



THE LENEXA EDIFIER

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

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SALVATION COMES IN THE LAST DAYS

Jim Stauffer

When Luke records the Acts of the Apostles for Theophilus, he refers to his account of the life of Jesus prior to His ascension into heaven (**Acts 1:1,2**). He had presented precious documentation of the life of Jesus, His death and resurrection in his gospel account, and will now begin this document with the ascension of our Lord to the right hand of God.

Prior to His ascension, Jesus reminds His Apostles of their appointment with the Holy Spirit to receive power from on high (**Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4-8**). Then Jesus is received by a cloud out of their sight into heaven, at the right hand of God (**Acts 1:9-11; 2:33**).

Luke then describes the glorious events of Pentecost in Chapter 2. In the first four verses the Apostles are baptized with the Holy Spirit as Christ had promised. They immediately began to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We would be wrong to treat this occasion lightly. Even those who opposed these men from this point forward recognized the extraordinary events of this day. They first attempted to dismiss the fact the Apostles began to speak in different languages miraculously. They accused them of being drunk. Of course this provided very little persuasion to those who heard the message in their own language (**Acts 2:6,7**). Peter then explained what was happening when he quoted the Old Testament prophet, Joel. This, he said, was the pouring forth of the Spirit of God on mankind (**Acts 2:17-21; Joel. 2:28-32**). This event, the prophet said, would take place in the last days.

What do the last days represent and when did they begin? **Isa. 2:2-4** tells us these are the days when *....all nations and many peoples will go to the mountain of the Lord, the house of the God of Jacob*. This is when the law will go forth out of Zion. Daniel tells us *..in the latter days..... the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever* (**Dan. 2:28; 44**). The Hebrew writer says this about those days. **Heb. 1:1** *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by*

his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; These days are the days when Christ will sacrifice Himself to put away sin once and for all (**Heb. 9:26**). Peter repeats this message in **1 Pet. 1:20**.

We now know these days are the days when Christ shall be the spokesman of God and He does this by sending the Holy Spirit to guide His Apostles into all truth (**John 16:13**). This we learn is accomplished after His death, resurrection and ascension. That message is first spoken on Pentecost and continues to be preached ever since (**Mk. 16:15,16; Rom. 1:16; 10:13-15**).

That message Peter gave on that day convicted those in his audience of their sin. The sin of crucifying the Lord. While he persuaded them to accept Christ, he did not mince words concerning their guilt of sin. Understanding their responsibility, they asked, *Brethren, what shall we do?* His response, **Acts 2:38** *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*. Their response, **Acts 2:41** *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls*. God's response, **Acts 2:47** *Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*.

It is clear the impact of the message of salvation on the life of anyone is determined by his response to it. The message is unalterable. God's response is dependable. Our response is then what determines whether we can be saved by it or not. We know we are all guilty of sin and therefore in need of salvation. We stand where those people stood on Pentecost. Guilty of sin until forgiven.

We are so blessed to live in the last days when that eternal kingdom has been established. We can all come to the house of the God of Jacob. God has released the message in these last days that will save the souls of men.

Now we understand what the Hebrew writer meant about Christ granting salvation to those who obey Him (**Heb. 5:8,9**)

Your Conscience: Dead Or Alive

Hardly anyone speaks of the conscience anymore. As a society, our "conscience" hardly even "bothers" us any longer. We have become so accustomed to all kinds of wrong and all types of filthiness that we don't even know how to blush. A Christian, however, is a man who lives by a properly ordered, well-trained conscience. In fact, violation of one's conscience is sinful (**Rom. 14:23**) even if there is no inherent wrong involved. Meat-eating was not sinful per se, but if a person had scruples against it, Paul said he should not eat meat. The lesson: Don't violate your conscience. If careful study of God's word and earnest prayer causes you to change your scruples and allows you to begin eating meat, then that is perfectly fine. But if your conscience cries out in anguish at the very sight of hamburger — then leave it alone. It would be sinful for you to go contrary to this inner sense of right and wrong.

Why is Scripture so insistent that the conscience not be violated? Paul, in fact, always worked *"to have a conscience without offense toward God and men."* (**Acts 24:16**) He paid attention to his conscience, made certain that he did not abuse it, and determined not to violate it. In order to secure a clean conscience, the blood of Jesus redeemed us (**Heb. 9:12-14**). Baptism is an *"answer of a good conscience toward God"* (**1 Pet. 3:21**). Concerning deacons, **1 Timothy 3:9** says they must *"hold the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience."* The conscience, therefore, is a vessel — a container in which is held the mystery of our faith. This being so, we can understand the necessity of an unbroken, clean conscience. Deliberate violations of conscience rupture the container in which our faith is held! If we persist in violating our conscience, our faith will leak away like water from a cracked drinking glass. When you do what you know is wrong, you cannot have a pure conscience. Without an intact conscience, sensitive to the will of God (**cf. 1 Tim. 4:2**) we are destroying the very thing that will keep us in the faith. **1 John 3:21,22** says *"If our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things pleasing in His sight."*

By Mark White

GRACE

Eph. 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Grace is favor, sometimes defined as unmerited favor. It must be embodied in some benefit supplying some need. To be of any benefit a gift must be usable. To throw a drowning man a deed to a diamond mine in South Africa would not supply his needs, for he could not use it; and, in no sense, would it be grace to him. And to offer the sinner a salvation that he is unable to appropriate is not grace, or favor. **Titus 2:11** *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12*

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

GRACE CAME BY CHRIST

The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17) This does not mean that no sort of grace, or favor, was ever extended to anyone before Christ came. *Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah (Gen. 6:8) It shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear, for I am gracious (Ex. 22:27). And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness and truth (Ex. 34:6). For thou wilt bless the righteous; O Jehovah, thou wilt compass him with favor as with a shield (Psa. 5:12). A good man shall obtain favor of Jehovah (Prov. 12:2).* But Christ brought grace to the world in a preeminent sense - His is specially a dispensation of grace. In him God's grace is manifested to the world in the supreme degree. *While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).*

SOME MANIFESTATIONS OF HIS GRACE

Wherever God has supplied man's needs, that is God's favor, God's grace to man. God supplied man's greatest need when He sent His Son to die for man. Without this, man's estate was utterly hopeless. He could provide no means of escape from his own sins and their consequences. But man needed to know of God's love and His wonderful sacrifice, and he needed to know how to appropriate the benefits of this sacrifice. And as *it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps (Jer. 10:23)*, he needed to know how to live so as to escape the follies and sins about him, and finally to enter in through the gates into the city of God.

In the church God has supplied man's need of a spiritual home. Here his need for spiritual training, growth and development is met. In the Bible we have a revelation of all these things. Thus the Bible, supplying some of man's urgent needs, is itself a manifestation of God's grace. In it God reveals Himself and the origin and nature of man, gives man the true philosophy of life, shows him how to be saved from his sins, and points the way to life eternal. The world is too much inclined to regard the Bible as something God has imposed upon the world. This is because we fail to realize man's condition and real needs. Nor greater favor could be bestowed on a lost man than to show him the way out.

Man was hopelessly lost in the wilderness of sin, and God's commands point the way out. Hence, God's commands meet man's need for guidance, and are a manifestation of his favor towards man. Of course the greatest exhibition of God's grace is seen in the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ; but, next to that, his greatest favor to man is seen in the very command he has given for man's guidance. God's commands grow out of man's needs, and every command of God is full of God's grace. Therefore, to set aside God's commands as of no consequence it to repudiate a part of God's grace.

Sound Doctrine, Vol. 1, C.R. Nichol and R.L. Whiteside; pages 145,146.

Is Gambling A Sin

It is a common thing to see advertising for a variety of gambling options on TV, on billboards, and online. Perhaps you've seen the lotto ad in which two men play a game of "hide and seek" with a helicopter and speed boat? Or the promise of \$1,000 cash per week for life. There are all kinds of appeals made for people to take a chance on the lotto.

If the lotto is not your cup of tea, maybe a bingo would work. There are even church groups that conduct bingos. Or maybe the casino might catch your fancy. Government operated casinos are emerging throughout Ontario. A whole host of games; slots, blackjack, roulette, etc. are available there.

Not interested in the lottery, bingo, or casino games? You can now bet on the outcome of sporting events, legally sanctioned by the gaming commissions that regulate lotteries and casinos. No bookie required. Maybe you want to gamble, but don't want to leave the house. You can do that too! You can participate in all the above on the internet now, and soon, OLG will host web gambling too! To say we are a people obsessed with gambling is an understatement. The "OLG generates \$3.8 billion annually in economic activity in Ontario." One part of this huge revenue is used by the provincial government to provide counseling services for people who are betting away their life savings and pay checks. How evil is that?! If our government were actually concerned about these folks, it would outlaw gambling. Problem is, there's too much profit to be made in gambling to stop it.

Having shown the variety of ways one can gamble, and the huge profits that our government is making from the gaming industry, let us turn our attention to the question, "Is gambling a sin?" It is sad that some do not exercise self-control when gambling, and as a result hurt themselves and their family. Such lack of self-control is sinful. Paul acknowledged that we've the ability to do all kinds of things, but cautioned that we should *"not be brought under the power"* of anything (**1 Corinthians 6:12**). It doesn't matter what it is, if we are under the control of something (a bottle, nicotine, drugs, food, etc.), it is sinful. The same is true of gambling.

For some folks, gambling is sinful on the basis that they will become or already are addicted to it. You might reason, "Well, I'll be able to control myself," or "I know my limits," but why would one give an open door to temptation?

Many will justify gambling because it is associated with charity. Not too far from us, you can find the 1,000 Island Charity Casino. Well, that's good, isn't it? You can support charity and have fun at the same time. If I were to stand at the front door of the casino and ask folks why they were there, I doubt I would hear anyone say that they were making a charitable donation. That is what the losers say the next day, if someone at work asks how it went. No one buys a Lotto ticket to give to charity. Those who make such a claim not only have an issue with gambling, but also lying. People don't go to bingo, the

casino, or a lottery kiosk to make a charitable donation. "The gambler hopes for everyone else to fail. How do we reconcile that with the Bible?"

Folks gamble, be it a slot machine, bingo, the race track, whatever it is, to obtain an exponential increase on their money. Now, that in itself is not sinful. An investor will buy stock or commodities anticipating an increase in value. Some of these markets are very risky. If one enters these volatile markets, it is necessary to do adequate analysis beforehand. To just jump into the market without proper investigation is no different than buying a ticket for this weekend's Super Max draw. One is not a good steward of the blessings God has given if he is willing to exchange it for a chance to win based on the roll of a dice or drop of a ball. Recall how upset the master was with the servant who buried the money placed in his hand (**Matthew 25:24-30**). This man, though identified as lazy and wicked, was more responsible than one who will lose money on a game of chance.

No one entering the arena of gambling does so with a desire for someone else to win his money. A desire to win is inherent in gambling. The gambler doesn't want another to walk away with her money - she wants to walk away with the other person's money. Can we reconcile that with the Christian character? Paul said that we should look out for the interests of others and not be selfish (**Philippians 2:3-4**). Can it be said of the one who exclaims, "BINGO!" that his concern is for others and not himself? If the slot machine pours out a bunch of coins into your bucket, realize that you just pocketed the losses of 100s of people who sat there before you.

Would you exploit others to your own benefit? It is despicable to do so. We have laws against such in the business world - but in the gambling world, it is acceptable for the winner to profit, not from the failure of one or two, but the masses.

The gambler hopes for everyone else to fail. How do we reconcile that with the Bible? Paul said that he did not seek his own profit, *"but the profit of many"* (**1 Corinthians 10:33**). Can we gather up our winnings from the table and in the next breath, with a good conscience invite those who will go home empty handed to church? "I like the games," one might say. Do you like the games more than the souls of men? Do you like the games more than your own soul? There is nothing wrong with the games - it's the wager, the bet. You can play poker or bingo or blackjack for fun and for free. Leave the money out of it. Don't gamble!

William J. Stewart

Have you ever wondered if Paul and Timothy spent their leisure time wagering over a game of chance? Me neither, since Paul told him this.

1 Tim. 4:12 *Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.*

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

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: GRANT CLOTHIER AND J.R. DANIEL AND JAN PATRICK.

STEVE WIMP AND JON COONES HAVE RETURNED HOME AND ARE DOING WELL.

EULA HARRIS IS RECOVERING FROM OUTPATIENT SURGERY.

BIBLE CLASSES: SUNDAY: GOSPEL OF JOHN - RON PECK - WEDNESDAY: THE THEME OF THE BIBLE - JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON: THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS



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