

WHAT IS SALVATION?

By John David Clark, Sr.

“And when he was gone forth in the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?”



And he said unto him, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” (Mk. 10:17; Mt. 19:17)

Our language is a “living language”, and as such, it is constantly changing. Some words are becoming obsolete, while new words are continually being added. This is a normal process, but there are some unfortunate victims. For example, “gay” once meant “light-hearted and joyous”; now, however, gay is most often used as a synonym for “homosexual”. This is a tragic loss to our language, for there is no single word which can adequately replace “gay” as it once was used.

A biblical word whose meaning has been recently changed is “saved”. In the 20th century, Christians altered its meaning so that “saved” is most often used now to mean “converted”. But it is not so used in the Scriptures.

When Jesus said, “*He who endures to the end shall be saved*”, was he saying that he who endures to the end shall be converted? Of course not. Or when Paul wrote, “*Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed*”, was he saying that our conversion is nearer than when we believed? Of course not. The clear meaning of both these statements is that

salvation is the future reward for faithful saints and that God’s children should strive to be found worthy to receive it (Lk. 13:24).

Who, then, first altered the definition of salvation to mean “conversion”? I do not know. But I do know that it is a definition foreign to the Scriptures and that it is non-biblical to claim that we are “saved” merely because we are converted to Christ.

So often, we tend to accept life as it is handed to us, and sometimes we are not harmed by doing so. But to receive without question religious doctrines handed to us is extremely dangerous to our spiritual health. Isn’t it revealing, concerning our priorities, that none of us would tolerate a dirty dish in a restaurant, yet so few have diligently searched the Scriptures to ascertain the cleanliness of the doctrines they are taught?

Eating from a dirty spiritual dish is what happened in the early 20th century when believers blindly received Christianity’s new definition for salvation. It is astonishing that so few seem to have noticed that this modern usage of the word “saved” differs significantly from its biblical usage. Biblically speaking, conversion is available now in Christ for all who repent of their sins; salvation, however, is the final reward promised to converts *if they are faithful to Christ after their conversion* (Heb. 5:8-9). Conversion and salvation are not the same experience! Conversion begins our earthly walk with Christ, and salvation ends it.

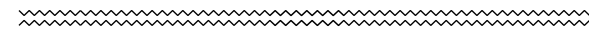
Most frequently, salvation is referred to in the New Testament as a future hope, not as a past or present experience. Sometimes, “saved” is used in the present tense with the meaning of “healed” or “rescued”, but the notion among many modern Christians that a believer already has salvation simply because he believes in Jesus is foreign to the Bible. Salvation is glorification with Christ, and none of us has

received that yet.

When the rich young ruler asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus responded, “*If you would enter into life, keep the commandments*” (Mt. 19:17). Please notice that according to the Lord Jesus, the way to salvation is the way of obedience to the commandments of God! Why else would Jesus point the wealthy young man to the commandments of God as the answer to his question? My dear friends, as much as our carnal nature would love to have it so, there is no formula, no ceremony, no single event or confession that can save anyone.

Jesus warned us not to believe that a mere confession of faith in him will save us. He said, “*Not every one who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*” Nor will merely knowing what is right save us, for “*not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified*” (Rom. 2:13). Nor should we think that the presence of spiritual gifts will save us, for the Lord said, “*Many shall say in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works?’ And then I will profess unto them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you who work iniquity.’*”

There is no way around it - we must do the will of God if we hope to be saved in the end. Without a life of holiness, “*no man shall see the Lord*” (Heb. 12:14). The truth is never more complicated than that.



Please visit our website!

You may download, view, copy, or browse through an abundance of Gospel Materials.

* www.isaiah58.com *

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Perhaps the most famous question in the Bible came from the terrified Philippian jailor in Acts 16. Kneeling in the dungeon where Paul and Silas were kept as prisoners, he pleaded, “What must I do to be saved?”

Historically, the answers to that simple question which have been given to the world by believers have been many and contradictory. Paul’s wise answer was direct and to the point: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” But with only that answer, there are questions left unanswered. What about baptism? Or the Lord’s Supper? Or good works? What does Paul’s phrase, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” entail?

Does the Bible tell us clearly what God requires of all who would be saved? What does the Bible really say about that vital issue? Indeed, what does the very word “saved” itself mean, as it is used by the wise and holy men who wrote our Scriptures? Can one know when he is saved?

Yes, there are answers, clear answers, available in the Bible for everyone who has the desire to find them. Join us as we search the Bible for truth concerning this topic.

Twelve messages on compact disc concerning what Jesus and the apostles really taught that men must do in order to be saved! Write to us at the address below and we will tell you how to receive your CDs!

WRITE FOR FREE SAMPLES OF OUR GOSPEL TRACTS:

ORDERS

P. O. Box 99 Burlington, NC 27216-0099