

SOTERIOLOGY (165)

In the following parable, “The Parable of the Talents” (25:14-30), the same thought is communicated. The kingdom program for Israel is like a man who leaves His own country for a time and entrusts His work to His servants.

When He returns to pick up His program with Israel, He discovers that some of the Jews were faithful and some weren't. Those who weren't faithful during the Tribulation are damned forever (25:30).

These parables are kingdom parables pertaining to Israel. Jesus Christ has temporarily changed His program and focus from His kingdom program with Israel to His Gentile program with all nationalities of people. Time and time again, the Bible makes it clear that eventually this Gentile Age will end and the kingdom program will once again be operative (i.e. Rom. 11:25-27).

For nearly 2,000 years now, Christ has primarily been working out His program with Gentiles all over the world. But the thing that will signal the end of the Gentile Age will be the Rapture of the Church. The Rapture will end the Church Age and will signal that God is once again taking up His program with Israel.

God will use the Tribulation as a means to regather Israel. During the Tribulation, God will give various special gifts, abilities and talents to many Jews. When He finally returns at the end of the Tribulation, there will be an accountability given by each Jew as to what they did with what they had in view of Christ's return.

The purpose of these two parables is to warn the nation Israel that just because a person is Jewish does not automatically mean he will enter the kingdom. Just as in this age one must be right with God by faith in Jesus Christ to enter heaven, in the next age the Jew must be right with God by believing in the future return of Christ and by not submitting to satanic Tribulation lures.

Those who are right with God during the Tribulation will clearly demonstrate that fact by their active work and faithful service. They will have gone through the Tribulation and not followed the Antichrist.

These parables have nothing to do with a New Testament Grace Age believer losing his N.T. salvation. This text is an appeal to Israel to not make the same mistake the next time Christ returns as Israel did the first time He came. Israel refused to humble herself to God's truth the first time and Christ realized 50% would the next time.

2) Hebrews 10:26-29 - This text, for obvious reasons, is a favorite one for the Arminian who claims you can lose your salvation. However, upon close examination of the context, this view can be proved false.

Some commentators, who hold strongly to the position that you cannot lose your salvation, suggest that this text is not referring to the true possessors of eternal life, but Jewish professors of eternal life.

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Dr. Chafer, for example, says that this text “is not a warning to Christians, nor does it imply their insecurity” (Vol. 3, p. 305). Dr. Charles Ryrie also views this as a text that refers to one who was in the process of rejecting Christ (*Ryrie Study Bible*, NASV, p. 1849).

There are a couple of key contextual observations that we may make before interpreting this text:

Observation #1 - This passage does seem to be addressed to believers .

We may make this observation based on the following:

- 1) They are called “brethren.” 10:19
- 2) They have the ability to approach God through Christ’s blood. 10:19b
- 3) They are challenged to draw near to God. 10:22
- 4) They are challenged to hold fast to their confession of hope. 10:23
- 5) They are challenged to go to church. 10:25
- 6) They are said to have received the knowledge of the truth. 10:26
- 7) They are said to know Christ. 10:30
- 8) They are said to be God’s people. 10:30b
- 9) They are said to be people destined for a better place. 10:34
- 10) They are said to be people destined for an abiding better place. 10:34b
- 11) They are said to be people of confidence. 10:35a
- 12) They are said to be people heading to great rewards. 10:35b
- 13) They are said to be people not heading to destruction. 10:39
- 14) The pronouns “we” and “us” indicate they are the same spiritual status as the writer of the book. 10:22-26, 30, 39
- 15) These are people who have been enlightened, which is a reference to the time they were saved. 10:32a
- 16) These are people who suffered for being saved. 10:32b

Taking all of these contextual matters into consideration, it is best to assume this text is addressed to true believers.

Observation #2 - This passage does seem to suggest that these believers are forever saved .

This observation may be made from the following points:

- 1) By the blood of Jesus, they have a living and confident access to God. 10:19-20
- 2) The participles “sprinkled” and “washed” are both perfect passive (10:22), indicating this work was completed at some point in the past and has continuing results at the present, into the future.
- 3) The people are said to know that they are guaranteed heaven. 10:34
- 4) The writer specifically says they cannot be destroyed. 10:39a
- 5) The writer specifically says their souls are preserved. 10:39b

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These observations lead us to conclude that this text is about a believer who is truly and eternally saved. This, then, leads us to the natural question, what do these verses mean?

In looking carefully at the context, there are some key terms and phrases which help us: “full assurance” (10:22); “willful sinning” (10:26); “a better possession and an abiding one” (10:34); “confidence” (10:35a); “great reward” (10:35b); “endurance” (10:36). If we see these terms which precede a context (Heb. 11) in which a list of faithful believers, who excelled in their lives, and Hebrews 12 which challenges believers to run the same kind of race, we may capture the true meaning of the text.

Some of the Jewish believers were experiencing great difficulty and were beginning to slip in their walk with God. Some were beginning to fall back into the same type of sin from which they had already been saved. The writer of Hebrews knew there would be several negative consequences:

- 1) There would be a loss of full assurance. 10:22
- 2) There would be a loss of godly impact. 10:24
- 3) There would be a forsaking of fellowship. 10:25
- 4) There would be a disregard of Christ’s delivering power and sacrifice for sin. 10:26
- 5) There would be a certain inflaming of God’s anger. 10:27
- 6) There would be a certain judgment by God’s anger. 10:30-31
- 7) There would be a loss of full rewards. 10:35
- 8) There would be a lack of doing God’s will. 10:36

The intent of this text is to warn Jewish believers to stay faithful to God and not willfully go back into a lifestyle of sin because that will result in many negative things.

The pressures were getting to some of these Jewish believers. Some were beginning to think life seemed to be much smoother prior to faith in Christ. The writer of Hebrews did not want these believers going back to a lifestyle of sin, so he writes and presents a far better way to live life. He wanted every one of these believers to have full assurance, a godly impact, consistent fellowship, godly character and full rewards. He did not want any believer to lose any of these things, so he challenges them to stay faithful to God.

When one honestly and objectively examines the context, one clearly sees this interpretation. This text is not about losing salvation; it is about finishing life as an award-winning believer, who by faith lives life in a way that will receive “great reward” (10:35).

QUESTION #51 – What are the terms of our salvation as far as humans are concerned?

It is said that the Gospel is so simple that even a child may understand it and accept it. The problem comes because its simplicity has been obscured and many people have been led to believe something which is not accurate.

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There is nothing more important in the world than for a person to know what his human responsibility is in order to be saved. Yet, most don't really know and most are very confused.

The Bible is crystal clear that all a person must do to be saved is to trust completely, totally and only in Jesus Christ to save him. Faith in Christ, plus no works, promises, commitments or acts is what God says saves a person. From the human side, there is only one way to get into a right relationship with God and that is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. From the human side it is by faith and faith alone that one enters into the eternal glories of eternal salvation.

For many, however, there is real confusion on this point and, as a result, this critical matter gets very confusing, as some present almost a different gospel message. Some examples are:

1. Repent, believe, confess your sins to God, then confess Him before men and you will be saved.
2. If you are to be saved, you must deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Christ.
3. If you are to be saved, you must come forward in faith and follow Christ in baptism.
4. If you are to be saved, you must humble yourselves and repent of your sins.
5. If you are to be saved, you must believe in Jesus and make Him Lord of your life.
6. If you are to be saved, you must be willing to give up everything you have to be saved.
7. If you are to be saved, you must give your heart to Jesus.
8. If you are to be saved, you must ask Jesus to come into your heart.
9. If you are to be saved, you must repent and believe.
10. If you are to be saved, you must believe and confess.
11. If you are to be saved, you must believe and be baptized.
12. If you are to be saved, you must believe and surrender and turn from all sin.

Although there may be bits and pieces of things that may be true, in many instances these concepts are presented as the terms of salvation. The big problem is this lack of precision in understanding Scripture causes people to be very confused about what actually does save them.

The Bible is very clear that we are saved solely on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ and not by any works or any promises or commitments we make. Dr. Chafer said, "...the New Testament declares directly and without complication in about 150 passages that men are saved on the sole principle of faith. ...it is not a matter of believing and repenting, of believing and confessing Christ, of believing and being baptized, of believing and surrendering to God, of believing and confessing sin, or of believing and pleading with God for salvation, but it is believing of oneself to Christ (II Tim. 1:12); and it is a definite turning—an act of the will to God from every other confidence (I Thess. 1:9). This is well-summarized in Paul's word to the Philippian jailer, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved."

QUESTION #52 – Does the Bible teach a Lordship salvation gospel?

At the outset, we want to be very, very clear that the answer to this question is absolutely NO! The only prerequisite for an unsaved person to be saved is to believe on Jesus Christ.

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The Bible is very clear on this point—salvation is always by faith alone. We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9).

1. What is Lordship salvation?

Lordship salvation is a dangerous doctrine that teaches that in order for a person to be saved, he/she must trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and then commit himself to Christ, making Him Lord of his life, submitting to His sovereignty in every aspect of life.

2. Why is Lordship salvation so dangerous?

It requires from an unsaved person a dedication to Christ's lordship, which the Bible only voluntarily requests of saved people (Rom. 12:1; I Pet. 3:15). It makes salvation contingent upon works or as one theologian observed, "it subtly adds works to the clear and simple condition for salvation set forth in the Word of God."

3. What Grace Age passage is used most to support Lordship salvation?

The Grace Age text that is most often used in favor of Lordship salvation is Romans 10:9: "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

4. What is the meaning of the Word "Lord" in Romans 10:9?

Proponents of Lordship salvation suggest that the proper noun "Lord" refers to making Him sovereign master—one whose authority one is required to submit. However, if one carefully studies the Romans passage, one soon realizes that Paul had Christ's Deity in view.

First, Chapters 9-11 of Romans are dispensational in that they deal with Israel's past election (Rom. 9), Israel's present salvation (Rom. 10), and Israel's future restoration (Rom. 11). Paul is writing this to address the subject of unbelieving Israel. In Romans 10:18-21, he uses four quotations from the Psalms, Deuteronomy and Isaiah that refer to Israel's unbelief. Paul's point was that Israel needed to acknowledge that Jesus was God to be saved. **Secondly**, the word "confess" in Romans 10:9 does not favor a Lordship salvation gospel. The Greek word literally means to speak or say the same thing. To confess "Jesus as Lord" means to be in agreement with what the Bible says about Jesus—namely, He is God. **Third**, salvation is a gift to be received, not a commitment to be made. Salvation is a gift of God; the prerequisite is receiving it, not give something back for it. **Fourth**, in Romans 12:1, Paul urges believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices in view of the mercy of God they had experienced through faith. If these Romans had already submitted to Lordship, there would be no need for the admonition.

In order for one to be saved, one must believe that Jesus is God, which is exactly the testimony of the Apostle Peter at Pentecost.