

SALVATION AND THE ELEPHANT

TEXT: Phil. 2:12-16.

INTRODUCTION:

A. An odd title for a sermon, yet you will soon understand.

B. Four blind men were asked by a man who owned an elephant if they would like to "see" him. One by one each felt it.

1. The first man felt the elephant's side and said, "An elephant looks like a wall."
2. The second man felt of a leg and said, "An elephant looks like a tree."
3. The third man felt an ear and said, "An elephant is like a large leaf."
4. The fourth man felt the elephant's tail and said, "An elephant is like a rope."

C. Just as it is a mistake to see an accurate picture of an elephant by looking at just one part, one cannot get a true concept of salvation w/o considering all the parts of salvation as they are given in the Bible.

D. Just a casual look at some verses seems to make them contradict each other.

1. Noah was saved by faith- Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith..

2. Yet 1 Pet. 3:20 say he was saved by the longsuffering of God, and water 1Pet 3:20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

3. It is clear that he was saved by a combination of the things mentioned and not by one of them alone.

E. Another illustration.

1. You see a man drowning in the river. You grab a rope and throw it to him. The man takes hold of the rope and you pull him to the shore.

2. Did you save him? YES

3. Was he saved by the rope? YES

4. Did he save himself by taking hold of the rope? YES

5. Let's rephrase the question adding alone or only. The answer- NO.

F. Too many people have "TOUCHED THE ELEPHANT IN JUST ONE SPOT" when it comes to salvation!

I. SAVED BY THE GOSPEL.

A. Rom. 1:16. **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."**

B. The Corinthians were saved by the gospel - 1 Cor. 15:1-2 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain.

C. But the gospel alone will not save.

1. Must be obeyed- 2 Thess. 1:7-9 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

2. The gospel without faith will not save.

II. SAVED BY FAITH.

A. Heb. 11:6. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

B. Many passages teach that salvation is by faith.

1. Gal. 3:24 **Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.**
2. Rom. 5:1 **Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**
3. Jn. 3:15-16 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

C. But to say one is saved faith alone is to touch the elephant in one spot and ignore the Bible.

D. James 2:24 not by faith alone! **"You see then by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."**

III. SAVED BY GRACE.

A. Titus 2:11. **"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men."**

B. Justified by grace:

1. Titus 3:7. that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
2. Rom. 3:24 **being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,**

C. Yet it is not grace alone:

3. 2 Cor. 6:1, must be received. **We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.**
4. Eph. 2:8 through faith. **"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."**

IV. SAVED BY CONFESSION.

- A. Rom. 10:9-10 (NKJV) that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
- B. Matt. 10:32-33 Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.
- C. Acts 2:21 **And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved"**
- D. Yet even the demons confess Christ- Lk. 4:41 And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.
- E. Matt. 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

V. SAVED BY REPENTANCE.

- A. Lk. 13:3. I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.
- F. Acts 3:19. **"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,**
- G. Acts 17:30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,
- H. Even then told to do the first works- Rev. 2:5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.

VI. SAVED BY BAPTISM.

A. Mk. 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

I. 1 Pet. 3:21 (KJV) The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

J. Baptism brings us into Christ- Gal. 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

K. But apart from the grace of God, Faith, confession, repentance will not save.

L. Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him- Heb. 5:8-9 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

VII. SAVED BY FAITHFULNESS.

M. One may be scripturally baptized into Christ and receive the forgiveness of his sins and yet be lost.

N. Rev. 2:10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

O. Rev. 22:12 according to his works And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

D. Notice these verses on work.

1. 1 Cor. 15:58 **Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**

2. 1 Cor. 3:9. **"For we are God's fellow workers..."**

3. 2 Tim. 4:5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Let us carefully consider each part of God's plan for saving man, and not ignore any single part.
- B. By doing this we can be sure we work out our own salvation-Phil. 2:12.
"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
- C. If we do our part God will do his part.