Salvation Problem Texts

April 9, 2006 · AM · https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/2006/salvation-problem-texts-1/

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."
II Peter 3:15-16

Establishing the Truth

A. We establish the truth by clear teaching, and then we reconcile all "opposing" verses to it.
   1. Until we reconcile all the word of God on any subject, we cannot be sure of our doctrine.
   2. If a great change in presuppositions were needed for us to hold the truth, we trust the living God to convict and guide us, and we deal fairly with every text, by holy rules.
   3. For a detailed study of hermeneutics and how we study the Bible, see "Knowing the Scriptures."
   4. God owns all truth, and He gives it by His grace to those He chooses. Humble yourself!

B. Eternal life is an unconditional gift by God's grace and will in Jesus Christ for the elect only.
   1. Man is unable to obey or please God (Ps 14:1-3; Rom 3:9-18; 8:7-8; Eph 2:1; Gal 5:17).
   2. God denies man's will or works (John 1:13; 3:8; Rom 9:15-16; Eph 1:5,11; Titus 3:5).
   3. Faith and works are the result of salvation (Eph 2:10; Phil 2:12-13; I John 3:7; 5:1,4).
   4. Jesus Christ saves the elect by Himself (John 19:30; Rom 5:19; Heb 1:3; 9:15; I Pet 1:2).
   5. The gospel and ordinances do not give life (I Cor 1:24; Gal 3:21; Eph 4:12; II Tim 1:10).
   6. Unconditional salvation is illustrated (Luk 1:15; Ac 10:34-35; Rom 11:28; I Cor 10:1-5).
   7. This doctrine glorifies God (Romans 4:2; 9:21-24; I Cor 1:29-31; Eph 1:5-6,11-12; 2:9).
   8. For much greater proof of each of these points, see "The Seven Proofs of Unconditional Salvation."

C. The New Testament speaks of salvation in five distinct phases that must be clearly divided.
   1. The eternal phase is God's election (John 6:38-39; Rom 8:29-39; Eph 1:3-12; II Tim 1:9).
   2. The legal phase is Christ's death (Romans 3:24-26; 5:14-19; II Cor 5:21; Heb 2:14-17).
   3. The vital phase is the Spirit's regeneration (John 3:6-8; Ephesians 2:1-6; Titus 3:5).
   4. The practical phase is gospel conversion (Phil 2:12; Jas 2:14-26; 5:19-20; II Pet 1:5-11).
   5. The final phase is glorification in heaven (John 5:28-29; Romans 8:23,29-30; I Peter 1:5).
   6. For much greater proof of each of these phases, see the document, "When Were You Saved?"

Recognizing the Threat

A. The devil and his false teachers have corrupted the words of God from the very beginning.
   1. He questioned and altered God's words to Adam and Eve for the first sin (Gen 3:1-5).

2. Jesus had to face the devil's misapplication of Psalm 91:11-12 in the desert (Mat 4:1-11).
3. Paul declared that there were many already in his day corrupting scripture (II Cor 2:17).
4. Paul told the Thessalonians to not be deceived even by forged epistles (II Thess 2:1-3).
5. Paul warned that the last days would be filled with Christian creeps (II Tim 3:6-9; 4:3-4).
6. Peter wrote about unlearned and ignorant men wresting Paul's words (II Peter 3:15-16).
7. Paul, Peter, and Jude wrote of other false teachers (Titus 1:10-11; II Pet 2:1-3; Jude 1:4).

B. The Bible is written in such a way to confuse men about doctrine unless they come humbly.
1. Consider why Jesus spoke in parables – in order to confuse His hearers (Matt 13:10-17)!
2. When reject the truth, God sends them strong delusion to believe a lie (II Thess 2:9-12)!
3. God sent lying spirits to Ahab and lying prophets to Israel (I Kgs 22:19-23; Eze 14:1-10)!
4. If you need many examples of this principle and fact, see "Is God the Author of Confusion?"
5. The Bible is not written as clearly as it could be – far from it: it is written with infinite wisdom and holy judgment to reveal truth to some and hide it from others. Glory!

C. Jesus had to deal with problem texts being thrown at him by different Jewish denominations.
1. The Pharisees confronted Him with Moses' provision for divorce (Matthew 19:3-12).
2. The Herodians confronted Him about the legality of taxes to Caesar (Matt 22:15-22).
3. The Sadducees confronted Him with Moses' rule for childless widows (Matt 22:23-33).
4. The scribes and Pharisees confronted Him with Moses' law for adultery (John 8:1-11).

D. Consider some obvious examples by Rome and her daughters that are easily discerned.
1. These few examples are adored by millions, have thousands of pages written about them, are sworn to by seminary professors, and preacher/priests are ordained to teach them.
2. If you ran into a sharp Jesuit, Campbellite, or SDA, you would find your faith shaking!
3. The pope and his dupes are certain they fully eat Jesus Christ (Matt 26:26; John 6:54-56).
4. The Alexander Campbell churches of Christ adore and practice baptismal regeneration as their sacred cow (Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:27).
5. The Seventh Day Adventists have hundreds of verses "proving" their use of Saturday as the Sabbath of God (Gen 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2).

E. Every word of God is to be carefully considered to reject sound bites for the sense instead.
1. True preaching is reading God's words very distinctly and giving the true sense (Ne 8:8).
2. Most corruption of the Bible is based on sound bites, especially Catholics and Arminians.
3. Every word of God is pure and we are to live by every one of them (Prov 30:5; Luke 4:4).
4. Jesus and Paul argued doctrine from single words, showing us the care we should pay to each word ourselves (Matt 22:32,43; John 8:58; 10:35; Gal 3:16; 4:9; Heb 8:13; 12:27).

F. Some accuse us of having to work too hard in the Bible to prove our point. They are fools.
1. Peter, an apostle, said Paul's writings were difficult and confused many (II Pet 3:15-16).
2. These scorners are like the wicked Jews who rejected the prophets (Is 28:9-13; 29:20-21).

3. Bible study is a laborious task for workmen of Jesus Christ (I Tim 4:13-15; II Tim 2:15).
4. Read Acts 2 and Romans 15 and Hebrews 1 to see Peter and Paul collating many verses.

Reconciling the Texts

A. Consider a few examples to illustrate how men will pervert the simplest salvation verses.
   1. Matthew 24:13 has nothing to do with eternal life, but it is a favorite of Calvinists and Arminians for teaching perseverance. It is limited to 70 A.D. (Matt 24:1-6,22-24,32-35)!
   2. John 1:12 is only part of a sentence, and the other part proves their doctrine to be heresy!
   3. Galatians 5:4 does not teach you can fall from grace, but from the true doctrine of grace.
   4. I Peter 3:21 is definitive about baptism, so they corrupt it three ways in the new versions!
   5. Revelation 3:20 has nothing to do with eternal life; it is written to the pastor of a church; but they use it as one of their top three favorites in offering heaven to sinners.

B. Some will say that God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are mysteries we must accept.
   1. They tell stories about the signs over heaven's gate and railroad tracks coming together!
   2. Those who claim they are a mystery still emphasize one over the other anyway! Shame!
   3. God has revealed the facts clearly, and different things should not be confused as joined!
   4. Nowhere did God tell us to forfeit our assignment to study, just because it takes work.

C. There are no contradictions in the Bible, and you cannot prove truth until all is reconciled.
   1. There is no verse in the Bible that is of any separate or unique interpretation (II Pet 1:20)!
   2. Until you reconcile all verses, there may be one or more that overthrow your premises!

D. When approaching the word of God, hermeneutics in its simplest form is a two-step process.
   1. You first prove what a verse cannot mean by the rest of the Bible, and only then do you begin the process of considering the other rules of interpretation to find its positive sense.
   2. We have already proved by many proofs above that eternal life is an unconditional gift, so we are not open at all to viewing any of the following verses as denying this axiom.

Declarations of fact do not offer eternal life by conditions.

John 3:14-16 declares new information to this Jewish ruler about what God would do to the Messiah to secure eternal life for Gentile believers, but this is no conditional offering to anyone.

John 6:47 states that a believer has life – it does not say anything about how he got that life, and it is not an offer of eternal life upon conditions, especially in light of why John wrote (I Jn 5:13).

Romans 8:1 states those walking after the Spirit are not condemned, but that is not a condition.

Hebrews 5:9 states that Christ authored salvation for those who obey, but this is not a condition.

I John 5:11 says God gave eternal life to John's readers through His Son, but it does not tell how He did it, nor does it make an offer of eternal life to anyone upon conditions.

John 3:36	Romans 3:26	II Thess 1:8	I John 2:5	Revelation 22:14
John 6:40	Galatians 3:7	I Timothy 1:16	I John 3:24	
John 6:54	Galatians 3:22	I Timothy 4:8	I John 5:4-5	

Descriptions of evidence do not offer eternal life by conditions.

Psalm 15:1-5 cannot be more than a description of evidence; otherwise eternal life is by works.

Matthew 7:21 says those entering heaven do God's will, but this is a description, not a condition.

Mark 16:15-16 describes the future of baptized believers, but only Campbellites see conditions.

I Timothy 6:17-19 cannot describe conditions for eternal life, or heaven can be bought for cash!

James 2:14-26 teaches the value of works as evidence, not as conditions, though worded in such a way as to use "save" and "justified" in definite conjunction with works!

Psalm 24:3-5	John 3:36	Romans 8:13	I Timothy 2:15	Revelation 2:10-11
Matthew 5:44-45	John 5:39-40	Romans 8:17	Hebrews 3:6, 14	Revelation 2:26
Matthew 10:22	John 6:35	Romans 10:9-13	James 1:12	Revelation 3:5
Matthew 19:29	John 8:24	Phil 2:12	I Peter 1:9	Revelation 3:12
Mark 13:13	Acts 2:21	Phil 3:8-11	II Peter 1:10-11	Revelation 3:21
Luke 6:35	Acts 16:31	Col 1:20-23	Jude 1:21	
John 3:18-19	Romans 2:6-11	Col 3:23-24	Revelation 2:7	

Conditions for other benefits do not offer eternal life by conditions.

Deuteronomy 30:19 declares God's conditions for life and blessings in Canaan, not for heaven!

Matthew 24:13 does not teach perseverance of the saints, but rather deliverance from 70 A.D.!

Romans 10:1-3 is not an appeal to the lost to get saved from hell, but elect Israelites from error.

I Timothy 4:16 reveals Paul's fear of Timothy and his hearers going into error, not down to hell!

James 1:21 exalts the written word of God for its known ability to save saints from sinful living.

James 5:19-20 describes recovery of a child of God from heresy or sin, not from eternity in hell.

Isaiah 45:22	Acts 2:40	I Cor 5:5	Ephesians 1:13	Hebrews 12:25-29
Isaiah 55:7	Acts 3:19	I Cor 15:1-2	II Thess 2:13-14	James 1:25
Ezekiel 18:5-9	Acts 11:14	II Cor 5:18-20	II Timothy 2:10	I Peter 3:10-11

Luke 13:3-5	Acts 26:18	II Cor 6:18	II Timothy 3:15	I John 1:7-9
John 5:34	Romans 4:24	Galatians 3:2	Hebrews 2:1-3	Revelation 3:20
John 8:31	Romans 5:2	Galatians 3:14	Hebrews 6:4-6	Revelation 22:17
John 8:32	I Cor 1:21	Gal 3:26-27	Hebrews 10:26-31	

Figurative language cannot teach conditions for eternal life.

John 3:5 is not teaching baptismal regeneration, but rather the Spirit's washing by regeneration, for John writes just a few chapters later that water is a figure for the Spirit (John 7:39; Titus 3:5).

Acts 22:16 does not teach washing sins away in baptism, but rather a picture of how it was done, for baptism only saves figuratively and does not wash away sins literally (I Pet 3:21).

I Corinthians 15:29 does not teach baptism for dead relatives, but baptism as a picture of bodily resurrection, which is Paul's argument in this chapter and especially this part of the chapter.

Titus 3:5 may use "washing," but it is only because water is a figure of the Spirit (John 7:39).

I Peter 3:21 does declare that baptism saves, but it only saves figuratively, as the verse declares; but of course, the modern versions change the verse so that baptism is no longer a figure.

Ezekiel 36:25-29	John 6:54-56	I Cor 11:24-25	Ephesians 5:26	Hebrews 10:22
Matthew 11:20-24	Romans 6:3-5	I Cor 6:11		

Nouns cannot be perverted into conditions for eternal life.

John 3:16 and the noun "world" cannot prove universality of God's love or Christ's death, for it is used too often in a restricted sense (Luke 2:1), and it is used for the Gentiles (Rom 11:12).

Galatians 5:4 and the noun "grace" are describing a fall from the right knowledge of grace, though this text is used by many to teach that a person can lose their eternal life by grace.

I Timothy 2:4 and the noun "all men" cannot prove God's will to save all, for it is often used in a restricted sense (I Cor 9:22), and the all sorts of men are clearly in context (I Tim 6:10; 2:1-2).

James 1:18 no more has to be referring to the written word of God than does Hebrews 4:12, for Jesus Christ has created all things, including the new man, according to His own will.

II Peter 3:9 and the pronoun "any" is referring to the "usward" addressed, not the lost in L.A.

Matthew 23:37	John 6:33	Romans 10:17	I Timothy 4:10	I Peter 1:23
John 1:7	John 6:51	I Cor 15:22	I Timothy 5:8	I John 2:2

John 1:9	John 12:32	II Cor 5:14-15	Titus 2:11	I John 4:14
John 1:29	John 12:47	II Corinthians 6:1	Hebrews 2:9	
John 4:42	Romans 1:16	Galatians 4:19	Hebrews 4:12	
John 5:25	Romans 4:5	I Timothy 2:6	I Peter 1:2	

Verbs cannot be perverted into conditions for eternal life.

John 1:12-13 teaches that any who believe (present tense) were already born again (past tense), though whenever John 1:12 is memorized or used by most, John 1:13 is conspicuously absent.

John 5:24 declares that a believer in the present has been passed from death to life, which is the sense of the present perfect tense, and the believer will not face future condemnation either.

I Corinthians 4:15 does not use "begotten" in the vital sense of the word, but in the practical sense of instruction and conversion, identical to forming Christ in the Galatians again (Gal 4:19).

I Corinthians 8:11 is not describing perishing in hell, but rather perishing practically under a guilty conscience from sinning through the bad example of another (Rom 14:13-21).

Ephesians 5:14 has no reference to eternal life, but rather an exhortation to practical godliness (5:1-21), because Paul has already confirmed their election (1:3-12) and regeneration (2:1-10)!

II Peter 2:1 uses the verb "bought" for God's purchase of Israel out of Egypt (Deut 32:5-6).

Genesis 4:7	Acts 13:39	Romans 5:17	Galatians 3:8-9	I Peter 3:21
John 3:18-19	Romans 1:17	Romans 14:15	Galatians 3:11	I John 3:7
John 10:27	Romans 3:28	I Corinthians 4:18	Philemon 1:10	I John 4:7
John 20:31	Romans 4:11	I Cor 8:3	James 2:5	I John 4:15
Acts 10:35	Romans 5:1	II Cor 3:3	James 2:24	I John 5:1

Prepositions cannot be perverted into conditions for eternal life.

Acts 2:38 and "for" are used by Campbellites as a baptismal condition for regeneration and soul cleansing, but baptism is the answer of a conscience already good (I Pet 3:21; Mark 1:44).

Galatians 2:16 describes Jesus Christ's faithfulness to God for justification by the preposition "of," indicating His faith in God, not our faith in Him, which the new versions change.

Ephesians 2:8 teaches by "through" that our faith believes the news of salvation by God's grace.

II Timothy 1:10, which limits the gospel to bringing life "to light," is credited with much more.

II Timothy 2:10 teaches by “also” and “with” that Paul helped the elect by his labors to obtain a practical salvation through the gospel along with and in addition to eternal glory.

Acts 11:18	Romans 3:25	Romans 4:16	Galatians 3:22	I Peter 1:2
Romans 3:22	Romans 4:3	Romans 10:10	II Timothy 3:15	

For Further Study:

A. The work by Benjamin Cox in 1646, “Some Mistaken Scriptures Sincerely Explained,” against the Pelagians.
B. The work by John Owen in 1647, “The Death of Death in the Death of Christ,” against universal atonement.
C. The work by John Gill in 1735, “The Cause of God and Truth,” against the free-will cavils of the Arminians.
D. Web Document: “Knowing the Scriptures,” details at length how to read and understand the Bible correctly.
E. Sermon Outline: “Revelation 3:20 Reclaimed,” explains how this text has been grossly perverted by most.
F. Web Document: “John 3:16 Revisited,” explains from John’s writings that it has no Arminian sense at all.
G. Web Document:“Seven Proofs of Unconditional Salvation,” prove that eternal life is an unconditional gift.
H. Web Document: “When Were You Saved?” rightly divides the New Testament into five phases of salvation.
I. Sermon Outline: “Is God the Author of Confusion?” proves clearly that God designed the Bible to confuse.
J. Sermon Outline: “Salvation by Works,” shows Arminian sound bites proving far more than they will accept.
K. Sermon Outline: “Why No Invitations?” reviews the history and heresy of gimmicks for offering eternal life.