

Rom. 14:19  
So then let  
us follow  
after things  
which make  
for peace,  
and things  
whereby  
we may  
edify one  
another.

John 8:32 And  
ye shall know  
the truth and  
the truth shall  
make you free.

# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

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## SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

by Jim Stauffer

**Eph. 2:8** *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

It is clear from Scripture we are saved by the grace of God. When man sins (**Rom. 3:23**) he separates himself from God (**Isa. 59:1,2**). The apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear the solution to the problem is reconciliation with God through the blood of His Son Jesus, freely given on the cross of Calvary (**See 2 Cor. 5:14-17**). Freely given is the key to understanding the grace of God. Consider the following passages; **John 10:17** *"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. 18 "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."* **Rom. 5:8** *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.* To this fact stated clearly in Scripture there has been little disagreement over the years among those who do sincerely believe Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Son of God.

The more controversial portion of **Eph. 2:8,9** is being *saved through faith*. The difficulty comes from a failure to either understand what faith entails or the willingness to accept it in light of what some teach about it. The best teacher in Scripture about faith is James, the brother of the Lord, who wrote the **Book of James** and had this to say about those who view a situation and believe it while doing nothing in regard to it. In the section of his book, **James 2:14-17**, he explains it this way, *What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has*

*no works, is dead, being by itself.*

Some believe accepting the word works negates the concept of grace by suggesting we have then somehow earned our salvation. Yet James dismisses this concept saying these works are merely obedience to God's word, which has always been necessary to please Him. His example is Abraham being willing to offer Isaac as a sacrifice to God on Mount Moriah. His point is that Abraham was justified because he obeyed God's command. James calls this being justified by his works. He does this to indicate that faith without the action called for is dead (**Jas. 2:26**).

What James does for us with this illustration is teach us that a living faith leads someone to act on it. Consider Naaman in the Old Testament. He believed the prophet of God could guide him to a cleansing of his leprosy, yet objected to dipping himself in the Jordan River. Once he decided to trust the word of God by way of the prophet, he did dip in the Jordan and was cleansed. When Habakkuk said, *the righteous shall live by faith* (**Hab. 2:4**), he was indicating the faithful would be guided to *live, that is act upon our faith*.

The apostle Paul in his defense before King Agrippa, quoted Jesus by saying his mission was, *to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'* (**Acts 26:18**) He follows that with the statement in **verse 20**, that those same people, *should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance*. That lets us know when he says in **Rom. 3:26**, *that He* (God) *would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus*, He is speaking of those whose faith leads them to deeds of obedience to His word.

So, let us conclude when Jesus says, *"He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned* (**Mark 16:16**), that we know that baptism is just as essential as the believing because without it our faith is dead.

## THE SIGN OF JONAH

*“Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, Teacher, we want to see a sign from you. But He answered and said to them, an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here” (Matthew 12:38-42).*

The request for a sign from the scribes and Pharisees was not uncommon. While we may want to use the word malicious to describe these Jews, we might do as they did. The middle chapters of Matthew’s account tell of healings, cleansings, sight restored, and lepers cleansed. When Jesus called people to follow Him, the demands of doing so were stringent. The good news Jesus preached was great; but the people wanted reassurance. They even asked for a sign from heaven (**Matthew 16:1**). It was unlikely that any sign would have fully satisfied those who were asking and it was unlikely that those asking were sincerely sincere; they were after all *“an evil and adulterous generation.”* Still they asked; and Jesus continued to answer, albeit in His own way.

Let us not miss the point that Jesus opens scripture to answer His questioners. The book of Jonah tells of the prophet who, after spending three days and nights in the belly of the great fish, was finally vomited out on land; he was delivered from certain death. Jesus, after three days, was raised from the dead. This miracle, this answer demonstrated that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. In responding to Jonah’s preaching, the citizens of Nineveh repented. Now, would the hesitant Pharisees do the same? They seemed intent on refusing this offer of salvation from Jesus (**Matthew 11:20-24**). Then there was the queen of the south. The Queen of Sheba, a Gentile, with great effort traveled to imbibe at least some of Solomon’s wisdom. Would the Jews listen to one who was greater than Solomon, or who is greater than all? Can we today act as the Pharisees acted? I don’t mean that we *really* (at least we won’t admit it) ask Jesus to work miracles. But is Jesus enough to convince us of heaven’s love and concern for our souls? If Jesus answered His detractors with the word of God, should not that same word occupy a primary place in our lives? Or, do we seek some tangible, better-felt-than-told experience that will somehow tip us in the right direction? Are we looking for some feeling

that will awaken our senses and turn us to God? Do we seek panaceas for our “felt-needs?” In a consumer driven culture we expect even Christianity to fill the voids in our lives. User-friendly churches cater to their clientele, catering to all. Marketing strategies can produce *signs of success*—large numbers, weight loss, better financial decisions, and better self-esteem. Remember, though, that no sign will be given; no sign will ever be enough, when those asking refuse to see Jesus.

**Randy Harshbarger**

## Things We Learn From the Old Testament: You Are Not Just a Physical Being!

Jesus had several confrontations with the religious leaders of His day, mostly the Pharisees. There was also, however, a party of folks called the Sadducees. Their religion consisted mostly of the trappings of political power. They did not really believe in the teachings of the Old Testament, unless it gave them power. During one of these confrontations recorded in **Mark 12:18-27** they brought a question to Him. Now they were the religious compromisers of their day and because they were they did not believe in the hereafter, and their question reflects this compromising unbelief.

Jesus addresses the heart of their problem by appealing to the Old Testament writings of Moses to prove, not only that there was a life after the one here in this world, but that it was going to be quite different from life in this world. He goes to Moses’ conversation with God in the Burning Bush (**Exodus 3:6**) and points out that The Almighty had said *“I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”* If they did not exist any longer then the proper tense would be ‘was’ instead of ‘am’. Since God does not make mistakes then they must still exist but how, since their bodies are in their tombs? The Inescapable Conclusion was that their spirits were still alive! You are more than an animated corpse!

This is the downfall of ALL religious liberalism, they really don’t believe what is written in the Old Testament Scriptures, and therefore they do not study them. If they do study them, when they come to a difference of opinion with Moses they immediately call Moses wrong! A religious conservative, on the other hand, would immediately understand that HE and NOT Moses, is the one that must be corrected!

**Cleveland Reddinger**

## God’s Provision

After leaving Egypt, the Israelites found themselves trapped on the shore of the Red Sea. With the sea at



their backs, and Pharaoh's army rapidly approaching, the people complained to Moses, saying that it would have been better for them to remain slaves *"than that we should die in the wilderness"* (**Exodus 14:12**). Moses responded, *"Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today"* (**13**). Since God was with them, victory was assured. The Egyptians were wiped out.

In contrast, Joshua and the people were routed by the weak and small denizens of Ai, as recorded in **Joshua 7**. Why? Sin was in the camp, and God said to Joshua, *"Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you"* (**12**). Since God was against them, they were defeated.

One of the most wonderful examples of God's provision is recorded in **Judges 7**. There God sought to teach this very principle to the people. He wanted them to know how dependent they were upon His protection and deliverance. He instructed Gideon to limit his army to 300 men in fighting against a much larger Midianite force. While Gideon's tactical plan was ingenious, without God's provision victory would not be possible. The Midianites were defeated. As the text reveals, *"When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the Lord set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled..."* (**22**). The victory was complete, with the Midianite army ultimately completely destroyed, and its Kings and Princes killed.

The three examples noted above are all examples of God's provision (or lack thereof) in military battle. But, the principle established has implications in every aspect of our own lives. God was concerned that Israel's campaign against the Midianites would lead the people to trust in themselves. He limited the army, *"...lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'" (2)*. Jehovah's wording here is interesting. If Israel had claimed credit for the victory, God said it would have done so, *"for itself against Me."* When credit is not given to God for our success, it is an act of rebellion against Him.

Instead, we must be aware of our own limitations and our dependence upon God. If we refuse to acknowledge His help, we in essence elevate ourselves. "I am the one responsible. I am the one in control." Such is foolish. The King of Tyre did that very thing, and God said to him, *"Yet you are a man, and not a god, though you set your heart as the heart of a god..."* (**Ezekiel 28:2**). James told those who foolishly thought they were in control of their lives and future, *"But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil"* (**James 4:16**).

Remember the rich man who sat back satisfied at all He had accomplished. He thought himself self-sufficient, but God said to Him, *"Fool! This night your soul will be required of you..."* (**Luke 12:20**). In concluding his message about the rich fool, Jesus said, *"So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward*

*God"* (**21**).

The most important application as we consider our dependence upon God's provision is seen in His words to the rich fool. *"This night your soul will be required of you."* Ultimately, it is God who determines who will be lost and who will be saved. We are dependent upon His provision (grace) to have our sins forgiven and the hope of heaven. While the rich man teaches us the vanity of pursuing earthly riches, the greater lesson is the vanity of living a life without God as the focus. Our eternal destiny is in His hands. He is the one who determines who will and will not be saved. As such, we must heed His will for us, submitting to what He requires of us to be saved. By doing His will we acknowledge His preeminence. *"But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord"* (**Jeremiah 9:24**).

This is key. We do not sit idly by, and trust the Lord to grant us all we desire. We obey. Just as Gideon worked diligently to secure the victory over the Midianites, God desires our diligence in obtaining the victory available through His extended grace. Paul wrote, *"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; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure"* (**Philippians 2:12-13**). *"Work out your own salvation"* indicates necessary obedience on our part, even as we acknowledge that our redemption depends upon God's part (**cf. 13**). This idea is also stated by Peter in **Acts 2:40**, *"Save yourselves from this untoward generation"* (KJV).

Most wonderful is the realization that victory is ultimately determined by where we will spend eternity. So, no matter what man may do to us (**cf. Matthew 10:28**), or what trials and tribulations we may suffer while here on earth (**cf. 2 Timothy 3:12**), with God's provision our victory is complete! *"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"* (**1 Corinthians 15:58**).

*by Stan Cox; Sound Teaching, January 18, 2017*  
**[soundteaching.org](http://soundteaching.org)**

Missionary statesman Hudson Taylor had complete trust in God's faithfulness. In his journal he wrote:

Our heavenly Father is a very experienced One. He knows very well that His children wake up with a good appetite every morning... He sustained 3 million Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years. We do not expect He will send 3 million missionaries to China; but if He did, He would have ample means to sustain them all... Depend on it, God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply.

***Our Daily Bread, May 16, 1992.***

**Eph. 2:19** *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

**1Pet. 2:9** *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

**Psa. 1:1** *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

## **HOURS OF WORSHIP**

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Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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RON PECK

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CLASS - FORGIVENESS  
JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON: GOD'S PLAN  
OF SALVATION (3)



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10