

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

WHO SHALL BE SAVED?

*When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying,
Who then can be saved? Matthew 19:25*

How religious men view their lost estate, will in great measure determine what it is that they believe "salvation" is about. The prevailing notion among the multitude of those who claim to profess faith in CHRIST, is that man is in a greatly wounded and debilitated state as a result of his sin, under condemnation, and standing in need of some sort of aid in order to extricate himself out of the mess he finds himself in.

Thus they view the matter of "salvation" as a benefit which CHRIST has provided and does presently offer to all of mankind. The manner in which they say a man can avail himself of this benefit is to exercise his free will and choose to believe in CHRIST as a SAVIOR. Therefore we have untold multitudes who consider themselves "saved" because they made a decision to be saved just like they decided what color shirt to wear. What could be simpler than that?

It is fair to say that the predominant consideration among those who call themselves Christians, in the present day, is that "salvation" is a sort of cooperative effort between man and GOD. GOD provides the plan of salvation and man provides the deciding factor of his own faith and choice. GOD is pictured as ONE who is wringing HIS hands as HE anxiously awaits the decision of each person to decide whether or not they will take HIM up on HIS offer to save each one. HE is said (by these freewill preachers) to have done all that HE can do to save everyone and now the rest is up to men to make a choice in the matter. Which choice will it be?

Most of these physicians of no value, tell their hearers that they are dangling by a thread over the fires of hell, into which they might drop at any moment, unless they will make all of heaven happy and assure themselves of eternal bliss by just deciding to take GOD up on HIS offer. HE really doesn't want to send them to the fiery pit but HIS hands are tied unless they let HIM into their heart (at least for a moment or two).

When a man is convinced by the SPIRIT of GOD (see John 16:8) of the actual condition that he is in by nature, then he will recognize the need for a "salvation" that actually saves, rather than one which makes "salvation" a mere possibility. The state of man as he comes forth from his mother's womb is not that he is wounded or spiritually immature. Rather, he is completely and utterly "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph.2:1); possessing neither sight to behold the promises of GOD nor the ability to produce faith in order to lay hold upon them.

If any part of his salvation depends on him, he is utterly and completely without hope. Such a man needs a "salvation" which is designed, purchased, and applied to his account, totally apart from any effort on his part. Those who seek to establish their own righteousness will take umbrage with that statement and continue to hawk the "gospel" as though it could be sold to the highest bidder.

When the LORD told HIS disciples that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it was for a rich man to enter heaven, they were totally flabbergasted, and asked "who then can be saved"? Their concept of "salvation" was much like the prevailing notion which

abounds today. They felt quite certain that man must play some role in his own salvation, since it was obvious to them that men of a certain power (rich men) should surely be able to gain a standing with GOD. The LORD then described to them the only manner in which any man is saved, *“With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” (Mat 19:26)*

In essence HE told them that not a single man could ever be saved by his own effort, even in part, yet *“the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD.” (Psa 37:39)* Jonah was a man who thought to save himself from doing what the LORD commanded, yet he was made acquainted with his own power to deliver himself, when he cried out from the belly of the fish, *“Salvation is of the LORD.” (Jon 2:9)* There was not a free will preacher to be found down there. Nor I might add did Nebuchadnezzar consult any when HE declared, *“And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Dan 4:34-35)*

So the truth of the matter is that “salvation” is the operation of GOD to deliver those whom HE wills from the death and condemnation which they rightly and justly deserve. This salvation is completely the work of GOD from beginning to end and HE is the ONE who determines the extent of it as well as those who are its recipients. And what can any man say? *“Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?” (Rom 9:20)*

We are certain that the LORD is the AUTHOR and FINISHER of our FAITH and is therefore said to be the SALVATION of HIS people. *“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” (Psa 27:1)* *“The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.” (Psa 18:46)* *“But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble.” (Psa 37:39)*

As a demonstration of that SALVATION and those HE has determined to be its recipients, HE is pleased to manifest those who are given the glorious privilege to be called the sons of GOD. We see who they are as we study the scriptures and see who **shall** be saved.

Those who are turned from their sin and upon whom the LIGHT of the LORD does shine. *“Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.” (Psa 80:3,7,19)*

Those who walk with the LORD in fellowship and obedience. *“Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved.” (Pro 28:18)* (see Isa.64:5) *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mar 16:16)* Lest a man think that salvation is unaccompanied with obedience, HE mentions the necessity of Baptism, but lest a man think that his personal activity could procure salvation for himself, HE clearly makes belief (i.e.; trust and reliance), which is the gift of GOD to be that upon which the enjoyment of salvation rests.

Those who are of the true Israel. *“But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation.” (Isa 45:17)* These are those who Paul describes when he says, *“But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” (Rom 2:29)* (see Jer.23:6)

Those whose only hope for salvation is CHRIST alone. *“Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.” (Jer 17:14)*

Those who are kept from falling, remaining steadfast in the HOPE of their calling. *“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” (Mat 24:13)*

Those who come in at the DOOR. *“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” (John 10:9)*

Those who call upon the NAME of the LORD. *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Rom 10:13)* To call upon the LORD is to relinquish hope in all others. *“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” (1Pet 5:7)*