

## Saved? Really. How?

The Teachings of [Spencer W. Kimball](#)

(*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, Pg. 68-71*)

Both faith and works are needed for exaltation. There can be no real and true Christianity, even with good works, unless we are deeply and personally committed to the reality of Jesus Christ as the Only Begotten Son of the Father, who bought us, who purchased us in the great act of atonement.

On highway signs and from sectarian pulpits, we are told: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)) ... This above verse, together with other isolated ones taken out of context, are interpreted by many to mean that personal religious activity and works are unnecessary and that all men need do is to believe in the name of Christ....

This misconception of those who eliminate or de-emphasize works arises in large measure from a lack of understanding.

When the resurrected Lord vacated his tomb after his crucifixion, a transcendently important thing happened. He gave a priceless gift to all men. He opened the door and made possible this redemption that every man would enjoy reunion of body and spirit. To this redemption, all men everywhere are heir, independent of their works, and it comes to the rebellious as well as to the saint; to the unbeliever as well as the believer.

When Adam intentionally and wisely partook of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, he brought upon all of us, his descendants, two deaths -- the physical or "mortal death," and the spiritual death or the banishment from the presence of the Lord.

From this physical death man was a by the grace of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and not by our works. The resurrection then is salvation from the grave....

To attend elementary school is one thing, and to receive a Ph.D. is another. To pour a foundation is one thing, and to complete the structure and make it usable is another. And so, to be merely saved in resurrected state is quite a different thing than to be exalted with eternal life....

Numerous people may be saved in lower kingdoms who will never see God, but all who are exalted will have that glorious privilege.

The Lord said: *"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."* ([Matthew 5:8](#))

He spoke of performance -- reaching perfection of life.

When he gave the memorable Sermon on the Mount, he was speaking of belief plus works of righteousness. He said: *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."* ([Matthew 7:21](#))

To receive so great a reward by merely believing is unthinkable. We pay a price for everything commensurate with its value. Paul points out throughout his epistles that to enjoy the greater blessings of eternal life there was much work to do.

To the Corinthian saints, he explained that after the resurrection, there were three heavens<sup>[(1)]</sup> or degrees of glory -- the Telestial, Terrestrial, and Celestial.

<sup>[(2)]</sup> In modern revelation, Joseph Smith amplifies these truths. All good people of every nation will be saved in one of these kingdoms, but neither Paul nor Peter nor modern prophets, nor the Lord himself, has ever promised celestial life or eternal life to any soul who does not live celestial laws.

Some religionists claim that the murderer dying on the gallows can go immediately to God if he has made confession of belief in Christ. This is unthinkable and untrue. To think that the criminal hanging beside the Lord on Calvary would receive the same reward as the martyr Stephen is unreasonable and untrue.... If one wishes to be forgiven of his sins and reach the celestial kingdom and have associations with the Father and his Son, [he must] repent and serve and do the proper works.... [(3)]

Now, from the second death we are saved by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ and this conditionally. As Adam made himself mortal he also moved himself out of the presence of God, thus bringing spiritual death penalties upon all his posterity. All men were halted in their progression. But in the meridian of time came the Son of God born of an immortal father and a mortal mother, and as he climbed crucifixion's hill, he carried that Adamic penalty, and as the nails through his hands and feet, and the spear in his side, drained from his body all of his precious blood in this, his voluntary sacrifice, he neutralized and paid for all the Adamic sins.

Now, John said all folks have personal sins also. Here is the area of cooperation between the Lord and man, for even the Savior cannot save men in their sins. He will redeem them from their sins, but then only through repentance.

Paul told the Romans that Christ *"will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life."* ([Romans 2:6-7](#))

There is no doubt. Intellectual assent will no more exalt mortal men than it will the evil spirits. The acknowledgment and confession of the divinity of Christ in itself is insufficient to bring the great eternal gift of exaltation.

And John the Revelator made it clear that, at the bar of God, men will be judged according to their works.

The truth in the matter is understandable to all who will search and read and pray and open their hearts.

Christ's sacrifice is fully effective only for the repentant. He suffered and died for us, yet if we do not repent, all his anguish and pain on our account are futile.

The Lord is merciful, but mercy cannot rob justice. His mercy extended to us when he died for us. His justice prevails when he judges us and give us the blessings which we have duly earned.

Some people not of our Church like to quote the following words of Paul: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#))

One of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved alone by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation.... One passage in the Book of Mormon, written perhaps with the same intent as Paul's statement above -- to stress and induce appreciation for the gracious gift of salvation offered on condition of obedience -- is particularly enlightening: *"For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do."* ([2 Nephi 25:23](#))

And the Lord further emphasized the fact: *"And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed*

*their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end." (3 Nephi 27:19)*

... However good a person's works, he could not be saved had Jesus not died for his and everyone else's sins. And however powerful the saving grace of Christ, it brings exaltation to no man who does not comply with the works of the gospel. Of course we need to understand terms. If by the word salvation is meant the mere salvation or redemption from the grave, the "grace of God" is sufficient. [(4)] But if the term salvation means returning to the presence of God with eternal progression, eternal increase, and eventual godhood, for this one certainly must have the "grace of God," as it is generally defined, plus personal purity, overcoming of evil, and the good "works" made so important in the exhortations of the Savior and his prophets and apostles. [(5)]

Few, if any, have understood these matters better than the Apostle Paul, who would have been surprised that any other construction should be put upon his words.

Throughout his writings he stresses the importance of deeds of righteousness.

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*(Hebrews 10:26) "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."*

[(1)] *(2 Corinthians 12:2) "...caught up to the third heaven."*

[(2)] *(1 Corinthians 15: 35-42) "...How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? ... "So also is the resurrection of the dead."*

[(3)] *(Matthew 3:1-8) "...Repent ye:..." ... "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:"*

[(4)] *(1 Corinthians 15: 21-22) "For as in Adam all die, even so in Jesus Christ shall all be made alive." -- [All shall be resurrected from the grave.]*

[(5)] *(Revelations 20:12-13) "...and the dead were judged...according to their works." "... they were judged every man according to their works."*

*(Matthew 16:27) "For the Son of man shall come...and then he shall reward every man according to his works."*