

Light and Truth

ARE YOU SAVED? * PART 2

Who Then Can be Saved?

This question was asked by the disciples of Jesus Christ: “Who then can be saved?” He answered them, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). Dear Reader, are you saved? Do you realise you can be saved, no matter who you are?

The Rich Young Ruler

A young man who had many possessions came running to the Lord Jesus Christ. This prosperous young fellow wanted eternal life. He knew no lack of the things that money can buy. He also had great respect for the Lord Jesus Christ. Kneeling down before Him, he said, “What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”

Jesus replied, “Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” (Please see also the other Gospels where the same event is recorded

- Mark 10:17 and Luke 18:18). The young man told the Lord that he had kept the commandments from his youth. He had not murdered or committed adultery. He had not stolen or borne false witness against his neighbour, and he had loved his neighbour as himself (Matthew 19:16-20). Yet in his heart he knew that was not enough: something was missing and he had no assurance of eternal life. “What lack I yet?” he asked.

The Lord Jesus replied, “One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me” (Mark 10:21). At this word the young man sorrowfully turned away “for he had great possessions.” What was it that kept him from the kingdom of God? It was his...

I. Treasures

The young man had treasures on earth. He could have had treasures in heaven. Like a fool he turned away from the everlasting treasures to hold on to fleeting, temporal, earthly treasures. This he did at the cost of his soul. “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26).

What a fool this young man was to come so close, yet turn away from the Lord Jesus Christ because of his earthly treasures! Treasures on earth kept him out

of the kingdom of God. It was impossible for him to be saved.

We read of another man, a farmer, whose barns were filled to overflowing with his goods. Did he ask the Lord what to do, or even give a thought to his poor neighbours? No! He enlarged his barns and then said, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry” (Luke 12:19).

This is a word also for those who make every preparation for their retirement but, like fools, make no preparation for eternity. God said to this prosperous man who made such abundant earthly provision for his future, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:20-21). He had no need of his earthly riches, for his time had come to die.

2. Pleasures

The pleasures of sin are the second thing that keep a man from the kingdom of God. One of the many signs of these last days is that men are “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:4). Moses the man of God, who was brought up in the king’s palace in Egypt, chose “rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the

pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt” (Hebrews 11:25-26).

Moses could have enjoyed the treasures, the earthly riches, of the palace because Pharaoh’s daughter had raised him as her son. He could have given himself to the fleshly enjoyment of sin. But he knew such pleasures were only for a time. After the short-lived pleasures of sin follow the everlasting torments of hell, where the fire is not quenched, and there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. In God’s Word we see there is no pleasure but only darkness in that place of torment. (Please read Mark 9:43-48, Matthew 25:30,41 and Luke 16:24-26).

When a man is proud, he is unthankful and does not glorify God. Professing himself to be wise, he becomes a fool. The Scriptures say that God gives such people up to the pleasures of sin: “God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts.” Again we read, “God gave them up unto vile affections ... God gave them over to a reprobate mind” (Romans 1:21-28).

When God is not a man’s treasure, God gives him up to his pleasure. Men become “filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness [having evil intent]; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity [malicious

craftiness]; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents.” Such men not only commit these sins but also have pleasure in them that do them (Romans 1:29-32).

Do you have pleasure in watching such lives of sin and uncleanness on television, or in the cinema? Many are defiled from childhood because God is not honoured in the homes. Their companions become those who are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God (2 Timothy 3:4). “Thinkest thou this ... that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?” (Romans 2:3). Such men cannot be saved. With men it is impossible.

3. Measures

Thirdly, the rich young man who came to Jesus could not be saved because he measured himself. The scriptures say, “They measuring themselves by themselves ... are not wise” (2 Corinthians 10:12). This young man truly was a fool for he used his own measure for himself. In his own eyes, he had kept the commandments. He thought that he had not stolen, murdered, or committed adultery and he loved his neighbour as himself.

The Lord Jesus only spoke one brief word to him, “Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and fol-

low me” (Matthew 19:2). The Lord’s word measured this young man. He did not truly love the Lord, nor did he love his neighbour, for he loved his possessions. The young man turned away sorrowful. He wanted to be saved, yet he clung to his goods. It was impossible for him to be saved. He could not enter the kingdom of God.

Who then can be saved? “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:25-26). For a man to be saved, it is a miracle of God. It is not something that we can do. “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13).

The Greatest Miracle

The greatest miracle in the history of this world was the birth of Jesus. His birth was prophesied about seven hundred years before it took place, “For unto us a child is born ... His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6). How could the mighty God dwell in human flesh? Every person begotten by man and born of woman is sinful by nature because the seed of man is defiled by sin.

The Christ had to be born of woman without a sinful human father. When God chose Mary, a virgin

of Nazareth, to bear the Christ-child she asked, 'How shall this be? The angel answered, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee ... For with God nothing shall be impossible (Luke 1:34-37).

We can ask the same question concerning salvation: how shall this be? With men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible. The answer for you is: the Holy Ghost shall come upon you. He will reprove you of sin, and righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8). The Holy Ghost will show you that all your treasures on earth have to be left behind. The greatest treasure is to have eternal life, to have Christ dwelling in you by His Holy Spirit.

The Holy Ghost shows you what the pleasures of sin really are; He shows you this world is a pigsty and a dung heap (2 Peter 2:22; 1 Samuel 2:8). He shows you just where you will end if you continue in sin. "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

And He will show you the everlasting pleasure of being cleansed from all sin and filthiness in the precious Blood of Christ. "The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Then you will enjoy the everlasting pleasure of dwelling in His

presence. In His presence is fulness of joy and at His right hand are pleasures for evermore (Psalm 16:11).

The Holy Ghost shows you your measure - your undone, vile, corrupt, wretched condition - without Christ, without hope. "There is none righteous, no, not one ... They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3:10,12).

If you will submit to the reproofs of the Holy Spirit and repent of your own wilful, wayward life, the Lord Jesus Christ is able to forgive your past sins, deliver you from the wrath to come, and save you from sin's power. This will be the greatest miracle in your life. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Hebrews 7:25).

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