

THE THREE TENSES OF SALVATION IN PAUL'S LETTERS

By Brenda B. Colijn*

Although the term "salvation" (in Greek, *soteria*) has given us the name for a central category of systematic theology (soteriology), many discussions of soteriology do not give much attention to the actual Biblical use of the word group related to salvation. A systematic approach, of course, must synthesize the various Biblical concepts, and the terms for salvation occur with relative rarity. In addition, a focus on justification by faith has sometimes contributed to the neglect of the salvation word group. Nevertheless, some scholars believe that salvation is the key to the theology of Paul.¹ Certainly the subject is of central interest to believers, both in Paul's day and now.

This essay will not attempt to cover Paul's soteriology as a whole. Any such discussion would draw upon a number of different word groups. Instead, this paper will focus on passages in which Paul uses terms from the "salvation" group — *sozo*, *soteria*, *soterion*, *soterios*, and *soter* — to see how he uses them. In particular, it will examine Paul's description of salvation as past, present, and future. As A. M. Hunter observes, "When Paul thought about Christian salvation, he saw it as a word with three tenses: a past event, a present experience, and a future hope."² In what follows, I will attempt to characterize Paul's view of salvation in each of these tenses. To do this, I will discuss the effects of salvation, not the means of salvation. I will also explore the implications of these concepts for believers.

Instances of salvation in the past tense are very rare in Paul's letters. In the undisputed letters, only one instance of *sozo* in the past tense occurs: "For in this hope we were saved" (Rom. 8:24).³ The past-tense salvation Paul is describing here corresponds to the justification he discusses in previous chapters.⁴ He sums up the situation of believers in Rom. 5:1-2: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." Without using the terms for salvation, these verses express the same ideas as Paul's three tenses of salvation: believers were "justified through faith" in the past, they "stand" in "grace" in the present, and they have "hope of the glory of God" in the future.

Romans 8:24, despite being in past tense, reveals more about the future of believers than about their past. It occurs in an eschatological passage describing "the glory that will be revealed in us" (8:18). Rather than focusing on what believers already have, Paul emphasizes what they do not yet have: "But

*Dr. Colijn holds a Ph.D. in English from Cornell and is an M.A. student at Ashland Theological Seminary.

hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently” (8:24-25). Paul implies that the salvation they already have is incomplete, or not yet fully realized; believers look forward in hope to its full realization in the last days.⁵

In the present, believers receive certain benefits as a result of their accomplished salvation. Paul opens his discussion in Romans 8 by declaring: “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (8:1). Believers who have been saved have been incorporated in Christ and have been freed from condemnation. They have “the firstfruits of the Spirit” (8:23), which include new life in the Spirit (8:10), new ability to live according to the Spirit (8:4-5), the Spirit’s intercession for them (8:26-27), the Spirit’s inner testimony that they are God’s children (8:15-16), the right to address God as “Abba” (8:15), and a new status as co-heirs with Christ (8:17). Paul’s concept of inheritance expresses his dialectic of present and future: someone who becomes an heir has not yet received an inheritance but enjoys a new status in the present.⁶ The firstfruits of the Spirit would also presumably include spiritual gifts, but Paul does not discuss them in this passage. The central evidence that salvation has been accomplished is the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit.⁷

What believers do not yet have, I will discuss more fully later, is their full “adoption as sons, the redemption of [their] bodies” (8:23) and the ability to share in Christ’s glory (8:17). Paul seems to use the past tense in Rom. 8:24 to assure believers that the salvation God has already accomplished through Christ — and the present evidence of that salvation in their lives — is their guarantee of their future inheritance. He tells them: “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (8:32). J. Schneider states that in Rom. 8:24

we can see how strongly Paul was conscious of the inner relationship between present and future salvation. The very fact that we have already been saved makes the expectation of final eschatological salvation the greater reality. Moreover, the final verdict is passed at that time. This future salvation . . . is the goal towards which Christians press.⁸

Ephesians contains the only two instances of salvation in the perfect tense in the New Testament: Eph. 2:5 and 2:8. Both verses emphasize grace: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast” (2:8-9). The perfect tense describes a past action that continues into the present. Believers have been saved from their transgressions and sins (2:1, 5) and saved into new life (2:5). They have been “raised up . . . with Christ and seated . . . with him in the heavenly realms” (2:6). Their salvation should also have the present effect of good works: “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (2:10). Although Paul emphasizes that works play no part in believers’ past-tense salvation accomplished through Christ, he stresses that works play an integral part in the present.

In Ephesians 1:13f, the word “salvation” occurs in a context of past-tense verbs: “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit . . .” The believers were saved when they heard the word of truth and believed; the evidence of their salvation is their possession of the Holy Spirit. But this salvation is still an interim state; the Holy Spirit is “a deposit guaranteeing [their] inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession” (1:14; cf. 2 Cor. 5:5).

In the Pastorals, past-tense salvation emphasizes grace, points forward in hope, and calls to present action. For example, in 2 Tim. 1:9, Paul states that God “has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.” He adds that he trusts in God’s ability to “guard what I have entrusted to him for that day” (1:12). Similarly, Titus 3:5-7 says that God

saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Verse 8 adds that because of these things believers should “devote themselves to doing what is good.”

Thus, Paul describes salvation in the past tense to emphasize God’s grace accomplished through Christ, to assure believers of their future salvation, and to urge believers to ethical action in the present. The Holy Spirit serves both as evidence of believers’ past salvation and as a downpayment on their future inheritance.

Instances of salvation in the present tense in Paul’s letters are nearly as rare as instances of the past tense. Only one example in the undisputed letters is unambiguously present tense, if present tense is defined as salvation occurring in the present in the life of believers. Phil. 2:12 states: “[As] you have always obeyed . . . continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” Salvation here appears as a cooperative enterprise. In a chapter describing the attitudes and actions believers should exhibit, Paul tells the Philipians to further their salvation as God enables them to “will” and “act” in ways that please him. God is still the one who makes salvation possible, but believers have a responsibility to cooperate with him. Paul implies that God’s enabling frees believers from the power of sin in the present. The reference to “fear and trembling” suggests that believers have no room for complacency. Their salvation is intimately connected with their obedience: “work out your salvation” seems to be equivalent to “obey,” suggesting that a continuing salvation is dependent upon obedience.⁹

Paul’s reminder to Timothy that the Scriptures “are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15) may also refer to

salvation in the present tense. In verses 16-17, Paul further defines this salvation by describing the present role of Scripture in "teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." Scripture assists the present salvation of believers by guiding them and stimulating their growth in the faith. It also equips them for ethical responsibility. As we have seen, good works play an important part in the present as an expression of believers' obedience and as a means of growth.

Other instances of present-tense salvation seem to refer to the general offer of salvation that is available to unbelievers in the present.¹⁰ In 1 Cor. 1:18, Paul states: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." Similarly, he says in 2 Cor. 2:15-16a: "For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life."

Paul is describing two categories of people, classified according to their responses to the gospel in the present: those people who are being saved (among whom he includes himself and his audience) and those people who are perishing. The expression "being saved" certainly describes God's gracious work in the present. It is, however, a corporate rather than an individual reference, and it may refer to a group to which God is adding people in the present, rather than to God's present work in the lives of believers. Paul's ministry itself polarizes people into these two groups as they react in their different ways to the "knowledge of [God]" that God is revealing through him (2 Cor. 2:14). Rudolf Bultmann's discussion of salvation in Paul focuses almost exclusively on this present aspect. He collapses past and future tenses into the present of existential decision:

It means that the salvation-occurrence continues to take place in the proclamation of the word. The salvation occurrence is eschatological occurrence just in this fact, that it does not become a fact of the past but constantly takes place anew in the present. . . . Consequently, in the proclamation Christ himself, indeed God Himself, encounters the hearer, and the 'Now' in which the preached word sounds forth is the 'Now' of the eschatological occurrence itself.¹¹

Paul's declaration that "now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2, referring to Isaiah 49:8) seems to refer to the general offer of salvation. But Paul is writing this to believers, to those who have received God's grace; he uses this declaration to exhort them "not to receive God's grace in vain" (6:1). In view of the Corinthians' problems with spiritual gifts, he may be urging them to use their many gifts for their proper purpose. They should pursue reconciliation rather than strife (5:18-20) and live for Christ rather than for themselves (5:15). However, since salvation is so closely connected with obedience, Paul may be implying that the Corinthians' self-centered and disorderly moral lives could put their salvation at risk. His exhortation

certainly implies his urgent concern that they get their house in order.

Thus, Paul discusses present salvation to remind believers of their responsibilities. While God is still the author of salvation in the present tense, believers participate in the process of salvation through their obedience. They grow in Christlikeness and share their knowledge of God with others. In general, present-tense salvation seems to correspond to sanctification.

This progressive aspect of salvation is confirmed by other passages that speak of God's continuing work in the life of the believer. For example, Paul states in 2 Cor. 4:16: "Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day." He seems to suggest in 2 Cor. 3:18 that even glory has a progressive aspect: "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."¹² The references to present-tense salvation often occur in a corporate context, suggesting that working out one's salvation takes place within the body of believers.

Salvation, for Paul, is predominantly future.¹³ As we have seen, even his uses of salvation in past and present tense have a forward-looking aspect. Wrede has observed: "The whole Pauline conception of salvation is characterized by suspense; a suspense which strains forwards towards the final release . . ."¹⁴ Salvation in its fullest sense is eschatological:

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. (Rom. 13:11-12)

Complete salvation has not yet occurred, but it is growing "nearer." Paul explains this to illuminate the "present time" as one in which the Age to Come is already active.¹⁵ Believers who know that the time is shortened will "behave decently" (13:13) and persevere in anticipation of the Day of the Lord.

Believers were already saved from their trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1, 5). In the present, believers are being saved from the power of sin (Phil. 2:13, 2 Cor. 5:15, 17; cf. Eph. 2:1-10). In the last day, believers will be saved from God's wrath (his righteous response to sin) and from death (the result of sin): "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him" (1 Thess. 5:9-10).¹⁶

Modern American Christians give little thought to God's wrath. Bultmann comes closer to Paul's perspective when he observes that "Christian faith in the grace of God does not consist in the conviction that God's wrath does not exist or that there is no threatening impending judgment (II Cor. 5:10), but in the conviction of being rescued from God's wrath . . ."¹⁷ Romans 5:9-10 states: "Since we have now been justified by [Christ's] blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much

more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!’ Justification and reconciliation have already been accomplished through Christ’s death. Salvation is yet to come, but believers can have assurance of their coming salvation because of God’s gracious work for them in the past.¹⁸ Because Christ now lives (5:10), believers will also live. Because of their assurance, they can “rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ” in the present (5:11).

Nevertheless, Paul makes clear that believers have no room for complacency. They will be saved from wrath, but not from judgment:

[Each person’s] work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. (1 Cor. 3:13-15)

Believers must build on the foundation of Jesus Christ (3:11). The work they do will be judged on the last day, and they will receive reward or loss based on that work. Paul does not suggest that believers earn their future salvation by their works, but he does stress the seriousness with which God regards their actions. As Sanders expresses it, “[Salvation] is by grace but judgment is according to works; works are the condition of remaining ‘in’, but they do not earn salvation.”¹⁹ A similar distinction between works and personal salvation seems to occur in 1 Cor. 5:5. Paul describes the judgment succinctly in 2 Cor. 5:10: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

While future salvation is not earned by works, it does seem to be conditional. Paul tells the Corinthians: “By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain” (1 Cor. 15:2). If they do not “hold firmly to the word,” Paul suggests, they will have “believed in vain.” This must mean that believers can do something to forfeit their salvation. The expression “believed in vain” would be meaningless unless someone who had actually believed could fail to receive the final salvation. Paul exhorts Timothy in a similar fashion: “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim. 4:16). This verse implies that Timothy has the option not to persevere.²⁰

We have already seen in Romans 8 the effects of future salvation: adoption as sons, the redemption of believers’ bodies, and sharing in Christ’s glory. Other passages expand upon these themes. For example, 2 Tim. 2:10 describes future salvation as glory: “Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.” Philippians 3:20-21 connects this glory with the believer’s resurrection body: “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will

be like his glorious body.’’²¹ As Beker has pointed out, Paul sees a necessary connection between Christ’s resurrection and the resurrection of believers.²²

Paul declares in 2 Thess. 2:13-14 that glory was in God’s plan for believers since before creation: “[From] the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Because of their hope, they should cooperate with the “sanctifying work of the Spirit” and persevere: “So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings I passed on to you . . .” (2:15).

Thus, future salvation can be summarized as glorification. Believers will share in Christ’s glory, and their bodies will be transformed in the resurrection to resemble his.²³ Final salvation will bring to completion the conformity to Christ’s image that has begun in the present.²⁴ Paul refers to future salvation to give his readers hope, urge them to action, and warn them against complacency. Believers can have assurance of God’s commitment to their future salvation because of what he has already done for them, but they must take seriously their own responsibility to live out the salvation they have already been given. They can wear their “hope of salvation” as a helmet to protect them in their struggles in the present life (1 Thess. 5:8, Eph. 6:17).²⁵ Future salvation, for Paul, can also have a strong corporate emphasis. The greatest concentration of salvation terms in Romans occurs in chapters 9-11, where Paul discusses the future salvation of Israel.

Paul’s concept of the three tenses of salvation has many implications for the lives of believers. His emphasis on future salvation should challenge the stress that modern evangelicals and fundamentalists have placed on past-tense salvation. Paul does not allow believers to rest complacently on their conversion. For Paul, believers should look forward, not back. They should move forward in cooperation with God’s continuing salvation in the present and look forward with anticipation to God’s completion of salvation at the Parousia. Modern believers have largely lost Paul’s sense of expectancy in general and his sense of the urgency of evangelism. As Ridderbos observes, “[The] certainty that in Christ the day of salvation, the acceptable time, has dawned does not mean the end of redemptive expectation, but only makes it increase in intensity.”²⁶

The future orientation of salvation also underscores the fundamental place of resurrection in the Christian faith — both Christ’s resurrection and the resurrection of believers. Paul looked forward to life in a resurrection body transformed in the final salvation to resemble the glorified body of Christ. His view corrects the overrealized and overspiritualized eschatology that is prevalent in many modern churches.

In Paul’s view, believers find themselves living between the salvation that has already been accomplished and the salvation that is yet to come. They participate both in the present world and in the world to come. This tension is reflected in Paul’s use of flesh and spirit: “But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness” (Rom.

8:10).²⁷ Likewise, in 2 Cor. 4:16, Paul says: "Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day." Now that they have been empowered through the Holy Spirit, believers have an obligation to live according to the Spirit rather than according to the flesh (Rom. 8:12-14). They must choose to live by the Spirit in order to manifest the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-25). In other words, they must work out their own salvation (Phil. 2:12-13). But they must do so in a world that has not yet been renewed.

Paul uses the three tenses of salvation to give believers a greater sense of their ethical responsibility. Furnish sees in Paul's view of salvation a dialectic of present and future that corresponds to his dialectic between indicative and imperative.²⁸ Beker contends that the future orientation of salvation fuels Paul's ethics: "[The] apocalyptic dawn of God's triumph in Christ provides Paul's gospel with its fundamental ethical motivation."²⁹ Believers are responsible for working out their salvation by obeying Christ as Lord. They can expect to be saved from sin and from wrath, but they cannot expect to be saved from suffering in this life or from judgment in the next.

Paul's concept of salvation includes assurance, but not eternal security. If future salvation were inevitable for believers, Paul would have no need to exhort them to persevere. Paul does not base their assurance on their conversion experience, but on Christ's completed work, the present activity of the Holy Spirit, and the promise that their resurrection will follow from Christ's.³⁰

Paul's concept should give believers a more theocentric rather than anthropocentric view of salvation. God's purposes include not only the salvation of individuals, but the redemption of all creation, which "was subjected to frustration" and "has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time" (Rom. 8:20, 22). Martin argues that Paul's idea of salvation includes — in fact, is grounded upon — global and even cosmic reconciliation: "Salvation, therefore, suggests an omnibus term to embrace a wide range of human needs; but it presupposes and builds on the prior action of God who has reconciled the world to himself."³¹ The "groaning" of human beings and the rest of creation, while it expresses the incompleteness of present salvation, is also a confirmation of the coming redemption.³² Completed salvation will be comprehensive: "Paul's overall descriptive term for the final victory of God in the coming age, when the last enemy shall have been destroyed and God shall reign as the unchallenged Sovereign above all, is *salvation*."³³

Finally, this view of salvation affects the believer's view of God. Paul portrays a Savior who is intimately involved and active in the believer's life in past, present, and future. His work is not complete with conversion; it continues until the final judgment. His love chose believers for salvation from the beginning (1 Thess. 5:9), but he also requires obedience and growth. He takes seriously any sin in the believer's life. In all three tenses of salvation, believers must be utterly dependent upon him.

Nevertheless, Paul's three tenses of salvation cannot be strictly separated.

Salvation as past event and present activity serve as the basis for future hope.³⁴ Titus 2:11-14, in describing the purpose of salvation, summarizes all three tenses, as well as their present implications for believers:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

NOTES

¹For example, A. M. Hunter believes that salvation is "a more comprehensive word [than either justification or communion with Christ] to express the richness and range of Christianity according to St. Paul." *The Gospel According to Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), p. 14. H. D. McDonald expresses the same opinion in *Salvation* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), p. 26.

²Hunter, p. 15. Hunter devotes a chapter to each of the three tenses of salvation, but he uses those headings to discuss soteriology in general. Similarly, Millard Erickson devotes only two paragraphs to the tenses of salvation as such (p. 888-89), but the concept underlies the organization of his section on soteriology. His chapter titles include "The Beginning of Salvation," "The Continuation of Salvation," and "The Completion of Salvation." *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983-85).

³Among the disputed letters I will include 2 Thess., Col., Eph., 1 Tim., 2 Tim., and Titus. See Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 54. All Biblical citations will be from the New International Version.

⁴Hunter states: "Salvation as a past event rests on the 'finished work of Christ' — what he did for men on the Cross — and looks back to the time when the sinner, by the decision of faith, made that deliverance his own" (p. 16).

⁵In his discussion of the title "soter" in the New Testament, Oscar Cullmann points to some Pauline passages in which Christ has "already fulfilled his role as Soter" and others which expect him to fulfill that role "at the end of days." He observes that this tension between past and future "is characteristic of the whole New Testament and in particular of New Testament Christology." *The Christology of the New Testament*, translated by Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), p. 244.

⁶Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), p. 127-28.

⁷Rabbinic Judaism would have regarded the activity of the Holy Spirit as evidence that the Messianic age had dawned. The Judaism in which Paul was raised believed that the Holy Spirit had ceased to act in the present but expected to see him come again in the future. W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), p. 215-16.

⁸*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, edited by Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 3:214. Furnish states: "Precisely because God's love is already powerfully present and active in his Spirit, there is hope for something more, namely, the fulfillment of salvation, the completion and perfection of God's redemptive activity" (p. 132).

⁹E. P. Sanders notes that obedience, for Paul, does not earn salvation, but disobedience can exclude one from salvation. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p. 518.

¹⁰W. Foerster states that the present tense of salvation "expresses the fact that the way to *soteria* or *apoleia* is not yet closed." In Gerhard Friedrich, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited and translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 7:992.

¹¹*Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols., translated by Kendrick Grobel (New York: Scribner's, 1951-55), p. 302.

¹²See Furnish, p. 126.

¹³As Foerster observes, "Primarily, then, *soteria* is for Paul a future, eschatological term" (7:992). See also Furnish, p. 122.

¹⁴W. Wrede, *Paul*, translated by Edward Lummis (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1908), p. 105. Wrede explains this suspense in terms of the eschatological significance of Christ's work: "The redemptive act must itself be reckoned as belonging to the final age; it is the first act of the last development, an act which must be followed swiftly and of necessity by all the rest. This makes the suspense, the forward outlook, especially intelligible" (p. 105).

¹⁵G. E. Ladd remarks that justification itself is eschatological, in that the final acquittal does not take place until the Day of the Lord. But the Age to Come "has reached back into the present evil age to bring its soteric blessings to men." *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 441-42.

¹⁶As R. McL. Wilson states, salvation "means deliverance from sin, and from the power of sin; it means deliverance from wrath and judgment . . . and it means deliverance from death, for in a very real sense sin *is* death." "Soteria," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 6 (1953): 412.

¹⁷Bultmann, p. 288.

¹⁸Foerster confirms that *sozomai* and *soteria* "in contrast to justification, reconciliation and redemption, refer to future, eschatological salvation" (7:993).

¹⁹Sanders, p. 542.

²⁰A conditional salvation seems to be in view in 1 Tim. 2:5: "But she will be saved through childbearing — if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety" (NIV mg.). The precise nature of the subject and the condition, however, have been the subject of much debate.

²¹Wilson notes that "salvation is not, as for the Greeks, the deliverance of man's immortal soul from the bondage of the body; it concerns the whole man, body and soul together, in every aspect of his life and every part of his being" (p. 413).

²²A. Christiaan Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), p. 46.

²³The evidence in Paul strongly favors the interpretation that believers will receive their glorified bodies at the resurrection, rather than at death, as Hunter (p. 56) and Davies (p. 318) argue.

²⁴"[Being] conformed to the image of His Son . . . is the positive content of eschatological salvation." Foerster, 7:993.

²⁵Furnish describes how Paul alters the Old Testament image of the helmet of salvation in Is. 59:17 to convey the idea of a future hope (p. 122).

²⁶Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, translated by John Richard DeWitt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 487.

²⁷Ridderbos notes that in Paul, the flesh is connected with the old aeon, while the Spirit is connected with the new aeon that has broken in (p. 66).

²⁸Furnish, p. 126.

²⁹Beker, p. 89. As Beker expresses it, "The ethical activity of the Christian then is motivated not only by the power of Christ in the Spirit but also by the beckoning power of God's Kingdom. And so both God's *past* act in Christ and his *future* act in the resurrection of the dead converge on Christian life in the present" (p. 87).

³⁰Ralph Martin has pointed out that Paul never appeals to believers' experience of salvation as the basis of their assurance. "Instead he announced the arrival of the new age and cast his lot with the new beginning that had been made in world history." *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), p. 40.

³¹Martin, p. 40, 42.

³²Ridderbos, p. 53.

³³Furnish, p. 122.

³⁴Foerster states: "In the NT, however, only the event of the historical coming, suffering and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth brings salvation from God's wrath by the forgiveness of sins" (7:1002).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Beker, A. Christiaan. *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.
- Brown, Colin, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. *Theology of the New Testament*. 2 vols. New York: Scribner's, 1951-55.
- Cullmann, Oscar. *The Christology of the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963.
- Davies, W. D. *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.
- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985.
- Furnish, Victor Paul. *Theology and Ethics in Paul*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1968.
- Hunter, Archibald M. *The Gospel According to Paul*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966.
- Kittel, Gerhard, and Friedrich, Gerhard, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. 10 vols. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964.
- Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.
- Martin, Ralph P. *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989.
- McDonald, H. D. *Salvation*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982.
- Ridderbos, Herman. *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.
- Sanders, E. P. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.
- Soulen, Richard N. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 2nd ed. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981.
- Wilson, R. McL. "Soteria." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 6 (1953): 406-16.

Wrede, W. *Paul*. Translated by Edward Lummis. Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1908.

