

“LORDSHIP” IS BIBLICAL TERMINOLOGY!

Even though the Bible plainly says we must believe on Jesus as Lord (Acts 16:30-31), even though it says to be saved we must call on the NAME of the LORD (Rom. 10:13), even so, many think that any talk of “Lordship” in relation to salvation is to speak of a “works salvation”. But as defined by the Bible nothing could be further from the truth!

WE ARE SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH. PERIOD! SELAH!!!

Our salvation from beginning to end is because of the GRACE of God (Eph. 2:3-14). Even Faith is a result of the work of God in the hearts of people (cf. Acts 18:27). The tension between the SOVEREIGNTY of God and human RESPONSIBILITY ultimately is God's alone to fully understand. By FAITH I recognize that God Sovereignly predestines, calls, justifies, and glorifies, and by FAITH I also recognize the reality of human responsibility (Rom. 9-11).

Therefore, I say with Paul “How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out” (Rom. 11:33). God in His SOVEREIGNTY promotes some things, permits some things, and prevents some things, but ALL things are ordered according to His SOVEREIGN purpose and will (Eph. 1:11). Only a God-centered theology is truly a God-honoring theology. All the glory and all the credit for our salvation belongs to GOD and GOD ALONE! We are saved by GRACE ALONE through FAITH ALONE in CHRIST ALONE!!!

DO I BELIEVE IN LORDSHIP SALVATION?

DEFINE IT! Define it and I will tell you whether I believe it or not! What one person's definition of “Lordship Salvation” may include may be significantly different than another person's definition. Some views labeled “Lordship” are heresy because it truly amounts to a “works salvation”, but the true GOSPEL OF GOD'S GRACE presents Christ as LORD and SAVIOR who must be received for WHO HE IS BY FAITH. Labels are relative depending upon the definition being used. Be careful of LABELS AND LIBELS. At issue is THE NATURE OF SAVING FAITH!

LET'S TALK OBJECTIVE DOCTRINE NOT PERSONAL BIASES

Evangelical “scholarship” at this point has often been very sloppy and very shallow in my opinion. One day I visited a BIBLE college professor. We visited about the LORDSHIP controversy.

I asked him about a particular book that was pro-Lordship and he said, "*it's a works salvation book*". I then asked him if he had read the book to which he replied "*No, I have only briefly skimmed through it*". If he would have read the first page, he would have found out that the author immediately and emphatically affirmed that salvation is by grace and grace alone. Subjective bias often produces more heat than light when what is needed is the light of the objective Word of God.

KEY QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE KEY ISSUES

1. What is the NATURE of grace?
2. What is the NATURE of saving faith?
3. Do we have to believe on Christ as Lord and Savior or only as Savior in order to be saved?
4. Does salvation involve only believing about the WORK of Christ or must we also BELIEVE on His PERSON?
5. Can one receive the GIFT of salvation without receiving the GIVER for who He is?
6. Is repentance (a change of mind with regard to sin as well as to Christ) involved in SAVING FAITH or not?
7. Does believing result in one becoming a disciple (learning-follower) or does that come later as optional?
8. Is saving faith only a matter of intellectual assent or does it also involve the will?
9. Does saving faith necessarily result in a changed person with resulting evidence in the life?

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR A "LORDSHIP" DEFINITION OF SAVING FAITH

- a) John 20:28: When doubting Thomas saw the risen Lord he cried out, "My Lord and My God!" Jesus' response was to say, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed." Recognition of Christ as Lord/God was NOT a matter of WORKS but rather a matter of BELIEF according to Jesus. The MAJOR point of the book John is to bring people to BELIEVE and John 20:28-31 is the climax of the book. Jesus in effect says this is what it means to BELIEVE when Thomas says, "MY LORD AND MY GOD". NOTE the word "**MY**". Saving faith is **PERSONAL!**
- 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 (cf. Jn. 2:23-25).

- c) The Bible constantly tells us to believe “IN” or “ON” Jesus and not merely about Him. Note also the emphasis to believe “IN” or “ON” His NAME, and not merely to believe in His work, as all-important as this is. This emphasizes personal appropriation of His personhood (cf. Jn. 1:12; 3:16; 20:30-31; 2 Tim. 1:12).
- d) In the N.T. in reference to all believers, Christ is constantly referred to as OUR LORD. He is not seen to be Savior of all believers and Lord of ONLY some (cf. Rom. 5:1; 6:23; 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 1:2, 9; Eph. 4:5; Rev. 22:21).
- e) In the NT Christ is shown to be Lord over all. People do not “make Jesus Lord” – rather He is LORD and saving faith simply appropriates the TRUTH of WHO He is. The unbeliever rejects the truth of this, but the believer certainly adheres to it. It's called FAITH! (cf. Rom. 14:7-9; Phil. 3:8; Col. 2:6)
- f) Salvation involves PERSONALLY recognizing Christ as Lord-God (cf. Jn. 8:24; Rom. 10:9-10, 13; 1 Cor. 12:3).
- g) Even demons intellectually and emotionally (but not volitionally) acknowledge the one true God, but they are not saved (James 2:19).
- h) Repentance as an inherent element of SAVING FAITH is NECESSARY for salvation (cf. Isa. 55:1-8; Mt. 3:1-8; 12:41; Lk. 13:2-3; 24:47; Acts 17:30; Rom. 2:4; 2 Pt. 3:9; Rev. 9:20-21; 16:11).

Recognition of Christ as Lord in salvation does not signify completion or maturity, but a personal belief in the truth of it which alters the course of one's life. Maturity involves growth in relation to the truth recognized in salvation.

One can debate so called “Lordship Salvation” all day but he who defines the terms wins the argument! However, one cannot deny that the Bible plainly says, “if you shall confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in you heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved” (Rom. 10:9). NOTE this salvation prescription has the word LORD in it! This is BIBLICAL TERMINOLOGY!