

“Redeemed”

Titus 3:4-7

December 4, 2016

INTRO: What’s the best “before/after” story you’ve ever seen or heard?

At one time in our lives, we were a spiritual corpse, controlled by our sin nature, Satan, and the world, condemned with no hope, no future, "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love... appeared," says [Titus 3:4](#). Praise God for these revivals in the Bible.

CONTEXT:

- Titus **1** = **BE Real**
 - Lovers
 - Leaders
 - Liars

- Titus **2** = **BE Righteous**

- Titus **3** = **BE Ready!**

Titus 3:1-7

- **vv.1-2** = 1 sentence (7) **REMINDE**
- **v.3** = 1 sentence (7) **REMEMBER**
- **vv.4-7** = 1 sentence (7) **REDEEMED**

T/S: Last week I used powerful testimonies to “Remind you to Remember, Realize, & Respond to the truth of Titus 3:3

Having initiated a contrast at the beginning of v. 3 with the words “At one time we too were,” Paul completed it in vv. 4–7, beginning with the words “But when.”

PREVIEW:

Last Week

Remember...

Realize...

Respond...

Today

Christ **Exalted...**

Christ **Explained...**

Christ **Exemplified**

T/S: v.4 = a “gracious interruption”

*v.4 **But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,***

I. Christ (& change) EXALTED (v.4)

- A. **"BUT"** = eternal contrast between v.3 & v.4-7
- B. **"loving kindness"** = *phanthrōpia*, (philanthropy)
 - 1. Phileo
 - 2. Anthropos
- C. **"God our Savior"**
 - First things first... **Jesus is God!**
 - Next... God/**Jesus loves the lost!**
 - **Jesus loves the found...**
 - **Jesus loves us ALL!**

It is God's nature to be kind to the lost.

"...He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men" (Luke 6:35).

"God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions - (Eph. 2:4-7)

v.5 He saved us...

VIDEO: "No Longer Slaves"

T/S:

The biblical fact that people cannot earn salvation strikes at the very heart of human pride and thus denies people the opportunity of exalting themselves.

II. Christ (change) EXPLAINED (v.5-6)

v.5 *He saved us, NOT because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,*

A. *HE saves us!*

i. Salvation is:

1. By grace alone
2. Through faith alone
3. In Christ alone
4. For the glory of God alone
5. AMEN!

ii. Salvation is NOT earned by our works

Grace replaces pride, they cannot coexist. JDP

*On your best day you had nothing to give God,
and if you have never realized that, then you
have never been saved.*

See [Ezekiel 36:25-27](#), where the prophet writes:

I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances.

B. Salvation is a gift of **MERCY**

C. Salvation = WASHING of **REGENERATION**

1. You must be born again...
2. Lamb of God takes away the sin...
3. He who the Son sets free...
4. You are a new creation...
5. You are as white a snow...

D. Salvation is Holy Spirit's fruit of RENEWAL

The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual life, sustains our spiritual life, empowers our spiritual life, and guarantees that our spiritual life will become eternal life, because He is the seal, or guarantee, of eternal life (Eph. 1:13-14).

v.6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

***** See the TRINITY of God in Salvation!**

- **“Whom”** = God the Holy Spirit
- **“He”** = God the Father
- **“Jesus/Christ/Savior”** = God the Son

***** “poured out”** = like at Pentecost...

***** “on us”** = NOT just at Pentecost...

***** “richly/generously”** = 2 Peter 1:3!

***** “through Christ”** = John 14:6

!

VIDEO: *“Redeemed”*

III.Christ (change) EXEMPLIFIED! (v.7)

v.7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

“so that”

The force of *“so that”* is applied to the final phrase, which truly expresses the goal, purpose, or result of our salvation: so *“that ... we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”*

“justified”

To be "justified" means to be declared righteous.

We are not made justified; we are declared justified.

“by His grace”

T/S: He now comforts us with a word about our future.

We are "heirs with the hope of eternal life."

“heirs”

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him"
([Rom. 8:16-17](#)).

YOU are your own most prolific proof statement of the gospel's transformative power & truthful promises. - JDP

“Heirs do what Daddy does!” - JDP

Let us man the lifeboats & get to rescuing souls! - JDP

“hope”

Christ's promises are our guarantees! - JDP

“eternal life”

VIDEO: “Forever”

CLOSE:

Titus 3:3-7

encompasses the gospel in a nutshell.

*We are now radically different from the way we once were, and from the way the unsaved still are, solely because of God's **kindness, His love, His mercy, His washing of regeneration, His renewing by the Holy Spirit, His Son Jesus Christ our Savior, and His grace.***

– John MacArthur

Let's PRAY!

“Redeemed”

Titus 3:4-7

December 4, 2016

3:4. But all of that (3:3) changed *when the kindness and love* (*philanthrōpia*, lit., "love for man") *of God our Savior appeared*. The contrast is startling.

In verse 3 man is the actor, but in verses 4-7 man is merely the recipient, and God becomes the actor.

What man could in no wise do for himself, God initiated for him. (On the reference to God as Savior, see [comments](#) on [1 Tim. 1:1](#).)

3:5. God in His grace saves those who believe, not because of any righteousness in them (cf. [Rom. 3:21-24](#); [Eph. 2:8-9](#); [2 Tim. 1:9](#)), but *because of His mercy*.

The three words, "*kindness*," "*love*," & "*mercy*" ([Titus 3:4-5](#)) **all represent aspects of God's grace**. The dual means of grace through which He accomplished this salvation are (1) the **rebirth** spoken of as a **washing** from the filth of sin, and (2) the **renewal by the Holy Spirit** (cf. [2 Cor. 5:17](#)). **No mention is made here of the role of faith in the process because Paul's**

entire focus was on what God has done, not on human response.

3:6-7. God *poured out* the Holy Spirit on the world *generously through Jesus Christ our Savior*. Jesus was the Mediator of the Spirit (cf. [Acts 2:33](#)).

The language intentionally conjures up images of the day of Pentecost ([Acts 2:17](#)).

God's purpose in pouring out the Holy Spirit was *so that, having been justified by His grace, believers might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is intimately involved, the New Testament explains, with bringing to fruition God's gracious purposes to save (cf. [Rom. 8:15-17](#); [Gal. 4:6-7](#); [Eph. 1:13-14](#)).

What God in His grace began, God in His grace will see to the end, through His Spirit.

3:8. The *trustworthy saying* formula so common in the Pastorals (cf. [1 Tim. 1:15](#); [3:1](#); [4:9](#); [2 Tim. 2:11](#)) introduces Paul's return to direct address. Because what he had just been saying is trustworthy, **Titus should *stress these things in order to promote godly behavior in his listeners.***

Twice before Paul had instructed Titus to teach these things in accordance with sound doctrine (Titus [2:1, 15](#)), and this exhortation is his final reiteration of what is probably the central thrust of the entire epistle.

Paul was deeply concerned that God's people *devote themselves to doing what is good* because *these things are excellent and profitable for everyone*.

Titus was to promote good works, for they go hand in hand with sound doctrine.

- Bible Knowledge Commentary

We Have Been Regenerated for Good Works

[Titus 3:4-7](#)

After showing who we once were, Paul then reveals what has been done for us.

At one time in our lives we were dead, doomed, and depraved, "But God," says [Ephesians 2:4](#). At one

time in our lives, we were a spiritual corpse, controlled by our sin nature, Satan, and the world, condemned with no hope, no future, "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love... appeared," says [Titus 3:4](#). Praise God for these revivals in the Bible.

What does this one in Titus teach us?

Four precious truths:

1. God Cares for Us ([Titus 3:4](#))

Paul begins with the basic and beautiful truth that God loves us.

In fact both His goodness and His love have made an appearance. This is the third appearing in Titus!

We see the grace of God in [2:11](#), the glory of God in [2:13](#), and now the goodness of God in [3:4](#).

This goodness, this love and kindness, has its source in God our Savior.

The theme of Christ as our "Savior" appears here for the fifth time of six occurrences in Titus.

"The kindness of God and His love" have as their object mankind—sinners in need of a Savior.

2. God Changes Us ([Titus 3:5](#))

Here is the greatest verse in the Bible on the doctrine of regeneration, the new birth experienced by those who repent of their sin and put their trust completely and exclusively in Jesus Christ.

Paul begins by first telling how regeneration did not happen, countering the false thinking that has plagued humanity for all of our existence.

His words could not be clearer: "He saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done."

Salvation is not earned.

Regeneration is not something you can work up. You were dead, spiritually—without a heartbeat, no pulse, nothing.

Any good you had done was "like filthy rags" in the eyes of a holy God ([Isa 64:6](#) NKJV).

On your best day you had nothing to give God, and if you have never realized that, then you have never been saved.

No, we cannot work our way into heaven.

"But," [Titus 3:4-5](#) says, "he saved us... according to His mercy."

He delivered us from sin and its slavery, rescued us from death, hell, and the grave.

Why?

Kindness, love, mercy.

What? Saved us. How?

Washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Regeneration consists negatively of removal of filth and positively of a renewing, both brought about by the Holy Spirit.

Regeneration washes us, makes us clean through the new birth. The imagery of washing has nothing to do with baptism, for it is the Holy Spirit who is washing us, not externally but internally.

The picture looks back to [Ezekiel 36:25-27](#), where the prophet writes:

I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances.

The Spirit and the Word work in tandem to make us brand-new in Jesus Christ. Indeed that is exactly where Paul looks next.

3. God Has Come for Us ([Titus 3:6](#))

God is generous when He gives us His Spirit. [Verse 6](#) says, *"He poured out this Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior."* Paul is probably referring back to Pentecost and the coming of the Spirit in [Acts 2](#). However, what God did then for the believers gathered in the upper room, He now does for every believer in and through regeneration. **His Spirit comes to be with us and in us abundantly.**

4. God Comforts Us ([Titus 3:7](#))

To be "justified" means to be declared righteous. By virtue of the imputed righteousness of Christ, we stand before God just as if we had never sinned and just as if we had always obeyed God perfectly. We are not made justified; we are declared justified. And how did we receive this legal acquittal, this forensic standing of righteousness before God? **Paul here adds a fourth motive as to why our great God saved us.**

His goodness or kindness moved Him to save us ([v. 4](#)).

His love moved Him to save us ([v. 4](#)).

His mercy moved Him to save us ([v. 5](#)).

His grace moved Him to save us ([v. 7](#)).

Having saved us, regenerated us, renewed us, and justified us,

He now comforts us with a word about our future.

We are "heirs with the hope of eternal life."

This is a reality now, though it is not yet our full possession.

There is no question that this inheritance will be received. As a work of our triune God, the Father ([v. 4-5](#)), the Son ([v. 6](#)), and the Holy Spirit ([v. 5](#)), it is a signed, sealed, and settled issue.

We Will Be Rewarded for Good Works

We Will Be Rewarded for Good Works

Titus 3:8

Five times in the Pastoral Epistles, we find the phrase, "This saying is trustworthy" ([1 Tim 1:15](#); [3:1](#); [4:9](#); [2 Tim 2:11](#); [Titus 3:8](#)).

It usually serves to emphasize the importance of the words that are to follow. **Here the phrase points back to [verses 4-7](#).** Further, the faithful saying may be something of a creedal statement, a hymn, catechetical guidance, or liturgical material. Because of the importance of the words, they should be repeated, memorized, or even sung. They should also have daily and personal application in our lives, and that is exactly what we see in the closing verse of this section.

We Should Affirm Good Works

This "trustworthy" saying and the words that make it up should be affirmed and affirmed constantly.

Paul spells this out specifically: *"I want you to insist on these things.... These are good and profitable for everyone."*

These are words of truth, of divine origin, and we do a good work to teach them repeatedly (cf. [Deut 6:7-9](#)). A blessing for all is certain to occur.

We Should Be Active in Good Works

Those who have been regenerated and renewed by the Holy Spirit are now described simply as "those who have believed God."

Because they have believed and do believe, they should "be careful to devote themselves to good works" (cf. [1:16](#); [2:7, 14](#); [3:1, 8, 14](#)).

The new birth will result in a new life.

Death is replaced by life. The flesh is captive to the Spirit. Evil works are overcome by good works. Such works are more assuredly good and profitable for everyone, saved and unsaved, the latter seeing the beauty of our new life and being drawn to the Christ who changed us, the Christ who can change them too! This is indeed a great reward for those of us who have been regenerated by the gospel of King Jesus.

Conclusion

In an article entitled "Scholars, Interfaith Families Grapple over What Passport Needed for Heaven," Amy Green discusses the perennial question, Who goes to heaven? (*Sun Herald*, May 8, 2005). Discussing the problem [John 14:6](#) presents and the more liberal view of Roman Catholicism since Vatican II, she reports of a Presbyterian pastor in Memphis, Tennessee, who says in a

sermon that [John 14:6](#) is "a club with which we beat others over the head." The pastor goes on to say,

"What I encourage people to do is look at the broader themes of the Bible, and what we see is a God who loved the world, a God whose intention is that all creation be made whole and healed. A lot of people kind of had a gut feeling that their God was a more loving God and a bigger God than they had imagined... and were yearning to have their large and loving view of God validated. And I think that's what happened."

The sermon affirmed what Heather Pearson Chauhan had believed all along. Chauhan, 31, an obstetrician/gynecologist, grew up a Christian and then married a Hindu man she met in medical school. Her husband converted to Christianity after they wed, and now the couple plans to raise their 4-month-old son a Christian.

"To define religion or Christianity as this narrow path I think is not a global perspective," she says. "Everyone gets to God a different way."

Not so, says the Word of God. Only those who have been regenerated by the power of God, been renewed by the Spirit, been justified by grace, and believed in Jesus and Jesus alone will go to heaven. Yes, **we all need a new birth for a new life today and forever. This new life overflows into a life of good works that testify to the goodness of our God and His love for all people in Jesus Christ. This is the power of the gospel. This is the new birth for a new life.**

- Christ-Centered Exposition

Remember Your Salvation

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, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. ([3:4-7](#))

As the apostle moves to his third reminder, **the transitional conjunction *But* turns the emphasis from remembering our former condition of lostness to the equally important need to remember our present condition of salvation.**

Again...

Paul lists seven (7) categories (as in both previous points), this time the seven aspects of salvation that are revealed in the single sentence that comprises [verses 4-7](#).

In this short passage Paul sweeps across the glorious truths of salvation, every facet of which is sovereignly initiated and empowered by God alone. There are doctrines here that could be studied and pondered for months without mining all their truth.

We are now radically different from the way we once were, and from the way the unsaved still are, solely because of God's kindness, His love, His mercy, His washing of regeneration, His renewing by the Holy Spirit, His Son Jesus Christ our Savior, and His grace.

Among other things, remembering our salvation should motivate us to keep in mind that the only reason we are different now is that **He saved us**.

When we are bombarded by our ungodly culture—by ungodly media, ungodly educators, ungodly politicians, ungodly entertainers and sports figures, ungodly books and magazines, ungodly neighbors and co-workers, and even by ungodly friends and relatives—**we should focus above all else on the sovereign grace of God, who delivered each one of us from that life purely by His own will and for His own glory** and not because of anything desirable or worthy that was in us. It is God "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" ([1 Tim. 2:4](#)), who does not wish "for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" ([2 Pet. 3:9](#)), and who "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life,... that the world should be saved through Him" ([John 3:16-17](#)).

Every aspect of salvation is from God and from God alone.

1. First, we should remember that we were saved by the kindness of God our Savior.

Chrēstotēs (kindness) connotes genuine goodness and generosity of heart. Our salvation from sin and lostness and death issued wholly from God's kindness, His loving, benevolent, and entirely gracious concern to draw us to Himself and redeem us from sin forever.

It is God's nature to be kind to the lost. "Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return," Jesus commanded; "and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men" (Luke 6:35, emphasis added).

God is kinder still to His children, those who are saved. In his letter to the church at Ephesus, **Paul declared, "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, in order that in the ages to come *He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus*" (**Eph. 2:4-7,** emphasis added).

Paul again refers to God as Savior, the central title for both God the Father and for Christ the Son and the theme of this letter (see also [1:3, 4](#); [2:10, 11, 13](#); [3:6](#)).

Near the beginning of his letter to believers in Rome, the apostle asked rhetorically, "Do you think lightly of the riches of His [God's] kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" ([Rom. 2:4](#); cf. [11:22](#)).

It is the sovereign *kindness of God* that initiates repentance, the first step in salvation.

Second, we should remember that we were saved by God's uninfluenced and unearned *love for mankind*,

a phrase that translates the compound **Greek noun** *philanthrōpia*, from which the English *philanthropy* is derived. It is **composed of *phileō* ("to have affection for") and *anthrōpos* ("man," or mankind) and refers to compassion**, especially the **eagerness to deliver someone from pain, trouble, or danger**.

It involves more than mere emotion and always finds a way to express itself in some form of helpfulness.

In the last two chapters of Acts, Luke records two instances of unsaved Gentiles showing *philanthrōpia*. Before Paul boarded ship to be taken as a prisoner to Rome, the centurion "Julius treated Paul with consideration [*philanthrōpia*] and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care" (Acts 27:3). After the shipwreck off the coast of Malta, Paul and all the others on board managed to safely reach shore, just as God had promised (27:22-26). Luke then reports that "the natives showed us extraordinary kindness [*philanthrōpia*]; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all" (28:2).

The Old Testament speaks often of the Lord's lovingkindness, which never ceases or fails (Lam. 3:22).

David declared, "Thou, O Lord, art a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth" (Ps. 86:15; cf. 145:8). Another psalmist proclaimed,

"He has made His wonders to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and compassionate" (Ps. 111:4).

In the present passage, kindness and love for mankind are virtually synonymous.

The two words together, especially in the context of these four verses, reflect the even deeper *agapē* love that God has for fallen mankind.

The best-known and most beloved passage that expresses God's *agapē* love is "For God so loved the world, that He

gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" ([John 3:16](#)).

Because of God's great and compassionate **love for mankind**, He delivers sinners from the oppression and fatal danger of their iniquity.

It was through the incarnation of Jesus Christ that God's sovereign **kindness and love for mankind appeared**, at which time His grace also appeared ([Titus 2:11](#)). "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" ([Eph. 2:4-6](#)). All believers can exult with Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me" ([Gal. 2:20](#); cf. [Rev. 1:5](#)).

John Calvin wrote that, **although God testifies his goodness and love to all, yet we know it by faith only, when he declares himself to be our Father in Christ.**

Before Paul was called to the faith of Christ, he enjoyed innumerable gifts of God, which might have given him a taste of God's fatherly kindness; he had been educated, from his infancy, in the doctrine of the law; yet he wanders in darkness, so as not to perceive the goodness of God, till the Spirit enlightened his mind, and till Christ came forth as the witness and pledge of the grace of God the Father, from which, but for him, we are all

excluded. Thus he means that the kindness of God is not revealed and known but by the light of faith.

Third, we should remember that we did not save ourselves by self-effort or any other means, but that **God saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy.**

Saved is from *sōzō*, which, although it is sometimes used in the New Testament of physical, temporal deliverance (see, e.g., [Matt. 8:25](#); [John 12:27](#)), is most often used of spiritual salvation. Those words have always been cherished by those who *have been saved*. Our salvation is the most important and precious thing about us, to which nothing else can begin to compare. Biblical Christianity is a saving religion, and salvation has always been the central theme of Christian songs and hymns.

In the negative sense, **salvation relates to our deliverance from the penalty of sin, that is, from divine wrath, spiritual death, and hell.** Still again, we are pointed to that beloved text in the gospel of John. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son," the Son Himself declared, "that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved [*sōzō*] through Him" ([John 3:16-17](#)).

In the positive sense, salvation grants us the privilege "to come to the knowledge of the truth" ([1 Tim. 2:4](#)), to be made "alive together with Christ" ([Eph. 2:5](#)), to be delivered "from the

domain of darkness, and transferred... to the kingdom of His beloved Son" ([Col. 1:13](#)), and to have "the hope of eternal life" ([Titus 1:2](#)).

After Pentecost, "the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved" ([Acts 2:47](#)). In words that may have been part of an early church creed, Paul wrote, "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" ([1 Tim. 1:15](#)). The purpose of the incarnation was to accomplish the sacrifice that would save lost sinners, among whom we all were once numbered ([Eph. 2:5](#)).

The Savior did not redeem us because of anything that we were, or could ever be, in ourselves. **[Ephesians 2:8-9](#) makes it clear: "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, that no one should boast" ([Eph. 2:8-9](#)). No deeds, even those done in relative righteousness, could have earned or merited our salvation.**

We made no contribution to God's sovereign and gracious work of salvation. We did not deserve deliverance from sin and death. We did not deserve to be born again, recreated in the very image of our Lord. **[We did not deserve to become God's children and joint heirs with His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. We did not deserve the promise of everlasting life, which we will spend in heaven in the continual presence of God.](#)**

We were rather saved according to His mercy. Mercy is from *eleos*, which refers to the outward manifestation of pity and assumes need on the part of those who receive it and sufficient resources to meet the need on the part of those who show it.

In some ways, **mercy is similar to grace**, which Paul mentions in [verse 7](#). **But whereas grace relates to guilt, mercy relates to affliction.** Whereas grace relates to the state of the sinner before God the judge, **mercy** relates to the condition of the sinner in his sin.

*Whereas grace judicially forgives the offender for his wrongdoing, **mercy** compassionately helps him recover.*

Fourth, we should remember that **we were saved by God's mercifully deciding to grant the washing of regeneration.**

When we were saved, we were cleansed of our sin, the decay and filth that is produced by spiritual deadness. Speaking of that truth in his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul explains that we were cleansed "by the washing of water with the word" ([Eph. 5:26](#)). James declares that, "In the exercise of His will He [God] brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it

were, the first fruits among His creatures" ([James 1:18](#)). Peter reminds us that we "have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God" ([1 Pet. 1:23](#)).

Palingenesia (regeneration) carries the idea of receiving new life, of being born again, or born from above.

Jesus told the enquiring Nicodemus, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" ([John 3:5](#); cf. [Eph. 5:26](#)). In his first letter, the apostle John repeatedly speaks of the marvelous truth of the new birth. We are assured that, "If [we] know that He [Christ] is righteous, [we also] know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him" ([1 John 2:29](#)). Conversely, we also are assured that "No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" ([3:9](#); cf. [5:18](#)). We are assured that "everyone who loves is born of God and knows God" ([4:7](#)) and that "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" ([5:1](#)).

Fifth, we should remember that our salvation came through our *renewing by the Holy Spirit.*

This phrase moves to the next logical step: the effect, or result, of regeneration—namely, the new life that emerges from the new birth. In [Romans 8:2](#), Paul reveals that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." ***The Holy Spirit, working through the Word, empowers our new life in Christ. "If any man is in***

Christ," the apostle explains in his second letter to the church in Corinth, "he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Cor. 5:17).

That is the Spirit's work of sanctification (cf. [1 Pet. 1:2](#)). He begins moving the believer up the ladder of glory from one level to the next (cf. [2 Cor. 3:18](#)).

The Father not only saved us through His Holy Spirit, but He poured out His Spirit upon us richly and without measure when we were born again (cf. [Acts 2:38-39](#); [1 Cor. 12:7, 11, 13](#)).

The Lord "is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power [of His Holy Spirit] that works within us" (Eph. 3:20).

Because of that available power in us, we are commanded to "be filled with the Spirit" ([Eph. 5:18](#)).

The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual life, sustains our spiritual life, empowers our spiritual life, and guarantees that our spiritual life will become eternal life, because He is the seal, or guarantee, of eternal life (Eph. 1:13-14).

Sixth, in order to prevent feelings of hostility toward the corrupters of our society, **we should remember that we were saved only by the substitutionary and atoning sacrifice of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Savior**, which God, by His eternal decree, made efficacious for us before we were even born.

His death in our place and for us is the means, and the only means, of our salvation. In his sermon at Pentecost, Peter declared to the assembled Jews that, although Jesus was put to death by their own ungodly leaders, **He nevertheless was sovereignly "delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God"** ([Acts 2:23](#)). And the death that He died in God's plan was a death in which He bore all the sins of all who would ever believe.

The seventh aspect of sovereign salvation is equally from God alone.

We should remember that we were saved by God's *grace*, as Paul has already alluded to in [verse 5](#).

In his second letter to Timothy, the apostle explains in more detail that **God** "*has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity*" (2 Tim. 1:9; cf. Rom. 4:2-8; 9:11; Eph. 2:8-9).

Paul is not here using justified in its narrow, forensic sense of God's declaring believers righteous based on the merits of Jesus Christ that are applied on their behalf (see, e.g., Rom. 4:6-8; cf. 3:24, 26; Gal. 2:7). **He is rather using justified in its broad, more general sense as a synonym for salvation.** Even John Calvin, a stickler for the narrow, precise definition of justification, recognized that in this passage it refers to salvation in general. He says, "What does he mean by the word justified? The context seems to demand that its meaning shall be extended further than to the imputation of righteousness."

Paul used his own life as proof that salvation is based entirely on the gracious merit and work of Christ. "If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more," he testifies:

[I was] circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus

my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith. ([Phil. 3:4-9](#))

Because Jesus paid the price for our sins, they are graciously removed; justice is fully satisfied; and God's kindness, love, mercy, regeneration, renewing, and grace are therefore enabled to act. Grace gives us what we do not and cannot deserve. We do not deserve to be forgiven, to have our sins removed, to have Christ's own righteousness imputed to us, to be given heavenly citizenship, to be justified, sanctified, and one day glorified in the very presence of our gracious Savior and Lord.

The bottom line is stated in the three words:
He saved us!

*That divine saving grace provides another amazing benefit to undeserving sinners: By faith they are **made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.***

As Paul declares more fully in his Roman letter:

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him" ([Rom. 8:16-17](#)).

Peter exults: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven" ([1 Pet. 1:3-4](#)).

Remember Your Mission

This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men. ([3:8](#))

Fourth, and finally, if we want to live the way God wants us to live in a pagan society, not resenting the very people we are to reach, we must remember our divinely ordained mission to that society.

We must live as we have been instructed in [chapter 2](#).

These things refer to everything Paul has emphasized in that chapter and in the first seven verses of chapter three: namely, the way believers should live and act in regard to one another within the church (2:1-15) and the way they should live and act before the unbelieving world (3:1-7).

Titus was *to speak confidently* about those truths to the churches, in order that, as Paul already has mentioned (3:1), *those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds*.

This young elder was not to be hesitant, indecisive, or vacillating but rather bold and intense, speaking and acting with the firm conviction that he was obediently fulfilling his divinely appointed ministry.

Those who have believed God does not refer to theists as opposed to atheists but to genuine Christians, those who

have been saved by God's grace and who take God at His word.

Biblically grounded and faithful believers remember their duty to submit to human authority, even that which is unjust, ungodly, and pagan.

They remember their former condition as unbelievers, knowing that, but for the grace of God, they would still be lost and condemned. They remember the marvelous gift of salvation, which they have received because of God's kindness, His love, His mercy, His washing of regeneration, His renewing by the Holy Spirit, by His Son—all by His sovereign grace. And they remember that the Lord has called them to be His witnesses before the lost and condemned world in which they now live. They therefore recognize that it is not their calling to change culture, to reform outward behavior, to try to redeem society superficially.

They are careful to engage in good deeds, genuine acts of virtue that benefit the unsaved and are produced by a loving heart that is empowered to be fruitful by God's Holy Spirit.

Among those *good deeds* are our sincere prayers for those who are lost, *deeds* that the lost may not even know about but which will work to their blessing and hopefully to their salvation.

When Christians exalt the Word of God and demonstrate God's power to transform lives, *these things are good and profitable for men*—for the believers themselves and, even more significantly as far as the emphasis of this passage is concerned, for the unsaved sinners around them who are drawn to Christ by the exemplary lives of those He has graciously transformed.

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Titus.

Proper Respect for All People (CONTEXT – 3:1-2)

It has been suggested that the primary teaching job of a pastor is to remind the congregation of what scripture says, not necessarily to impart new information. Believers know what they *should* do, but tend to stray when their minds wander or when their spiritual senses grow dull. So Paul instructs Titus to remind the Christians in Crete how to act.

He lists seven specific qualities expected of Christians: (1) to be subject to rulers and authorities; (2) to be obedient; (3) to be ready to do every good work; (4) to slander no one; (5) to be peaceable; (6) to be gentle; and (7) to show complete courtesy to all people. Paul emphasizes good works three times in this chapter alone (3:1, 8, 14). His feelings about submission to others—even secular authorities—have been expressed in other letters ([Romans 13:1-5](#); [1 Timothy 2:1-2](#)).

The Difference Christ Can Make (vv.3-8)

Paul contrasts the seven Christian qualities with seven characteristics that had been evident prior to the believers' awareness of Jesus: (1) foolishness, (2) disobedience, (3) being deceived by pleasures, (4) enslavement, (5) malice, (6) envy, and (7) both being hated and hating others.

Critical Observation

Paul frequently deals with sin directly and frankly. Yet he doesn't come across as arrogant, legalistic, or condemning. Although his upbringing had been considerably different from most of those who grew up in the hedonistic, secular culture of Crete, he makes no distinction (3:3). He includes himself in those influenced by sin: foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved, and so forth.

The juxtaposition of these two lists serves to highlight God's grace in salvation, compelling the reader to respond in grateful obedience.

God's kindness, love, and mercy (3:4-5) are all aspects of His grace.

Redemption is... not accomplished by works of righteousness (3:5), but rather by the work of the triune God—the Father (3:4), the Spirit (3:5), and the Son (3:6).

Believers are to do good works for others in response to the marvelous and unique good work God has done for them. His act of love took place while people were still disobedient, foolish, and hateful. They were enemies of God, but thanks to Jesus' sacrifice on their behalf, they came to be considered God's friends ([Romans 5:10](#); [John 15:13-16](#)).

Salvation is through “the washing of rebirth and renewal” (or “regeneration”), by the Holy Spirit ([3:5](#) NIV). The Spirit is instrumental not only in the conversion experience, but also throughout the transformation from foolish and sinful behavior ([3:3](#)) to a life of obedience and godliness ([3:1-2](#)). And beyond that, the end result for a believer is eternal life as an heir of God ([3:7](#)).

Demystifying Titus

Some people tend to emphasize the importance of water baptism in regard to salvation and use this passage to promote that belief. Yet it is unlikely that Paul is referring to water, much less to baptism, as integral to salvation. He is in the midst of making the point that salvation has nothing to do with human works ([3:5](#)).

The “*washing*” here is spiritual. It is the Holy Spirit who is “poured out” on believers ([3:6](#)).

The work of the Spirit is not a matter of improving and tweaking the old person until he or she is a child of God. Rather, salvation involves a birth from above, resulting in a new creation ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

This gift of the Holy Spirit is generous ([3:6](#)), and His work is directly connected with the will of God the Father and the authority of Christ ([Acts 2:33](#)).

Those who place their faith in Christ receive the Spirit. Those who don't do not receive the Spirit.

**Paul isn't just expressing his opinions. He instructs Titus to stress these teachings—
to insist on them ([3:8](#)).**

They are not only excellent and profitable for anyone who heeds them, they are also trustworthy.

Even after salvation, those who want to experience the abundant life that God offers must be careful to devote themselves to doing good.

**God makes all things possible, but
believers must be disciplined and willing.**

- Layman's Bible Commentary

Verse 4

v.4 provides ***a kind of gracious interruption*** found in [Ephesians 2:4](#): "But God, being rich in mercies, because of his great love with which he loved us" (lit. trans.).

In Ephesians 2 the great operative words are mercy, love, grace, and kindness. They reappear here in a different order: kindness, love, mercy, and grace. In both passages God "saved" us.

In Ephesians he raised us up and seated us with Christ in the heavenly realms; here he washes us, renews us, justifies us, and gives us "the hope of eternal life" ([Titus 3:7](#)).

The Ephesians passage concludes with the call to good works—the same emphasis that concludes this passage in ([v. 8](#)).

The following diagram may be useful in conceptualizing the relationships of the clauses and phrases in this section:

Conjunction	But
Time (= circumstance) of salvation	when the kindness and love of God of salvation our Savior appeared
False grounds of	not from (i.e., because of)

salvation	things which, in righteousness, <i>we</i> had done
True grounds of salvation	but according to his mercy
Affirmation	he saved us
Means (of salvation)	through washing
Genitive (modifying "washing")	of regeneration
Means (of salvation)	and [through] renewing
Agency (of renewal)	[by the] Holy Spirit { or:
{ <i>Means of salvation</i>	<i>through washing</i>
{ <i>Genitive (modifying</i>	<i>of regeneration</i>
<i>"washing")</i>	
{ <i>Genitive (modifying</i>	<i>and [of] renewing</i>
<i>"washing")</i>	
{ <i>Agency (of renewal)</i>	<i>[by the] Holy Spirit}</i>
Relative clause (=	whom he poured out on us
manner of bestowal of	generously
the Spirit)	
Agency (of bestowal of	through Jesus Christ our
the Spirit)	Savior
Conjunction	so that
Circumstance (= basis)	having been justified by his
	grace
Purpose	we might become heirs
Concordance	according to the hope of
	eternal life.

The first clause in [verses 4-7](#) is, as noted above, temporal. Using the distinctive terminology of the Pastoral Letters, the verb used in this clause is *epiphaino* (trans. "appeared"). And like [2:11](#), where the same verb occurs, it does not directly feature Christ as the subject, but rather refers to him obliquely. Thus, what has appeared is "the kindness and love of God our Savior," just as in [2:11](#) it was "the grace of God that brings salvation." In the previous passage the appearing motif occurs again with "our God and Savior, Jesus Christ" as the subject.

Paul's emphasis is not only on the coming of Christ as Savior but also:

(1) on the merciful, gracious work of salvation and

(2) on the fact that this was *God's work*, using once again the characteristic reference to God as Savior (see also [1 Tim. 1:1](#); [2:3](#); [4:10](#); [Titus 1:3](#); [2:10](#)).

The word for "kindness" conveys more than just goodness; it includes the idea of benevolence.

The next two phrases in the Greek structure are prepositional phrases modifying the main verb of the sentence, "*he saved.*"

The first phrase expresses what we may call *false grounds*. The basis on which God saved us is not the good things we have done (lit., "not out of works that we did in righteousness").

An emphatic "we" appears at the end of that phrase, stressing that it is not *our* doing (compare [Eph. 2:8-9](#)).

The second prepositional phrase stands in strong contrast to the first, introduced by the strong adversative conjunction *alla*; it indicates the *true* grounds on which God saves us: "*his mercy*."

The next word is the main verb, "*saved*," in the **simple aorist tense**, indicating the basic fact of that completed work.

Paul then cites the means by which God has accomplished this. The use of the Greek genitive after the preposition *dia* ("through") is significant here and not entirely easy to understand.

Illustrating this by grouping the English words together by hyphens, one can read it "**through-washing-of-regeneration and renewal-of-Holy- Spirit.**"

In this reading, the washing is characterized by regeneration or perhaps produces it, and the renewal is accomplished *by* the Holy Spirit or perhaps comes *from* the Holy Spirit as a source.

These phrases can also, however, be understood as "through washing of regeneration-and-renewal of-the-Holy-Spirit." In this reading the regeneration and renewing are both functions of the washing. In either case it is difficult to separate the regeneration (a word used more in the Greco-Roman world than in Scripture, though see [Matt. 19:28](#), NIV "renewal") from the washing.

The theological question is whether this teaches baptismal regeneration. On the one hand, on reading this from a Christian point of view it is hard not to think of baptism, and this was true especially in the early centuries, when ritual was a larger part of church life than it is now. On the other hand, it is *not* necessary to take the word "washing" as identical to and solely referring to baptism. Baptism can be understood as the visible form of washing without removing the fact that the Spirit and the Word cleanse us on the basis of the blood of Christ shed on the cross. If one takes the two genitive nouns ("rebirth" and "renewal") along with the "washing," this is grammatically and theologically permissible, but must not be allowed to minimize the fact of the further modifying genitive phrase ("by the Holy Spirit"). We might say that the means of salvation are: the washing (represented by but not identical to baptism), the regeneration, and the renewing, while the agents of the renewing are the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ our Savior, through whom the Spirit has been so generously poured out on us.

The purpose of this process includes one further circumstance that can be considered as further modifying "saved" (in sense although not grammatically) or else as modifying "we might become heirs" ([v. 7](#)), namely, "having been justified by his grace." The overall point is clear: The purpose of God's mercy, grace, and kindness in our lives is "so that" we may be heirs of God, a concept closely linked to our having the "hope of eternal life" (cf. [Rom. 8:16-17](#) and context).

The "trustworthy saying" referred to in [verse 8](#) is one of the so-called "faithful sayings" in the Pastoral Letters. It is not always easy to tell which words in the context are the "faithful saying" that Paul is quoting. In this case it is probably [verses 4-7](#). Normally, the trustworthy sayings contain expressions uncharacteristic of the works attributed to Paul. In this case such language is sprinkled throughout [verses 4-7](#). Note too that what follows ([vv. 8-11](#)) does not have the structure of a quotation.

As noted earlier, **the latter part of [verse 8](#), in common with [Ephesians 2:8-10](#), sets out the importance of good works for those who have experienced God's grace.** One may have expected that Paul would then state that these things are to the glory of God or to the benefit of believers, but instead he makes the broad statement that they are excellent (cf. [Titus 2:7, 14; 3:14](#)) and profitable for everyone.

Once again (in v.8) the apostle shows a concern for the world around him.

Several emphatic words are worth noting **in verse 8**:

1. "***to stress***" (i.e., to strongly maintain, an exercise of Titus authority)
2. "***be careful,***"
3. "***devote themselves to***" (denoting being concerned about or caring for something).

- NIV Application Commentary

The Theological Basis for Proper Behavior

3:4

The expression of humanity's depraved condition (3:3) marks the beginning of the third outstanding theological statement in this brief letter (cf. 1:1-4; 2:11-15).

Having initiated a contrast at the beginning of v. [3](#) with the words “At one time we too were,” Paul completed it in vv. [4–7](#), beginning with the words “But when.”

In the Greek text vv. [4–7](#) form one sentence that eloquently summarizes God’s work in humanity’s salvation.

Paul’s beginning phrase, “But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared,” closely parallels [2:11](#). Both describe the manifestation of God’s saving grace as having “appeared” (see comments on [2:11](#)). Whereas [2:11](#) states that “the grace of God appeared,” in [3:4](#) Paul stated that “the kindness and love of God appeared.” The term for kindness, *chrēstotēs*, is unique to Paul in the New Testament. The “divine orientation” of this term is noted in its usual application to God ([Rom 2:4](#); [11:22](#); [Eph 2:7](#); [Col 3:12](#)), its designation as a “fruit of the Spirit” ([Gal 5:22](#)), and the fact that Paul expressly stated that man does not naturally possess this attribute ([Rom 3:12](#); [Ps 13:3](#) [LXX]).

God’s “kindness” includes his generosity and goodness, especially toward humanity and for humanity’s benefit (cf. [Rom 2:4](#)).

The term rendered “love” is *philanthrōpia*, from which the English word “philanthropy” is derived. It specifically denotes God’s “love for mankind.”

The combination of such infinite “kindness” and “love for mankind” facilitates our understanding of “the grace of God ... that brings salvation to all men” ([2:11](#)).

The purpose of the manifestation of God’s kindness and love was to bring salvation; therefore God is referred to as “our Savior” (see comments on [1:3](#)).

[3:5](#) Paul’s assertion, “he saved us,” in v. [5](#) constitutes the main verb in this lengthy sentence (vv. [4–7](#)). It is the fact of God’s saving action in Jesus Christ that is amplified and explained by each additional clause and phrase.

Paul left absolutely no doubt concerning the basis of human salvation. His explanation is presented in the form of a contrast that is indicated by the use of the strong adversative “but,” *alla*.

The contrast is between humankind’s attempts to achieve salvation through their own effort and salvation as a result of God’s mercy.

Paul stated: “He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, *but* because of his mercy” (author's emphasis).

The use of the negative “not” (ouk) at the beginning of the clause serves to heighten the contrast indicated by the adversative “but” (alla), as does the explicit use of the personal pronouns “we” (“we had done”) and “his” (“his mercy”).

The phrase rendered “because of righteous things” (*ek ergōv tōn en dikaiosynē*) appears to be equivalent to Paul’s more familiar phrase “works of the law” (*ek ergōn nomou*). Neither “the works

of the law” (a phrase more specifically applicable to Jews) nor “righteous things we had done” (perhaps a more generally applicable phrase encompassing good moral behavior) will achieve humankind’s salvation.

Paul could not be more clear in addressing the matter of the basis of salvation: People cannot save themselves! Salvation depends solely and completely on God’s grace, displayed in “his mercy,” revealed and achieved by his Son, Jesus Christ, and applied to humankind by the Holy Spirit.

The biblical fact that people cannot earn salvation strikes at the very heart of human pride and thus denies people the opportunity of exalting themselves.

It is a reflection of this pride that popular conceptions of attaining salvation revolve around “keeping the law,” “doing more good deeds than bad deeds,” or living up to some (usually undefined) “moral standard.”

Theologically, the purpose of the Old Testament law is *not* to show how humans could save themselves. Rather, the purpose of the law is to show humans that they *cannot* save

themselves and that their only hope for salvation is in the gracious promise of God ([Gal 3:10–27](#)). Humanity's sinful acts are the result of a sinful nature. Salvation cannot be attained by suppressing sinful acts, by doing more righteous acts than sinful acts, or by living a better life in comparison to others.

Salvation can only be attained by effectively dealing with humanity's sinful nature. This requires a new birth ([John 3:3–8](#)), a transference from being in Adam to being in Christ ([Rom 5:12–19](#); [1 Cor 15:21–22](#)), a new creation ([2 Cor 5:17](#); [Gal 6:15](#)).

These metaphors for salvation indicate the radical change in heart that can be accomplished by God alone.

This strong, clear, and precise statement in Titus 3:5 concerning the basis of salvation reflects a determined effort by Paul to eliminate any confusion in the minds of the Cretan Christians regarding the role of good works in the Christian life.

Thus far in this letter, Paul had emphasized the necessity for good works among Christians and toward the pagan world as a demonstration of the true gospel (cf. [1:16](#); [2:7, 14](#); [3:1, 8, 14](#)).

Good works are the result, not the cause, of the saving, transforming power of God's grace in one's life.

Theologically, they have no saving, transforming power. C. H. Spurgeon rightly states: “Works of righteousness are the fruit of salvation, and the root must come before the fruit. The Lord saves His people out of clear, unmixed, undiluted mercy and grace, and for no other reason.”

Paul proceeded, “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.” For the sake of clarity, the NIV repeats the main verb, he “saved” us, although it appears only once in the Greek text. Scholarly discussion on this phrase is plentiful because of a grammatical ambiguity in its compound construction and the precise meaning of the term “washing” (*loutrou*).

The grammatical question centers on the omission of the preposition “through” (*dia*) before the second phrase, “renewal by the Holy Spirit.” This omission clearly indicates that the phrase “through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit” refers to a single event rather than referring to two distinct events. If “through” (*dia*) were used before “renewal,” thus rendering “through the washing of rebirth and *through* renewal of the Holy Spirit,” it would describe two events instead of one. **Simply stated, the text indicates that “washing” is an activity of the Holy Spirit and that this washing involves “rebirth” (*palingenesias*) and “renewal” (*anakainoseos*). **The Greek term for “rebirth” denotes “a new creation” (cf. Matt 19:28), and Paul used this analogy with reference to salvation (2 Cor 5:17).** The Greek term for “renewal” refers to an internal change, which in this context may suggest a process begun within the believer from the moment of conversion.**

The second question that has sparked scholarly discussion is whether the term “washing” (*loutrou*) refers to the external ordinance of water baptism or to an internal, spiritual baptism. Most commentators who understand this washing as a reference to water baptism (e.g., Huther, Fairbairn, Locke, Kelly, Dibelius and Conzelmann, Barrett) do not suggest that rebirth is based upon participation in water baptism. **Any suggestion of salvation being attained through the ordinance of baptism is absolutely contrary to Paul’s previous statement regarding the futility of works of righteousness as the basis of salvation.**

Interpreting “washing” as referring to water baptism raises further questions concerning the activity of the Holy Spirit in this external ordinance. The New Testament often describes a close association between Christian conversion, the giving of the Holy Spirit, and the act of water baptism. However, there does not appear to be a set, prescribed New Testament pattern nor a clear definition of interrelationship, especially in Acts. **The complicated relationship between water baptism and the Holy Spirit’s role in it will remain a theological mystery.** Those commentators agreeing that this “washing” is equivalent to water baptism vary in their explanations of how the Holy Spirit relates to the “washing of rebirth and renewal” in this passage.

An alternative interpretation is that **the “washing” refers to an internal, spiritual cleansing as denoted by the terms contained in the phrase “rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”**

If this phrase indicates that it is the Holy Spirit who does the “washing,” then the “rebirth and renewal” must be an internal, spiritual cleansing. Therefore, “washing” cannot refer to the external ordinance of water baptism. If washing alludes to baptism in this text, then it is to “Spirit baptism” at conversion and not “water baptism.” The amount of scholarly wrestling with this text indicates that there is no simple resolution to these questions. While neither interpretation is without difficulties, the latter alternative is preferred as less problematic.

3:6 Concerning the Holy Spirit, Paul continued, *“Whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.”*

It is noteworthy that each Person of the Trinity is referred to in this passage and particularly in this text: God poured out the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ.

The verb *“poured out”* (*execheen*) echoes the **description of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost** (cf. **Acts 2:17, 33 [Joel 2:28]**).

The additional words “on us” (eph hemas) indicate that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit is not limited to the historic event at Pentecost but rather is shared by all believers.

The descriptive term “generously” suggests that God’s pouring out of the Holy Spirit is totally sufficient for the needs of every believer.

This provides a contrast with the limited personal role of the Holy Spirit demonstrated in the Old Testament ([2 Cor 3:2–6](#)).

This generous outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the direct result of the work of “*Jesus Christ, our Savior*” (cf. [John 14:16–17, 26; 16:7–13; Acts 2:33](#)).

3:7 Having referred to “Jesus Christ, our Savior,” Paul restated the basis of our salvation with a clause introduced by “so that” (*hina*). The phrase “having been justified by his grace” recalls the main verb of the entire sentence, “he saved us” (v. 5).

The use of the term “justified” expresses a favorite Pauline expression for salvation ([Rom 3:24; 5:1, 9; 1 Cor 6:11; Gal 2:16–17; 3:24](#)). The expression “by his grace” refers to “God's grace,” which is the basis of Christian salvation (cf. [2:11; 3:4](#)).

The force of the term rendered “so that” (*hina*) is applied to the final phrase, which truly expresses the goal, purpose, or result of our salvation: so “that ... we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”

New Testament salvation is often expressed in the familial terms of “children” (e.g., [John 1:12](#); [Rom 8:16](#)) and “sonship” ([Rom 8:14](#); [Gal 4:6](#); [Heb 2:10](#)). The logical extension from “son” to “heir” can be seen throughout the New Testament (cf. [Rom 8:17](#); [Gal 4:6–7](#); [Eph 3:6](#); [Heb 6:17–20](#); [Jas 2:5](#)).

The soteriological and eschatological aspects of Christians’ being “heirs” is readily apparent in this final phrase. Paul asserted that “he saved us” (v. [5](#)) “so that ... we might become heirs” (v. [7](#)). Christian salvation results in adoption into God’s family, which in turn makes believers “heirs.” This is the soteriological aspect. The eschatological aspect of Christians’ being “heirs” is understood in the fact that all believers still await their final *future* redemption and the full realization of eternal life. What has been promised by God in Christ to his heirs has not yet been experienced in the fullest measure ([Rom 8:23–25](#)).

In becoming “heirs” (through salvation), Christians become possessors of a guaranteed future referred to as “the hope of eternal life” (see comments on [1:2](#)).

This outstanding theological statement in [3:3–7](#) encompasses the gospel in a nutshell.

Beginning with humankind's lost condition, Paul summarized the elements of salvation from the perspective of God's work. Each Person of the Trinity is presented as working together to achieve humankind's salvation. Paul left no doubt that salvation is truly God's own work.

- New American Commentary

"There but for the grace of God, go I."

- John Bradford

[1 Corinthians 15:1-11 \(ESV\)](#)

¹ Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand,
² and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.
³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

7 helpful & 7 humble & 7 hope-filled Truths (vv.3-7)

7 memories for humility:

A. Humble... & loving (Bailee)

B. Hope-filled... & empathetic (David Wood)

C. (Commit to) Heading-out... & overcoming! (IMB)

It's like we have been plucked out of the faithless & frigid, spiritually shark infested waters, in the aftermath of the Titanic's tragic sinking... (and make no mistake, this world IS the Titanic)... And now the western church sits docile & deaf to the gurgling screams of those souls still shivering & sinking into the jaws of an eternally torturous hell. How can this be???

Let us man the lifeboats & get to rescuing souls! -JDP

YOU are your own most prolific proof statement of the gospel's transformative power & truthful promises. -JDP

“Redeemed”

Titus 3:4-7

December 4, 2016

INTRO:

The Theological Basis for Proper Behavior

3:4

The expression of humanity's depraved condition (3:3) marks the beginning of the third outstanding theological statement in this brief letter (cf. 1:1-4; 2:11-15).

Having initiated a contrast at the beginning of v. 3 with the words "At one time we too were," Paul completed it in vv. 4-7, beginning with the words "But when."

In the Greek text vv. 4-7 form one sentence that eloquently summarizes God's work in humanity's salvation.

Paul's beginning phrase, "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared," closely parallels 2:11.

the transitional conjunction *But* turns the emphasis from remembering our former condition of lostness to the equally important need to remember our present condition of salvation.

Again...

Paul lists seven (7) categories (as in both previous points), this time the seven aspects of salvation that are revealed in the single sentence that comprises verses 4-7.

v.3

T/S: After showing who we once were, Paul then reveals what has been done for us.

At one time in our lives we were dead, doomed, and depraved, "But God," says Ephesians 2:4. At one time in our lives, we were a spiritual corpse, controlled by our sin nature, Satan, and the world, condemned with no hope, no future, "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love...

appeared," says Titus 3:4. Praise God for these revivals in the Bible.

v.4

v.4 provides *a kind of gracious interruption*

Four precious truths:

1. God Cares for Us (Titus 3:4)

Paul begins with the basic and beautiful truth that God loves us.

The theme of Christ as our "Savior" appears here for the fifth time of six occurrences in Titus.

"The kindness of God and His love" have as their object mankind—sinners in need of a Savior.

It is God's nature to be kind to the lost. "Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return," Jesus commanded; "and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for *He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men*" (Luke 6:35).

Paul declared, "God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions" - (Eph. 2:4-7)

It is the sovereign *kindness of God* that initiates repentance, the first step in salvation.

Second, we should remember that we were saved by God's uninfluenced and unearned *love for mankind*,

a phrase that translates the compound **Greek noun** *philanthrōpia*, from which the English *philanthropy* is derived. It is **composed of** *phileō* ("to have affection for") **and** *anthrōpos* ("man," or mankind) **and refers to** **compassion**, especially the **eagerness to deliver someone from pain, trouble, or danger.**

The two words together, especially in the context of these four verses, reflect the even deeper *agapē* love that God has for fallen mankind.

The best-known and most beloved passage that expresses God's *agapē* love is "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" ([John 3:16](#)).

The combination of such infinite “kindness” and “love for mankind” facilitates our understanding of “the grace of God ... that brings salvation to all men” ([2:11](#)).

2. God Changes Us (Titus 3:5)

Here is the greatest verse in the Bible on the doctrine of regeneration, the new birth experienced by those who repent of their sin and put their trust completely and exclusively in Jesus Christ.

Paul begins by first telling how regeneration did not happen, countering the false thinking that has plagued humanity for all of our existence.

His words could not be clearer: "He saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done."

Salvation is not earned.

On your best day you had nothing to give God, and if you have never realized that, then you have never been saved.

No, we cannot work our way into heaven.

"But," [Titus 3:4-5](#) says, "*he saved us... according to His mercy.*"

He delivered us from sin and its slavery, rescued us from death, hell, and the grave.

Why?

Kindness, love, mercy.

What? Saved us. How?

Washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Regeneration consists negatively of removal of filth and positively of a renewing, both brought about by the Holy Spirit.

The picture looks back to [Ezekiel 36:25-27](#), where the prophet writes:

I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a

heart of flesh. I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances.

The Spirit and the Word work in tandem to make us brand-new in Jesus Christ. Indeed that is exactly where Paul looks next.

Third, we should remember that we did not save ourselves by self-effort or any other means, but that **God *saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy.***

salvation relates to our deliverance from the penalty of sin, that is, from divine wrath, spiritual death, and hell.

*Whereas grace judicially forgives the offender for his wrongdoing, **mercy** compassionately helps him recover.*

Fourth, we should remember that we were saved by God's mercifully deciding to grant the washing of regeneration.

Palingenesia (regeneration) carries the idea of receiving new life, of being born again, or born from above.

Fifth, we should remember that our salvation came through our *renewing by the Holy Spirit.*

The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual life, sustains our spiritual life, empowers our spiritual life, and guarantees that our spiritual life will become eternal life, because He is the seal, or guarantee, of eternal life (Eph. 1:13-14).

3:5 Paul's assertion, "*he saved us,*" in v. **5** constitutes the main verb in this

lengthy sentence (vv. 4–7). It is the fact of God’s saving action in Jesus Christ that is amplified and explained by each additional clause and phrase.

Paul left absolutely no doubt concerning the basis of human salvation.

The use of the negative “not” (ouk) at the beginning of the clause serves to heighten the contrast indicated by the adversative “but” (alla), as does the explicit use of the personal pronouns “we” (“we had done”) and “his” (“his mercy”).

The biblical fact that people cannot earn salvation strikes at the very heart of human pride

and thus denies people the opportunity of exalting themselves.

v.6

3. God Has Come for Us (Titus 3:6)

4. God Comforts Us (Titus 3:7)

To be "justified" means to be declared righteous.

We are not made justified; we are declared justified.

Paul here adds a fourth motive as to why our great God saved us.

His goodness or kindness moved Him to save us (v. 4).

His love moved Him to save us (v. 4).

His mercy moved Him to save us (v. 5).

His grace moved Him to save us (v. 7).

He now comforts us with a word about our future.

We are "heirs with the hope of eternal life."

Sixth, we should remember that we were saved only by the substitutionary and atoning sacrifice of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Savior

His death in our place and for us is the means, and the only means, of our salvation.

He nevertheless was sovereignly "delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). And the death that He died in God's plan was a death in which He bore all the sins of all who would ever believe.

3:6 Concerning the Holy Spirit, Paul continued, *"Whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior."*

It is noteworthy that each Person of the Trinity is referred to in this passage and particularly in this text: God poured out the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ.

The verb **“poured out”** (*execheen*) echoes the **description of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost** (cf. [Acts 2:17, 33](#) [[Joel 2:28](#)]).

The additional words “on us” (eph hemas) indicate that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit is not limited to the historic event at Pentecost but rather is shared by all believers.

The descriptive term “generously” suggests that God’s pouring out of the Holy Spirit is totally sufficient for the needs of every believer.

This provides a contrast with the limited personal role of the Holy Spirit demonstrated in the Old Testament ([2 Cor 3:2–6](#)).

This generous outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the direct result of the work of **“Jesus Christ, our Savior”** (cf. [John 14:16–17, 26; 16:7–13; Acts 2:33](#)).

v.7

Twice before Paul had instructed Titus to teach these things in accordance with sound doctrine (Titus 2:1, 15), and this exhortation is his final reiteration of what is probably the central thrust of the entire epistle.

Paul was deeply concerned that God's people *devote themselves to doing what is good* because *these things are excellent and profitable for everyone.*

Titus was to promote good works, for they go hand in hand with sound doctrine.

- Bible Knowledge Commentary

The seventh aspect of sovereign salvation is equally from God alone.

We should remember that we were saved by God's *grace*

God "has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity" (2 Tim. 1:9; cf. Rom. 4:2-8; 9:11; Eph. 2:8-9).

Paul is not here using justified in its narrow, forensic sense of God's declaring believers righteous based on the merits of Jesus Christ that are applied on their behalf (see, e.g., [Rom. 4:6-8](#); cf. [3:24](#), [26](#); [Gal. 2:7](#)). **He is rather using justified in its broad, more general sense as a synonym for salvation.**

As Paul declares more fully in his Roman letter:

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him" ([Rom. 8:16-17](#)).

3:7 Having referred to “Jesus Christ, our Savior,” Paul restated the basis of our salvation with a clause introduced by “so that” (*hina*). The phrase “having been justified by his grace” recalls the main verb of the entire sentence, “he saved us” (v. 5).

The force of the term rendered “so that” (*hina*) is applied to the final phrase, which truly expresses the goal, purpose, or result of our salvation: so “that ... we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”

New Testament salvation is often expressed in the familial terms of “children” (e.g., [John 1:12](#); [Rom 8:16](#)) and “sonship” ([Rom 8:14](#); [Gal 4:6](#); [Heb 2:10](#)). The logical extension from “son” to “heir” can be seen throughout the New Testament (cf. [Rom 8:17](#); [Gal 4:6–7](#); [Eph 3:6](#); [Heb 6:17–20](#); [Jas 2:5](#)).

In becoming “heirs” (through salvation), Christians become possessors of a guaranteed future

CLOSE:

*We are now radically different from the way we once were, and from the way the unsaved still are, solely because of God's **kindness, His love, His mercy, His washing of regeneration, His renewing by the Holy Spirit, His Son Jesus Christ our Savior, and His grace.** - Mac*

This outstanding theological statement in [3:3–7](#) encompasses the gospel in a nutshell.

Beginning with humankind's lost condition, Paul summarized the elements of salvation from the perspective of God's work. Each Person of the Trinity is presented as working together to achieve humankind's

salvation. Paul left no doubt that salvation is truly God's own work.

It's like we have been plucked out of the faithless & frigid, spiritually shark infested waters, in the aftermath of the Titanic's tragic sinking... (and make no mistake, this world IS the Titanic)... And now the western church sits docile & deaf to the gurgling screams of those souls still shivering & sinking into the jaws of an eternally torturous hell. How can this be???

Let us man the lifeboats & get to rescuing souls! -JDP

YOU are your own most prolific proof statement of the gospel's transformative power & truthful promises. -JDP

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (ESV)

¹ *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand,*
² *and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.