

THE EXAMINER



Published by the Winter Park church of Christ
Meeting at: 2122 Market Street; Wilmington NC 28403
www.winterparkcocnc.com

Vol. 2, No. 16

Edited by John Cripps

July 27th, 2014

- Great Principles of Our Salvation : How Faith Saves - by Ron Halbrook - Nashville, Tennessee - Part 1

We need to understand the fundamental principles of salvation. The place that faith plays in our salvation is misunderstood not only by denominational people, but also by many brethren. The Bible is the final authority on the subject of faith, as it is on every religious question.

A reading of **Eph. 2:1-10** will reveal statements regarding the Ephesians in "Times Past," in their "Present State," and then how they moved from that past to this present state, or "How Saved." Their condition in "Times Past" is expressed in these words: "dead in trespasses and sins;" "the course of this world;" "according to the prince of the power of the air;" "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;" "the lusts of our flesh;" "the desires of the flesh and . of the mind;" "the children of wrath." When Paul said they "were BY NATURE the children of wrath," he meant by nature of their walking in sin (as lie described in several terms) and not

by nature of their birth in sin, as the Calvinists and some other Protestants have it. The Bible knows nothing of inheriting sin and its guilt by birth, but speaks often of coming under sin and its guilt by practice of life (**Ezek. 18**).

But what of their "Present State?" These expressions apply; "you hath he quickened" (made alive); "quickened us together with Christ;" "ye are saved;" "raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" "that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace;" `saved;" "his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." That is quite a change! How did it come about? "How Saved" is seen in these terms: "God . . . is rich in mercy;" "his great love) wherewith he loved us;" "by grace;" "riches of his grace;" "his kindness toward us;" "through Christ Jesus;" "by grace are ye saved through faith;" "not of yourselves;" "the gift of God."

A study of these various terms, expressions, and phrases gives real meaning to the simple statement, "Ye are saved" (v. 5). They had passed from death to life, from disobedient living to obedient living, from being "children of wrath" to being inheritors of "the exceeding riches of his grace." One thing is crystal clear regarding this change of condition and life. Faith plays a vital part. In some way, in some sense, by some means, faith saves. The purpose of this study is to better understand how faith saves in the plan of God.

Another thing is abundantly clear from our text. Salvation is not accomplished by any ONE thing. Salvation has been described by some in the Protestant Reformation as Sola Gratia, or solely by grace; Solo Christo, or solely by Christ; Sola Fide, or solely by faith. The more popular way of stating this among the denominations is that we are saved by grace only and by faith only. Sometimes men will add by Christ only or even by Scripture only. But "only", comes from one-ly and means by ONE thing alone. Grace cannot be the ONE(ly) thing that saves if faith is the ONE(ly) thing that saves!! It must be one or the other one-it cannot be both and still be one! If we add one plus one plus one plus one, we get . . . one? ? ? No, four! If we are saved by grace ONE-ly,

plus faith ONE-ly, plus Christ ONE-ly, plus Scripture ONE-ly, then we are saved by how many things? Just one??? If a man steadfastly says it is still ONE-ly, then we demand to know which one??? If it's all four, then it's not one-and, there's no two ways about it! "Oh, we do not mean just one thing alone, we mean" We respond, "Quit saying one or alone or solely, then, and say what you mean." Paul said what he - meant in **Ephesians 2** and he did not attribute salvation to anything ONE-ly.; Instead, he spoke of God's part (love, mercy, grace, kindness, gift) AND Christ's part (through Christ and in him) AND man's part (faith, maintain good works).

Therefore, faith does not save by being the one and only thing that saves. How does it save, then?

Faith, An Activating Principle

We must understand what faith is in order to understand how it saves. The theme of the book of Romans involves the relationship between the gospel, faith, and life. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ . . . it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth . . . For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (**Rom. 1:16-17**). At that Great Judgment

Bar when time is no more, the Judge will pronounce the final verdict and its eternal sentence. If He says, "Guilty," He will say, "Death." If He says, "Innocent, just, right," He will say, "Life." "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (**Rom. 6:23**).

But Paul convicts Jew and Gentile alike of sin. Paul concludes his air-tight case, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (**3:23**). If all have sinned, then all will stand guilty and condemned. Is there no escape from this fatal end? Yes, by the gift of God. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (**v. 24**). How is this gift obtained? By faith, as the case of Abraham shows.

In that Abraham was justified by faith, he "is the father of us all" (**Rom. 4:16**). "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (**v. 3**). When Abraham and Sarah were beyond the normal child-bearing age, God promised a son which would make Abraham "the father of many nations." In spite of all outward appearances, Abraham "against hope believed in hope" -- "being not weak in faith"-- he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith,

giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness" (**vv. 18-23**). The very nature of the faith by which God justifies us is demonstrated in the life of Abraham. God commanded him to go from Ur to an unseen land; he went. God gave him circumcision, both as a seal and an act of faith. God promised him a son in his old age; he believed God; he went in unto his wife and she conceived. Later he was commanded to bring Isaac to the altar as an offering; again he obeyed. The nature of Abraham's faith is summed up in four words: "By faith Abraham . . . obeyed" (**Heb. 11:8**). Whenever Abraham obeyed God, as by offering Isaac, "faith wrought with his works . . . And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness" (**Jas. 2:21-23**).

From Abraham's life, we see that faith: (1) accepts God at His Word, (2) fully trusts His promises, (3) obeys exactly His command. This may be seen also in Hebrews 11, where we learn by faith Abel offered a sacrifice, Noah built an ark, Abraham obeyed, Sarah received strength, Abraham offered Isaac, Issac blessed Jacob, Jacob blessed Joseph's sons, Moses was

hidden, Moses chose to suffer with God's people, Moses kept the passover, Israel passed through the Red Sea, the walls of Jericho fell, Rahab received the spies, and other actions were accomplished: subdued, wrought, obtained, stopped, quenched, escaped, were tortured, etc., etc.

Not only is faith an action required on man's part, it is the principle that motivates action. Faith is not the one act that saves, apart from any other act of obedience. Rather, faith activates obedience and therefore saves. Christ said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (**Matt. 7:21**). What activates and motivates such obedience? Faith. Christ "learned . . . obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (**Heb. 5:8-9**). What activates our obedience in order that we might be saved? Faith. When faith accepts God's Word, trusts His promises, and obeys His command, then and only then does faith save.

How does faith save, then? By activating obedience. The same faith that saved Abraham will save us. Abraham accepted God's word, trusted His promises, and obeyed His will. "And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (**Rom. 4:23-24**).

*** Concluded In Next Bulletin ***

CONSIDER THESE BLESSINGS

EPH. 1:3

SINS WASHED AWAY - REV. 1:5

REDEMPTION - EPH. 1:7

SALVATION - 2 TIM. 2:10

PEACE WITH GOD - ROM. 5:1

BECOME NEW CREATURE - 2 COR. 5:17

ETERNAL LIFE - 1 JO. 5:11

PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER - 1 PET. 3:12

A WAY TO GOD - 1 JO. 2:1,2

INTERCESSION OF CHRIST - HEB. 7:25

INCORRUPTIBLE INHERITANCE - 1 PET. 1:3-5

DEATH IN CHRIST - REV. 14:13

ABUNDANT ENTRANCE INTO HEAVEN - 2 PET. 1:11

CROWN OF LIFE - REV. 2:10

THESE BLESSINGS CAN BE YOURS!

THEY ARE ALL IN CHRIST - EPH. 1:3

YOU CAN BE IN CHRIST - ROM. 6:3-5; GAL. 3:27

MUST REMAIN FAITHFUL IN CHRIST - 1 PET. 1:3-5

