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Climbing God's Hill

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Psalm 24 contains several important lessons for us; however, I want to focus on only one. Recently I wrote about the fact that I've never been to a funeral where the deceased was not "preached into heaven," so to speak. Everyone is quick to say things to the effect that "now (fill in the name) is in heaven." In fact, just yesterday I read of the death of a famous basketball coach and someone was quoted in the article that he was now in heaven "coaching God's basketball team." I would never propose to "whittle on God's end of the stick" and say I know who is, or is not, going to heaven. However, in a sense, I do know. I only know in a general sense because God's Word tells us exactly who is pleasing to Him and will be granted the grand and glorious honor of a heavenly abode in eternity. This Psalm is just one of many passages that gives us some of this critical information.

The Psalmist writes (vv. 3-6):

"3 Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?

Or who may stand in His holy place?

4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,

Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,

Nor sworn deceitfully.

5 He shall receive blessing from the LORD,

And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him,

Who seek Your face."

So many folks seem to think that if one is "a good person" who pretty much obeys the laws of the land and is "a nice guy/gal" will make it. However, that is not God's criteria. One very key element of one who "may ascend into the hill of LORD" (i.e., go to heaven) is that their "righteousness [is] from the God of his salvation" (v. 5). I, or anyone, will not make it to heaven just because others think I am "a nice guy." To seek to establish my own righteousness and think that will force God into allowing me to "ascend the hill of the LORD" is a fool's errand. That was the mistake made by the Jewish nation in general. Paul describes it this way: "1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." (Rom. 10:1-4)

Try as hard as we may, we can never establish our "own righteousness" in God's eyes through being "a nice guy." We can only accomplish that blessed state by submitting "to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). The "righteousness of God" is revealed in His "gospel" (Rom. 1:16-17). Unless we obey His "gospel" we can be the "nicest guy" in the world and we will still be lost. The New Testament tells us that to obey the "gospel" and receive salvation we must first hear God's word (Rom. 10:17). That's because God's Word (i.e., His "gospel,") is God's "calling card" (2 Thess. 2:13-14). It is the "calling card" that draws men "for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:14). The "gospel" is what produces faith in our hearts that Jesus Christ is indeed God's Son (Jn. 8:24). That He is the one who shed His blood to take away our sins (Eph. 1:7-9). Upon believing those key facts, we must be willing to verbally confess it before men (Rom. 10:9-10). We must do as the Ethiopian treasurer did when he confessed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). We must then repent and turn away from our lives of sin (Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 6:17-18). We must also obey Christ in baptism. Jesus Himself said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16). Why? Because by being baptized we contact Christ's saving blood (Rom. 6:3) and our sins are washed away (Acts 22:16). Paul wrote

that "salvation" is "in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:10) and baptism puts one "into Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:3). Or, as Paul states in another passage, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27) Finally, to make our salvation "sure" (2 Pet. 1:10), we must give "all diligence" to grow in the faith (2 Pet. 1:3-11).

Are you planning to "ascend the hill of the LORD" when your life here ends? You can, but only if you do not rely on your "own righteousness" and submit to "the righteousness of God."

What the Baptists Really Teach About 'The Impossibility of Apostasy'

~by Greg Gwin

Take a careful look at this quote. In it you will see fully exposed the Baptists' view on apostasy.

*"We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct. or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul. This is settled in Christ and Christ alone . . . All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the -services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger . . ." - **Sam Morris**, Pastor, First Baptist Church. Stamford, Texas*

The Baptists often refer to this as "once saved, always saved", or sometimes you hear them call it the "security of the believer". No matter what terms are used to describe it, the results of this totally Calvinistic position are obvious. And, while we may be appalled by the plainness of his wording, we respect the honest consistency of Mr. Morris in expressing his view. Many other Baptists are not nearly so willing to admit the logical consequences of their doctrine. But, if "a Christian's sins do not damn his soul", then Morris is correct in stating that it matters not if the sin is idolatry, or murder, or adultery, etc. If this argument holds for some sins, it holds for all.

Compare this to the simple Bible truth on the subject which is found in these passages: Gal. 5:4; 1 Tim. 1:19,20 & 5:8; Acts 8:18-24, etc. The fact is that we must be "faithful unto death" to receive the "crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

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