

# Saving Faith

# Two very different, equally wrong, attitudes

1. 2 Pt.3:5, willfully forget = deliberately overlook (ESV). Do not wish to know.
  - No passage, preaching, pleading can change truth. Cf. 2:5
- a. They have no security...
- b. They make human judgments.
  - Q: “Is brother X saved?”

# Two very different, equally wrong, attitudes

1. 2 Pt.3:5, willfully forget = deliberately overlook (ESV). Do not wish to know.

2. Mt.7:3, speck, plank.

– Book: some *think* they understand gospel

– They profess belief in Jesus, but are lost (by their own reckoning)

– This means . . .

1. Faith is more than mere mental assent

2. They cannot merely rely on a faith verse

3. If faith includes more than mental assent, it may include baptism

# I. Salvation is Based on Many Things

# Salvation

- Divine beings: God, Jesus, Spirit: mercy, love, blood, word...
- Human responses: Ac.2:38, 41
  - 38, 41: do what the apostle said...
  - Belief is understood (2:44)
    - May find other conditions; cannot exclude one of these
    - E.g.: Ac.2:42, no singing?

# Salvation illustrated

- Ep.2:8, by grace, saved, through faith, and *that (this)* not of yourselves
  - Some: “God gives us faith” (miraculous)
  - If God gives faith, and if salvation is by faith alone, we’re saved totally by God . . . [= *we do nothing!*]

. . . WHY ISN'T EVERYONE SAVED?

# Salvation illustrated

- Ep.2:8, by grace, saved, through faith, and *that* (*this*) not of yourselves
  - ‘*that*’ does not refer to faith (faith IS of us)
  - ‘*that*’ refers to saved (salvation)
  - God saves when we come (respond) in faith.
    - Gn.22:12, Abraham...

# Salvation illustrated

- Ep.2:8, by grace, saved, through faith, and *that* (*this*) not of yourselves
  - NASB ftnt.: ‘that [this] salvation’ = the entire process of salvation
  - Vincent: “And that. Not *faith*, but the salvation.” “Gift of God” || Ro.6:23, gift of God
  - ATR: Grace is God’s part, faith ours.  
[NB: ‘**that**’ is neuter gender; faith and grace are feminine. *That* refers to the act of being saved by grace, conditioned on faith on our part] - p. 525



# Applied

- Ep.2:8, by grace, saved, through faith, and *that* not of yourselves
  - Ep.5:25-26, Washing...Water...Word
  - What Word connects to Washing of Water?
    - Baptism: Ac.22:16
    - Drowning man...
      - Oar
      - Holding on
      - Favor of men
      - Trust

## Applied – Noah's salvation

- Gn.6:8, **grace**: But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD
- Hb.11:7, **faith**: By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith
- 1 Pt.3:20, **water**: when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

# Applied – Noah’s salvation

- 1 Pt.3:21, There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- “Water was the means of destroying all the rest; that same water was the means for floating the ark with its eight souls. ...This is one of the passages which directly says that baptism ‘saves’” – Lenski, 170f.

# Applied

- Ep.2:8, by grace, saved, through faith, *that* not of yourselves
  - ATR: ‘Grace is God’s part, faith ours.’
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    - Drowning man...
    - Noah
    - Naaman, 2 K.5

# Salvation Applied

- Naaman and leprosy: 2 K.5
  - girl, prophet, instructions, river, dipping, seven times, etc.
- Though Naaman did his part (faith), it was salvation by grace . . . .
  - Naaman earned nothing
  - Praised God for his cure

# Applied

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    - Naaman, 2 K.5
    - Blind man, Jn.9:...5-7, 11
      - Spit, clay, going, washing, Siloam

I. Salvation is Based on Many Things

II. Some Faith is Small

## Mt.6:30

- Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?
  - Little faith in Great God??



## Lk.8:25

- But He said to them, “Where is your faith?” And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, “Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!”
  - Afraid of storm...then more afraid of Him

## Lk.17

- <sup>5</sup>The apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith.’ <sup>6</sup> So the Lord said, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”
  - Mustard = smallest of seeds, but doesn’t stay small...

## Ro.4:19

- And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.
  - Abraham was not weak in faith; some are, 14:1

## 1 Co.2

- <sup>4</sup>My speech and my preaching were not w. persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.
  - Misplaced faith (in wisdom of men).

## 2 Tim.2:18

- Who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.
  - Past faith is no guarantee of present or future faith. 2 Tim.4:10

I. Salvation is Based on Many Things

II. Some Faith is Small

**III. Some Faith is Simulated**

# Saul

<sup>1</sup>Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup>and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem – Ac.9

Misguided zeal

# Zeal

<sup>1</sup> Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. <sup>2</sup> For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. <sup>3</sup> For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God – Ro.10

- “I know one thing: salvation is not by baptism”
- Ro.6<sup>3</sup> do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?



# Paul's summary

<sup>14</sup> And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers – Gal.1.

- Religious, active, sincere...and wrong – all before he was baptized into Christ

I. Salvation is Based on Many Things

II. Some Faith is Small

III. Some Faith is Simulated

**IV. Some Faith Saves**

## Acts 2:36-37, 38, 41

- Summary: 44, all who *believed* (= v.41) – includes all of v.41, the baptized
- Repent and be baptized...for... (in Ac.2:38) = Lk.24:47, repentance for remission of sins
- “Forgiveness of sins i.e. cancellation of the guilt of sin...Ac.2:38” – BDAG

## Acts 2:36-37, 38, 41

- “Peter’s reply was unspeakably reassuring. Incredible as it must appear, he told them that there was hope for them even now. Let them repent of their sin and turn to God; let them submit to baptism in the name of Jesus, confessed as Messiah; and their sins would be forgiven – nay more, they too would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit which had been bestowed upon the apostles themselves but an hour or two before” – FF Bruce, p.75

## Acts 2:36-37, 38, 41

- (baptism was no surprise): “The idea of an unbaptized Christian is simply not entertained in NT” – Prof. Ned Stonehouse, p. 77
- “You must repent, and every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to have your sins forgiven” –Edgar Goodspeed, NT, 1923, p. 231

## James 2:14-23

- Abraham obeyed, no matter the cost
- Faith and actions cannot be separated

24: You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only ...

[Mere profession of faith is not saving faith, v.14ff]

26: For as the body w/o the spirit is dead, so faith w/o works is dead also.

[Dead faith is lodged in a lifeless body.]

# Conclusion:

- “Only he who is obedient believes” – Bonhoeffer
- “If we have the faith of a Paul, we will have the works of a James” –
  - “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love” – Gal.5:6; cf. Ja.2