

Hebrews 9:15

This verse is pivotal, but not exhaustive, in understanding how were people saved under the Mosaic Covenant? Did they get forgiveness of sins through the keeping of the Law? Before we move on to the conclusion of chapter 9 it is important to address the point that is mentioned in verse 15. That is, how were those who lived under the Mosaic Law to get forgiveness of their sins?

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

What do we learn from this verse?

- 1) Jesus is the mediator of the new testament (not a book but a relationship with God)
- 2) Jesus died for the sins of those under the Old Testament (Mosaic Covenant) so they would be redeemed.
- 3) Those which are called would receive the promise of eternal salvation. Who are the called?

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isaiah 55:1

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1:9

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32

"For many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22:14

"It is true that this parable [speaking of Matthew 22:1-14], unlike the previous one [speaking of Matthew 20:1-16], has an application to salvation. It is equally true that whatever our Lord meant by *many* being *called* and *few* being *chosen*, He placed the responsibility for the man's presence without the wedding garment squarely upon the man himself. The shocked king demanded, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment.' As we know from the history of Oriental custom in our Lord's day, wedding garments were provided by the host for wedding guests. This man's lack was inexcusable and his speechlessness indicated his realization of that fact. *A garment had been provided for him by the king and he had refused to wear it!* This in no way pictures irresistible grace or proves that theology of a *general* and an *effectual* call. (On the other hand, we might point out that the parable favours *unlimited* atonement since a wedding garment would have been provided – *even though unused!*)

Robert L. Sumner, An Examination of TULIP: The Five Points of Calvinism, emphasis in the original

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Romans 8:29

This verse is a close parallel to Ephesians 1:5 and Romans 8:23. Notice those *whom He foreknew*, obviously speaking of believers, God has "predestined" to *be conformed to the image of His Son*. That means we will have a body like his and be like him (this doesn't mean we become God). Our body will be perfect like his, our thoughts will be perfect like his, etc.

"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Romans 8:30

God has "predestined" believers thus he has called them, justified them, and will glorify them. This verse does not teach that we are "predestined" to be saved. Believers are "predestined" to be glorified one day and God has called, justified, and glorified them. It would be wrong to equate "call" with predestination. There are plenty of verses that say God has "called" all men and yet not all respond. There are passages where men resist the conviction of the Holy Spirit. They were "called" but didn't respond positively.

1. God has called all people to be saved, throughout history.
2. Only those who "call upon the name of the Lord" (Romans 10:13) are saved.
3. Those who "trusted in the LORD" in the Old Testament economy were saved and waited for the promise (Hebrews 11 speaks often of the earlier believers waiting for the promise).

James Burton Coffman comments: "'They that have been called' is not exclusive but relates to the world-wide invitation of the Master that 'whosoever will may come.'"

What should we know about salvation prior to the birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus?

1. The Law can never save anyone

The Law referred to in the Bible is the Mosaic Law or the moral, ceremonial, and civil regulations which Israel was to live under. Although the Law is made up of hundreds of parts - the 10 commandments being just a few - it is always looked upon by God as a whole (James 2:10).

What do the following verses teach us about the Law?

- Romans 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.
- Deuteronomy 27:26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.
- Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.
- Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.
- Galatians 3:21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.
- Galatians 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The same can be said of any religious system. No religious system - Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Catholicism, etc. - will ever save anyone. Whenever the teachings of a religion system tell you that in order to attain forgiveness of sins and ultimately heaven that you have to obey the teachings of their faith, they are in effect instituting a law system. If the system of law (works) that God set up can't save anyone why should we think a system set up by men can?

2. People have always been saved **by** God's grace.

- Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
- Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

3. People have always been saved **through** faith.

- Genesis 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.
- Habakkuk 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.
- Romans 4:3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.
- Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
- Galatians 3:8-14 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.
9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.
10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.
11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.
12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

- 13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:
- 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Progressive revelation leads us to the following Biblical understanding of salvation. The **basis, requirement, object, and content** of salvation will help us to understand the issue of salvation throughout history.

1. The **basis** for our salvation, at any time in history, is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

Leviticus 17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

Hebrews 9:22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

Hebrews 10:4-12 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

1 Peter 1:18 18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

2. The **requirement** for salvation, at any time in history, is faith.
See point # 3 above.

3. The **object** of our salvation, at any time in history, is God.
The issue here is whether man will take God at His word and exercise faith in the provision for salvation which He has revealed.
Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.
In the Old Testament the prophets always called for the backslidden people to return to God not to a religious system (Jeremiah 4:1; Hosea 12:6; 14:1; Joel 2:12 are some examples).
Jeremiah 4:1 If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove.
Hosea 12:6 Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.
14:1 O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.
Joel 2:12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

4. The **content** of our faith has changed through history.
There are two basic themes in regard to salvation that run through the Scripture:
 - A. Sacrifice

Genesis 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

Genesis 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

Genesis 12:7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.
8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

Sacrifices under the Mosaic Law

B. Promise

Genesis 22:8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.
13-14 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.
And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Daniel 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

Since the revelation of God was progressive, revealed over about 1600 years, we would expect the content of salvation to be different but based at all times on the need of a sacrifice for forgiveness of sin and God's promise to provide forgiveness.

Romans 4:1-5 (see Genesis 15:1-6)

Abraham believed God's promise of a seed

- 1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?
- 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.
- 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.
- 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.
- 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

and God

Romans 4:16-22

accounted it to him for righteousness.

- 16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,
- 17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.
- 18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.
- 19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:
- 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
- 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.
- 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

Since the time of Jesus the **content** of faith has coincided with the **basis** of faith - i.e. the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Today, we are to accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, Romans 10:13, believing that he died for our sins, was buried and rose from the grave, Romans 10:10, if we want to have our sins forgiven and ultimately go to heaven.