

THE RIGHT KIND OF FAITH (BIBLICALLY DEFINING “LORDSHIP”)

It is often said that he who defines the terms wins the argument. But when it comes to SAVING FAITH God defines the terms! Historically, many have claimed that tying any concept of “Lordship” to salvation amounts to a works salvation. But that is NOT what the Bible teaches. In truth, the Bible links true saving faith to the Lordship reality of Christ. It’s a matter of the nature of saving faith. And a true saving faith personally appropriates the truth of Jesus for WHO He is as LORD and SAVIOR! Note the biblical evidence:

a. In John 20:28 Thomas said to Jesus, **“My Lord and my God!”** and Jesus responded by saying he had **“believed”** (Jn. 20:29). THIS is what it means to believe – to recognize Jesus as “My Lord and My God!” NOTE the word “My”. It must be personal! The point of the book of John is to bring us to the point that we might believe in Jesus for WHO He is. This is the purpose as revealed in the climax of the book (Jn. 20:28-31).

b. The word “BELIEVE” is always used as a verb in the gospel of John signifying its active nature - that which is more than mere passive mental assent.

c. Acts 16:31 says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved“. Note we are to believe on Him as Lord - on the “Lord Jesus Christ”. The type of faith that applies to Him as Jesus (meaning God-Savior) applies to His Lordship as well. Note that His Lordship was very obviously manifested in the earthquake just prior to the salvation message being given (Acts 16:25-30). And then “they spoke the word of the LORD to him” (Acts 16:32 – emphasis mine). And finally, the text says he “believed in God” (Act 16:34). He had come to believe in Jesus as His LORD-GOD!

d. In reference to Jesus, the Bible constantly tells us to believe “in” or “on” Him and not merely about Him. The emphasis in the gospels is to believe in Him for WHO He is and not just believe in His WORK (all important as it was/is). Prior to the cross, the overwhelming emphasis in the gospels is Christ’s presentation of Himself to the nation of Israel on the basis of WHO He was as the divine/human Messiah. At the height of His earthly ministry just before turning His emphasis to the cross, Jesus asked the disciples, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”. In short, the answer was,

“one of the prophets”. But Peter (under inspiration) responded by saying, **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** (Matt. 16:13-16). Christ then said it was this “Rock Truth” that He would build His Church on (Mt. 16:17-18). This emphasis of recognizing Jesus for WHO He is as the Messiah-LORD harmonizes with John’s purpose statement where he says, “these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” (Jn. 20:31) Both the confession of Peter (Mt. 16:16) and the purpose statement of John (Jn. 20:31) harmonize in making the issue the personal appropriation of WHO Jesus is as the divine Messiah (cf. 2 Tim. 1:12).

e. In the New Testament, in reference to all believers, Christ is constantly referred to as our Lord. He is not seen to be the Savior of all believers and Lord of only some (cf. Rom. 5:1; 6:23; 10:9-10; and Rev. 22:21).

f. In the N.T. Christ is shown to be Lord over all. The unbeliever rejects the truth of this, but the believer certainly adheres to it. It’s called FAITH! (cf. Rom. 14; Col 4:1)

g. In places such as 2 Timothy 3:7 and Titus 1:1 the English rendering of the word KNOWLEDGE is the translation of a Greek word that carries with it the idea of “full knowledge”. This is the sense of personal or experiential knowledge (in accordance with godliness) in contrast to mere intellectual assent (cf. 2 Pt. 2:20).

h. Salvation involves confession of Christ as Lord as the mouth tells on the heart (cf. Matt. 12:34; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:3).

i. Even demons intellectually and emotionally acknowledge the one true God, but they have no heart allegiance to the Lordship of Jesus (cf. James 2:19).

ILLUSTRATING THE ISSUE

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| | 1) History - Jesus died and rose again. FACTUAL |
| WORK | Theology - Jesus died for sin and rose again. OBJECTIVE |
| | Salvation - Jesus died for MY sin and rose again. PERSONAL |
| | 2) History - A man called Jesus claimed to be God. FACTUAL |
| PERSON | Theology - A man called Jesus is God. OBJECTIVE |
| | Salvation - A man called Jesus is MY God. PERSONAL |
| | 3) History - A man called Jesus who claimed to be God died. FACTUAL |
| BOTH | Theology - A man called Jesus is God who died for sin. OBJECTIVE |
| | Salvation - A man called Jesus is MY God who died for MY sin. PERSONAL |

NOTE: A true saving faith combines both the PERSON-hood and the WORK of Christ on the cross into one view. Both truths are a part of the salvation message and must be personally applied and appropriated in a personal sense in order for saving faith to take place. Lord and Savior is an indissoluble package! Even the very name “Jesus” which emphasizes Him being SAVIOR literally means “YHWH is Salvation” or “God-Savior” (cf. Mt. 1:21-23). This is Who Jesus is! He is God – He is Savior! Saving faith appropriates Him for WHO He is!

MY DEFINITION OF SAVING FAITH:

“SAVING FAITH IS PERSONALLY EMBRACING THE LORD JESUS CHRIST FOR WHO HE IS AND FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE”. He is the God-Man, our Lord and Savior. As Savior, He died for ALL our sins, as Lord over all He arose again and ever lives. Saving faith embraces both concepts of Lord and Savior in a personal way from the heart (cf. Ps. 2:11-12; Jn. 20:28-31; Rom. 3:25, 10:9-13).

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved...” (Acts 16:31)