

Salvation—The Work of Christ (2nd)

(Our study for today continues to show that verses like John 3:16 and 20:30-31 are generally ignored in their true sense. Various renowned commentators avoid the correct interpretation of such verses and interpret them to fit their theology rather than bow to the truth of the Holy Scriptures. Salvation is by the work of Christ alone and it is not centered on the actions of man.)

We ended our last podcast discussing John 3:16 and 20:30-31 to show that John was writing to people who were already believers and not to unbelievers. We showed that John 3:16 is not a proposition for unbelievers to believe the gospel and become a child of grace. When clearly reading the text for what it says, it is only saying that he who currently believes has everlasting life. Furthermore, it was shown from John 20:30-31 that John wrote the gospel for believers to encourage them to “keep on believing.” We quoted the renowned Greek scholar, A. T. Robertson, regarding these verses. He said of verse twenty that the phrase “that ye might believe” is “present active subjunctive of *pisteuô*, ‘that you may keep on believing.’” He further said, “**And that believing ye may have life in his name** (*kai hina pisteuontes zôên echête en tôi onomati autou*). Note present participle *pisteuontes* (continuing to believe) and the present active subjunctive *echête* (keep on having).” Therefore, John was writing to believers to encourage them to “keep on believing” and “continuing to believe” that they would “keep on having” life in Christ. We concluded by saying, “many well-known commentators are not honest in their exegesis of this verse.” To prove this, I will give comments from various commentators. The following quotes are comments on John 20:31 as supplied from the Bible software program *Sword Searcher*.

Albert Barnes: “*That ye might believe, &c.* This is a clue to the design which John had in view in writing this *gospel*. The whole *scope* or *end* of the book is to accomplish two objects:

1st. To prove that Jesus was the Messiah; and,

2nd. That they who looked at the proof might be convinced and have eternal life. This design is kept in view throughout the book.”

Note that Barnes clearly said that the “whole *scope* or *end* of the book is to accomplish two objects” and that the second object was, “That they who looked at the proof might be convinced and have eternal life.” However, Robertson said that the Greek translation is to encourage them to “keep on believing” and “continuing to believe” that they would “keep on having” life in Christ.

John Calvin closes his remarks with the following: “*That believing, you may have life.* This effect of faith was also added, to restrain the foolish longings of men, that they may not desire to know more than what is sufficient for obtaining *life*. For what obstinacy was it, not to be satisfied with eternal salvation, and to wish to go beyond the limits of the heavenly kingdom? Here John repeats the most important point of his doctrine, that we obtain eternal *life* by *faith*, because, while we are out of Christ, we are dead, and we are restored to life by his grace alone.” Though Calvin concluded by saying that “we are restored to life by his grace alone” he previously and plainly said, “Here John repeats the most important point of his doctrine, that we obtain eternal *life* by *faith*.” In other words, Calvin clearly affirmed that “we obtain eternal *life* by *faith*.” This is contrary to the grammatical interpretation of the Greek text.

Ellicott: For those who are unfamiliar with him, *Wikipedia* says, “Charles John Ellicott (1819–1905) was a distinguished English Christian theologian, academic and churchman. He briefly served as Dean of Exeter, then Bishop of the united see of Gloucester and Bristol.” From his *Bible Commentary for English Readers* he said, “We have here the writer’s own statement of his object in writing his narrative, and also the explanation of what seems an abrupt end. His object is that those for whom he writes may become believers, and read in these signs the spiritual truths which lay behind them.” Nothing can be plainer. He

said that the object of John “is that those for whom he writes may become believers.” Again, we see that this is against the grammatical construction of the text. I ask, “Why is it that these profound scholars avoid the grammatical construction of the Greek text?”

Matthew Poole: “But he had [*sic*] wrote these to induce his readers to believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God; a thing of so great concernment to them, that their eternal life depended upon it; for through his name alone eternal life is to be obtained, **Ac 4:12.**” Note again that this commentator also says John “wrote these to induce his readers to believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God” and “that their eternal life depended upon it.” He furthermore said that it is through this that “eternal life is to be obtained.”

John Wesley: Though his comments are brief, they align with the others. He said, “But these things are written that ye may believe - That ye may be confirmed in believing. Faith cometh sometimes by reading; though ordinarily by hearing.”

Many other quotes could be supplied to show that the grammatical construction of the verse is not explained or made known, but an interpretation is supplied to suggest (if not clearly stated) that salvation from the wrath of God and eternal life is obtained when a sinner believes or exercises faith. However, redemption is by the finished works of Christ plus nothing else. If there is anything to be done by the individual for the sinner to have eternal life then it is salvation by Christ *plus* something else. The above quoted commentators (and the Christian world as a whole) believe a person must first exercise faith or first believe for a person to have eternal life. Why is it that such Bible scholars do not explain the true and clear meaning of what God inspired man to write? Likely it is because it does not fit their theology. We must submit our theology to the plain, clear, and grammatical truth of the Holy Scriptures and not seek to force the Word of God to fit our theology. When “schooled and educated men” that are supposed to know the language do not accurately define the Scriptures, false teaching will be set forth and believed by those who read their comments. May God rise up faithful men that will labor to study Scriptures and proclaim the truth to the honor and glory of the Lord!

Before proceeding further, I want to be clear and say that I certainly do not mean to minimize the importance and essential of faith, but it must be properly understood so that God will be given the full credit and honor for salvation for His people from His eternal wrath. The Lord permitting, we will show this importance when we discuss faith/belief in the future. The child of God has faith, but it is Christ that saves from sins and not faith. Equally, it is by faith that the child of grace receives into his heart and mind the salvation accomplished by Christ. However, that salvation must first exist before it can be received by faith; faith cannot receive what does not exist; faith does not create. But, as previously stated, the Lord willing we will address this in the future.

When the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, he was told that the child Mary was carrying was conceived in her by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the angel said that the child would be a son and that His name was Jesus and that He “shall save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:18-21.) From the beginning, it was clearly stated that Christ “shall save his people from their sins.” Notice He “shall save”; not He shall make salvation “possible” nor that He shall “provide” salvation.

Jesus made it equally clear that His reason for coming to the earth was to save those given to Him by the Father before creation. Christ testified to the Jews saying, “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” (John 6:38-39.) Toward the end of His life while praying to the Heavenly Father, Jesus said that God had given Him “power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him,” John 17:2. Further in this prayer to the Heavenly Father Jesus said that He prayed “for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine,” John 17:9. Some try to avoid these verses by saying that Christ was only praying for His immediate disciples, the apostles. If this should be the case regarding these verses, Jesus further qualified the full intent of His prayer by saying, “Neither pray I for these

alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word,” John 17:20. He went on to say of these whom the Father had given Him that the Father “loved them” as He (i.e., the Father) loved Christ. If this is not enough, note our Lord’s statement in verse twenty-four, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” What a profound truth! As we combine verse twenty-three with verse twenty-four, we see that those given to Christ were not only loved “before the foundation of the world,” but that they were loved as Christ was loved by the Father. What a blessed thought! We who are believer were not only chosen in Christ before the world was (Ephesians 1:4) but were also loved as Christ was loved by the Father. Obviously, our sinful minds cannot fully process this glorious truth but we ought to lay hold on it continually by faith as much as we can. How much we will be able comprehend in our glorified state, the Holy Scriptures are silent. Without question we shall be blessed to understand it far better. However, the point of these passages with regard to our current study is that Christ came to this earth to save. He did not come to make salvation possible nor to provide salvation. No! He came to save those given to Him by the Heavenly Father before the world was. He did not die for each and every human that ever lived or will live. He died for those given to Him by the Father. Time does not allow us to provide other passages to show in this study that the redemption of Christ was not only limited in scope but that it was effectual. The Lord willing, we will continue this in our next study. It is my desire that these truths are a blessing to your soul and that you will be blessed to honor and glorify the Lord in His salvation. But our time is up for today; farewell.