

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

## How Salvation Brings Freedom

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I grew up in the Bible Belt where, by mid-elementary, most of the kids in my peer group could point proudly to a note written in the front of their Bibles announcing the exact date they Got Saved. At junior high youth rallies the Rededications began, along with a smattering of I-Thought-I-Was-Saved-But-I-Really-Wasn't's (scribble over that first date and write in the new one). Through all seven verses of "Just As I Am", and all four years of high school, we children of the Bible Belt battled our doubts and bustled our backslidden selves down aisles to altar rails. Maybe, we thought, this time just maybe the Saving will stick.



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### WHERE'S THE FREEDOM?

Our problem was this: our sinning had not ceased with our professions of faith. The salvation that had promised us new life in Christ had by all appearances failed to deliver. We still made all the same mistakes, and along the thorny path of adolescence we added fresh failures to the list. Damning evidence, or so we thought, that when we Prayed The Prayer we had somehow not done it right. Where was the freedom from sin we had been promised?

Looking back I wonder if, for many of us, our problem was not with salvation itself, but with our understanding of how the freedom of our salvation actually occurred. It was not until my early twenties that I gained any clarity on this issue. I knew I served a God who *was and is and is to come*, but I had yet to learn that I possessed from Him a salvation of which the same could be said. Salvation from sin can be broken down into three categories: justification, sanctification and glorification. For the believer, our justification *was*, our sanctification *is*, and our glorification *is to come*. We were saved, we are being saved, we will be saved. I've found the easiest way to understand these three forms of freedom is to remember the three P's: penalty, power, and presence.

### JUSTIFICATION: FREEDOM FROM SIN'S *PENALTY*

When we came to saving faith in Christ, confessing our great need of him and asking for forgiveness from the punishment we deserved, we were met with God's unequivocal

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“yes”. Christ bore the penalty for our sins, therefore we received freedom from that penalty for all sins past, present and future. We were justified before God our judge because our penalty had been paid. Those who have been justified never need re-justifying. We can look back to the time of our justification (perhaps written in the front of our Bible?) and know that there is [no condemnation](#) for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Our justification is behind us. It is a past occurrence. We *were saved* from sin's penalty.

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## SANCTIFICATION: FREEDOM FROM SIN'S POWER

Now that the grace of God has been set upon us as a [permanent seal](#), we are being made new. We are being set free from the power of sin by the power of the Spirit. God's grace is restoring to us a will that wants what he wants. Before we were justified, our broken wills were utterly subject to the power of sin. We chose sin at every turn. Even when we made choices that appeared good from an external standpoint, because we had no higher internal purpose than to glorify self these choices were ultimately sinful as well. Now, the power of sin is broken in our lives. We have been given the deposit of the Holy Spirit. Though we once chose only to sin, now we have the power (and the growing desire) to choose righteousness. We who were once slaves to sin's power are now free to serve God. We don't always use our freedom. We still sin, but over time we learn increasingly to choose holiness. Our entire lives from that handwritten date in our Bibles onward are devoted to “[working out our salvation](#)” as we learn to choose righteousness instead of sin, to walk in obedience to God's commands.

Our sanctification is ongoing. It is a slow-moving growth in holiness. We *are being saved* from sin's power.

## GLORIFICATION: FREEDOM FROM SIN'S PRESENCE

We will fight to grow in holiness our entire earthly lives. But when we have run the race and fought the good fight, we will enter into the presence of the Lord forever. We will be glorified. In His presence, our soul-rest will at last be complete, as sin and its devastation will cease to assail us. There can be no sin in His presence. Though now we are surrounded on all sides by sinfulness, though now sin continues to cling to our hearts, on a day not too distant we will go to a place where sin is no more. In our glorification we will at last be granted freedom from the very presence of sin.

Our glorification is future. It is the day we trade the persistent presence of sin for the perfect presence of the Lord. We *will be saved* from sin's presence.

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## REST, LABOR, HOPE

If I and my childhood peers had understood these three aspects of salvation's freedom better, we might have saved ourselves a great deal of anxiety and a few trips down the aisle. The knowledge that sin is gradually overcome across a lifetime would have been good news to the teenager who thought surely her ongoing sin invalidated her profession. The knowledge that sanctification is hard work would have helped her topple the myth of the effortless stock-photo Christian life. The knowledge that total freedom from sin was a future certainty would have helped her ask in faith for grace for her current failures.

Maybe you, too, have found salvation mystifying. Maybe you've wondered, "If I'm really saved, why don't I feel fully free?" You're not yet, but you will be. Our complete freedom from sin is certain, but it is not sudden. So we rest confidently in our justification, we labor diligently in our sanctification, and we hope expectantly in our glorification.

Be assured of your justification. It *was*. One day, you were freed fully from the penalty of sin.

Be patient with your sanctification. It *is*. Each day, you are being freed increasingly from the power of sin.

Be eager for your glorification. It *is to come*. One day, you will be freed finally from the presence of sin.

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