

Salvation By Grace Through Faith Always Has Been and Always Will

Men today are teaching a false system of Bible theology concerning salvation in different periods of Bible history. Some say they were saved by works in the period of the Law. Some say you were saved by faith and works in other time periods. I've even heard it said that in Acts 2:38 a person was saved by baptism. What does the Bible say?

First of all, a good look at the depravity of man would be helpful. In Isaiah 64:6 it reads, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." God says, "... all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." That means all of mankind and all of its natural goodness adds up to nothing. Mankind stinks in the nostrils of a Holy God! Romans 3:10-12 reads, "There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." After reading these verses could anyone ever think that anyone could ever please the Lord with something they could do? The Bible says in Galatians 3:11, "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, The just shall live by faith." This is true in the New Testament and in the Old Testament. For it is written in Habakkuk 2:4, "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." We are saved by faith now and that is how people were saved in the past. Man is totally depraved and can never please God with works.

The Bible says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Hebrews 11:6. In Hebrews 11:26, Moses esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." It also says in I Corinthians 10:4, "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

When Moses obeyed God and killed the passover lamb and applied the blood, he was safe from the destroyer (Exodus 12:23). Was his soul saved by the actual good works of his life and the sacrifices he offered? Of course he wasn't saved that way. The Bible says in Hebrews 10:1, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."

Are we saved by good works in our life now? Of course not, for the Bible says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9. Are we saved by the communion now? Of course not, for the Bible says, "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." I Corinthians 11:25b. As we partake of communion, we look back to the Saviour who came. If we have no faith in our hearts concerning the Saviour in regard to our sin, then we are just putting on a show and it will be to no avail. If a person back in Moses' time offered sacrifices in a mechanical way, and with no true faith, he was a hypocrite. He was to look forward by faith (as we look back) to a time when God would provide the real sacrifice, of which all sacrifices are just a type.

Moses knew about a "Prophet" that would come in the future. In Deuteronomy 18:15 it says, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;"

Adam and Eve knew about the seed of women that would bruise the serpent's heel. For it says in Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." They also received the coats of skins found in Genesis 3:21, which is a type of Christ's righteousness. Abel offered a lamb. It says in Hebrews 11:4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous..."

Abraham believed God in that he believed God was going to use someone from his seed to bless all the families of the earth. It says in Genesis 12:3, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Later on he offered up Isaac as a sacrifice, but the Lord stopped him. He even believed that God could raise him from the dead. It says in Hebrews 11:19, "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." Abraham was saved by faith for it says in Romans 4:3, "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." In fact, all the heroes of the faith were saved by faith for it says in Hebrews 11:39, 40, "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Saints in the Old Testament believed God in everything he revealed to them regarding the remission of sins and the coming Messiah. We know more information about the Lord Jesus Christ than Isaiah did. However, he knew quite a bit for in Isaiah 53:6 it says; "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." That is the gospel! In fact, the book of Isaiah is called the "Gospel of the Old Testament."

What about David and Psalm 22? It says in verses 16-18, "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." These men knew of a Saviour that was going to come. Did they trust their good works? No, a thousand times, no. If the devil can get us to believe our good works could have saved us in the past it will be very easy for him to say that the time has come that we can please God now with our good works or a mixture of good works and faith. This is all blasphemous and degrading to our wonderful Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible says in Colossians 1:20, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, John the Baptist, Noah, Abel, David and all the other Old Testament saints are in heaven. How did they get reconciled to God? Colossians 1:20 said it was "through the blood of his cross."

Peter did not preach salvation by baptism and faith in Acts 2:38. The repenting did the saving, not the baptizing. These ultra-dispensationalists must make the baptismal regenerationalists very happy. They are just one dispensation away from each other in regard to their doctrine of salvation. It is ungodly and heretical to say that water could ever wash or help wash away sin. I Peter 3:21 says, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:"

Baptism is just a sign to others that we have faith and a good conscience toward God. What was circumcision? It was a sign and it never helped one become righteous. It doesn't now either. In Romans 4:11 it says, "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:"

A profound fact in regard to our subject is "Paradise." This is where all the Old Testament saints went when they died. In Genesis 25:8 it says, "Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, and old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people." "Gathered to his people", means that he went down into paradise. This same phrase is used with other Patriarchs. Also, in Luke 16:22 it says, "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angles into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;" Paradise was in the earth across from the burning side of hell. The Lord taught that this is where he was going in Matthew 12:40, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the

earth. " Christ went down to "Abraham's Bosom". What does all this have to do with "salvation by grace in any time period"? It has everything to do with it. These saints were saved and were not thrown into hell, but they could not be taken up to the presence of God until the Messiah came and made the sacrifice for sin.

When Christians die, they go right to the third heaven - where God is. We know now "paradise" is in the third heaven for it says in II Corinthians 12:2b-4, "...such and one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Paradise was moved from the inside of the earth up to the third heaven, God's abode, after the death of Christ. In II Corinthians 5:8 it says, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

Saints could not go to be with the Lord until the Saviour came to make the atonement for sins. When the Lord Jesus Christ left paradise, He took the Old Testament saints up with Him. In Ephesians 4:8-10 it says, "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)" The Old Testament saints were fit to be in the presence of Holy God at this time. If their works saved them, they could have gone right to the abode of God when they died! It wasn't until after the Lord Jesus Christ died that they could go to be in the presence of God.

In any dispensation, the central figure for salvation is the "cross". The basis for salvation is "the shedding of blood" and the means of salvation is "faith",

Heaven has a testimony that I will use for a closing. Revelation 5:9 says, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation:" Again in Revelation 5:12 it says, "...Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

Let's glorify the Lord and teach that salvation could only be by grace through faith now or any other time in history. Glory to God! And let's "contend for the faith" in this very vital area of doctrine.

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