

## Temporal Salvation Through The Centuries

Written by Various Historic Baptists

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A brief compilation of quotes from various English speaking Baptists on the subject of Temporal Salvation over the last three centuries.

This collection of quotes from various Baptist writers is not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, the purpose of this article is to document the fact that historically, Baptists have distinguished between eternal salvation and temporal salvation. While eternal salvation (ie., regeneration) in an individual is exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit (Monergism), their salvation, or deliverance in this life from many temporal undoings is a cooperative effort between the Holy Spirit and the believer (synergism). As noted below, recognizing whether a salvation is eternal or temporal is crucial to a proper understanding of the Bible and theology.

An Answer to a Treatise, entitled The Doctine of the Antinomians, in Answer to Doctor Crisp's seven Sermons, by Steven Geree.

*Geree says "that Doctor Crisp condemns doing any thing for our own salvation, and is not ashamed to say there is no condition on mans part. I say nothing is more evident in the Gospel than conditions on the covenant on man's part, to wit, faith and repentance, without which, he cannot be in the covenant, nor have any share in Jesus Christ. As Masters covenant with their Servants, so does God with his people, and they with him. And if it be not performed, the covenant is frustrate, Rom. 3. 27; Acts 27. 24, 31; 1 Cor. 6. 14-19. If we mean to have God for our God, we must repent, and come out, and God will receive us, and upon no other terms in the world; therefore, I conclude that Doctor Crisp is fully deceived and strangly deluded and so are all others as did and do believe him. Epist. Fide 9, p.35, 37, 43, 67, 72, 77, 78, 79, 80, 99, 102."*

Answer [by Samuel Richardson]. You prove not what you affirm, Rom 3. 27, declares salvation is not of works. This is a full place against you, Acts 27, Except ye abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. **This is a temporal salvation from drowning, unless he brings this place to**

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**prove his soul shall not be saved whose body is drowned.** It's not to the question. For the 2 Cor. 6 he alledges to prove that God is our God upon terms, not else. Whereas these words were written to the saints who were converted, and the church of God before this epistle was written to them. This Church of Corinth had some communion and fellowship with idolaters; therefore, the Lord exhorts them to come out from amongst them, and he would receive them, declare himself to be their God and own them to be his people in a Church Relation, as Rev. 1. 20 & 2. 5. See pag. 170. To understand it concerning our eternal condition is to contradict the Scripture which says, He hath not deal with us after our sins, nor rewarded us after our iniquities, Psal. 103. 10; Psal. 89. God's love to his depends not upon what we do. See God's eternal good will to his, Jer. 31. 3 & 34. 40; John 13. 1; Luke 22. 32; John 17. 20, 21;

Samuel Richardson, 1640s

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Ver. 40. "And with many other words did he testify and exhort,"... For Luke does not give the sermons of the apostles at length, but a compendium, or specimen of them, and some of the more remarkable things in them; and which, it seems, lay partly in testifying concerning Christ, his person, office, grace, righteousness, and salvation; and against sins and errors, and false doctrine; and in "exhorting" to the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty; or in comforting distressed minds: for the word used signifies to comfort as well as to exhort; though it seems to have the latter sense here, since it follows: "saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation:" meaning, the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, and elders of the people, chiefly, who were a perverse generation of men; and upon whom, for their impenitence and unbelief, for their rejection of the Messiah, and their evil treatment of him, wrath and ruin would come upon them, to the uttermost, very quickly; wherefore the apostle exhorts to separate from them, and not partake of their sins, lest they should also of their plagues; but come out from among them, and so, **in a temporal sense, save themselves from the destruction that would quickly come on their nation, city, and temple** ; and so the Arabic version renders it, "escape from this rough generation".  
Dr John Gill, Commentary on Acts 2:40

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2. The words are to be understood of providential goodness and temporal salvation; which all

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men have a share in, more or less, God the Father and not Christ, is here called the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, that is, the preserver of all men; who supports them in their being, and supplies them with all the necessaries of life, and especially them that believe who are the particular care of his providence; for though he is good, and does good to all men, yet more especially to the household of faith; which was the foundation of the apostles' trust in him, under all their labours and reproaches, which attended the preaching of the Gospel. Which sense of the words is perfectly agreeable both to the analogy of faith, and to the context, and is owned by some {1} who are on the other side of the question.

Dr John Gill, The Cause of God and Truth, 1738

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2dly, He proposes the following Scriptures which declare God's willingness that all should be saved, to be reconciled to the doctrine of reprobation, Mt 21:9; Mr 16:15; Joh 5:34; Ac 17:24; Ro 5:18; 10:12; 1Ti 2:3-4; Jas 1:5; 2Pe 3:9; 1Jo 4:14 (Predestination Calmly Considered, pp. 16, 17). Some of which do not respect eternal salvation at all, **but the temporal salvation of the Jews; and others have nothing to do with salvation in either sense;**

some speak only of God's will to save his elect, to whom he is long-suffering; and others of his will, that Gentiles as well as Jews, should be saved; and that it is his pleasure that some of all sorts should be saved by Christ; neither of which militate against the doctrine of reprobation.

Dr John Gill, THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION STATED, AND SET IN THE SCRIPTURE LIGHT

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All salvation is of the Lord. Salvation, (says the Psalmist) belongs unto the Lord: {Ps 3:8} **tempo**  
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well as spiritual and eternal salvation, belongs to him: he is the author thereof, and to him the glory should be given; and particularly, the salvation of his people: the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; and he is their strength in the time of trouble. {Ps 37:39}

**Even temporal salvation is of the Lord,**

as their covenant God and Father too; for he is their King and their God, working salvation in the midst of the earth: and every temporal deliverance is wrought for them by their covenant God, and in virtue of this covenant made with them. Covenant ones are saved in this covenant, in a temporal way, in order to be called. Saved they are from many evils in a providential way, while in an unconverted state, in order to be effectually called by the grace of God: and, indeed, all their temporal mercies are covenant mercies, as they come from a covenant God, and in a covenant way; when the mercies of the wicked, though the same for substance as theirs, are

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not covenant mercies. They are sometimes curses unto them; for the Lord curses their very blessings. {Mal 2:2} Hence it is, that the people of God have what they have, in a temporal way, with the favour of the Lord: hence it is, that a little that a righteous man hath, it is better than the treasures of many wicked: they are blessed, and they are loaded day by day, comparatively speaking, with benefits; for God is the God of salvation, in a temporal sense, and to God the Lord belong the issues from death. {Ps 68:20}

Dr John Gill, The Stability of the Covenant of Grace

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One other view of this subject should not be omitted; and that is the marked difference between the two classes, relative to works performed. One were so full of the Effort System, that they boast of the many "wonderful works" that they had done in the name of the Lord. But the other, having never viewed what they had done as in any wise meritorious in their eternal salvation, **but only as a discharge of duty in connection with their temporal salvation and welfare in time, they had never treasured it up in their minds**

—for they had been so rooted and grounded and fixed in the doctrine of free grace alone, that they had lost sight of the genuine good works which they had performed.

Benjamin Griffin, Griffin's History of Mississippi Primitive Baptists, 1853

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There is a time salvation to be enjoyed in obedience only. \* \* \* As before hinted, our own salvation here mentioned is **a time salvation**, and we must work it out or go without it."

M Hodges, Zion's Advocate, 1858; (Quoted from Cayce's Editorials, 1934)

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"The other party in the association held the same views as the second on the subject of missions and kindred societies instituted by men, but differed from both the other parties on the use and effect of the preached gospel. They denied that the preaching of the gospel had any power to convert the dead sinner, or to give him life, and declared that man in nature was dead in trespasses and sins, and that as no means could be used to give life to one literally dead, even so no means could be used to give eternal life to those who are dead in sins, that God

effects that work of Himself, by His holy Spirit, without means or instruments, and that the gospel is a proclamation of good tidings, of great joy to the soul that is prepared with a hearing ear and an understanding heart to receive it. **To those who thus believe it is the power of God unto salvation, and it saves them from the false doctrines of men, and feeds and makes them strong in the truth.** ”

Chapter 26, The Life of Wilson Thompson, 1867

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Paul says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."-2Ti 3:16-17. This is plain, positive testimony. Then if all Scripture is for the purpose of thoroughly furnishing the man of God unto all good works, where is any of it given for any other purpose? Nowhere. Then why should one search the Bible to find a Scripture to overthrow Paul's testimony? He would not have written this to Timothy had it not been the truth. Paul, in writing to the Romans, says: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."-Ro 1:16. Some contend that this Scripture is applicable to the unbeliever. One or two things is true of this. Either the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, or else it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that does not believe it. Well, which is it? Paul says, "to every one that believeth." Jesus says, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."-Joh 6:47. Again Jesus says, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."-Joh 5:24. Hence "every one that believeth" is passed from death unto life, and, as a matter of course, is a "man of God," and the Scripture is for the purpose of thoroughly furnishing him unto all good works. Here, then, is a perfect harmony seen between the two quotations from Paul. **But how can the gospel be the power of God unto salvation to one who is saved already? Timothy was one of the "saved already" when Paul was writing to him, yet he says, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."-1Ti 4:16. This cannot have reference to eternal salvation**

from two considerations; first, Timothy was at that time a young preacher of the gospel; second, if he was to save himself and them that heard him, there would have been no necessity for Jesus Christ, since Timothy, in this case would not only be his own saviour, but the saviour of them that heard him, be they many or few. Paul tells how Timothy and himself were saved; that is how their eternal salvation was accomplished: "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."-2Ti 1:9. From the above quotation we see his eternal salvation did not depend upon, nor was it "according to our works." But the salvation that Paul was writing to Timothy concerning did depend upon "in doing this." Paul, in giving his charge to the elders at Ephesus, says: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock," etc.; "for I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you,

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not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them."-Ac 20:28-30. And again, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."-Eph 4:14. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies," etc., "and many shall follow their pernicious ways."-2Pe 2:1-2. By Timothy taking "heed" to himself and to the doctrine he saved himself and them that heard him (the flock) from "greivous wolves;" saved from being drawn away by men speaking "perverse things;" saved from being "carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;" saved from those "damnable heresies" privily brought in by false teachers; saved from following "their pernicious ways;" **in short, they were saved from every false way.**

Thomas J Carr, from the appendix of A Brief History of the Regular Baptists, Principally of Southern Illinois, Achilles Coffey, 1877

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He says I spoke of two salvations-a spiritual and a temporal salvation. I did not call them by that name. He has given them the names himself. **I do speak of two.** I want you to think of them. In the first place, Brother Yates' Confession of Faith teaches it, and so do I Hence we agree that if a man is truly born of God, if he is a saint, if he is truly regenerated, that he will be preserved, and that heaven will finally be his home-that he is saved.

**Then there comes a salvation after that.**

What is it? To whom it is said, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." It is to those who have obeyed. "Beloved, as ye have obeyed not as in my presence only, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Now, if we have once been saved, and yet have to work out our own salvation, is not that two? Do they have to work out the same salvation again after being once saved? Brother Yates admits that when they are regenerated they have been saved, and the apostle tells them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. I refer you to the text in 1Co 1:23-24 beginning at the 23d verse: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Unto those who are called, those who are saved, the gospel is the power of God, according to this text. I refer you to his own text where the apostle says: "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews' a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." I showed you that this call here spoken of was a prerequisite to the gospel, being the power of God and the wisdom of God in that case, for the gospel was preached to all of them alike, and was not the power of God to all. What was the difference? Some were called, others were not. To those that were called it was Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God, and foolishness to the others. What does that

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``called" mean? it means saved, because the apostle uses that word, as unto us that are saved it is the power of God. That is the salvation; he can call it spiritual or temporal just as he pleases. But here are two salvations-one before the gospel is the power of God, and the other afterward. That is two. Let him notice that. They are his own texts. He brings them up himself and then says I do not answer his arguments, and not notice his texts. Then, he has been complaining because we have not stuck to the proposition. He left it first. I am not here to prove any thing. It is not my place to prove. Every person that is acquainted with debating knows it is the duty of the affirmative to prove his proposition; and it is the duty of the negative to follow him and see whether he does or not, to examine his arguments and proof-texts. Brother Yates has led from the proposition in his arguments. The people have seen that. He asked me questions concerning the heathen, and would have me write them down, when my moderator and myself claimed that it was irrelevant to the subject, but his moderator, Brother Collins, thought that the questions I put to him were also irrelevant to the question. Brother Darby, since he heard it, admitted that it must be answered, as an admission that it was not irrelevant, while he also admits that those questions that were put to me were irrelevant.

Lemuel Potter, JOINT DISCUSSION ON Foreign Missions BETWEEN THE REV H. CLAY YATES, Of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, AND ELDER LEMUEL POTTER, Of the Regular Baptist Church. HELD IN OWENSVILLE, INDIANA, Commencing Dec.14 and ending Dec. 19, 1885.

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As stated above, the meeting was a very pleasant one indeed; the brethren both preached with good liberty and greatly to the comfort, seemingly, of all our brethren and sisters. Not only did we enjoy their preaching, but the writer felt greatly encouraged because of the fact that they both endorsed our views, or believe just as we do, on the question of Christian obedience, time or "common" salvation. Brother Sammons stated that he had never heard me advance a single idea or express any sentiment whatever that he did not fully endorse. This was very encouraging indeed. So much so, that I could but let our brethren know (after he was done preaching) that he had heard me at his own (the Mississippi River) association, in October upon the very points, and in expression of the same ideas for which I have recently been denounced as an Arminian. **I know that when I first became identified with the Baptists in this country (in 1866) they ALL believed that our eternal salvation is wholly unconditional, altogether the work of God, but that the time salvation, or Christian enjoyment, of the children of God (those already born of God) in this life depends greatly upon their obedience, and that it (their timely salvation) is in that sense conditional.** And I know that this is what I believed and tried to preach when I first began to speak in public. Hence it is very encouraging to have such brethren as Elders Myatt and Sammons visit us and preach to our brethren at home just what we try to preach wherever we go.

SF Cayce, Cayce's Editorials Volume 1, 1896-1899

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**We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a time salvation received by the heirs of God distinct from eternal salvation, which does depend upon their obedience.** The people of God receive their rewards for obedience in this life only. We believe that the ability of the Christian is the unconditional gift of God. Besides the efficacious grace of God in the heart in regeneration, we need the company of God's Holy Spirit to comfort, lead, and bless us, which He has promised to give to every one that will ask Him. {Lu 11:13} The act of God necessary to our regeneration must in some sense be distinguished from His act necessary to our obedience. We are never commanded to be born again, but in hundreds of places we are called on to obey. We are passive in regeneration, but in obedience we are active. Regeneration is neither a vice nor a virtue; obedience is a virtue and disobedience is a vice. Regeneration is wholly independent of the will. There could be no such a thing as obedience or disobedience independent of the will. Men do not neglect to be born again, but they do neglect their duty. Fulton Confession, 1900

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Another equally unnecessary and unprofitable verbal contention among a few Primitive Baptists is one similar to, if not connected with, the controversy on predestination. It is the question concerning what is called "the conditionality of time salvation," and, connected with this, the question as to the ability of the child of God to obey the commandments of his heavenly Father. All Primitive Baptists are agreed upon the unconditionality of our eternal salvation, and the inability of those who are dead in sin to render spiritual obedience to the law of God. Instead of repentance and faith being conditions prerequisite to salvation, we understand that they are the work of the Holy Spirit in the renewed heart, and are thus essential parts of salvation; and, until this spiritual renewal, the fallen child of Adam will love sin and hate holiness and continue in rebellion against God. But there is an apparent disagreement in two or three of our associations, among worthy and lovely brethren, who would be heartily fellowshiped and gladly welcomed by other **Primitive Baptists everywhere, as to whether our time salvation, that is, our deliverance from spiritual darkness, coldness, distress, and chastisement during the present life is conditioned or dependent upon our obedience to God, and as to whether the child of God is able to obey God or not.**

Now, even the authors of dictionaries have no right to manufacture or change the meanings of words; their business is simply to ascertain and state the meanings which words actually and already have in the language of which they treat. It would be deceptive to use words in a different sense from that which they generally have, unless we explain the sense which we mean. The most of controversies are strifes of words; and when words are properly defined, and their correct meaning is accepted by both parties, the controversy ends. A "condition" is defined by the best of English dictionaries to be "an event, object, fact, or being that is necessary to the occurrence

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or existence of some other, though not its cause; a prerequisite; that which must exist as the occasion or concomitance of something else; that which is requisite in order that something else should take effect; an essential qualification." And these dictionaries say that the word "if" is "the typical conditional particle, and is nearly always used to introduce the subordinate clause of a conditional sentence," and means "on the supposition that; provided, or on condition that; in case that, granting, allowing, or supposing that." There are 1,422 "ifs" in the Bible-830 in the Old Testament, and 592 in the New Testament; and these conditional sentences make up about one-fiftieth part of the Bible. Thus forty-nine fiftieths of the Scriptures are unconditional, and one fiftieth is conditional. All reverent minds must admit that this conditional part of the Scriptures, though comparatively small, has a real and true meaning. It cannot be denied by any informed and honest man that such Scriptures as the following are conditional: "If His children forsake my law, I will visit their transgression with the rod, nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from Him." {Ps 89:30-33} "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." {Isa 1:19-20} "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." {Joh 13:17} "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." {Ro 8:13} "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" {Heb 2:3} "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." {1Jo 1:7} See, also such Scriptures as Le 26:1-46; De 4:29-31; 7:12-26; 11:13-32; 28:1-68; Eze 18:1-32; 33:1-33. Not only is it certain that these Scriptures are conditional, but it is equally certain that the condition, introduced by "if," necessarily precedes the conclusion, which would not take place unless the condition took place first. If the conclusion in these sentences means eternal punishment, then Arminianism is true; but either the text itself, or the context and other Scriptures, prove that the punishment or chastisement threatened in case of disobedience, is temporal and corrective, and not eternal and destructive, for God gives His children eternal life, and they shall never perish, and though their voluntary sins separate them from His face, nothing present or future can ever separate them from His love. {Joh 10:28-30; Heb 12:1-29; Isa 59:2; Ro 8:28-39} The conditionality of time salvation is just as certain as the truth of the eternal word of God. Baptists have always heretofore understood it so; nearly all Baptists understand it so now; and this truth is in perfect accordance with Christian experience.

Sylvester Hassel, Cayce's Editorials, 1926

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Q. Do such Scriptures as 1Co 1:21; 9:22; Php 2:12; 1Ti 4:16; Jas 5:19-20, refer to a temporal or eternal salvation?

**A. A temporal salvation, a salvation here in time, which God works in us by His Holy Spirit,** {Isa 26:12; Eze 36:26-27; 1Co 15:10; Eph 2:8-10,18-22; Php 2:13; 4:13} and which

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we are to manifest in our outward lives, and we will be more comforted in obedience than in disobedience, and we will gladly and justly give all the glory of both our temporal and eternal salvation to God alone. If the texts mentioned in the first sentence of this question mean our eternal salvation, then Arminianism is true, and the Bible doctrine of salvation by grace is fundamentally wrong.

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Note :

*The concept of Temporal Salvation (that many times the word "save" in scripture has reference to salvation from a present, temporal danger) is crucial to a proper Biblical understanding.*