

Salvation — How is it Gained? Once Gained, Can it be Lost?

Many struggle with these questions. Depending on who you speak to you are likely to receive any number of answers. Most people though, will agree on one necessary element, that being, accepting Jesus as your Savior.

Acts 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

But, what does it mean to accept Jesus? By and large Christians will quote verses such as:

Acts 2:37-38 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

1 John 2:1-2 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

We can be in total agreement with anyone following these principles. Perhaps it is what comes next that unsettles people. The evangelical, by and large, believes this means that once you accept Jesus as your savior, you are thereafter secure. For Jesus himself said in John 10:28-29: “**And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.**”. Doesn't this mean once you've made a decision for Jesus, you are eternally secure?

Others hold that you need to do something while still others maintains it is security in their particular denomination or those who believe and think as they do. Didn't Jesus also say in John 10:16 “**And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.**”? Doesn't this mean everyone will be in one church unit at the end for Jesus also said in John 10:27; “**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.**”??

Can all views be equally correct? Why all the confusion? Does God have multiple roads to salvation? Some would say so. Yet, the nagging question in the minds of most honest folks would say no. Still, they sit in their pews each week during services congratulating themselves they will end up in heaven and those not in that particular church congregation, denomination and or group are lost souls. Jesus said something quite different though in Matthew 1:1. “**Judge not, that ye be not judged.**” The prophet Jeremiah said in chapter 17 verse 9 that; “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”. In other words, who are we to judge another. Only God can judge the intentions of another. Psalms 44:21 “Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.”

What or who make up God's church?

God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Where Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ's church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church. {UL 315.5}

Did you notice the conditions in the above definition of God's church? First it is not "various denominations". [1] It is where "two or three are gathered together" in His name and "keep His commandments". [2] Those who are "the humble few" and are in "the presence of the High and Holy One".

So what is the key? At this point, many may puzzle that there are more questions than answers. Perhaps so. Permit Paul to start bringing together some important pieces to our puzzle.

Eph 2:8-10 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Do not let the components herein escape our notice. [1] We're saved "through faith" "not" by our own doing. If it were our works that saved us we would likely be tempted to "boast" of our own efforts. Since God created us we are "His (Jesus') workmanship". It is His works in us, not ours. [2] Salvation is God's "gift" to us. [3] Jesus's work, in us, brings us into a walk with Him. That means as stated in 1 John 5:2; "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments." and 1 John 2:4 "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Let us end this session with this promise.

Ezek 34:11-12 For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

We all wish for salvation, yet many if not most of us doubt ourselves. May we find solace in the fact we do distrust in our human condition but we have a Savior that is able to save to the uttermost because he is interceding in our behalf, [Ref. Heb 7:25.] but for how long?

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