

Have You Been Saved?

by Sebastian R Fama

Every day people are asked: “Have you been saved?” or “If you died tonight, do you know for sure that you would be going to heaven?” We are assured that this is all possible if we just follow these four steps:

1. Recognize that you are a sinner.
2. Recognize that Jesus died on the cross for you.
3. Repent of your sins.
4. Receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

“And that is it” we are told. Nothing more needs to be done. You are on your way to heaven and nothing can change that. “For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved” (Romans 10:9-10).

That sounds reasonable on the surface. But we need to examine the context, to see what is really going on here. Paul is not explaining how one is saved. He is merely making the point that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles. The next three verses, among others, illustrate this point:

For the Scripture says: “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” **For there is no distinction between Jew or Greek**; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:11-13).

When Paul speaks of salvation here, he is speaking in general terms. We know that because elsewhere he gets more specific. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 6:7-11 he is addressing Christians, that is, those who our Protestant friends would refer to as “the saved.” After confronting them on their sinful habits he says in part:

Instead, you inflict injustice and cheat, and this to brothers. **Do you not know that the unjust will not inherit the kingdom of God?** Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor boy prostitutes nor practicing homosexuals nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Earlier, Paul commented on his own situation:

It does not concern me in the least that I be judged by you or any human tribunal; I do not even pass judgement on myself; I am not conscious of anything against me, but **I do not thereby stand acquitted**; the one who judges me is the Lord. Therefore, **do not make any judgement before the appointed time, until the Lord comes, for he will bring to light what is hidden in darkness** and will manifest the motives of our hearts, and then everyone will receive praise from God (1 Corinthians 4:3-5).

The Bible says only Jesus can say who is saved and who is not. That means, I cannot do it and you cannot do it. The Bible also says, the unjust will lose their salvation.