

If Man Can Do Nothing to Save Himself...

by John Isaac Edwards

Ephesians 2:8 has been misused to teach that man can do nothing to save himself. It's been said, "The fact is that man can do nothing to save himself from the consequences of his sin." If man can do nothing to save himself, then he can be saved without doing anything! If not, why not? If this be true, then...

1) Why did the Lord say, "...he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Mt. 10:22)? Is endurance necessary? Evidently not, if man can do nothing to save himself. Enduring is doing something!

2) Why did Jesus say, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:16)? If man can do nothing to save himself, then no need to believe and be baptized!

3) Why does the Scripture say, "...that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be

saved" (Acts 2:21)? Calling on the name of the Lord involves doing some things! It includes hearing, believing and obeying the gospel! (Rom. 10:13-17).

4) Why did Peter tell Jews on Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." when they asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37-38)? That would have been a great opportunity for Peter to reveal, "Man can do nothing to save himself from the consequences of his sin", if man can do nothing to save himself.

5) Why do we read concerning Peter, "...with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40), if man can do nothing to save himself?

6) Why did the Lord tell Saul of Tarsus, "Arise, and go into the city, and it

shall be told thee what thou must do", when he asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6)? Why didn't the Lord inform Saul man can do nothing to save himself? Why do we read in the city where Ananias told Saul, "...arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16), if man can do nothing to save himself from the consequences of his sin?

7) Why send for Peter? Cornelius was instructed to send for Peter, "...he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do" (Acts 10:6). Chapter 11, which rehearses the matter by order, states, "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (v. 14). Cornelius had to do something to be saved! No need to send for Peter, if it be true that man can do nothing to save himself!

8) Why is it written, "That if thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord

Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:9-10)? Is believing and confessing doing something?

9) Why did Paul write the Corinthians, “...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21)? If man can do nothing, he can be saved without faith. Faith is a work, you know (Jn. 6:29).

10) Why did Paul tell the Corinthian Christians, “...ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain” (1 Cor. 15:2)? That sounds like something man must do to be saved!

11) Why did Paul exhort the Philippians, “...

work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12)? What is there for man to work out, if it is all to be done by God and man can do nothing to save himself?

12) Why do we read, “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Th. 2:10)? Is it necessary to receive the love of the truth to be saved?

13) Why did Paul tell Timothy, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Tim. 4:16)?

14) Why does Hebrews 5:9 say of Christ, “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him”?

15) Why all the emphasis on doing? From Matthew to Revelation, passage after passage emphasizes that man must do: Mt. 7:21, 24, 26; 12:50; Lk. 6:46; Jn. 2:5; 7:17; 13:15, 17; 15:14; Rom. 2:13; Jas. 1:22-25; 1 Jn. 2:17; Rev. 22:14. Why all this emphasis, if man can do nothing to save himself?

Anyone have any answers to these questions? The fact is that man never has been saved without doing anything. Not Noah (Heb. 11:7). Not Rahab (Josh. 6:25). Not Jews on Pentecost (Acts 2:37-38). Not Saul (Acts 9:6; 22:10). Not Cornelius (Acts 10:6). Not the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:30-31). And not us today! Ephesians 2:8 shows two sides to salvation — God’s (grace) and man’s (faith). The thinking that God does it all and man can do nothing makes salvation one-sided and is Biblically incorrect.

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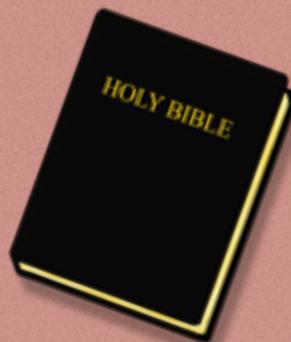
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