

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY (ORGANIZED BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

Part VI: Soteriology (The Doctrine Of Salvation)

F. The Terms Of Salvation

I. Introduction

A. Were the Philippian jailer to have asked some Christian **today**, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30), he might have heard he was to "Repent and believe," or "believe and confess Christ" or "believe and never deny Christ after that" or some other similar idea for him to be pronounced righteous by God!

B. As there are many ideas on **how** to be saved, we view Scripture to learn the **terms** of salvation as follows:

II. The Terms Of Salvation (I am indebted to Lewis Sperry Chafer's Systematic Theology, vol. III):

A. Salvation is by non-meritorious faith alone, Rom. 3:26; 4:4-5. Thus, all efforts to add to faith or to alter such a faith alone in Christ alone to be saved are in error (Eph. 2:8-9) and **must** be corrected (Gal. 1:8-9).

B. Hence, we correct some major misunderstandings Christians have on the **terms** of salvation as follows:

1. Some teach one must "repent and believe" to be saved, but this needs to be corrected:
 - a. Repentance is a "change of mind," Ibid., Chafer, p. 372. It comes from the Greek word, *metanoeo* meaning "to change one's mind," cf. Arndt & Gingrich, A Greek-English. Lex. of the N.T., p. 513.
 - b. One will change his mind as a **precondition** to trusting Christ, otherwise he **would not believe**; yet, 35 out of 115 Bible verses have salvation based upon faith **without even mentioning repentance**, so it is faith alone, not faith **plus** repentance, that results in one's justification, Ibid., Chafer, p. 376.
2. Some teach one must believe plus confess Christ to be justified, but this needs correcting as follows:
 - a. Passages like Matthew 10:32 or Romans 10:9-10 are sometimes used to teach one must confess Christ before men to be justified, but there confession is the **evidence** of true discipleship for those who are **already** justified by God! Confessing Christ is here the evidence of salvation, cf. Jas. 2:18.
 - b. Since 150 passages in the New Testament show faith alone **without** confession results in one's being justified (Ibid., p. 380), we conclude it is **faith, not faith plus confessing** Christ that saves!
3. Some teach one must believe **and be baptized** for salvation, but this also needs correcting as follows:
 - a. Mark 16:15-16 has been used to imply baptism **with** faith is needed for salvation: however, these verses belong to the Mark 16:9-20 section which has **grave manuscript credibility problems**, cf. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, p. 122-126. Even if these verses **belonged** to the **original** Gospel manuscript, they would **still** make baptism an **amended** act to faith.
 - b. Some say Acts 2:38 reveals one must believe **and** be baptized to be saved, but the text properly reads from the Greek, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, believing upon the name of Jesus Christ unto remission of sins," Ibid., Chafer, p. 383. Here, **faith alone** is the basis for justification!
 - c. Some claim Acts 22:16 teaches one washes away his sins by water baptism. However, the Greek text reads, "having arisen, be baptized; and wash away your sins, having called on the name of the Lord." (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, footnote to Acts 22:16) One is justified by faith alone!
 - d. Since many verses make faith alone the condition for salvation, and Paul made faith in the gospel **as opposed to baptism** necessary for salvation in 1 Cor. 1:17, baptism is **not a condition** for salvation!
4. Some teach one must believe **and surrender to God** to be saved, but this needs correcting: the unsaved have no capacity to **want** to **do** God's will, 1 Cor. 2:14. One is saved by faith alone in Christ alone!
5. Some teach one must believe **and confess** or **make restitution for sins** to be saved, but this needs correction: John's call for confession in 1 John 1:9 is to **believers** (cf. 1 John 1:1-8), and **no unsaved** person can **improve** his standing before God **by human effort**, Romans 3:20. (Ibid., Chafer, p. 388)
6. Some teach one must believe **and plead with God** to be saved, but this needs correcting also: God does **not** need to be **pleaded** to save anyone as His wrath has **already** been **propitiated** re: man's sin, 1 John 2:2, and He has **reconciled the world to Himself**, 2 Corinthians 5:19. Justification is by faith alone.
7. Some teach one must **unflinchingly** or **strongly** believe or he will **not** be justified. Yet, faith is non-meritorious, Rom. 3:27; 4:4-5, so **only GOD justifies**. Thus, one puts **whatever** faith he has, be it as small as a grain of mustard seed (Luke 17:6) in Christ to be justified by God through His pure grace!

Lesson: Salvation is by God's grace (Rom. 3:24-28), so just as Paul and Barnabas told the Philippian jailer, we must tell the lost: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," Acts 16:31!