

Salvation is not instantaneous, takes time, effort

Some say they are “saved.” It seems they mean they have accepted Christ as their Savior, and now they are set. Is this what the Bible teaches?

Philippians 2:12 says, “Consequently, my beloved ones, in the way that you have always obeyed, not during my presence only, but now much more readily during my absence, keep working out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

Salvation doesn’t come in an instant when one “accepts the Lord into his heart” but is something that must be worked out over time.

Matthew 10:22 says, “And you will be objects of hatred by all people on account of my name; but he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved.”

Being saved requires endurance and doesn’t happen until the end, either the end of one’s life or the



sharon corcoran

- use it or lose it

“conclusion of the system of things” as referred to in Matthew 24:3.

No one is set — even those who have partaken of holy spirit can fall away. Hebrews 6:4, 6 says, “For it is impossible as regards those who have once for all been enlightened, and who have tasted the heavenly free gift, and who have become partakers of holy spirit. . . . but who have fallen away, to revive them to repentance, because they impale the Son of God afresh for themselves and expose him to public shame.”

Not only can those who have partaken of holy spirit fall away, but it is impossible to revive them again

after actions that expose Christ to public shame.

The apostle Paul said he put forth great effort to be sure his imperfect flesh didn’t lead him to fall away.

At 1 Corinthians 9:27, he said: “but I pummel my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow.”

“Pummel” means to beat or hit with repeated blows. Paul worked at his salvation to the point it was at times painful for him — he didn’t just sit back and wait to float off to heaven, confident that he was “saved.”

If instantaneous salvation didn’t come to a chosen apostle of Christ, should Christians today expect instant, effortless salvation? Is this expectation not just an extension of

an instant-gratification society that encourages credit, rather than saving up for things? A society that says, “be good to yourself?”

Of course we want to be comfortable and to enjoy life, and that is proper, for Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4 says, “For everything there is an appointed time, even a time for every affair under the heavens: a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to wait and a time to skip about.”

There is a time to enjoy ourselves, but life is not an endless party. Where does the attitude that we should be good to ourselves, be easy on ourselves, come from?

An event recorded in the gospels sheds some light on this. Matthew 16:21-23 says, “From that time forward Jesus Christ commenced showing his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the older men and chief priests and scribes, and be killed,

and on the third day be raised up. At this Peter took him aside and commenced rebuking him, saying: ‘Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this destiny at all.’ But turning his back, he said to Peter: ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you think, not God’s thoughts, but those of men.’”

The idea that being a Christian requires no effort, that having God’s approval is automatic, is from Satan. He doesn’t want us to make the effort to be approved — if we don’t, we are in his hands, just like he wants.

The Bible outlines the proper course of life for Christians and makes it clear that it is a life of hard work and sacrifice. But it also makes it clear the effort is worth it.

Psalm 72:1, 7, 8 says, “O God, give your own judicial decisions to

the king, and your righteousness to the son of the king. . . . In his days the righteous one will sprout, and the abundance of peace until the moon is no more. And he will have subjects from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.”

When Jesus Christ came to earth to sacrifice himself for mankind, he also came to preach and teach and to fulfill the scriptures related to the king referred to in the Psalms. He cleared the way for a better future for all of us.

But he asks us to show by actions that we support his kingship. John 14:12, 15 says, “Most truly I say to you, he that exercises faith in me, that one also will do the works that I do; and he will do works greater than these, because I am going my way to the Father. . . . If you love me, you will observe my commandments.”

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