**Is Salvation A Gift?**

**Introduction:**

If salvation is a gift from God, does that mean everyone will be saved? If salvation is a gift, do we have to do anything to receive it?

Let’s read Ecclesiastes 3:13. “and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor – it is the gift of God.” NKJV Notice that the verse says that there is good that comes from labor and that it is a gift of God. The Bible teaches that God designed man to work. (Genesis 2:15) “Then the Lord God took the man and put hIm in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.” NKJV After sin entered the garden, God cursed the ground. As a result, work became toil.

The good of man’s labor [the fruit] is a gift from God. So while we plant and water, it is God who gives the increase. God has given us seed and water and we must work to receive God’s gift of fruit.

So everything we have is from God. The result of our work is completely dependent upon the grace of God. Now let’s apply this principle to the gospel.

**Body:**

The gospel teaches “salvation by grace.” It means that salvation – the forgiveness of sins – is a gift from God. There is nothing we can do to earn back his favor. Based upon Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, God gives us the gift of forgiveness. Note Ephesians 2:8-9. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” NKJV But notice what the verse doesn’t say. It doesn’t say that God’s grace is unconditional. The Bible teaches that there are conditions attached to the receiving of God’s grace. Some will accept those conditions and receive the gift of salvation while others will refuse those conditions and be lost eternally.

Let’s note how some responded to Peter’s sermon on Pentecost in Acts 2. (Acts 2:37) “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ ” NKJV Peter did not reply that there was nothing for them to do – that salvation was unconditional. Note what he did say. (Acts 2:38) “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’ ” NKJV Repentance and baptism did not earn them salvation when they responded. It did not put God in their debt. However, there were condition they had to meet before God’s gift would be given. (Acts 2:40) “And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’ ” NKJV Let’s look at an example from the Old Testament. In II Kings 5, we have the account of Naaman the leper. He was a commander of the Syrian army who possessed much power. Elisha, the prophet of God, told him to wash seven times in the Jordan River and he would be healed. (II Kings 5:10) “And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, ‘Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean.’ ” NKJV After dipping the seventh time, he was indeed healed. (II Kings 5:14) “So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.” NKJV The gift of healing was totally by God’s grace, but he would have died a leper if he had not complied with God’s conditions.

Likewise, God has attached repentance and baptism as conditions necessary to receive forgiveness of sins. Baptism is not a “work of human righteousness” as some have called it, but rather a work of God. (Colossians 2:12) “buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” NKJV

**Invitation:**

Salvation is truly by grace, but conditions must be met to receive this gift. (Romans 6:23) “For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” NKJV Have you met those conditions?

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