

Saved, But Just Barely?

Joe Slater

“If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and sinner appear?” (1 Peter 4:18).

I have no idea how many times I’ve heard this passage quoted and misapplied to teach that even the most faithful child of God will just barely squeak through the pearly gates before they slam shut. I call it “skin-of-the-teeth salvation,” and let me say here and now: “The Bible Teaches No Such Thing!”

Peter was quoting Proverbs 11:31 from the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew text used by Greek-speaking Jews to whom Peter wrote. It will help us to read it from an English translation of the Hebrew text also. *“If the righteous will be recompensed on the earth, how much more the ungodly and sinner”* (Proverbs 11:31, NJKV). That doesn’t match with the idea of just barely making it to Heaven! Nor does Peter’s context pertain to salvation from sin in Heaven. Peter was writing about suffering as a Christian (1 Peter 4:16). If God allows His children to suffer, delivering them only through great difficulty, rest assured that the fate of the ungodly will be infinitely worse! And that’s what “scarcely” means – not “just barely,” but “with difficulty.” The same word is used in Luke 9:39 where a demon left a man’s son *“with great difficulty.”* The unclean spirit didn’t “just barely” depart, but as it left, it caused the boy a final dose of misery.

In a different passage which actually does pertain to salvation in Heaven, Peter wrote that *“an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”* (2 Peter 1:11). Just barely saved? Nope!

By the way, the pearly gates will never slam shut; they are open continually (Revelation 21:25).

In The News

Ancient Bible Manuscripts In Danger Of Destruction

Archivists are frantically scanning some 4,500 ancient manuscripts in an effort to digitally preserve them. The urgency to complete the preservation as quickly as possible stems from two reasons (Source: *Jerusalem Post*).

First, the fragile texts, dating back to the fourth century, are among the oldest surviving copies of the Bible. One of these is the famous Sinaiticus Codex.

But condition isn’t the only reason for the hurry. Islamic terrorists have encroached into the area near St. Catherine’s Monastery in the Sinaitic region. These violent and fanatical enemies of all are determined to destroy any artifact not aligned with their hostile nature.

The technology being employed may just be the best means of preserving ancient biblical texts today. Each manuscript is scanned in red, green, and then blue light. The three colored images are then merged together to produce one high-resolution, full-color image.

Despite the efforts of many enemies of God, we cannot but be amazed at how the Holy Scriptures have been providentially preserved through multiple millennia.

*The grass withereth
the flower fadeth;
but the word of our God
shall stand forever*
(Isaiah 40:8)

--Jared Jackson (via Christian Courier, July, 2019)

ARE YOU LIVING A QUESTIONABLE LIFE?

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15 NIV).

Is your life such that people see a difference? Is your life so questionable that people burn with curiosity to ask, "What's with you?"

The actions of the Christians in Acts 2:42-47 stood out so much that people who saw them clearly sought to find the answer to "What's with you?" Learning the answer led them to Jesus.

The first-century Christians were living God-centered, God-directed, and God-focused lives. Those Christians demonstrated godly, caring attitudes.

Peter said that non-believers will glorify God as they observe your good deeds (1 Peter 2:12).

Today even atheists do good deeds. What can you do so that people will see a difference in your deeds? A difference that causes them to question you?

--Ed Wittlif (Denver, CO)

+ + + + + + + + + + +

Use What You Have

Shamgar had an ox goad; David had a sling;

Dorcas had a needle; Rahab had some string;

Samson had a jawbone; Aaron had a rod;

Mary had some perfume; All were used by God.

--Author Unknown