

“But what about these verses?” I think that they show that it is not enough for me just to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. Instead, I think that they show that for me to be saved I also need to be water baptized like Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 say. And I also need to be faithful in living for God in my daily life, like Matthew 24:13 says. So to me it is obvious from these verses that there is more to being saved than just believing in Jesus Christ as my Savior.”

“A lot of people think the same as you. These verses you point to, along with others like them, are commonly cited to try to prove that faith alone in Christ alone is not enough for salvation. However, are you sure that you are understanding these verses properly?”

“Of course I’m sure. But...what do you mean, anyway?”

“I mean that not everything in the Bible is talking about what God is doing today in this present dispensation of His grace. In addition, not every time you see the word ‘save,’ ‘saved,’ or ‘salvation’ in the Bible, is it always a reference to spiritual salvation; or salvation from the debt and penalty of your sins. There are numerous times when these words refer to some physical kind of salvation. And this is especially true in the portion of the

Bible that pertains to God’s program and dealings with Israel, like in the Gospel accounts and the opening chapters of the book of Acts where the verses you cite are found.”

“Are you telling me that my spiritual salvation, or justification unto eternal life, is not what God is talking about in Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, and Matthew 24:13?”

“Yes, that’s exactly what I’m saying. Carefully check out the context of those verses and you will see that they pertain to the preaching of ‘the gospel of the kingdom’ during God’s program with Israel. But as God declared later on when He raised up the Apostle Paul, He has now temporarily suspended Israel’s program and has brought in this present dispensation of His grace. Hence, those verses do not pertain to what God is doing now. Moreover, the salvation that those verses speak of in Israel’s program has more in view than just the issue of spiritual salvation. It includes physical salvation for people at that time from the various judgments of the Lord’s day of wrath that will be taking place during the final stage in Israel’s program. In fact water baptism is used at that time to mark out the ones who are to be physically saved from those judgments. So in those verses God is not talking to you about how you can be spiri-

tually saved, or justified in His sight, in this present dispensation of His grace.”

“I’m going to need to study some more about what was happening at that time in God’s program with Israel. However, I do see from the context that God’s program with Israel is in view, and that these verses are definitely dealing with more than the fundamental issue of spiritual salvation, or justification unto eternal life.”

“Well for right now that is the most important thing for you to see. And in view of it, when it comes to your own justification in God’s sight you need to make sure that you are dealing with the specific portion of God’s word in which He is talking directly to you about it.”

“By that I assume you mean Romans 1:16-3:26.”

“Yes, that’s right. As the opening verses of Romans set forth, the Apostle Paul is God’s apostle for us this present dispensation of His grace. And just as Paul declares in Romans 1:16, “the gospel of Christ” which he preaches to us is “the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.” Therefore on the basis of this you know that this is the gospel that God has for you to hear today. And you

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can also see from the context that the salvation spoken about in this gospel is your spiritual salvation, or justification unto eternal life.”

“Yes, that is clear.”

“Well, then, it should also be clear that what Paul declares to you in Romans 3:21-26 is perfectly true. Read it again and notice that there are absolutely no works for you to do in order to be justified in God’s sight. The Lord Jesus Christ has done all the work for you when He died in your place as your substitute-Redeemer. The issue is for you to believe in Him as your all-sufficient Savior in view of His redemptive work on your behalf. Hence, faith alone in Christ alone is the only issue.”

²¹ But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

²² Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

²⁴ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

²⁵ Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

²⁶ To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Romans 3:21-26)

“Notice that the apostle Paul does not say that God will justify you in His sight, if you will believe in Jesus and be water baptized. Nor that God will justify you if you believe in Jesus and live for Him on a daily basis. Nor if you will believe in Jesus and do anything in addition to that. No, instead Paul says that God is ‘just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.’ Again, to believe in someone means to completely depend upon him and his ability to do something for you that you cannot do for yourself. And this is exactly what it means to ‘believe in Jesus.’ ”

Have you believed in The Lord Jesus Christ as your all-sufficient Savior? If not, why not do so right now, and let God justify you unto eternal life. — K. R. Blades

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But What About These Verses?

¹⁶ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark 16:16)

³⁸ Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38)

¹³ But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (Matthew 24:13)

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