

Sunday, October 30, 2011

Salvation in the Orthodox Faith

+ In Christianity, salvation means the final triumph, being delivered from the dominion of Satan, and enjoying eternal life in the kingdom of God in which there is new heaven and new earth where righteousness dwells.

+ In our Orthodox faith, there is no salvation except through the blood of Christ.

- *“Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”* (Hebrews 9:22).

- The blood of Christ offers **unlimited atonement** for sins of the whole world.

- The blood of Christ offers us **free salvation** without us paying anything.

+ Although the blood of Christ is sufficient for the whole world, there are conditions for man to benefit from His blood, whoever meets these conditions would attain salvation, they are:

1- Faith followed by repentance, (refer to the following: John 3:16, 3:18, 8:24, 20:31, and Acts 12:31). We must live out this faith and it must bring forth fruit (refer to: James 2, Galatians 5:6 and 1Corinthians 13:2).

2- Baptism, (refer to the following: John 3:3-5, Mark 16:16, Matthew 28:19-20, Titus 3:4-5, Acts 2:37-38, Acts 8:36, 10:47-49, 16:15, Galatians 3:27, Ephesians 5:25-26, and Romans 6:3-8).

3- Church sacraments which are necessary for Salvation, Such as the sacrament of anointment of the Holy Spirit (Chrism) (Refer to: Acts 2:38, 1John 2:27, Acts 8:14-17, Acts 19:2-3), the Sacrament of repentance and confession (Refer to: 1John 1:8-9, Proverbs 28:13, Acts 11:18, Luke 13:3, Romans 2:4-6, Revelation 3:3, and Acts 19:18), the Sacrament of Communion of the body and blood of Christ for it is Given for us for salvation, remission of sins and eternal life to those who partake of him (Refer to: John 6:53-58, 1John 1:7)

4- Good deeds:

- Work is the fruit of faith and without it, faith is dead (James 2:18, Titus 1:16)

- Evil deeds lead to ruin (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

- Strife ought to be according to the rules (1 Corinthians 9:25, 2Timothy 2:5)

- There ought to be synergy between the strife of man and the grace of God (John 15:5, Hebrews 12:1-4, Colossians 1:29, 1Corinthians 9:25-27)

+ *“God who created you without you, will not save you without you.”* (St Augustine, Sermon 169, 13)

+ *“God does not want us to be lying idly on our backs; Therefore He does not effect everything Himself, nor does he give us everything.”* (Form the Philokalia- St. John Chrysostom).

+ TRUSTING SALVATION:

We trust in God, in His love and mercy, in His power, and in His provisions for salvation. But we do not place our trust in our beings, flesh, capabilities, talents, nor our righteousness. Therefore, we must live in a constant state of vigilance.

- *“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”* (1Corinthians 10:12)

- *“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.”* (Hebrews 4:1)

- *“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”* (1Corinthians 9:27)

+ SALVATION IS A LIFE JOURNEY:

The journey of our salvation is exemplified in the story of the exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt on their way to the Promised Land, as Saint Paul explained to us (Refer to 1Corinthians 10:1-12). Not all of those who came out of Egypt who were freed from the bondage of Pharaoh (Satan) and received baptism (crossing the Red Sea), were able to enter the promise land (the symbol of Heavenly Jerusalem). Rather, a small number of them did, and the rest perished on the way because of their wickedness, lusts, and rebellion.

The will of God is our salvation. Nonetheless, we ought to be receptive to this will, keep ourselves from defilement of the world, walk in the narrow path, and live in an unwavering strife to attain the glory and heavenly inheritance which He prepared to the ones who love Him.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” (Philippians 2:12)

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