

SOTERIOLOGY:  
The Doctrine of Salvation  
Gulf Coast Baptist Church  
Bible Institute

“What must I do to be saved?”. That was the question posed to Paul and Silas by the Philippian jailer. The jailer used the Greek word *poieo* which means, to make or to do. His question is indicative of lost man’s misguided idea that there is something that they can and must accomplish to be accepted by God. This tendency has existed since the Fall. This erroneous mindset is the basis for the religions of the world. The Scriptures paint a very different picture of what must happen for someone to be saved. When the Jews asked Jesus what they needed to do to work the works of God, he responded, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” (Jo. 6:29) Man can “do” nothing to make themselves acceptable to God, rather God forgives and makes them acceptable when they believe His promise concerning salvation.

I. Salvation is by grace through faith, not out from works - Eph. 2:8-9

A. What is Faith?

1. Hope is built upon a promise(s) of God - Eph. 2:12; Acts 26:6
  - a) Eph. 2:12 - *“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”*
  - b) Acts 26:6-7 - *“And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise [future resurrection] made of God unto our fathers: Unto which [promise] our twelve tribes, instantly serving [God] day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.”*
2. Hope is not hope if it can be seen - Ro. 8:24
  - a) *“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it?”*
  - b) Similar to Heb. 11, hope, the basis for faith, is the confidence in something [a promise of God] that is unseen
3. Faith is the making real of a confidence one has in an unseen promise of God - Heb. 11:1
  - a) *“Now faith is the substance of things hope for, the evidence of things not seen.”*
    - (1) Substance: *hupostasis* - “a standing under”, “that which stands, or is set, under, a foundation, beginning,” hence, the quality of confidence which leads one to stand under, endure, or undertake anything:
    - (2) Faith is the outworking of hope
  - b) Biblical definition of faith:
    - (1) the making real of a confidence one has in an unseen promise of God
    - (2) Living one’s life in the certainty of God’s person and unseen promises, even if what we see and experience seems contrary to what God has said
4. Salvation is by the means of faith - Ro. 4:5; Eph. 2:8-9
  - a) Salvation is not out from works (*ek* = out from a source)
  - b) Salvation is not earned, or merited,
  - c) Faith provides no opportunity for man to boast in his contributions to his salvation, all glory is attributed to God

- d) Faith is the door or the conduit by which one receives the promise of salvation which is graciously provided by God

## II. Salvation is by grace and not of works - Ro. 4:3-5; 11:6

A. "...Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

### 1. Definition: Grace

- a) "God's attitude of kindness whereby He bestows a benefit or benefits on those who are undeserving." - Dale Spurbeck
- b) "God's attitude in which He chooses to provide good without considering whether it is deserved or not." - Tim Hoelscher

### 2. Faith is counted, or reckoned, for righteousness - Ro. 4:3

- a) God considers one to be righteous based upon their faith in His promises
- b) The individual does not become an un-sinner, rather God chooses to change His perspective on that individual when they believe His promise

### 3. No amount of self-effort can save anyone

### 4. God determined to save the ungodly, not those who are "good"

B. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

### 1. Grace and works are incompatible

### 2. Even on our "best day", it is futile to try to earn salvation by works

## III. The James vs. Paul debate:

A. Martin Luther viewed the book of James as being inferior to Paul's epistles and some even believe he wanted it excluded from the canon of scripture. Luther's aversion for the book of James was because it appears to advocate works righteousness. If that was truly the case though, it would put James in opposition to the rest of scripture.

### B. Pauline Soteriology (Past tense)

1. "...Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." - see Ro. 3:26-30

- a) Law is anathorous signifying a quality or kind of thing
- b) God's declaration of righteousness is apart from works or any kind of law - v. 27

### C. James' Soteriology (Present tense)

#### 1. Demonstration of salvation to men by works in present tense salvation

#### 2. Concerning possibility for faith without works to save a man in present tense salvation - Ja. 2:14

#### 3. Deadness of faith without works in present tense salvation - Ja. 2:17, 20, 26

#### 4. The key to understanding this section - Ja. 2:18

a) "Shew me (man, not God) your faith without works"

b) "I (man) will show you (man, not God) my faith out from works"

(1) The believer in Christ has been saved unto good works - Eph. 2:10

(2) The works that God desires the believer to do are accomplished out from faith:

(a) 1 Thess. 1:3 - "Remembering without ceasing your works of faith..."

(b) 2 Thess. 1:11 - "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of [this] calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of [his] goodness, and the work of faith with power:"

(c) Heb. 11 - the works of faith in this chapter are all performed by OT saints

(d) These believers were declared righteous before men by works resulting from their faith

5. The examples of Abraham and Rahab

a) Abraham - Ja. 2:21-24

(1) Salvation - Gen. 15:6; Ja. 2:23

(2) Work of faith (+35 yrs. after salvation) - Ja. 2:21-22

(3) Abraham demonstrated faith by his works - Ja. 2:24

b) Rahab - Ja. 2:25

(1) Salvation - Joshua 2:9-11

(2) Work of faith - hiding the spies demonstrated her saving faith - Joshua 2

IV. What must one believe to be saved in the Dispensation of Grace (Church Age)? - 1 Co. 15:1-4

A. *“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you...by which also ye are saved...how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”*

1. Gospel that Paul preached to in order to be saved

2. Christ’s death for sins proved by his burial

3. Christ’s resurrection out from the dead - 2 Ti. 2:8-9

4. This Good News is the power of God unto salvation - Ro. 1:16

B. Misleading statements about salvation

1. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ - Acts 16:31

a) This passage does not say what to believe about Christ - “Believe what?”

b) The title Paul uses can be helpful - the man Jesus, who was crucified for our sins, who is the Resurrected Anointed One, is God Himself

2. “Believe that God loves you” - John 3:16 does not equal the gospel -

a) God is not fond of the world

(1) God loved (aorist - 1x act) by giving His Son

(2) God loved because it’s His nature, not because there is anything in mankind deserving His love

(3) Not a continual fondness of the lost of the world

b) It does not include man’s sinful condition

c) It does not include the resurrection

3. “Asking Jesus into your heart” is not a presentation of the gospel

a) What does that even mean?

b) “Which Jesus?” - Many different Jesus’ could fill that void

4. “Confess your sins and ask Jesus to forgive you”

a) The Holy Spirit convinces the world of the sin of unbelief - Jo. 16:8-9

(1) Confessing a list of sins is not necessary for forgiveness

(2) What if you forgot some?

b) Maybe God will, maybe He won’t forgive you when you ask

(1) “I’m too bad, no way he’ll forgive me!”

(2) Scripture never instructs the sinner to ask for forgiveness, only that God will forgive if you believe His promise

5. Lordship Salvation

a) “Submission to the will of god, to Christ’ lordship, and to the guiding of the Spirit is essential, not an optional, part of saving faith.”

- b) “Saving faith is a placing of oneself totally in submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- c) “Salvation isn’t the result of an intellectual exercise. It comes from a life lived in obedience and service to Christ as revealed in Scripture; its the fruit of actions, not intentions. There’s no room for passive spectators: words without actions are empty and futile...The life we live, not the words we speak, determines our eternal destiny.”
- d) Lordship salvation confuses God’s desires for present tense salvation for conditions necessary for initial salvation, essentially teaching a works based soteriology.