Destiny Newsletter

PUBLISHED BY CHRISTIAN DESTINY HILLSBORO, KANSAS

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THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

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May 2009

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31).

How can I know that I am saved?

More Christians and want-to-be Christians are plagued by this question than almost any other. We receive many letters with this serious concern pressed in one and another ways. It is certain that the question of the assurance of salvation has become a vital concern to believers in these days. What is the answer to that question? How can a person have the present assurance of salvation and the certainty that he or she is going to go to heaven one day?

We can discover the answer to that concern by asking the preliminary question, "What must I do to be saved?" We know the answer to that question because it was specifically asked in Scripture of the Apostle Paul. After the occasionoftheearthquakeinPhilippi, the jailor of the local prison asked in great anxiety, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). The answer that was given to this concerned sinner by the Apostle Paul was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house" (Acts 16:31).

What then must I do to be saved?

I must believe in Jesus Christ. Christ Himself said most emphatically, "*He* that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36). So we see that salvation is based on one single requirement, faith in Jesus Christ.

What then does it mean to have faith, to believe in Jesus Christ? It means exactly this--to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died to take away our sins on the crossofCalvary. This very requirement was expressed by Jesus Christ to the woman at the well. He said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that said to you, Give Me to drink; you would have asked of Him, and He would have given you living water" (John 4:10). By so saving, Christ announced that the faith that saves is faith in who Jesus is and what He did for us on the cross; specifically, it is faith that Christ is the Son of the Living God and that His sacrifice on Calvary is the basis for our forgiveness.

It is in this vein that the Apostle Paul takes the time to carefully state what the Gospel is. Paul says that the Gospel is "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1Cor. 15:3,4). Yes, there was an awesome price paid for the sins of all the world, as a result of which we have the good news that salvation is free, having been purchased by the Lord Jesus when He died for our sins. How amazing, therefore, is the wonderful truth of the Bible which says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

From whence, then, do I receive the assurance of salvation? It is from the fact that I have believed in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and accepted for my salvation His sacrifice on the cross. The assurance of salvation comes from having properly conformed to the divine requirement for everlasting life, faith alone.

So, the assurance of salvation depends on understanding the Gospel. There are millions of people in our world who think of themselves as being Christians, but they have no assurance of salvation. They fear, they tremble, they hope for the best, they wonder, and many times, they drop into despair because of the lack of assurance of eternal life. What is the problem? The problem is that they do not know the Gospel.

Being ignorant of the Scripture, but listening to the religious establishment, most Christians believe that we are saved by faith plus something else. In addition to a vague "believing" in Christ, they believe that one must also do good works, be baptized, join the church, live a perfect life, be constantly in prayer, give money to religious causes--the list is endless. Obviously, if salvation comes

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because of faith plus something else, no one can ever be sure that he is saved. This because we can never know if we have done enough good works, given enough money, prayed enough, or been good enough to add to our faith the thing that brings surety. Most systems of religion in the world today, even though they are a part of "Christianity," are nothing but religions of good works. The theology of too many "Christian" churches is, "You are saved by faith, providing you keep the law." These views can be named many things, like "Salvation by Discipleship," "Lordship Salvation," "Liberation Theology," "Kingdom Now," and many other concepts. Many churches, both Protestant and Catholic, liberal and conservative, fundamentalist and evangelical, independent and denominational, mix up the Gospel by adding one, seven, twelve, or a whole system of requirements to faith alone. People who are a part of such movements and accept them may well be saved, if they initially believed the truth, but they can never have the assurance of salvation

How then can I have the assurance of salvation? This is not some feeling

or some warm glow or selfhypnosis--none of that. The assurance of salvation comes alone from having been saved by the grace of God and knowing it. If I look at myself, assurance will disappear. If I look at other Christians, the church. read the new books, attend the new kinds of meetings, these may all be interesting, but none will bring the assurance of salvation. Assurance comes from knowing I have exercised faith in Jesus Christ and what He did for me on the cross. This knowledge alone will bring steadfast confidence to the soul.

We bring, therefore, a word of warning and a word of assurance. To every reader, we would say that if your faith and hope is placed in anyone except Christ alone, and in any act save Calvary, the assurance of salvation will escape you for all of life. It is, therefore, good to examine yourself to see if you are in the faith. "The faith" means that body of truth which makes Christianity what it is. The core is Christ and His work on the cross. Anyone who does not believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for our sins is not a Christian. A person who believes that Christ is God and Savior plus something else may be saved, but salvation's assurance will always elude him.

The promise is this: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved."* In this very moment, you can exercise faith that Christ is the Son of God and that He died for the sins of the world, for your sins, on the cross.

But how can I have faith? Jesus said, "*He that hears My word and believes*"--that's the one who gets everlasting life. One cannot have faith simply as a "gift." He must learn from the Word how Christ is the Son of God and how He died for our sins. If you will take the time to read the Bible, your heart will be quickened in response to the Word and the Gospel that it presents. Believe it is true, and accept the Christ of the cross as your very own. Then, you will be saved.

Then, also, you will **know** that you are saved--the assurance of salvation will be yours.

From the writings of Dave Breese

Let no one therefore think that the labor of the believer is in vain. Every act done for Christ produces a just recompense of reward in eternity. Every prayer is presented as a substantial thing before the throne of God. Even though in this world so afflicted by spiritual myopia we may not see the immediate results of our efforts, these results are significant, substantial, and eternal. The recording angel puts them all down, and the rewarding hand of God will pour upon His servants one day the golden reward of eternity.

Remember also that, in the divine economy, a little becomes a lot. The servant rewarded by Jesus Christ was faithful "in a very little," but as a result, was given authority over ten cities. There is no question about it--a little labor, a little prayer, a little faithfulness, a little trust when we might have doubted-- this becomes a lot in the expanded vistas of eternity.

It is time, therefore, to look up, to look out, and to ask with enthusiasm anew the question, "Lord, what will You have me to do?" Then, doing what God has called us to do, we discover the truth that no one goes to war at his own charges but rather, is backed by the treasury of eternity. How marvelous to serve Christ now before we see Him then in His glory. Bright anticipation--that is the attitude! With that attitude, we must serve Him in this shadowy world and then we soon shall see Him in the shadowless presence of His eternal glory.

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THE TIDE OF OUR TIMES

"ARE EARTHQUAKES REALLY ON THE INCREASE?--We continue to be asked by many people throughout the world if earthquakes are on the increase. Although it may seem that we are having more earthquakes, earthquakes of magnitude 7.0 or greater have remained fairly constant.

A partial explanation may lie in the fact that in the last twenty years, we have definitely had an increase in the number of earthquakes we have been able to **locate** each year. This is because of the tremendous increase in the number of seismograph stations in the world and the many improvements in global communications. In 1931, there were about 350 stations operating in the world; today, there are more than 8,000..."

"FRATERNITY STANDS ON 'CHRISTIAN VALUES' at secular university--

A University of Alabama fraternity is offering its members something different than typical frat life. Lambda Sigma Phi is a Christian fraternity, founded at the University of Alabama in 2000...Some of the fraternities do not have very good reputations, so there was a desire among the guys to start something different...'We wanted to build around a fraternity that had Christian values and recruit guys who were really on fire for the Lord and wanted to minister and be an example for the campus."" www.onenewsnow.com

"NATURAL GAS DISCOVERY IS HUGE!--A massive natural gas find off the coast of Haifa which was

lauded as capable of fueling all of Israel for 15 years is actually more than 60 percent larger than originally estimated, according to the American partner in the drill, Noble Energy, Inc...That estimate is up from January...

'The implications of this discovery to Israel cannot be overstated, 'saidNoble EnergyChief Executive Officer Charles Davidson."

David Hocking, Prophecy Watch

"THIRTY-THREE 'PREACHERS' preach 24 hours a day to a total of nearly one million people in 6 states. They preach day and night, in rain or snow. You might see these preachers as you drive the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Interstate 75 in Georgia, or the I-10 corridor in Louisiana, Texas, or New Mexico. These preachers stand beside the highways ministering to those traveling. Some say *It's your choice*... *Heaven or Hell.* Others proclaim *Bound*

By Sin? Jesus Christ brings freedom! or *Jesus--Healer of Broken Hearts.*"

CAM's [Christian Aid Ministries] goal is to have 100 billboards installed by the end of 2010. Jesus said in John 9:4, 'I must work the works of

him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."" Christian Aid Ministries Newsletter

DID YOU KNOW

that more than "50 percent of students will reject their faith during their college years[?]"

While this statistic is troubling, there is hope. "Summit Ministries [of Manitou Springs, CO] has educated and equipped over 50,000 teenagers to understand, defend, and articulate their Christian faith in light of the competing worldviews and conflicting ideas vying for their hearts and minds.

Summit students enter college with renewed confidence in their ability to think and reason from a Christian perspective. They no longer feel threatened by opposing views. And many are able to openly defend their faith in and outside the classroom." David Noebel, Summit Ministries

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Q. Since I was saved, I have not lived a perfect life. Am I still saved?

A. There are, strictly speaking, two ways of salvation. Those are salvation by perfection and salvation by grace. No one save Jesus Christ lived a perfect life, before or after salvation. Therefore, the doctrine of salvation by grace alone is our only hope. The preaching of salvation by works (tragically, this is very common in our day) is a despair producer. We are not saved by the lives we live, but we are saved by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, shed at Calvary.

Q. How can I be happy when there is so much sadness and so many problems in the world? A. The Bible does not teach that the happiness of our lives is created by our circumstances. Rather, the Scripture says, "*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4)*. Remember that happiness does not come from benign or cooperating circumstances. Rather, it comes from the Lord. Happiness should be remembered as a product of responsibilities met, duties fulfilled, tasks completed. We should not wait to just be overtaken by happiness, but rather, ask "What is my duty?" It is in doing one's duty that we have the joy for which we seek.

Q. How can I improve and stabilize my mental attitude?

A. The answer of the Bible is, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). Mental slippage can be avoided by thinking on the things of Christ and of eternity.

Q. Can you give me one neverfailing rule that I should follow in life? A. Yes, certainly. "Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him" (Col. 3:17).

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by John H. Parker--Paul Seawright, Photographer

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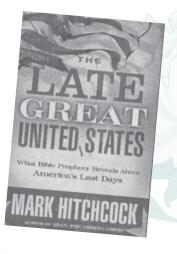
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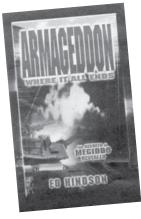
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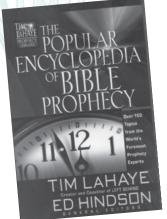
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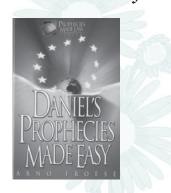
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