

Procuring Salvation

Have you ever had anything of value, a free gift that you could not give away, and the reason you could not give it away is because it required the forfeitures of your chosen path in life?

One says, "If it requires a forfeiture of a chosen path in life, then it is not free." The fact is it is free because you could not obtain it otherwise. In regard to salvation, the scriptures reveal, "the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). Mankind is an odd duck. Well, not really a duck, but often sounds like one, i.e., a lot of noise.

When the apostle Paul spoke of the "free gift of God," was he saying it had no cost? Sounds like the local mattress salesman, i.e., "This mattress comes with a **free** adjustable base." Do you really believe that? How many "free adjustable bases" do you believe can be given away and the dealer stay in business? "Come in for your free gift!" The "free gift" of God is not that it has no cost, the gift is that which mankind did not deserve. Yes, God freely provided for, sacrificed for, and freely offered, but it does not mean there is no cost to either God or man.

There are two terms of interest: 1) free = a favour which one receives without any merit of his own 2) gift = do'-ray-mah From G1433; a bestowment (Strong's); a gift, bounty, benefaction (Thayer's).

How do we know this is so? The writer, of the book of James puts it this way: "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith. Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and shudder. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead (2:14-26).

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he said, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (2:10). Did Paul contradict himself, when he said, "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law" (Rom. 3:28)?

All of these come to a unified harmony when we understand the difference between works of faith and works of merit, i.e., keeping of the law of Moses. The Pharisees, and some religions today believe an individual is saved by works of merit, i.e., Catholicism and Islam, etc.

Thus, salvation is summed up by Isaiah's statement "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it upheld him" (59:16), and the apostle Paul's affirmation, saying, "for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

Thus, "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope: and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us. For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation." (Rom. 5:1-11). ret