

"WAYS MEN TRY TO SAVE THEMSELVES"

Eph. 2:8-9

INTRODUCTION:

V. 7 - Explained what we will do in the ages of Eternity -- after a million years we will be instruments of God's amazing grace.

We said we were quickened from deadness and raised, seated as heirs of God.

Next, there are only two ways in which a man might be saved.

First, he can save himself.

Second, God can save him.

Look at these two possibilities.

I. WAYS MEN TRY TO SAVE THEMSELVES

There are at least four ways men put trust in.

1. Self-Affliction -

Men believe by tormenting the body there is hope of delivering the soul from death. By torture of this physical body.

Pictures of this have been found in history.

Hindus seeking to cleanse the soul of sin. Hold up their hands to Heaven and do so for long periods of time. Their arms become so rigid they cannot lower them. May be where some of this hand waving originated.

Some will lie on beds of nails and spikes.

Others starve themselves to death. *Poor - clothes hang on like sack*

Some make long pilgrimages on their knees.

Afflict their bodies to save their souls.

This is the result of a twisted understanding of Christianity. This is strange -- Martin Luther illustrates for us -- as a monk he whips himself with thongs. He would lie down at night covered with blood.

Origin an early church father, one of most gifted minds, destroyed his own manhood by self-emasculation.

Men have suffered torment, grieving, and afflicting of the body in order to be delivered from the penalty of sin.

2. Human Sacrifice

A second way of cleansing is to find a sacrifice that God will accept.

Since Jesus died on the cross. They feel the supreme sacrifice is the way.

Museum in Mexico -- sculptured carvings of ancient Aztec Pyramids.

On the alter will be laid a warrior for human sacrifice with a priest holding high a knife sharpened to cut out the warrior's heart.

The sacrifice had to be warm in blood and the heart carved out of the victim pulsing with life when presented to the gods.

Ganges River once was the scene where mothers came to fling their children into the hungry mouths of crocodiles in order to save their own souls. They offered the fruit of their bodies to save the soul from sin.

Old Testament, Ahaz King of Judah made his son to pass through the fire of Molock.

Scripture is saying he offered up his son to the heathen god, Molock.

Large brass god in valley of Hinnom was heated and those who sought to save their souls threw their children into his burning arms.

Manasseh did that.

Josiah, led revival and defied the practice and made the valley a place of pollution forever, a place where dead animals, garbage, filth of the city was poured. New Testament word for Hell, Gehenna, valley of Hinnom. There they offered children for sins of soul.

Africa -- blood pours out in attempt to cover over sin. Blood on trees, sticks, stones. They believe that spirits live in all inanimate objects, hence they offer them blood sacrifices.

3. Good Works -

If I am good, I'll go to Heaven. They live as a ladder with rungs that are good. They leave one vile thing and go up on something better, leave off another sin and finally think their ladder has reached Heaven.

Lord does say that in his sight all our righteousness is as filthy rags.

Man does not think so, he thinks he will be good enough to be saved.

Some keys - The Golden Rule and say this is my method. Human race is shallow and sin has entered every faculty of mind, emotion, and will.

Lord says no man is saved by his own righteousness. He never gets good enough.

4. Religious Ritual -

Ways men have tried self-affliction, human sacrifice, good works, and fourth religious ritual.

Satan is a religionist, transformed into an angel of light. He took Jesus on a high mountain and showed him the kingdoms of this world and said, "This will I give Thee if Thou wilt bow down thyself, and worship me."

Satan covets worship. He perverts the minds of men and persuades that by ceremony or sacrament he can save himself. Blinds eyes of men.

II. THE ONE WAY GOD SAVES US

Not by any of man's methods.

V. 8 - Note "Three Key Words" of the New Testament.

Some liberal modern day folks would say these words are old, threadbare. What a dreary sermon.

First saved = second grace = third faith.

1. Saved. You are saved. V. 8

Means deliverance - what from?

"His name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

Saves from wrath to come.

Means rescue -- as a kid, by the way a kid is a goat! Here is a kid in the claws of the lion and the shepherd rescues the kid.

Salvation is more than a shelter, more than an escape. Saved by His mercy.

Deep sea soundings have been made - South Pacific - 29,400 feet and no bottom, and the wire broke.

Highest peak of the Himalayas might be put into that abyss and there would be hundreds of feet between it and the surface.

He cast all our sins behind his back into the depths of the sea! No plummet man can drop will ever reach its profound abyss.

Saved is not a cold worn word -- man never spoke in sadder words than Jesus Christ did.

"Lost sheep, coin, son."

Don't be led away by nation of wealth or culture or anything less than Christ.

Life belts lie unnoticed on the cabin shelf as long as the sun is bright,

the sea calm, and everything goes well. But, the ship gets on rocks, or storm hits, passengers fight to get the life belts. *Boat turns over - get in - people jump*

If you know yourself, you will know that salvation is what you need!
Are you saved?

2. Grace. "By grace" source of salvation.

Not of works - not of self - grace Good News - a Living Gospel.

Word - more 150 times in New Testament. Not a reward. Favor shown the utterly undeserving.

Man could not pay his debt. God forgives us and saves us.

All were as autumn leaves -- falling -- perishing.

Man can (never earn) it - two reasons:

✓ First, God is perfection. Nothing sinning man could do can earn, merit, or deserve.

Only perfection is good enough for God.

✓ Second, God is love. Sin is against love. One cannot make atonement for a broken heart.

Break a law, you pay penalty of fine, or imprisonment, and the law has no further claim on you.

Break God's heart and can never atone.

By grace are ye saved -- sinners are welcome. Because of God's abounding love. Something God does for us.

3. Faith. "Through faith" -- instrument, medium of salvation - channel.

This word may be threadbare, but you had better use it.

Faith is the hand that receives the gift.

How do I know the sun is going to rise tomorrow morning? I can't prove it to you but I believe it will.

How do I know money is safe in the bank? I can't prove it to you but I believe it is.

We live by faith. Food we eat.

→ Three things about saving faith!

✓ 1. I must hear, I must listen.

Rom. 10:17 - "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

That is why a man ought to preach the Bible in the pulpit! Faith cometh by hearing -- not talk about politics - current events -- world situations. People can hear that forever and never be saved or even convicted.

Preach the Book, some will be saved, not all. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

✓ 2. I accept the Word as true.

Never been to England but I believe there is such a place. I accept information as true.

✓ 3. I commit myself to it.

Trust - reliance upon.

Sower sows seed, believes they will grow and bring a harvest.

*Tane Sila Isashun
Jehi Mon Tomitru Tawke Boshan*

A mariner on the trackless sea trusts the stars, compass.

A sick man trusts the surgeon.

A passenger trusts the pilot of the airplane.

Open your eyes -- see your dangers. Let your conscience tell you of your sickness.

Do not try to deliver, or to heal yourselves.

Self-reliance and self-help are a very good thing, but they have no place here.

Every man his own redeemer will not work.

Your sins have you as a man in the folds of a python -- he cannot release himself.

V. 9 - Any other way except grace would fill Heaven with boasters.

If there should be more than one way -- conversation in Heaven might be like this:

How did you get here?

"I built and equipped a hospital."

"I helped Noah build the Ark."

"I endowed a home for orphans."

John Nelson, Preacher in Wesley's time. A blacksmith before saved. He was used of God.

One day talking to a self-righteous man who said, "I do not need your Saviour. I'm all right. I have done some things. I'll try my chances with the rest of the people."

Nelson replied, "look here, my good man, if God let you in Heaven, you would bring discord there because others would be singing:

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessings."

You would be singing worthy am I. Glory to me, because I live a consistent

Christian life."

An angel hearing you sing that would throw you over the wall!

William Newell contemplating this verse wrote:

"Mercy there was great and grace was free.

Pardon there was multiplied to me.

There my burdened soul found liberty at Calvary."

Tyndal "By Grace ye are made safe Through Faith,"

Amazing Grace!

How sweet the sound, That saved A Wretch like me!

I once was lost, but Now Am found —
Was Blind, But Now I see.

Grace my ~~fears~~ Relieved.

Grace hath Brought me safe Thus far,

And Grace will lead me home.

Ten Thousand years plus 10,000 years

we will still sing God's Praise!

Grace That is greater Than all our sin —

Receive Now By Faith This Gift!