

The Two Views of Genuine Salvation

A Brief Personal Thesis by Jason M. Silver

The Two Views

1. The Free Gift View: Salvation is a free gift of grace received by confession of faith period. Nothing else added.

a. This view states that salvation is by faith alone and that the issue of surrendering to the Lordship of Christ comes about through a growing relational process, not in a moment. It is God's plan for the Christian only and not a requirement to become a Christian.

b. This view believes that adding "commitment of life" to the plan of salvation is adding a human work.

c. Salvation takes place at the moment of faith. Commitment to His Lordship is an everyday learning and growing process. Paul prayed a number of times that the Church would grow in their "knowledge of Christ."

A clear distinction is made between justification & sanctification.

Repentance = a change of heart and mind.

Romans 10:10-12:10 "For it is **with your heart that you believe** and are justified, and **it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved**. 11 As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

2. The Lordship View: Salvation is a full submission & surrender of **every area** of your life to the Lordship of Christ & a willingness to fully obey at the point of first belief.

a. Salvation takes place only if a person completely surrenders to Christ's Lordship at the moment of saving faith. No complete surrender = no genuine salvation.

b. This view states that Christ must be made Lord of one's life at the moment of faith or salvation does not occur.

c. The lordship view expressly states the necessity of understanding Christ as the Lord and Master of one's life in the act of receiving Him as Saviour.

There seems to be no clear distinction between justification & sanctification.

Repentance is stressed as a necessary element of salvation, and it is defined as "turning from sin"...even as "stop sinning". ("He was calling for a 180 degree turning from sin. That is repentance". "If we fail to call people to "turn from their sins" we are not communicating the same gospel" - "Repentance turns from sin to Christ". – John MacArthur, Faith Works)

THESIS:

It would seem to me that the answer to these seemingly opposing views is that it's not a "one or the other" but a "both and" answer. Really, the argument is over "when does something happen?" not which one is right. Both viewpoints have a solid scriptural basis for what they believe happens. It's when it happens that raises the question in argument. I would say with full scriptural confidence, that although faith alone initially saves, that very faith should result in good works and in a growing understanding of the Lordship of Christ to follow. We turn from sin after we receive our new nature, not before. Without our new nature we cannot stop sinning. If we could, we wouldn't have need of a new nature in the first place would we?

The simplest way to say it is, "Faith Works." Yet it can't work until you have it. The works we are to do which were "**prepared by the Father beforehand for us to walk in**", are performed by us after salvation; not beforehand. They are performed out of an already obtained salvation that is being worked out through sanctification. That is the process of getting our outward man to submit to our inward man. We have nothing good enough in us to offer to God for forgiveness of sin, that's why He offered Jesus for us. The initial cost is free; it has to be, for we have nothing on our own to purchase it with. If we had what we needed beforehand, then maybe we could boast, but we had nothing.

When we initially come to receive Christ, the scripture clearly indicates that we accomplish this by "**believing in our heart, that God raised Him from the dead...**" and "**confessing with our mouth that He is Lord.**" (Romans 10:9) However, I do not see practical evidence that this "initial realizing and confession" that He is Lord, and the understanding of what that knowledge will actually cost you throughout your Christian walk as a simultaneous event. For that matter, no one fully understands anything in full at the moment they first come to realize it. It's like saying Thomas Edison didn't genuinely invent the light bulb, because he never knew how much it would cost in electric bills to pay for its use. Peter had no clue what it would cost him when He told Jesus that he was able to drink from the same cup that Jesus would. Yet his devotion was genuine. He was speaking out of His love for Jesus, and when the time came, he paid the cost with his love for his Saviour. Jewish historian Josephus records the Apostle Peter died by crucifixion.

Out of the many folks I know that beyond a shadow of a doubt are genuinely saved, all have varying testimonies regarding their salvation experience. Just as much as every scriptural example we can find seems to vary in an individual's experience in coming to believe in Christ and be saved. Yet the commonalities are always they "believed" and "we're saved". Paul was knocked off his horse at his point of salvation, and Jesus Himself announced His Lordship to Paul. Paul did not believe in Christ as Lord beforehand, and though he realized Jesus as Lord for the first time in that moment, he still did not fully foresee all that it would cost him in the future.

Then we see how the Ethiopian man listened to Philip explain the passage of Isaiah and believed, yet he came down off his horse willingly to be baptized. So was the Ethiopian's conversion any less genuine because he was not knocked off his horse to the sound of Jesus personally proclaiming his Lordship? Of course not. Did the Ethiopian man fully understand the costs involved now that he was committed? We're not told, but probably not. We come to Christ by seeing how much it cost God to send Jesus, we are so deeply touched (in our hearts) by His sacrifice that we confess it with our mouth. It is only after this that we truly find out how much it will cost us to give Him everything.

When we look at salvation we can rightly use the parallels of physical birth and marriage. Jesus often used these parallels when teaching on salvation and our relationship with him as His bride. For example, when I committed to marrying my wife, I said “I Do” to the costs laid out in the vows. However I didn’t truly realize the full extent of those costs until they were demanded of me further down the road of marriage. Yet when they presented themselves, though not easy, I looked back to the commitment that I made to the woman that I loved, and in view of the commitment I made out of love for her, I paid the cost. This in essence is the nature by which we follow Jesus Christ.

At the initial point we make our vows, no matter how much pre-marital counselling one has done, neither the Bride nor the Groom fully understand the costs that the vows they make may one day demand of them. What they do know however, is that they love one another, and because of this love they will pay the costs when they come due. Although I believe God in his foreknowledge was aware of every cost to come. So receiving salvation is free and effortless, however **“working out your salvation”** can and at times will be costly and hard. When the rubber meets the road, we can only count the costs that we know. The extent of some costs is not realized until later.

Physical birth is another great parallel in which we can compare spiritual birth or reception of salvation. A baby doesn’t birth itself, the mother does the birthing. The mother is the one who does the work or exerts the effort, not the baby. The Scriptures tell us that God in Christ exerted the effort to provide us with the ability to be born again in the spirit through the cross. However after the baby is born, it now is forced to grow and mature until it becomes more self sustaining. And as it matures, it will begin to understand more about what it costs to live this life. It will see how hard at times life can be, yet also find the joy of the good things this life also holds.

There’s a principle in life. Proof of commitment is not necessarily seen in the initial utterance of the words, but it is proven in the times that the commitment demands action upon those very words.

Ephesians 2:8-13

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, **it is the gift of God**— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, **created (or birthed) in Christ Jesus** to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. 11 Therefore, remember that **formerly** you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)— 12 remember that **at that time** you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But **now in Christ Jesus** you who once were far away **have been brought near through the blood of Christ**.

Romans 6:1- 4

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We **died to sin**; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live **a new life**.