

## REVISITING THE DOCTRINE OF DISPENSATIONALISM

### Part III: A Biblical Study Of Salvation In The Dispensations

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. Charles Caldwell Ryrie's book, Dispensationalism Today, 1970, p. 110 reports that "(w)ithout doubt the most frequently heard objection against dispensationalism is that it is supposed to teach several ways of salvation . . . salvation by works in some dispensations and salvation by grace in others."
- B. This is a serious charge: if salvation were ever by works, man could boast before God opposite Romans 3:27!
- C. We thus need a clarifying, Biblical study of the doctrine of salvation in the dispensations (as follows):

#### **II. A Biblical Study Of Salvation In The Dispensations**

- A. First, "the *basis* of salvation in every age is the death of Christ," Ibid., p. 123 (as follows):
  1. Paul noted that Christ's death propitiated the wrath of God against all sin so that He could "declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God," Romans 3:25.
  2. This means that from Adam's fall in sin to Christ's death, God in forbearance dealt in grace with those who believed in Him without having His wrath actually satiated against their sin, but that in Christ, all of those sins of the past were placed upon Jesus on the cross so that God's wrath could be righteously propitiated. (John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 1975, p. 119-120)
  3. Christ also paid for the sins that occur after His death: Revelation 7:14 shows men in the Great Tribulation era will "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," the blood of Christ.
  4. Thus, Christ's death is the basis of salvation in every dispensation, past, present and future.
- B. Second, "the *requirement* for salvation in every age is faith," Ibid., Ryrie, p. 123 (as follows):
  1. Romans 4:1-5, 9-12 documents from Genesis 15:5-6 and 17:1-27 how Abraham was justified by faith apart from works, for he was justified by faith in Genesis 15 before he was circumcised in Genesis 17!
  2. Romans 4:6-8 documents from David's words in Psalm 32:1-2 how people like David who were in the dispensation of the Mosaic Law were similarly justified by faith apart from works in God's grace.
  3. In addition, Paul wrote that God intentionally made His promise to Abraham of blessing the world through Abraham's "seed," through Christ, four hundred and thirty years before the Mosaic Law came that the Gentiles might by grace through faith in Christ receive God's gift of the Holy Spirit, Galatians 3:13-19.
  4. After predicting the current Church era in Revelation 2-3 and the still future Great Tribulation (Rev. 4-19) and Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-7), Jesus offered mortals on earth in Revelation 21:6-8 that "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely," revealing that up to the last era of human history, men on earth will be saved by grace through faith apart from works, Romans 3:21-28.
  5. Thus, faith in God is the requirement for salvation in every dispensation, past, present and future.
- C. Third, "the *object* of faith in every age is God," Ibid. (as follows):
  1. Abraham before the Law and David under the Law trusted in God for justification, Romans 4:3 (citing Gen. 15:6) and Romans 4:6-8 (citing Psa. 32:1-2), today we believe in Christ (Who is God, John 20:31) for salvation (John 3:16) and people in the Great Tribulation will trust in God to be saved, Revelation 14:6-7.
  2. Thus, God is the object of one's faith in every dispensation, past, present and future.
- D. Fourth, **however**, "the *content* of faith changes in the various dispensations" due to God's "progressive revelation," that is, due to God's **ever growing revelation** of His truth to man in history, Ibid., p. 123-124:
  1. Genesis 15:5-6 reveals that Abraham was justified upon believing God's promise that his descendants would be so numerous that he would not be able to count them like he could not count the stars of the sky.
  2. However, in the Church era, we are to believe that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose from the dead and was seen alive by witnesses, and that faith in Him leads to salvation, 1 Cor. 15:1-11; John 3:16.
  3. In the future Great Tribulation, the content of the salvation Gospel will be that one must believe the **true** Messiah is **not** the **then reigning antichrist whose number as a man is 666, but the TRUE Christ** Who is **yet to come** to the earth and establish His Kingdom on earth, Revelation 14:6-7 with Revelation 13:11-18.
  4. Thus, the **content** of what is to be believed **differs in various dispensations** due to **progressive revelation**.

**Lesson:** *In historic dispensationalism, salvation is always by grace through faith in God based on the cross of Christ, but the content of what is to be believed for salvation differs among various dispensations due to God's ever growing revelation of His truth to man down through history, what theologians call "progressive revelation."*

**Application:** *May we adhere to the Biblical truth on the doctrine of salvation in the various dispensations.*