

Salvation: Purpose: Deliverance from Lake of Fire; Result: Eternal Life; a *Fortiori*: If God Can Save Saul He can Save Anyone; John 20:31, 3:16; a Gospel Statement

37. The purpose of the Lord's sacrifice on the cross was "to save sinful ones." Paul asserts under the ministry of the Holy Spirit that he was the most sinful person in all of human history.
38. Saul was a demonically inspired terrorist whose religious arrogance was expressed by a maniacal hatred of Christians whom he intimidated, imprisoned, and approved their executions.
39. Since the Lord was judged for all sinners, and since Saul held the all-time record for sinning, then the fact Paul is saved became the source of another purpose: if the Lord showed patience with Saul until he believed in Christ, then Paul is the foremost example to other unbelievers of God's perfect patience toward them.
40. This second purpose is expressed by the prepositional phrase:
πρός, pros - with the accusative, it marks the object toward which something is directed. It is used here figuratively to express the end, aim, or purpose of an action: to use Paul as a "prototype," the accusative of purpose from the noun:
ὑποτύπωσις, hypotypōsis - "delineation: a portrayal that sets forth with accuracy and in detail; a pattern, example, or prototype."
41. If any member of the human race needs a reference point on understanding the perfect patience of God and Christ toward them, they only need to look toward Saul for an example.
42. The period of time during which Saul was the world's worst sinner portrays "with accuracy and in detail" the forbearance of divine patience.

1 Timothy 1:16 - Nevertheless, because of this I received mercy that in me, as foremost of all sinners, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example to them who are about to ...

V. Purpose and Result: Eternal Life

1. The reason God used Saul as an example was so He could portray to unbelievers His perfect patience toward anyone who would believe. First there is the present active participle of the verb:
μέλλω, mellō - Relates what is destined to take place and is translated, "for those who are about to," or "for those who are destined to."
 present: Futuristic: denotes an event that has not yet occurred but is regarded as so certain that in thought it may be contemplated as already coming to pass.
 active: Church Age believers produce the action of being among those who are destined to believe.

NOTE: This does not imply the false doctrine of predestination which asserts that in eternity past a predetermined few were sovereignly chosen by God as the elect while all the rest were left reprobate. This view also insists that human free will plays no part in salvation, only the sovereignty of God. However, this ignores the principle that in human history the sovereignty of God and the free will of man coexist by divine decree.

The true doctrine of predestination recognizes that the elect are foreknown in eternity past by means of the omniscience of God which was able to determine those individuals in history who, from their own uncoerced free will, would believe in Christ and those who would not. The former are the elect while the latter are left in a status quo of unbelief and remain in their just condemnation.

Because God knew who would and would not believe does not mean that He sovereignly decided who these people would be.

Instead, He identified those that through faith would use their free will to believe the message of the Gospel and decreed that these would be granted salvation in time. Although the elect are known in eternity past their destiny does not become operational until they are saved at which point they enter into God's predetermined plan.

In our passage, the verb *mellō* recognizes the certain fruition of what foreknowledge recognizes in the divine decree: that when individuals in the future believe in Christ they will be saved and Paul provides the pattern of the magnificence of grace that saved the worst sinner of human history. The principle that emerges here may be described by *a fortiori* logic:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *The Integrity of God*. 4th ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2005), 92-93:

A fortiori is a Latin term meaning "with stronger reason." *A fortiori* logic has two parts: the *greater* and the *less*. The greater is found in the protasis and the less in the apodosis. *A fortiori* logic states that if God can do something that is extremely difficult, it only makes sense that He can do something that is much easier. If God has already done the greater, it follows *a fortiori* that He can do the less. If the more difficult function of the justice of God has already been provided, then "with stronger reason," the less difficult will not be withheld.

Using this logic we can construct the following conditional sentence:

If the justice of God can do the most difficult thing in saving Paul, who is history's worst sinner, then, *a fortiori*: with stronger reason, He can do the less difficult thing by saving those who are less sinful than Paul.

2. What these individuals are about to do that is certainly future is believe, the present active infinitive of the verb:

πιστεύω, *pisteuō* - "to believe"

present: Futuristic: denotes an event which has not yet occurred, but which is regarded as so certain that in thought it may be contemplated as already coming to pass.

active: Church Age unbelievers will express positive volition at Gospel hearing by believing that Jesus is the Christ and by doing so they have eternal life.

infinitive: Purpose: The infinitive may be used to express the aim or the action denoted by the finite verb, in this case "demonstrate" His perfect patience. The purpose was so that the sinful of the Church Age would look to Paul as a demonstration of divine grace in salvation to any who would believe.

3. Next we get the final prepositional phrase which shows purpose as well as result:

εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον, *eis zōē aiōnios* - "for eternal life"

4. The proposition *eis* indicates intention, purpose, aim, end, and may be translated "for the purpose of" and therefore joins with the infinitive of *pisteuō* to indicate the purpose "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15): so that those who believe in Him and His work on the cross might be saved and have eternal life.

5. In context the word *aiōnios* is an adjective and describes the kind of life the person possesses who believes in Christ: *zōē*. Thus one of the two major purposes of salvation is eternal life.
6. From the human side of salvation, the purpose of believing in the person and work of Christ is that it results in the imputation of eternal life:

John 20:31 - These are written for the purpose that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have as a result eternal life in His name.

7. A summary of John 20:31 ties the concept of purpose and result together into a neat package which clearly expresses what one must believe in order to be saved:

Yeager, Randolph O. *The Renaissance New Testament*. (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1982), 9:34:

Where the action of God is involved the only difference between purpose and result is the passage of time. God's purpose is always God's result. Thus both the divine purpose and the inevitable result for the writing of John's gospel was that some would believe. The result of John's having written his book is that the believers will have life, by means of His name.

God's purpose is that we believe when we read the Gospel of John. Believe what? That is an important question since Satan has propagated the nonsense that the fact of believing is what saves not the content of what is believed. John leaves no doubt about **what** we are to believe **if** we are to **have eternal life**. We are to believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God. This proposition is the sole ground for saving faith. Whatever else we may believe or disbelieve, the *sine qua non* of Christianity is acceptance of the proposition that the historic Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of Israel, the ever living fulfillment of God's promise to David (2 Samuel 7:12-14), and He is also the Son of God.

Once we are told by John in his gospel who Jesus is, what is the ground for our possession of eternal life? Obviously it is believing what we have been told.

8. Here then is the crux of the matter. If a person contends that he believes Jesus Christ died on the cross for his sins but at the same time does not believe that he has eternal life then he doesn't know if he will go to heaven when he dies. Such a person is not saved.
9. Why? The purpose of the work of Christ on the cross was to save sinful mankind. In order to do this He must be the Christ the Son of the living God.
10. This means that an unbeliever must understand that: (1) Jesus of Nazareth is both God and Man, (2) in His humanity He is without sin and thus a qualified Substitute for the human race, (3) those who believe in His Person, His work, and His resurrection are saved, (4) the purpose of salvation is "to be rescued from a lost estate": the lake of fire, (5) the result of salvation is "to be brought into a saved estate": eternal life, and (6) with these things in mind to have absolute confidence that when he dies he will go to heaven.
11. The intended result of Christ's sacrifice was, according to Him, so that "he who believes in Him might have eternal life" (John 6:47). The many passages in Scripture that discuss the Gospel make this clear.
12. Here's another and is a direct quote by Jesus to Nicodemus in:

John 3:16 - "God so loved the world, that He gave His uniquely-born Son, for the purpose that [ἵνα, *hina*: introduces purpose and result] whoever believes in Him shall not perish [purpose] but have and hold [ἔχω, *echō*] eternal life [result]."

13. Therefore, to reject the result of salvation is to misunderstand the work of salvation. The purpose was to deliver the sinner from the lake of fire. The result of salvation is to deliver the believer into eternal life.
14. To assume that the work of Christ on the cross does not provide eternal life is to reject the message of the Gospel and the mindset of the individual who does so must conclude that something more must be done by him to appropriate an eternal future outside of the lake of fire.
15. The result is false or fuzzy Gospels that require a person (1) to do good works for salvation, (2) to perform more good deeds than sinful acts, or (3) in the confusion produced by hyper Calvinism, to conclude he may or may not be among the elect and therefore must spend his life trying to prove to himself and others that he is, but without achieving any real confidence in the matter and therefore having no sense of security about his eternal future.
16. What is needed is a Gospel statement that is simple yet contains all the necessary information so that when a person believes its message he can be assured he is saved and possesses eternal life. Such a statement might read as follows:

“Jesus of Nazareth, Who is both perfect God and sinless Man, was sacrificed on the cross for the sins of the human race after which He died, was buried, and after three days was resurrected from the dead. The *purpose* of these things is so that anyone who believes them will be delivered from punishment in the lake of fire after he dies. The *result* of these things is so that anyone who believes them will be delivered into eternal life and will go to heaven when he dies. Do you believe this?”