

## Salvation Motifs in Scripture and the Confessions

Charles St-Onge, May 18, 2003

### 1. Universal Motif

The universal motif refers specifically to God's desire for all to "come to the knowledge of the truth." God desires no one to perish, but rather hopes that all will come to salvation. The emphasis in the passages associated with this motif is the love of God for the whole world (John 3:16), God's reaching out to all nations (Psalm 117, Romans 15), and God's desire that no one be left without salvation (2 Peter 3:9, Ezekiel 18:32). The Lutheran confessions repeat this theme, especially as it applied to the sacraments and the doctrine of election. Augsburg Confession Article XIII (Sacraments) presents the sacraments as a gift from God to humanity for confirming and strengthening faith. Formula of Concord XI (Election) reemphasizes the Lutheran denial of a double predestination. God predestines or wills the condemnation of no one. God's grace, and Christ's atonement, is indeed extended to all people.

Psalm 117: "all you nations", great love toward all. Romans 15: Gentiles will rise up to glorify God. 1 Tim 2:4 God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. 2 Peter 3:9 God wants no one to perish, but all to come to repentance. John 3:16: God so loved the WORLD.

AC XIII (Sacraments): Sacraments show God's gracious will toward us, confirming and strengthening faith. FC XI (Election): God's grace and Christ's atonement extends to all people.

### 2. Harmatological Motif

This motif deals with evil and man's place in its cause. Genesis 3 describes the fall of humanity, and how Adam and Eve, our first parents, are responsible for our sinful nature. That sinful nature is now transmitted from one generation to the next, so that King David can say he was "sinful from conception" (Psalm 51). Paul, in his epistles, writes that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3), and that we stand condemned under the sin of our first parents (Romans 5). By nature, we are objects of wrath (Ephesians 2). The Lutheran symbols reiterate the same points. Augsburg Confession II describes original sin. The Smalcald Articles, in article I, speak of original sin as "root sin", and as so imbedded that reason cannot see it except that it is revealed in Scripture. In the Formula of Concord, Article II (Free Will), we read that man is entirely and completely dead in spiritual matters, according to John 8:34, Ephesians 2:2, and 2 Timothy 2:26. This is the end result of original sin. Our salvation from this wrath is Christ Jesus, for when we believe in him and are baptized (Mark 16) we are cleansed from its stain. Augsburg Confession III (Son of God) describes this "justification" by the work of Jesus in more detail.

Genesis 3: Man is the cause of sin. Psalm 51: Man is sinful from conception on. Romans 3: All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Romans 5: Original sin. Ephesians 2: We are by nature "objects of wrath". Mark 16: Belief and baptism and necessary for salvation.

AC II: Original sin. AC III: Son of God: Christ is the propitiatory sacrifice for original, as well as other, sins. SA I: Sin: original or root sin. It is hereditary, and reason cannot understand it. FC SD II: Free Will: Man is entirely and completely dead in spiritual matters according to John 8:34, Eph 2:2, 2 Tim. 2:26.

### 5. Kyrological / Doxological Motif

The theme of this motif is that those who call on the Lord will be delivered by him, in order to give praise and glory to his name (Psalm 50:15, Psalm 66:18). The object of our salvation is to give glory to the Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). Paul writes the same in 2 Cor. 9 when he says "men will praise God for the obedience shown in you." As does Peter, when he writes that the church should do all things so that

God might be praised through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 4:11). Everyone who puts their trust in the Lord will be saved, and this is done so that glory might be to God. (Romans 10:9). Augsburg Confession III (The Son of God), Small Catechism II and the Large Catechism stress the dominion and rule of Jesus over those whom he has redeemed.

Psalm 50:15: the Lord delivers those who call on him, that they might honor him. Psalm 66:18 “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.” But he who is contrite, the Lord will hear and will not withhold his love. Then honor the Lord! Psalm 105: Give thanks to the Lord. Psalm 113: Praise the Lord. Matthew 5:16: Let your light shine, that God might be glorified. 2 Cor. 9: men will praise GOD for the obedience shown in you. Phil 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. 1 Peter 2:12: The pagans might see your good works and so glorify God. 1 Peter 4:11 “so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.” Romans 10:9: Anyone who puts their trust in God will not be disappointed: everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

AC III: The Son of God: Christ rules and has dominion over all. SC II: Christ has redeemed me that I might serve him. LC II: Christ rules over us. LC III: Same, “thy kingdom come”.

## 6. Eschatological Motif

The theme of this motif is the end times. The church has been called on to proclaim the Gospel until the end of the age (Mark 13:10, Matthew 24:14). We proclaim this message, that our salvation is the healing of all of creation, and the redemption of our own bodies (Romans 8:18-27). Paul also reminds us that our struggle until the end of time is a struggle, not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers of evil (Ephesians 6:10-18). The Large Catechism II calls the church the instrument through which the Spirit will work redemption until the end of the age. The church’s task is to bring the love of God and the redemption in Jesus to all the world until the end of the age.

Mark 13:10 The church is to preach the Gospel to all nations until the end of time. Matt 24:14: The end will come after the Gospel has been preached to all the nations. Romans 8:18-27: we hope for the redemption of all creation and of our own bodies. Ephesians 6:10-18: Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers.

LC II: the church is called as the instrument through which the Spirit works redemption until the end of time. LC III: God created us to redeem and sanctify us. We only know the love of God through Christ.