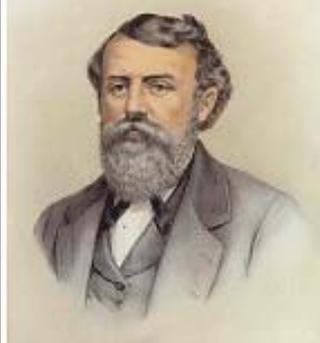


Salvation by Works



Finney



Moody



Graham

In the last 150 years, the evidence for eternal life has been reduced from a changed life to merely using the name of Jesus in a rote prayer. Charles G. Finney originated the heresy; D.L. Moody perpetuated it; and Billy Graham popularized it. Those appalled at the doctrine of these heretics call it decisional salvation, easy-believism, and fire insurance. They watch as “converts” rush back to the world without any evidence at all of grace in their lives. These three men were ignorant of the Bible, were obsessed with the dignity of the human will and numbers, and their preaching has devastated Bible Christianity. Their “converts” live like the world and presume on salvation by a cheap decision for heaven.

The error spawned the Lordship controversy, where teachers of this heresy reject even basic repentance or commitment to Christ as part of salvation. But the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles preached a very different doctrine, which required good works as the essential basis and evidence of eternal life.

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the **Lord** shall be saved.”
Romans 10:13

These heretics use Romans 10:13 as cotton candy to offer eternal life and heaven to anyone who will mouth the word, “Lord.” As soon as the person mumbles “Lord,” the soul winner guarantees their salvation no matter how they may live or die! All they have to do is remember the date of their decision!

“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.”
Matthew 7:21

“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth
Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the **Lord**, but by the Holy Ghost.”
I Corinthians 12:3

“And why call ye me, **Lord, Lord**, and do not the things which I say?”
Luke 6:46

But look at what Jesus and the apostles taught! Saying “Lord” did not prove a thing! It was living for the Lord that counted! If you do not have much fruit and good works, you have no evidence of eternal life!

Salvation by Works

Introduction:

1. We hold to a different doctrine of salvation than other churches in this city called the buckle of the Bible Belt.
2. You should understand the doctrine of salvation, rejoice in its gracious nature, and be able to defend the truth.
3. The horrible disease of easy-believism, promising eternal life for mere decisions, has corrupted Christianity.
4. There are two primary goals for this sermon: decisional salvation is heresy; and true saints will bear fruit.

A Doctrine from Hell

- A. From the beginning, man has wanted to save himself, whether by fig leaves, Moses' law, or freewill.
- B. The heresy of decisional regeneration, or decisional salvation, is the rage in these perilous times.
 1. They say, God loves every sinner so much; Jesus died for each one; the Spirit convicts each one.
 2. All a sinner must do is believe on Jesus, call on Jesus, invite Jesus into his heart, make a decision for Jesus, accept Jesus as his personal Savior, or other decision formula in order to be born again.
 3. Once he is born again, with the date and timing guaranteeing his perpetual assurance, he knows he is saved no matter what, for "once saved, always saved." Instant salvation instead of pudding!
 4. This sacramental, hocus-pocus, numbers-driven, man-exalting, God-denying, sin-allowing, repentance-rejecting, and holiness-hating scheme is devilish heresy. It is not from the Bible.
 5. You must hear their invitations! "There is nothing you can do ... all you have to do is ... it is so easy to be saved in the next few seconds ... you can know tonight you will never go to hell ..."
 6. Charles G. Finney got the whole mess going, and Billy Graham did the most to popularize it.
 7. Then we got the "Romans Road," but the road never gets to sanctification (Rom 12-16), and it always misses the verses showing the holy and righteous character of the justified (8:1,13; etc.).
 8. We know without a doubt that God must regenerate before sinners will do anything right at all.
- C. This lie from hell has gone so far as to create a lordship controversy rejecting the duty of repentance.
 1. Can you believe many today condemn repentance and Jesus as Lord in getting-saved formulas?
 2. They say that anything beyond "bare belief of the bare truth" is legalistic salvation by works!
 3. You better believe it, because the lordship controversy has been a raging conflict in many circles.
 4. They reduced salvation to a belief-decision, and now they reduce how much you have to believe.
 5. Charles Ryrie, in Balancing the Christian Life, wrote, "The importance of this question *cannot be overestimated* in relation to both Salvation and Sanctification. The message of faith only and the message of faith plus commitment of life cannot both be the gospel; therefore one of them is false and comes under the curse of perverting the gospel or preaching another gospel," (p. 170).
 6. Ray Stamford, in Handbook of Personal Evangelism, wrote, "Any teaching that demands a change of conduct toward either God or man for salvation is to add works or human effort to faith, and this contradicts all Scripture and is an accursed message."
 7. Zane Hodges, in Absolutely Free, wrote "Faith alone (not repentance and faith) is the sole condition for justification and eternal life" (p. 144).
 8. Robert Lightner, in Sin, Salvation, and the Savior, wrote, "These views - the absolutely free gift view and the lordship view cannot both be right. They are mutually exclusive. The Bible teaches one or the other or neither, but it cannot teach both without contradicting itself."
- D. Most believe that if unconditional election were true, men would have no motive to live for Christ.
 1. They get all excited about reconciling God's sovereignty and man's responsibility by gimmicks.
 2. "The door into heaven says, 'Whosoever will,' and on the other side says, 'Chosen in Christ.'"
 3. "God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are like the two rails of a railroad track ... meeting far out in the distance." But we say that we don't want to ride on a train where the tracks meet!
 4. Their idea is lascivious, for it promises life to reprobates and crushes the righteous (Ezek 13:22).
 5. They accuse us of being antinomians (lawless rejecters of good works), as a slur against election.

6. We know that those ridiculing holy living by virtue of election are damned souls (Romans 3:8).
- E. Those holding God's sovereignty and sacramentalism, called Reformed, cry *sola fide* (faith only)!
 1. Faith only! It may be true with careful description in limited contexts, but it feeds decisionalism!
 2. Faith without works is dead, so blabbing about faith only had better be restrained to Judaizers.
 3. We know Paul's contrast of faith and works was to condemn Judaizers, not teach decisionalism.
 4. He did not teach decisionalism, as James proves, but rather condemned Jews with Moses' law.
- F. Those holding God's sovereignty and teaching unconditional eternal life often neglect man's duties.
 1. Man's duties are not for eternal life, but God's salvation is not for man to live as he pleases.
 2. Some Primitive Baptists end up with most or all humanity elect and regenerate, without works.
 3. These are the true antinomians, for they consider most of the world's fools and pagans as elect.
- G. The popular use of Scripture is to grab sound bites with little regard for any context or honest sense.
 1. Consider John 1:12. Why use only half a sentence? They reject God's choice in regeneration.
 2. Consider John 6:37. Why use only half a verse? They cannot stand God's election in Christ.
 3. Consider John 6:47. Does it give a condition? Or does it state a fact? Why make it a condition?
 4. Consider Revelation 3:20. It is totally unrelated to salvation: it is addressed to church members.
- H. While the heresy of these pernicious doctrines and practices is obvious, we seek fair use of Scripture.
 1. Our issue is this: if sound bites with faith convict them to promote decisional regeneration and easy salvation, then let these sound bites of good works convict them to promote holy living!
 2. Their doctrine of salvation is so distorted and twisted; we simply want to help get them balanced.
 3. If sound bites with faith attached to salvation require faith as a condition for eternal life, then these sound bites with good works attached to salvation require good works as a condition also.
 4. If we are honest, only the Campbellites, the so-called Church of Christ, consistently includes works in their salvation scheme, which leads them to lose their salvation for every act of sin.
 5. You better figure out the fatal difference between calling on the name of the Lord and calling Him Lord, before it is everlastingly too late (Rom 10:13; Matt 7:21; Luke 6:46; I Cor 12:3)!

A Doctrine from Heaven

- A. The doctrine of salvation in the Bible does not put any stock at all in a man's momentary decision.
 1. There are [seven Bible reasons](#) why we categorically reject any such decisional salvation scheme.
 2. There are [five phases of salvation](#), and four of those phases do not include man's will at all.
 3. Eternal life is entirely a gift of God according to His own purpose and will, not the will of man.
 4. Repentance, faith, and good works are all the fruits of regeneration and evidence of eternal life.
- B. Sinners are not saved by good works, but they cannot lay any claim to eternal life without them.
 1. We totally deny any meritorious value of good works in earning salvation from God (Rom 11:6).
 2. But we just as totally deny any assurance or evidence of eternal life without them (Jas 2:14-26).
 3. Salvation is without good works, but unto good works (Eph 2:8-10; Titus 3:3-8; Phil 2:12-13).
- C. Good works are closely connected to salvation throughout the whole Bible and the New Testament.
 1. Get a load of Psalm 15, where David lists the characteristic good works of God's saints. Why isn't this passage used for an invitational text? Why isn't this reference in football endzones?
 2. Get a load of Psalm 24, where David lists further characteristic good works of Zion's citizens.
 3. The gospel of the New Testament always connects faith and repentance (a changed life).
 4. Those that enter into the kingdom of heaven are those doing the will of the Father (Matt 7:21).
 5. Jesus Christ will eternally reject all men continuing in a course of wickedness (Matt 7:22-23).
 6. The Lord Jesus had no use for those calling His name but not doing His sayings (Luke 6:46).
 7. Our Lord's Beatitudes state heavenly rewards and blessedness for more than faith (Matt 5:1-12).
 8. When Jesus began the Sermon on the Mount, He condemned the least compromise (Matt 5:20).
 9. Calling your brother a fool without a justifiable cause creates the danger of hellfire (Matt 5:22).
 10. If you want to know for sure you are saved, you better do these things diligently (II Pet 1:5-11).
 11. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him (Heb 5:9).

12. God works His grace in us, but we must work out salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:13).
13. Cornelius was commended and approved by Peter for working righteousness (Acts 10:34-35).
14. Believing on Jesus Christ is absolutely worthless without continuing in His word (John 8:31,44).
15. The evidence of abiding in Jesus Christ is bearing much fruit to avoid His burning (John 15:5-6).
16. If a man is truly saved and in Christ Jesus, he will be a new creature practically (II Cor 5:17).
17. Paul knew the election of the Thessalonians by their work, labor, and patience (I Thess 1:3-4).
18. Paul told Titus to be always about the work of teaching believers care for good works (Titus 3:8).
19. Paul told his prize ministerial student to fight the good fight of faith for eternal life (I Tim 6:12).
20. If we analyze and consider faith by Hebrews 11, we find that in every single case it did much.
21. The classic text for the importance of good works is James 2:14-26, where faith only is ridiculed.
22. Jesus told the church at Ephesus that the tree of life in paradise was for overcomers (Rev 2:7).
23. Jesus told the church at Smyrna that avoiding the second death was for overcomers (Rev 2:11).
24. Jesus told the church at Pergamos a new name unknown by men was for overcomers (Rev 2:17).
25. Jesus told the church at Thyatira the morning star was for workers and overcomers (Re 2:26-28).
26. Jesus told the church at Sardis white raiment and the book of life was for overcomers (Rev 3:5).
27. Jesus told the church at Philadelphia that the city of Jerusalem was for overcomers (Rev 3:12).
28. Jesus told the church at Laodicea that sitting in Christ's throne was for overcomers (Rev 3:21).
29. The objects of Satan's wrath, the pure church, keep the commandments of God (Rev 12:17).
30. Paul was still desiring, paying, and pressing for the approval and victory in Christ (Phil 3:8-14).
31. Phinehas obtained righteousness by impaling two fornicators while others cried (Ps 106:30-31).
32. The rich do not look to their decision for eternal life, but rather to their giving (I Tim 6:17-19).
33. Paul was sure of a crown of righteousness for fighting, finishing, and keeping (II Timothy 4:7-8).
34. God's gracious salvation of sinners is Christ is for those continuing in the faith (Col 1:21-23).
35. We are Christ's house and partakers of Christ by continuing stedfast in our faith (Heb 3:6,14).
36. There is therefore now no condemnation to them who truly walk after the Spirit (Romans 8:1-9).
37. Jesus declared salvation for Zacchaeus, not after a decision, but after a payment (Luke 19:1-10).
38. It is the doers of God's word that are saved, not the readers or the professors (James 1:21-25).
39. The people asked John what they could do to please God, and John told them (Luke 3:10-14).
40. The true followers of Jesus deny themselves, bear their cross, and follow Christ (Luke 9:23).
41. The true followers of Jesus hate all the dear things of this life and their lives also (Luke 14:26).
42. The true followers of Jesus must bear their cross in life and follow after Christ (Luke 14:27).
43. God has given commandments, and we are to do them, though they are our duty (Luke 17:10).
44. Preaching basics and baptizing only fractionally fulfills the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20).
45. The resurrection of life is for those that have done good, and vice versa for evil (John 5:29).
46. If you want to be the children of God, then you need to love your enemies, now (Matt 5:43-45).
47. If you really want to inherit everlasting life, then you need to forsake your dearest (Matt 19:29).
48. We need preaching that eternal life is dependent on mortifying the body's deeds (Romans 8:13).
49. Suffering is necessary to be glorified with Jesus Christ, if Paul wrote inspired truth (Rom 8:17).
50. Paul prayed for the Colossians to walk worthy of God in good works, not just faith (Col 1:10).
51. Serving a boss heartily at work is the basis on which you receive the inheritance (Col 3:23-24).
52. For a woman to be saved by Jesus, she must have faith, love, holiness, and sobriety (I Tim 2:15).
53. You must endure temptation, if you wish to receive a crown of life from the Lord (James 1:12).
54. If you want eternal life at the end, then you must keep yourself in the love of God (Jude 1:21).
55. You better be doing His commandments in order to have a right to the tree of life (Rev 22:14).
56. Godliness has promise of the life that now is and that which is to come, not faith (I Timothy 4:8).
57. Jesus is coming with mighty angels to destroy them that do not obey the gospel (II Thess 1:8).
58. Paul labored to be accepted by Christ in patient endurance and zealous service (II Cor 5:9-11).
59. Righteousness is the mark of the true children of God as opposed to wickedness (I John 3:4-13).
60. We prove eternal life and assure our hearts before God by loving the brethren (I John 3:14-24).

61. Love of the brethren is just as essential to identify true children of God as faith (I John 4:7-21).
62. God accepted the prayers and alms deeds of Cornelius and told him what to do (Acts 10:1-6).
63. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, which are proofs of eternal life (Mark 16:16).
64. The apostolic answer to men asking what to do is for them to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38).
65. Jesus had no use for men who believed on Him and sought Him for carnal reasons (John 6:1-71).
66. True religion bridles the tongue, visits orphans and widows, and rejects the world (Jas 1:26-27).
67. If faith is the hand taking the offer of salvation, why is charity greater than faith (I Cor 13:13)?
68. If you want to be saved, then you must endure to the end ... of Jerusalem's end (Matt 10:22).
69. These examples can be multiplied until most or all of the Scriptures are used, for the message throughout is summarized by fearing God and keeping His commandments (Eccl 12:13-14).

Let God Be True

- A. You better figure out the fatal difference between calling on the name of the Lord and calling Him Lord, before it is everlastingly too late (Rom 10:13; Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46; I Corinthians 12:3)!
- B. If the jailor asked today, "What must I do to be saved?" We would answer the same (Acts 16:30-31).
 1. But we know that his faith in Jesus Christ was the result of regeneration, not a condition for it.
 2. And believing on Christ was not the condition or instrument of eternal life, only laying hold of it.
 3. And we would immediately teach him the myriad of things he ought to do to add to his faith.
 4. And the only belief ever intended by Paul was much more than the belief of most (John 8:31).
 5. Belief on the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity is the evidence that you shall be saved in the last day, it is not the condition, instrument, or means of getting regenerated or justified. Rightly divide!
- C. We understand faith and good works to be the evidence and result of salvation and the means for assurance of salvation, but neither are a condition or instrument of eternal life in any degree at all.
- D. The Bible doctrine of salvation exalts God's grace to great heights and stresses man's responsibility.
 1. Eternal life is totally the sovereign choice of the blessed God in all operations of grace in Christ.
 2. Man has no claim on eternal life without good works and cannot please Christ without them.
- E. Are good works necessary to salvation? Yes! They are absolutely necessary to practical salvation!
 1. If you don't know what practical salvation means, then learn the [five phases of salvation](#).
 2. Our good works are not involved at all in God's four phases of our salvation, only in our phase.
 3. But there is no evidence God has worked a single phase of salvation in you without good works.

Conclusion:

1. It is one thing to know and understand salvation by works, but it is another thing to be fruitful in good works.
2. It is one thing to despise heresy in others, but it is very much another thing to despise heresy in yourself.
3. If you are struggling with temptation in any area of life, remember that eternal life is for overcomers only.

For further study:

1. The sermon outline, "[They Promise Them Liberty](#)," which identifies and condemns teachers promoting sinful lifestyles.
2. The sermon outline, "[Eating and Drinking Christ](#)," which shows clearly Jesus was not seeker sensitive at all.
3. The sermon outline, "[Why Preach the Gospel?](#)" which identifies from the Bible the connection of the gospel to salvation.
4. The sermon outline, "[Why No Invitation?](#)" which gives a history of the invitation and the Bible reasons condemning it.
5. The sermon outline, "[The Love of Christ Constraineth Us](#)," identifies the changed man resulting from being in Christ.
6. John Gill's tract, "[The Necessity of Good Works unto Salvation](#)," in which he divides salvation five ways, denies good works to be any meritorious or instrumental cause of eternal life, and defends good works as necessary to please God.
7. Arthur Pink's tract, "[Is Christ Your Lord?](#)" takes up the difference of viewing Jesus Christ as Saviour or Lord.
8. J.I. Packer's article, "[Understanding the Lordship Controversy](#)," which explains this heresy from the Reformed position.