
God, Our Gracious Savior

*“He established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter forever and ever”
(Psalm 104:5).*

*“This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved
and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3, 4).*

Psalm 104 does not address the topic of the spiritual Saviorhood of God. It only implies it in the basic thought that human beings look to God for everything—food, life, and living places. The implication follows that God is not only in charge of our earthly care, but He also looks after our life that we will have with Him in the next world. This God who fashioned the earth for man’s habitat is opposed to evil and leads His world of humans to praise Him with righteous hearts (v. 35). In this sense, God’s works rise above the concerns of our physical environment and providing food for us to eat.

Therefore, if we see this psalm as speaking only of God’s physical care for man in this world, we would be restricting this praise-prayer unjustifiably. To be sure, its heavy emphasis is upon what God does for His living creatures in this world. It does not make specific references to His spiritual nature and His call to righteousness other than in verse 35. However, the writer, from the context of walking with God, from the attitude of praising the God he serves, rejoices in His creation, sustenance, and on-going maintenance of His world. Going, then, back behind his prayer, we observe the spiritual relationship that he has with His God. This writer would readily agree that God is our Creator, our Sustainer, and our spiritual Savior.

As we transfer this topic, “God, Our Savior,” over to the New Testament, we see six verses that address Him as “Savior” (1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4–7). These six passages can be subsumed under three great headings.

Let us consider each of them.

He has loved each of us with an eternal, divine love. Accordingly, no person lives outside the umbrella of His love. Paul wrote, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3, 4). God, infinite in love and mercy, bestows a special love upon each member of the human race. His great heart yearns for the eternal salvation of each person He has created. Paul further said, “For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers” (1 Timothy 4:10). The only hope anyone has is in God who is the Savior of everyone. He brings deliverances and rescues to all men—physical, mental, and social ones. His kind hand blesses all men. Behind all medicines that heal, earthly powers that mend, and techniques that help, stands God. Rising up to the level of spiritual life, we can say even more significantly that no one has any spiritual or eternal hope except in God. Indeed, Paul could forcefully say that God is our Savior: “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope” (1 Timothy 1:1).

In love, He planned from the beginning for our salvation. Before the world was created and before He brought man into existence, He constructed an eternal purpose that centered in providing salvation for those of the human race who would chose to receive it. Paul wrote, “Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless

before Him" (Ephesians 1:4). His promise of salvation was a reality in His mind "long ages ago" in eternity past. Paul affirms this truth in his oft-quoted words, "In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior" (Titus 1:2, 3). When He began planning to create the human race, He laid down along His great ambition a way of salvation for the man He was creating.

His love demanded that the greatest of all sacrifices be made to make this salvation possible. It is expensive to love the way God does. His plan had to be put into place in harmony with His righteousness, His flawless character, which required that a divine offering be made that became the center of history. One cannot describe the reception of this salvation without including in his description such words as God's "kindness," "mercy," "love," and "grace":

But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:4-7).

This salvation He gives is on the basis of His mercy—not on the basis of our merit. It comes not through the deeds of righteousness that we have done, but through the grace that God has extended to us.

God's Saviorhood is always pictured in three dimensions: His love, His plan, and His sacrifice. The three streams merge into one great event, the cross of Christ. His love is the purest, deepest, and divinely perfect as it is expressed not in word, but in deed and truth. It was planned beforehand, which is His divine forethought. It paid the price that the plan required, which is His divine follow through.

In one sense, to God we must ascribe the whole program of salvation. It is God who spared not His Son but delivered Him up for us all (Romans 8:32). It is God who sent forth

His Son as a propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2). It is He who commended His love toward us through the death of Jesus (Romans 5:8). It is God who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Foreknowledge, foreordination, calling, justification, and glorification are all ascribed to Him (Romans 8:29, 30). It is He who chose us (Ephesians 1:4). It is He who caused the gospel to be proclaimed (Titus 1:1-3). It is He who bestowed His grace upon us (Ephesians 1:7, 8). In this respect, faith is His gift to us (Ephesians 2:8).

In view of all this, we cannot talk about God without bringing His Saviorhood and care into the conversation. We can rejoice in His salvation regardless of our situation or relationship. Paul could say even to slaves, "Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect" (Titus 2:9, 10). Yes, He is Creator, Sustainer, and Savior! God sent Jesus to us, and Jesus has brought us to God! We must thank God for Jesus, and we must thank Jesus for God!

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"For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21).

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:4-9).