

SAVED
(Part 1 of 6)

Paul when writing to young Timothy cautioned him concerning apostasy in the last days. He said, “This know also, that in the last days perilous [dangerous or difficult] times shall come” (II Timothy 3:1). The reason for these dangerous and difficult times is found in the first two words of II Timothy 3:2 “For men.” Paul warns Timothy that in the last days men and their thinking (mind-set) will change. Therefore, times will become dangerous and difficult. However, men in their twisted thinking will not be godless, but very religious. Paul spoke of them as “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” of which he warned Timothy “from such turn away” (II Timothy 3:5). In respect of these dangerous and difficult times Paul charges Timothy to “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they [men] will not endure [tolerate] sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (II Timothy 4:2-5).

Why is today’s church so weak? Why is it that many are able to claim a great crop of conversions and enroll many into membership but have less and less impact on our culture? Could it be that we are more interested in numbers than we are truth? It very well could be, and this is the reason that the gospel message of today appears a little distorted from what we read in Scripture. If one will examine carefully what they hear over most Radio and TV programs of present-day evangelicalism one will note a kind of fuzziness. It appears to be the gospel message of salvation, but by and large, it is not the gospel message that Jesus and the apostles preached. Paul said, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8). Paul’s language is very straightforward and strong concerning the gospel of salvation. In the mind of the apostle Paul anyone, and he means anyone, that would distort the gospel message of salvation, that person should be accursed (anathema or devoted to destruction).

This position that the apostle Paul sets forth is the same position that this writer holds. The preaching and teaching of the true gospel of salvation is not for the weak-minded, nor the timid, but for those who know what is at stake. There is more to being a born again Christian than reciting a prayer or knowing the biblical terminology. Yet many preachers and teachers of our day leave this very

impression upon people. Therefore, I feel it my duty as a minister of Jesus Christ to call to your attention some very important facts concerning this great doctrine of salvation (Soteriology).

SALVATION FROM A HISTORIC VIEWPOINT

The year was 1878, the date, October 13th Sunday evening. The subject was “The Need and Nature of Conversion.” The speaker was well gifted, and a person of great intellectual ability, his name was C. H. Spurgeon. He chose his text from the prophet Isaiah which reads, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:7).

In Spurgeon’s first point of the text he states, “If a man is to be saved, he must turn from his sins: “Right about face!” is the marching order for every sinner. There is no hope of forgiveness for him if he will continue with his face as it now is. He must turn from his sin if he would be saved.

This will be at once evident to you when I ask, - How would it be consistent with the holiness of God for him to put aside our past sin, and then allow us to go on sinning as we did before? How could he be thought to be just and pure if he should remit the punishment for past transgressions, without seeing in us any determination to abstain from such sin in the future? Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, but he never came here to spare their sins. God would never have sent his Son to this earth to be the messenger of sin, yet Christ would be nothing better than the messenger of sin if he had come, and said to men, “You may continue in your sin, yet I will forgive you. You may live as you like, yet you shall find mercy with the Lord at the last.” It must strike you, in a moment that such a course as this would be inconsistent with the character of the Judge of all the earth, who must do right. There is no such teaching as that in the whole of the Scriptures; and he who dares to believe it, believes a lie. Nowhere, in the whole compass of revelation, is there a promise of forgiveness to the man who continues in his iniquity. There is a promise of pardon to the sinner who forsakes his wicked way, and turns from his evil thoughts; there are many promises of forgiveness to those who confess their sins in humble penitence, and who seek to live new lives under the power of the Holy Spirit. Possibly, someone would remind me that the greatest promises are given to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is quite true; but the faith which believes in Jesus is a living and active faith, which works in the soul a hatred of sin; and if a man says, “I believe in Christ,” and yet continues to delight in sin, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him, for “faith, if it

hath not works, is dead, being alone.” That faith alone will save us which is proved to be a vital and real faith by bringing forth “fruits meet for repentance.” It is no use wanting or trying to be saved without a change of heart, and a change of life. “Ye must be born again,” is Christ’s own words to all unregenerate sinners. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” There has never been any revocation of these truths, and again I repeat that, in the whole compass of the Word of God, there is no promise of pardon to the man who continues in his iniquities. Neither, dear friends, is there a single case in fact, nor one emblem in parable, that would lead any to hope that he could keep his sins, and yet be saved. . .”

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