



Conducted by
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“1 Tim. 4:10 says that Christ “is the Saviour of all men, especially those that believe”. How can all be saved, and some saved ‘especially’?”

It is as well to quote the whole verse which reads, **“For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe”.**

Godliness

The first point we notice in the verse is that it is **God** who is said to be **‘the Saviour of all men’**. If we refer to 1 Tim. 1:1 we read the same thing, **“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope”**. Now you may say to me, **“Come on, Alf, you’re splitting hairs. If Jesus is God’s Son, and a true manifestation of the Father (he that hath seen me hath seen the Father), then salvation must be attributable both to Son and Father”**. That is true, as far as it goes, but I believe the Bible portrays salvation as **from God**, in His **‘providential’ capacity**, and **through Christ**, in **His ‘executive’ capacity**. Why do I make this distinction? Because it is God who gives **‘life’** and you will notice, of course, that Paul says, **“we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God.”**

In v8 he speaks about godliness, "**For bodily exercise profiteth little** (take note, all 'keep fit' enthusiasts; the Holy Spirit says it, not me); **but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come.**"

There is a sense, of course, in which all men are partakers in the life that God gives; I direct you to Acts 17:28 ff. "**For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said. For we are also his offspring. For as much then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not, etc** And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he (God) hath appointed a day, in the which he (God) will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he (God) hath ordained; whereof He (God) hath given assurance unto all men, in that he (God) hath raised him (Christ) from the dead". The bracketed words are mine. These scriptures make the issue quite clear. God gives life to all men, and had graciously provided sustenance for that life; if man mis-uses and mis-appropriates what is provided, then that in no way nullifies the **provision**, nor does it nullify the **grace** of the Giver. However, we can also see that the God-life, which is the 'new' life which comes by and through the death and resurrection of God's Christ, is conditional on man's repentance. The distinction in the types of salvation is quite marked, and this leads us on to the crux of our question.

Potentiality

A definition of the above word would be, 'inherent, latent, capacity for development'. To illustrate, perhaps we can use the analogy of an electrical circuit.

Let's consider the circuitry for a simple door-bell or chimes. In its simplest form, this comprises a battery and a circuit including a push-switch on the outside of the door; the contacts of the switch are normally open. In this state, the terminals of the battery have a 'potential' to force an electric current through the circuit and so energise the bell or chimes, but will only do so when the circuit is completed through the switch, i.e., when someone presses it. It will be readily understood, of course that when the push-switch is open, there will still be a 'potential' but it will be 'latent'. Can we now use this crude example and give it a spiritual application relevant to our question?

Obedience calls for some sort of response on the part of the individual. If 'to obey' involves **internal** and **external** responses which are mutually dependant, then usually we take the **external** response as being motivated by the **internal** response; if this is **not** the case, then the external response is seen as being 'blind' obedience to a command '**to do**'. This, I think, can be clearly seen in an individual's response to the dual command 'repent and be baptised'. If there is no internal response regarding repentance, then being immersed in water is simply an external response to a direct command. The serious spiritual implications of this can be understood without any further comment from me. Taking this reasoning a stage further, if 'being dead' in trespasses and sins means **total depravity**, then it is difficult to understand **how** any meaningful response can be made to love and compassion, as exemplified in God and Christ, by a person who is totally depraved (I am thinking of **Satan** as being totally depraved, but of man as being **enslaved** by him, but capable of making responses for good or evil). Therefore, there is **always** the potential in God to save, and there is that in man which can respond to what God requires as shown in His Word, the Bible.

In answer, then, to the part of the question which asks, "How can all be saved", my answer would be that God is 'potentially' the Saviour of all men, but all men will **not** be saved **in spite of themselves**. God is the Great Provider of salvation; Christ is the Great Bringer of salvation. Man must 'close the circuit', so to speak, by a responsive obedience to the Gospel; it is only then that he will enter the mainstream of the new God-life in Christ Jesus. It is then, and then only, that he will be saved.

Actualization

From the foregoing, the second part of the question which says, '**especially of those that believe**' ought to be straightforward to answer. The word '**especially**' expresses the pre-eminent; the particular'; therefore, we are talking about a pre-eminent and particular salvation, not a '**potential**' one. The '**believer**' has made some sort of internal response to the Gospel. He has given assent to the truth of the Gospel, but his assent will not be purely '**passive**', because believing, so far as the Bible is concerned, is always coupled by '**doing**'. When the Ethiopian Eunuch heard and believed the Gospel, it was he himself who asked for baptism. When the Philippian jailer was told to believe with all his house on the Lord Jesus Christ, the scripture goes on to say that Paul spoke the word of the Lord to them, and the jailer and all his household were baptised. (See Acts 8; and Acts 16). So you see that in this part of the question we are speaking about the '**particular**' or the '**actual**' as regards salvation, and not the '**potential**'.

To sum up, then. In answer to our question we can say that God is '**potentially**' the Saviour of all men, but '**actually**' the Saviour of those who believe and obey Him relative to His Christ, and the terms and conditions of the Gospel.

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