

QUESTION #12 – What about the idea of obedience in grace salvation?

As previously pointed out, those who hold to the heresy of Lordship salvation include obedience into their equation of salvation. To a proponent of Lordship salvation, obedience and obey are synonyms of faith and believe. To one who believes in Lordship salvation, true salvation demands a commitment to a life of obedience.

As they specifically state, “Saving faith is more than just understanding the facts and mentally acquiescing. It is inseparable from repentance, surrender and a supernatural eagerness to obey” (MacArthur, p. 31).

Two passages that are often cited to support their position are Romans 1:5 and Romans 16:26. However, if one carefully examines the book of Romans, one clearly sees that Paul is not calling for a works obedience, but a faith obedience. In other words, Paul is calling for an obedience to turn to faith in Jesus Christ for salvation (Rom. 3:22-28). Obedience to the Gospel is to believe on Jesus Christ for salvation.

One of the Bible expositors whom John MacArthur claimed to have greatly admired was Dr. S. Lewis Johnson. When MacArthur came out with his confused doctrine, Dr. S. Lewis Johnson was asked by Christianity Today to write an article on the subject, which he did, entitled “How Faith Works.”

In the article, he refutes MacArthur’s position and on the matter of obedience, here is what he wrote: “the realization of Christ’s lordship in growing obedience and submission to his will is the work of sanctification, not justification. The two great teachings must not be confounded, or the peril of mixing things that differ threaten us.”

QUESTION #13 – What about the idea of complete submission or commitment to God’s will in grace salvation?

Those who support Lordship salvation often promote a complete submission to God’s will and the Lordship of Christ in order to be saved. Curtis Hutson said that he once asked a person who taught Lordship salvation, “Has Jesus been Lord of your life since the day you trusted Him as Savior? Has there ever been a time since you were saved when Jesus Christ has not been the absolute Lord of your life?” Hutson said, “He hesitated a moment, then said, ‘Well, He has always been Lord, but there have been times when I didn’t obey Him’” (*Salvation*, Vol. 1, p. 305).

The matter of complete submission to God’s will is a lifetime matter of sanctification for the believer, not justification for the unbeliever.

Dr. S. Lewis Johnson said “to insist on a complete submission to God’s will as necessary for salvation is unsupported by not only the Gospel of John, but also the Book of Acts.” He goes on to cite Professor Everett F. Harrison and says if you read the entire book of Acts, you cannot find one single passage where unsaved people are pressed to completely submit to Jesus Christ as their personal Lord. That is a matter of progressive sanctification.

In justification we simply believe in Jesus Christ and are saved by God’s grace apart from any works. In sanctification we begin to work out our salvation in a progressive development that obeys and applies the Scriptures. The result is we move toward rewards and lay up treasures in heaven.

When Curtis Hutson was asked whether or not he believed in the matter of surrender he said “Absolutely! Wholeheartedly! But not to be saved. . . . The surrender of the life to the Lordship of Christ is a beautiful and wonderful thing; but when you make surrender a requirement for salvation, it becomes an ugly, dirty, wicked thing and frustrates the marvelous grace of God!” (*Ibid.*, p. 306).

QUESTION #14 – What about the idea of confession in grace salvation?

Many of those who support Lordship salvation include the concept of confession in real salvation. To them, one must believe in Christ and publicly confess Christ. Lordship proponents often demand some motional or decisional proof.

Often times a text like Matthew 10:32 is used for their support. However, if one carefully examines the context of Matthew 10, there are some major problems with this. First, this was a teaching specifically given to Israel and not Gentiles (Mt. 10:5-7) and this was a message given to specific disciples who were to demonstrate it with spectacular signs to Israel (Mt. 10:8).

Furthermore, before Jesus was crucified He actually changed this message. In Matthew 10:9-10 Jesus tells his disciples that they were not to acquire gold or silver for a money belt. They were not to acquire a bag, tunic, sandals or even a staff. But later, just before He was to be crucified, he told those same disciples just the opposite (Luke 22:35-36).

This instruction about Israel confessing that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah is not instruction given to preachers and teachers in the Grace Age. It is true that a believer in the Grace Age should grow to understand that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, but this promise given by Jesus in Matthew is a specific promise that Jews who would confess that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah on earth would be honored by Jesus before God the Father in Heaven. **This has nothing to do with being saved by confession.**

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Another text often cited is Romans 10:9-10. It is stated by Lordship proponents that confession is part of salvation. However, if you track the conjunctions “for” which begin verses 10, 11, 12 and 13, which are designed to explain exactly what Paul means, the confession is made to God, not to or before men. In other words, whoever calls out to God in the matter of believing on Jesus Christ for salvation will be saved.

QUESTION #15 – What are some biblical illustrations that clearly disprove Lordship Salvation?

There are several biblical examples we could cite that clearly disproves Lordship salvation, but we will specifically cite three here:

Biblical Illustration #1 - The illustration of Lot.

In II Peter 2:7-8, Lot is called “righteous Lot (δικαιον Λωτ).” The word “righteous” is in the same word family from which we get our word “justification.” You must conclude that Lot is a man who we may expect to see in eternity because he had the righteousness necessary to get him into eternity.

Now if you track Lot’s life in the book of Genesis, it is not the story of one who was godly, who was submitted to the will of God. In fact, the only thing Lot ever did in life was to not want men of God raped, but even in that his compass was morally confused:

- 1) - When given a choice, Lot was not interested in God’s will, but a plush worldly life in godless cities. Gen. 13:1, 5, 8-11
- 2) - Lot’s existence was not being lived in a godly environment nor was he himself living in a godly way. Gen. 18:16, 20, 22-32
- 3) - Lot was certainly not a righteous or God-honoring father when he would offer his own daughters up to men to rape them. Gen. 19:1-8
- 4) - The last glimpse we get of Lot is a scene in which he is drunk, committing incest with his daughters. Gen. 19:30-38

Now there is no possible way you can analyze Lot’s life and say there is a man of God who was committed to knowing and doing God’s will. If you take Lot’s life up against a Lordship salvation gospel, you would conclude he could not possibly be saved.

However, the Word of God says he was saved. He was justified. He was righteous. How is that possible? It is possible because positional justification is not the same as practical sanctification. We will see Lot in heaven not because he deserves to be there anymore than we do, but because of the pure grace of God.

Biblical Illustration #2 - The illustration of the thief on the cross . Luke 23:39-43

Now one must ask, what is the purpose of this illustration? We would admit that it is a fact of history and this is what did literally happen.

When Jesus was crucified, He was hanging between two thieves who had lived criminal lives to the point that they deserved to be executed. That is a true, historical fact.

But what exactly is the reason why God wants this story recorded? Timothy Dwight, who was the grandson of Jonathon Edwards, said that the purpose of this was to show that one might be saved simply by believing on Jesus Christ “when they have no opportunity to perform any works of righteousness which might be the ground for their justification.” He said that this story was designed to show that “they are in no sense justified on account of their own righteousness, but solely by the free grace of God, on account of the righteousness of Christ” (*Dwights Theology*, Vol. 2, p. 521).

The whole point of this critical story is that if any person will simply look to Jesus Christ to be saved, he will be saved no matter what the works have been or will be.

Biblical Illustration #3 - The illustration of King Saul .

In Acts 13:21, the Apostle Paul speaks of the fact that it was God who made Saul the first King of Israel. Later in this very chapter, Paul speaks of the doctrine that one is saved by simply believing in Jesus Christ (Acts 13:38-39). Now there is no doubt that we will see Saul in eternity. Saul did not go to hell when he died.

However, when you track Saul’s life, he never wanted to do God’s will and his life never did follow God’s will in submission and obedience.

- 1) His life starts by running and hiding from the will of God—I Sam. 10:21-22
- 2) As King he completely disobeyed God in arrogantly functioning as a priest—I Sam. 13:9-11
- 3) He made up crazy commands God never told him to make—I Sam. 14:24-45
- 4) He never did completely obey God in anything—I Sam. 15:1-3, 9
- 5) He tried to kill David because David was right with God—I Sam. 19:1; 23:15
- 6) He consults a witch—I Sam. 28:7ff
- 7) He commits suicide—I Sam. 31:4

Now I ask you, does this look like a man totally committed to doing God’s will with his life? Does this look like a man totally surrendered to God and committed to obeying God’s Word? According to those who believe in Lordship salvation, there is not one thing in Saul’s life that would lead you to believe he is saved. Yet, David called Saul God’s “anointed” (I Sam. 24:6) and Paul said God made him king.

QUESTION #16 – Is the heresy of Lordship salvation even logical?

If one is honest and logical, you cannot support Lordship salvation because you cannot answer key biblical questions:

1) How do we explain the Corinthian letters that Paul wrote that were inspired by God?

There is no evidence that the Corinthians ever yielded to Christ's Lordship. That is the whole basis for I Corinthians and the whole basis for his follow up letter of II Corinthians. When you read the letters it is clear that Paul classifies these Corinthians as true believers who had experienced the grace of God and it is also clear that he is trying to get these Corinthians to start living like they are supposed to live (i.e. II Cor. 6:14-18). Paul actually said that when he got back to Corinth, he was afraid that he would find a bunch of believers who were caught up in a fleshly lifestyle that included practicing impure, immoral and sensual things (II Cor. 12:20-21). Some of the Corinthians were actually showing up drunk to church (I Cor. 11:21).

Now how can you explain this if you believe in Lordship salvation? You cannot logically explain it.

2) How do we explain the Thessalonian letters that Paul wrote that were inspired by God?

Paul specifically gave thanks to God because he knew the Thessalonians had been elected by God (I Thess. 1:2-4). But a Lordship concept of complete submission to God's will was not in Thessalonica because apparently there was some form of immoral wife-swapping that was taking place (I Thess. 4:1-7).

Now if you were to ask a proponent of Lordship salvation whether or not a person could be saved and involved in this kind of action, if he is true to his message he will say no way. There is no possible way that one could be really saved if this were the case. Then we ask, how do you explain the fact that Paul says God's Spirit was in the people who were doing this—I Thess. 4:8? You cannot logically defend Lordship salvation when you stack it up against the data found in the grace epistles.

3) How do you explain the illustrations in Scripture of those saved who were not dedicated to obeying God—Lot, Thief on the Cross, Saul?

4) How do you explain carnal, fleshly Christians? I Cor. 3:1

The whole matter of carnality or fleshliness for a believer is not yielding to the Spirit of God. In other words, a carnal Christian is saved, but is not allowing the Spirit of God to dominate his life. How do you explain that if you are a Lordship proponent?

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5) How does one explain the matter of rewards or loss of rewards for a believer?

I Cor. 3:14-15

Why will some believers be rewarded in heaven and others won't? The answer is because some did the will of God and allowed the Lord to control their lives and others didn't. In other words, some believers never did permit the Lord to be Lord of their lives and that is the basis for losing rewards.

6) How does one explain Jesus' messages to the seven churches of Revelation? Rev. 2-3

It is obvious that all but one of the churches in Revelation had some major problems with permitting His lordship and yet He still promises life to those who had believed on Him and He challenges those who had believed on Him to move in a direction that pleased Him. How do you explain this if you believe in Lordship salvation?

7) How does one explain Paul's warning against preaching "another gospel?" Gal. 1:6-9

Paul's clear message is faith in Jesus Christ apart from any works is that which saves and justifies (Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14). Now Paul warns against "another" gospel which is different from this.

Now you must admit that the message of believe in Jesus Christ or place your faith in Jesus Christ is not the same as believe and purpose to obey. It is not the same as believe and commit yourself to works. It is not the same as believe and surrender. The messages are not the same so how do you logically explain this?

8) Why does God promise that salvation will come through faith alone if He really means faith plus works?

Many passages stress the faith and believe message which specifically delivers us from law and works—Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:26; 4:5; 10:11; Gal. 3:14, 22, 24, 26. Why is this?

9) How does one explain Paul's straightforward answer to the question of what a person must do to be saved? Acts 16:30-31—He simply says "believe in the Lord Jesus."

10) How does one explain Jesus' own illustration from the book of Numbers—John 3:14-15/
Numbers 3:7-8

All the people had to do was look at the cross to be saved. They did not have to do any works or make any promises. How do you explain that?

Lordship salvation is not logical. It goes against the grain of all biblical Grace Age data.