



THE GREAT

RESCUE



R.C. Sproul

UNDERSTANDING THE SAVING
WORK OF CHRIST



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LIGONIER MINISTRIES

The Great Rescue

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Saved from What?

“Are you saved?”

I recall vividly a time many years ago, in 1969, when I was asked this question.

These were the volatile days of the sixties—the era of the cultural revolution in America. I was a professor of theology at the Conwell School of Theology on the campus of Temple University in Philadelphia. One day after lunch, I began my trek across the plaza to my classroom. I was walking briskly to avoid being late. I was alone, minding my own business. Suddenly, apparently out of nowhere, a gentleman appeared in front of me, blocking my forward progress. He looked me in the eye and asked directly, “Are you saved?”

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I wasn't quite sure how to respond to this intrusion. I uttered in response the first words that came into my mind: "Saved from what?" What I was thinking, but had the grace not to say, was, "I'm certainly not saved from strangers buttonholing me and asking me questions like yours." But when I said, "Saved from what?" I think the man who stopped me that day was as surprised by my question as I had been by his. He began to stammer and stutter. Obviously, he wasn't quite sure how to respond.

"Saved from what? Well, you know what I mean. You know, do you know Jesus?" Then he tried to give me a brief summary of the gospel.

This serendipitous encounter left an impression on me. I experienced real ambivalence. On the one hand, I was delighted in my soul that someone cared enough about me, even though I was a stranger, to stop me and ask about my salvation. But it was clear that, though this man had a zeal for salvation, he had little understanding of what salvation is. He was using Christian jargon. The words fell from his lips without being processed by his mind. As a result, his words were empty of content. Clearly, the man had a love for Christ and a concern for people. Few Christians have

SAVED FROM WHAT?

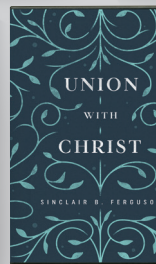
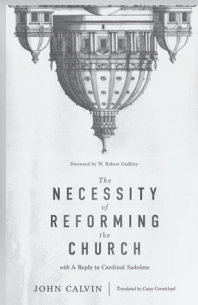
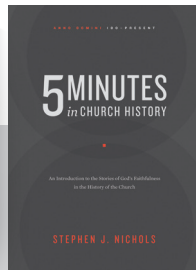
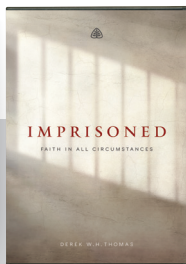
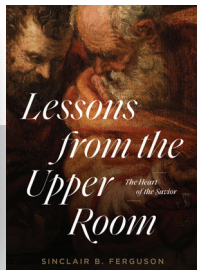
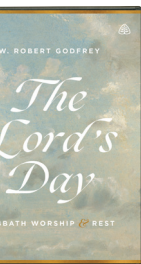
the courage to engage perfect strangers in evangelistic discussion. But sadly, he had little understanding of what he was so zealously trying to communicate.

Consider this profoundly shocking text that uniquely answers the question, “Saved from what?” The text reads:

The great day of the LORD is near,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter;
the mighty man cries aloud there.
A day of wrath is that day,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

I will bring distress on mankind,
so that they shall walk like the blind,
because they have sinned against the LORD;

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