

Calling on the Lord's Name

Many in the religious world have taught to be saved all one must do is to call on the name of the Lord. In teaching such, they generally contradict themselves because many teach that man can do nothing in saving himself. Yet, they teach that one needs to call on the name of the Lord. Let us consider this important Biblical phrase.

The background for this is found in the prophecy of Joel when he stated, "And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call" (Joel 2:32).

Notice first that it is those whom God calls. When we come to the New Testament times, we learn how God calls us today. Paul tells us, "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 The. 2:14). The Lord calls us by the Gospel. The Gospel is that which the apostles were commissioned to preach in the Great Commission. Jesus said to them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). It is this Gospel that is God's power to save: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is

the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

While God calls us by the Gospel, we have the responsibility to call on the name of the Lord. Peter in his great Gospel sermon on Pentecost recorded in Acts 2, stated that what was taking place was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy: "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). Peter then quotes Joel's prophecy and ends it with the statement: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (2:21). Since these were Jews and in Jerusalem on Pentecost, they already had faith in God. They did not believe in Jesus as being God "manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). Thus, Peter's sermon instilled in these Jews faith in Jesus as being "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). He also convicted them of the sin of crucifying the Savior of the world causing them to cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (2:37).

Peter in his quotation of Joel's prophecy had previously instructed them what they needed to **do**: "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (2:21). However, they possibly remembered Jesus' teaching that saying was not sufficient. He said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my

Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 7:21). Thus, Peter did not tell them to simply state their faith in Jesus as the Son of God and their acceptance of Him as their Savior (which is what many teach people to say to have salvation—the sinner's prayer). However, Peter did tell them what they must **do** to call on the name of the Lord for their salvation. He said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Repent and be baptized is what they had to **do** to call on the name of the Lord to be saved. Peter continued to encourage them to "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (2:40). Those "that gladly received his word were baptized" (2:41); they called upon the name of the Lord; they were saved.

We find confirmation of this understanding when we next read of this phrase in the New Testament. The apostle Paul is retelling his conversion to the Jewish mob recorded in Acts 22. As he was traveling to Damascus to persecute Christians, the Lord appeared to him in a blinding light. After Jesus reveals Himself to Paul (then Saul), Saul says, "What shall I do, Lord?" (22:10). Notice Saul calls Jesus Lord but recognizes that verbally calling Jesus Lord is not sufficient. Jesus also knows a verbal calling Him Lord was not going to save him. Thus, Jesus tells Saul to go into Damascus, "and there it shall be told thee of all

things which are appointed for thee to do” (22:10). Jesus sends Ananias to Saul to tell him what he must **do**. When he comes to Saul, Ananias sees one who believes in Jesus, is penitent of his sins. Yet, Saul still had not been told what he must do to be saved, and he was still in his sins. Thus, Ananias tells Saul, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (22:16). Thus, the way to call on the name of the Lord was not an audible statement, but the action of being baptized upon one’s faith and repentance.

Paul uses this in speaking of the salvation of both Jew and Gentile and there being no difference between them. He writes, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13). He then asks rhetorical questions regarding calling and how they need to believe but need a preacher who must be sent for them to do so. Paul then says, “But they have not all obeyed the gospel” (10:16). One calls on the name of the Lord by obeying the Gospel. That is what Jesus told His apostles to preach (Mark 16:15). In preaching the Gospel, Jesus then states, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (16:16). This is what Peter preached on Pentecost and this is how one obeys the Gospel and by his obedience to the Gospel calls on the name of the Lord.

Do not be deceived by those who state you only need to audibly say something. That is contrary to what Jesus taught in Matthew 7:21. However, if you wish to be saved, you must call on the name of the Lord. How you call on His name is when you believe, repent, and are baptized for salvation or the remission of sins. If you have not called on the name of the Lord as the Scriptures teach, please do so immediately. Do not delay your obedience and salvation.



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