



4/16/2023

**Questions & Answers From The Bible  
Sunday Night Series**

## 1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

# How Did Old Testament Saints Go To Heaven Without Christ?

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# THE GOSPEL IS NOT A NEW TESTAMENT INVENTION

- The Apostle Paul uses the Old Testament to present the Gospel.
- He explains Justification By Faith apart from the law and works in Romans 3:21-28.

## Romans 3:21-24

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:

## Romans 3:25-28

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.

27-Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

28-Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

# 2 OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES ~ ROMANS 4

- Paul discusses two outstanding Old Testament men. He shows they were forgiven (or saved) in the Old Testament, just as believers are in the New Testament...

- **Abraham**

- **Romans 4:1-3** What shall we say then that **Abraham** our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed God**, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

- **David**

- **Romans 4:6-8** Even as **David** also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

# PEOPLE WERE SAVED BEFORE CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION

There have always been people who were accepted by God.

- **Adam and Eve** were made acceptable when God clothed them.
- **Abel's** offering was found acceptable implying that he was also. (Hebrews 11:4)
- **Abraham** was credited with righteousness before God (Gen. 15:5).
- **David** had his sins forgiven and enjoyed God's blessing (Rom. 4:6-8 citing Ps. 32:1-2).
- **The Prophets** who wrote the Scriptures were obviously saved.
- **Jesus' disciples** knew they had eternal life before He died and rose from the dead (John 6:68-69).

# NO ONE WAS SAVED BY WORKS

- **No one at any time was ever saved by works**, self-effort, or by keeping the Mosaic Law.
- Works-righteousness could never attain to God's perfect standard but were nothing but "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6).
- **In the New Testament**, Paul explains that no one is justified by the Law (Rom. 3:20);
- Though **the Law was helpless to save**, it led people to Jesus, who does save (Gal. 3:19-24).
- Paul refers three times to Abraham as the supreme example of justification by grace through faith (Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23).
- Abraham was saved before circumcision and the Law were instituted, so he could not have been saved by keeping it (Rom. 4:9-12; Gal. 3:16-18).
- Obedience to the Law and its sacrificial system allowed fellowship with God and prefigured the final necessary sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- Mosaic animal sacrifices were only provisional, **never sufficient for salvation** (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 10:1-4).



# PEOPLE WERE SAVED BY GRACE

- Grace is the free gift of God's undeserved provision.
- **In the case of Abraham**, grace came to him through the unconditional promise of future blessings that would come to the world through His Descendant, or Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 12:2-3; 17:1-8, 22:18; Gal. 3:16).
- Since this future deliverance is God's promise, the fulfillment depends on God's performance, not Abraham's.
- **In the case of David** as one to whom God imputed righteousness apart from works, that is, by grace (Rom. 4:6-8).
- **David** was saved by grace despite his infamous sins.
- **Abraham and David** were saved on the basis and in anticipation of God's gracious gift of a coming Savior.

# PEOPLE WERE SAVED THROUGH FAITH

- **Salvation by grace cannot be earned or deserved**, it can only be received through faith (Rom. 4:16; cf. 4:4-5).
- **Abraham** was justified because he believed God's promise of a Descendant, who would be the Deliverer (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3-5).
- Since **Abraham's salvation** occurred while he was uncircumcised, he serves as a model for all people, both Gentiles and Jews, who are imputed righteousness through faith (Rom. 4:9-11; Gal 3:26-29).
- The principle of **salvation by grace** through faith apart from works pervades the New Testament (John 3:16; 4:10; 20:31; Rom. 3:21-24; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-5; Rev. 22:17).

# THE TRANSITIONAL TIME OF CHRIST

- **Jesus' disciples** knew that they were eternally saved. (Matt. 18:21-22; Mark 8:31-32; Luke 18:31-34; John 2:19-20; 20:8-9).
- They were saved because they believed that their salvation would come through Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Christ, the Savior.
- They understood Jesus was the divine Son of God sent to deliver them from the condemnation of sin (John 5:24; 8:24).
- They heard Him teach that salvation was a gift received through faith, not works (John 6:27-29; 35-54; 7:37-39).
- They did not understand exactly how that gift would be given, though they should have known based on the testimonies of the prophets, the many types of Christ in the Law, and Jesus Himself who spoke of the Messiah's suffering and resurrection.

# THE TRANSITIONAL TIME OF CHRIST

- **After His death and resurrection**, Jesus challenges Thomas to believe in Him as the crucified and risen Lord (John 20:26-29). Only after this encounter does John state the purpose of His Gospel. (John 20:31).
- So, within the time of the disciples' association with Jesus, the message of eternal salvation expanded from Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior... to Jesus is the crucified and risen Son of God, the Savior.
- That is the message confirmed later by the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 1:17-18; 2:2; 15:1-4).
- **The gospel message had not changed, only expanded.**

# THE PROGRESS OF REVELATION

Consider how the content of the good news of God's Deliverer expanded through time.

- **Adam** knew that God was going to provide a Deliverer, a Seed of the woman, who would destroy Satan (Gen. 3: 15).
- **Abraham** also anticipated the saving Seed and had a special revelation of Him (John 8:56).
- **Moses** knew something about the suffering of the coming Savior and spoke of Him (John 5:46; Heb. 11:26).
- **David** understood the Seed would be His Descendant.
- **The Prophets** described the Messiah's divinity, His kingdom, His power, His death, and His resurrection. Isaiah especially linked the suffering of the Messiah with salvation (Isa. 53:3-11; Acts 8:26-35; 10:43).

# THE PROGRESS OF REVELATION

**Consider how the content of the good news of God's Deliverer expanded through time.**

- Jesus declared that **the Scriptures**, from Moses and all the prophets, testified that the Messiah would suffer before He entered His glory (Luke 24:25-27).
- **At the time of His birth**, Jesus' name is announced (Matt. 1:21) and today, no one is saved apart from the name Jesus (Acts 4:12). **After His resurrection**, Jesus presents Himself as crucified on the cross and risen from the dead.
- This is the object of faith that Jesus wanted Thomas to see (John 20:26-29), which became the message of salvation the apostles preached after Christ's ascension into heaven (Acts 2:22-24; 3:18-25; 4:2, 10; 5:29-31; 10:39-41).
- **In God's eternal plan**, Jesus was “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” (Rev. 13:8; 1 Peter 1:18-20), but the details of how this would happen were expanded as revelation progressed through the ages.

# SALVATION'S PLAN

## God's Progressive Revelation / Salvation Plan



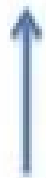
Faith looked forward

Faith looks backward

Death of Christ

Direct knowledge of Christ not required

Direct knowledge of Christ required



# CONCLUSION

- Salvation has always been by grace through faith in God's promised Savior.
- The essential content of the gospel has not changed, but it has been expanded as more information became known in the progress of revelation.
- **In Old Testament times**, people were saved by believing in God's provision of a coming divine Savior.
- **In Christ's day**, it was believing in Jesus as the living divine Savior.
- **After Christ's death and resurrection**, we are saved by believing in Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen Savior who delivers us from condemnation and gives us eternal salvation.
- Some were saved by **Looking Forward** to this good news; today we are saved by **Looking Back** to its accomplishment.
- In that sense, we can say that salvation at any time has always been by grace through faith in God's promised Savior, Jesus Christ the Son of God, who died for our sins and rose again.