

Harmartiology And Soteriology

Harmartiology and Soteriology are complementary studies: God saves us because there is something to be saved from. Such doctrines are among the most fundamental in Christianity. They are also of great relevance to the individual Christian. For how does the sinner become the saint? To be sure, the details of righteousness, both imputed and cultivated, are mysteries so deep its waters would never meet ocean floor by any earthly disciple. Likewise, the immense darkness and putridity of one's rebellion towards God is seldom fully realized.

Harmartiology is the study of sin. It is a discipline in which everyone holds a degree. For all are proficient practitioners of sin, of rebellion. This truth is cited by many Bible passages, just a sample being Psalm 14: 1-3 and Romans 3: 23. Sin has been defined in different ways, at different times, by different people. But there is one aspect that is universally accepted by all God-fearing beings: sin is deadly! It proved deadly to Adam and Eve, and it has proved deadly to every generation since Adam and Eve. It is a deadly virus to both body and soul—to material and immaterial. No science, no technology, no earthly wisdom has been able to stem its crushing tide. In its infancy, it is a thought of rebellion and disobedience to God's laws. In its adolescence, it becomes the coddling of such thoughts leading to strategizing. And in its maturity, it is the act, the manifestation of the evil inner-workings of the heart. This delineation can be clearly seen in Eve's notorious conversation with the serpent (Genesis 3: 1-6). Since then every man, woman and child has felt the painful bite of sin—both passed on and personal. Total depravity has set in and we have lost the crowns of God's glory. What are we to do? Nothing... for all of our efforts are futile against sin's ravishing power.

Soteriology is the study of salvation: salvation that bellows the glorious Hallelujah that breaks asunder the cruel Slave Master's whip; salvation that is the conclusive proof that God is an immanent, personal God; salvation that is the conclusive proof that love is not a warm, fuzzy feeling but an action; salvation of such magnitude that it dwarfs even the cancerous ambition of sin itself. It is the gift of our God (Ephesians 2: 8, 9). For it is he that chooses (Ephesians 1: 4) and it is he that lavishes (1: 8) and it is he that seals (1: 13). Of such joy is this salvation that Jesus instructed its celebration to overshadow even the greatest spiritual achievements (Luke 10: 20). It provides us with everything we need because Christ paid for it with everything he had! Therefore, it is of infinite scope and value. It is to be treasured in like measure.

Although it has been stated that Harmartiology and Soteriology are complementary studies, it should be noted that they will not be so forever. They will not always walk side by side. On that day full salvation will be ours—the day that sin is no more! No longer will the pull of evil be felt on our heartstrings. No longer will Satan and his cohorts have an outlet for their deranged ministry. We will receive back our crowns of glory. And when we see our Lord and Savior we will cheerfully cast them at his feet!