

SALVATION: IN CHRIST JESUS

Joe Slater

Here is a person who has not obeyed the gospel of Christ. Perhaps he has never even been taught it. By all accounts, he is a good person; he works diligently, treats his family and neighbors well, and refrains from bad habits. Maybe he is even religious. What if he dies before anyone shows him the Bible's answer to the question: "What must I do to be saved?" Our hearts yearn to say he will be saved. What does the Bible teach?

Salvation, according to Scripture, is "in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:10). If one is not "in Christ," then he is lost, presuming he has reached a state of accountability. When we begin making exceptions for people who have never heard the gospel, but have lived the best they know how, or for people who die in traffic accidents on the way to be baptized, or who are in prison and are denied access to baptism, etc., then we drift on the sea of salvation by meritorious works. That is, we say or imply that God will save certain people because of their goodness, sincerity, good intentions, and obedience in other areas, not because they are in Christ. It's odd that those who claim to strongly emphasize (but actually abuse) the doctrine of grace are usually among the first to claim that the "good" person who hasn't been baptized into Christ will still be saved.

When the tenth plague hit Egypt, the only way to be spared was to be in the house where the blood had been applied. Scripture specifies that everybody else was affected, from the Pharaoh to the prisoner in the dungeon (Exodus 12:29). We might protest: "But that poor prisoner didn't hear the warning! He didn't even have an opportunity to sacrifice a lamb and smear its blood on the appropriate places. Do you mean his firstborn will die too? It isn't fair!"

Indeed, from a purely human perspective, it doesn't sound fair. We'll have to trust the wisdom and justice of God. But the principle is still true today – if you aren't in the house that has the blood (i.e. the Lord's church, see 1 Timothy 3:15 &

Acts 20:28), you will suffer disaster! And just as the blood had to be applied in the prescribed way (with a bunch of the hyssop plant), so today Christ's blood must be applied in the prescribed way – namely, through baptism. We are baptized into the death of Christ, and that is where He shed His blood (see Romans 6 and the crucifixion accounts in the gospels). When one is scripturally baptized, the Lord adds him to His church (Acts 2:47); or, to put it another way, he is baptized into the one body (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Scripture shows no way for one outside of Christ to access the cleansing blood except by baptism; and there is no remission of sins apart from the blood of Christ, all of the good intentions and obedience in other areas notwithstanding.

Instead of hunting for loopholes, let's proclaim the good news of Christ to every creature!

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F E A R

F – E – A – R HAS TWO MEANINGS:

Forget Everything And Run

or

Face Everything And Rise

--Zig Ziglar

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**It is not necessary to blow out
the other person's light**

In order to let your own shine.

Questioning Jonah

"...for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity" (Jonah 4:2).

There are some great evangelism lessons taught in the book of Jonah. One way to notice them is to evaluate the questions asked in the book, and ask them of ourselves.

First, *"Why are you sleeping?"* (1:7). For Jonah, they were in the middle of a physical crisis in the storm at sea. For us, we are in the middle of a spiritual crisis! Looking around, we see a lack of spiritual concern everywhere, and more people on the planet than there has ever been. Now is not the time to slumber. Now is the time to wake up and get to work!

Second, *"What is your occupation?"* (1:8). For Jonah, they could not figure out that he was a prophet because he was not prophesying. Can people tell we are Christians, or do they have to ask? If we are not living it, telling it, and inviting them, will they ever know?

Third, *"How could you do this?"* (1:10). For Jonah, he had put the ones around him in grave danger by not obeying the Lord. If we do not obey the Lord's commission to teach the Gospel, we are putting the souls around us in eternal danger!

Fourth, *"Do you have good reason to be angry?"* (4:4). For Jonah, he was angry that the Lord was willing to "relent" from punishing Jonah's enemies when they repented. What about us? Are we guilty of not wanting to spread the Gospel to people who look different, talk different, smell different, or come from different religious backgrounds? Are we soil testers or seed sowers?

Fifth, *"Should I not have compassion?"* (4:11). God asked Jonah this, pointing out His willingness to forgive even the pagan, Gentile enemies of Jonah's people. God is still wanting and willing to forgive all who would believe and obey Him.

We must not run from the job of evangelism! There is too much at stake - Our souls, and the souls of those yet to hear the Gospel!

--Corey Sawyers (Denver, CO)