

# Checking Your Salvation

**Many** who would call themselves Christians believe that they have been saved. They believe in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice and that their salvation is assured. What many don't realise is that Christ laid conditions upon the free gift of salvation, that salvation is a life-long *process* and moreover told us that even for those who *are* being saved there are various, quite different levels of reward. Let's start with John 14:2, *'In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you'*. The Greek here for 'mansions' is 'monai', an abiding or abode, from 'mono' to stay, abide, remain. Modern translations often use 'rooms' and some have suggested 'dwelling places', 'offices' or 'positions', which would seem to make more sense. That would tie up with Christ's explanation in Revelation 22:12, *'And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.'*

This scripture indicates that not all Christians will be rewarded equally, but rather according to how well they have carried out Christ's commands – verse 14 same chapter, *'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.'* So, salvation comes with conditions and degrees of reward, and that is backed up by many scriptures and parables as we will see. **No one can earn salvation**, because we all sin, but that does not remove Jesus Christ's requirement that we should try our best to observe His Commandments and instructions! *'...how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?'* Hebrews 2:3, and Hebrews 6:4, 6-8, *'It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit.....and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.'*

So, first we should notice that Jesus explains in Matthew 7 that many (actually the majority) who believe they have been saved, in reality have not, verse 14, *'Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'* He continues in verses 21-23, where we see that many Christian leaders – priests and ministers, are turned away by Christ. *'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.'* Why? Because of iniquity, which in the Greek reads 'violation of the law', or, 'lawlessness', failure to keep His commands.

These obviously committed but deluded Christians simply failed to try to keep the Ten Commandments! 2 Timothy 2:19, 'But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: *"The Lord knows those who are his,"* and, *"Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity,"* and John 14:15, *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments.'* Jesus Christ came to expand and amplify the law, not destroy it, so that we keep its fuller *spiritual* intent, for the Holy Spirit writes it upon our hearts.

The Satanic delusion can be traced back to repeated mistranslations of the Greek phrase 'ergon nomou,' 'works of law' rather than "the works of the law." In every case where 'ergon nomou' is used there is **no** definite article and it refers to the man-made traditions, rituals and sacrifices of Judaism and pagan religions, rather than **"to ergon tou nomou,"** which is only found in Romans 2:14-15, where it is correctly translated "the work of the law" and is clearly referring to God's

Laws, see verse 13, *'For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but **the doers of the law who will be justified.**'* I hope to deal with this subject in an article shortly.

Today, very many Christians have thus been deceived into thinking that the Ten Commandments have been 'nailed to the cross', done away, but Matthew 7 should not be a surprise to any serious Bible student. Thus we are left with only the *minority* of Christians, who struggle to keep God's laws faithfully though some of *them* fail to *diligently* seek to understand what God's word actually requires of us. God demands of us more than just the Ten Commandments, and actually only a small proportion of that minority even *keep* the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment for example - Exodus 20:8-11, *'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the **seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.**'*

They have been quite prepared to write off these clear words in the mistaken belief that the Old Testament is of no relevance, and instead rely upon their church's teaching that the Sabbath has been changed to Sunday, despite Jesus Christ's plain example and words, Luke 6:5, *'And he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."* They also ignore the same pattern of the early New Testament Gentile Churches, as taught by the Apostles; instead, though they don't realise it, they are following the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, even if their church is Protestant, for the Bible nowhere sanctions a change in the Sabbath, which was **instituted by the RC Church which is proud of its success in so influencing the Protestants, and admits there is no biblical evidence for the change, so proving its authority.** God condemns such Protestant churches who ignore His Holy Sabbath in Revelation 17:5, because they are the *daughter* churches of Roman Catholicism – in God's sight, 'harlots.' *'And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.'*

Sadly, such Christians have been deceived, and may only come to fully repent when they experience the lethal Great Tribulation. They will be deeply shocked to find that they will be not raptured away before the dangerous last 7 years, nor will they be resurrected at the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal when Jesus Christ *actually* comes for His faithful firstfruits at the 3½ year point. (Revelation 6, Revelation 12:14)

We read about *them* in Revelation 7, especially verses 14-17 where Christ speaks in the *future* tense of those who, in the Great Tribulation, repent of their sins, *'I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

*"Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

What is their main fault?

2 Corinthians 6:16 – 7:1, *'What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,....'*

WITHOUT realising it, their lack of diligence has allowed them to be drawn into the sin of idolatry. Yes, they may eventually gain those rewards mentioned in Revelation 7:15-17, **after their repentance**, but only in the 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection, for the first resurrection occurs in the previous chapter, Revelation 6, at the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal, **before the Great Tribulation at the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal, which lasts for 3½ years. Their idolatry is the sin of looking to something or someone as their god, rather than the true God. Many Christians mistakenly look to their church, or its leader or leaders for their beliefs rather than directly to the whole of God's word and Jesus Christ's example, 2 Peter 2:21, 'For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.'** Thus they are subtly diverted from the words of truth, into idolatry.

**The Pope is one such leader, but many Protestant churches have copied his pattern and refuse to follow Jesus Christ's command in Matthew 20:25-28,**

*'But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* The result, as we often see in the West, is a rich church, lavish and expensive buildings, wealthy leading 'ministers', some of whom fly about in luxury jets claiming to preach the gospel, and accumulate lavish, even stately homes, 'needed' for offices or colleges, while the laity remain under dominion, held by the fact that this is claimed to be the 'one true church', and to leave would be to lose salvation. Even if those symptoms have been escaped by your church, God says that Satan has virtually deceived the whole world, *'Satan, which deceiveth the whole world:'* Revelation 12:9.

So, we have learned that Jesus Christ asks more of us than merely claiming to be Christian. He clearly expects us to study His words *diligently* and apply them in our lives. We should remember that at the time of Christ and the Apostles, **only the Old testament existed**, and Jesus constantly quoted its words. As we read in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the Old Testament is **as one** with the New if we are to be thoroughly equipped with the spiritual knowledge we need, *'All Scripture [is] breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.'* Neither is complete without the other and neither the Old or the New can be fully understood without the other, especially with regards to what God requires of His people at the End Time!

As we have learned, one of the greatest dangers to faithful Christians is idolatry, because it diverts us from God's word. Sadly, as a result, many of God's people have also come to rely upon a man's scenario of the End Time, rather than the plain scriptures. An often unvisited chapter in the book of Revelation clearly contradicts the common belief that Christ's return *'for'* His Saints will take place at Christ's final return, which is when Christ returns from Heaven *with* His Saints, Zechariah 14:5, *'And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee [Him]'* This is after Christ's marriage to His Bride before His Father's throne, on the Sea of Glass in Heaven. (Read our article on Revelation 14)

It is in that same chapter that we can clearly prove that the first resurrection takes place **before** the Great Tribulation by comparing the firstfruit harvest of the Saints in verse 15, with the quite separate *later* harvest of the unrighteous, who are cast into the winepress of the Great Tribulation, in

verses 18-19, *'And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.'*

Whereas, when we put the scriptures together, we see that Christ's Bride is found in Heaven, upon the Sea of Glass during the Great Tribulation, Revelation 12:14, *'But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished [spiritually] for a time, and times, and half a time,'* Revelation 14:1-4, *'Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb,'* ESV.

and Revelation 15:2, *'And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.'* Instead, a very common **false** scenario accepted by many who have been led to look to a man, has Christ's Bride to-be in Petra, Jordan, during the last 3½ years - the Great Tribulation, though some Christians *are* protected there, who did not quite qualify to become Christ's Bride. (See our article 'The Division Of The Saints' on the 'End Time' tab)

Sadly, this false scenario which has been accepted by so many in the Church of God, prevents them from accepting their God-given responsibilities during the *first* 3½ years of the End Time, called the 'Tribulation of those days' in Matthew 24:29-30, *'Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.'* It is **then** that Christ returns for His Bride, though He never actually sets foot upon the earth at that time. (see our articles, 'The End Time Commands of the Lord' and the 'Tribulation of Those Days')

In conclusion then, we see that Christ will reward us according to our works, which many Christians have failed to grasp. The result is that, as in Christ's parable of the pounds, (Luke 19: 13-26), the resurrected Christians will have different positions and levels of responsibility, while some may not qualify to be in the first resurrection at all and will not receive their lesser reward until the 1000 year millennium is over, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection.

It behoves us then as sincere and diligent Christians to strive for the *better* resurrection of those who become the Bride of Christ, Hebrews 11:35, *'Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:'* and 2 Corinthians 11:2, *'For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.'*

These are special indeed, very limited in number and counted as virgins because they looked directly to Christ rather than any man, Revelation 14:1-5, *'And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written*

*in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from **among** [this word is not in the Greek - rather, 'the'] men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God,' and Matthew 25:1-10, 'Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and **they that were ready** went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.'* KJV.

Spiritually, they are virgins. No others will ever achieve such a close relationship with Jesus Christ, the relationship which faithful marriage pictures. Like Jesus Christ, they faced up to the temptations and influence of the Devil, and overcame much with the help of God's Holy Spirit, Acts 5:32, '*And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, **whom God hath given to them that obey him.***' May God help us to reach that goal, so that, on His return, we may be with Him, Revelation 17:14b, '*And they that are with Him are called and chosen **and faithful.***'

.....