

The L.D.S 3rd article of faith is not biblical. The Bible warns us about false gospels, so this is a serious matter. In this study we will look at the Mormon idea of salvation and discuss the topic of grace Verses Works.

A DIFFERENT GOSPEL, THE WARNING

Galatians 1:8-9

“But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.”

The L.D.S Third Article of Faith states, "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."

Even if we interpreted the true meaning of the word "saved" it would be an untrue statement. We are not saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel. If we take this statement at face value, then the issues between Christianity and Mormonism would be," What does it mean to be saved?" and "Grace Versus Works".

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SAVED?

A good place to start this discussion is to see what the words "saved" and "salvation" actually mean.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary Tenth Edition

"SAVED1. a: to deliver from sin b: to rescue or deliver from danger or harm c: to preserve or guard from injury, destruction or loss."

"SALVATION 1. a: deliverance from the power and effects of sin."A13

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

SALVATION: Deliverance from the power of sin; redemption. In the Old Testament, the word salvation sometimes refers to deliverance from danger <Jer. 15:20>, deliverance of the weak from an oppressor <Ps. 35:9-10>, the healing of sickness <Is. 38:20>, and deliverance from blood guilt and its consequences <Ps. 51:14>. It may also refer to national deliverance from military threat <Ex. 14:13> or release from captivity <Ps. 14:7>. But salvation finds its deepest meaning in the spiritual realm of life. Man's universal need for salvation is one of the clearest teachings of the Bible.

The words "saved" and "salvation" mean that we are rescued and delivered. A logical question would be, "Rescued and delivered from what?" When we turn to Christ, we are saved from receiving God's wrath.

Romans 5:8-9

"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him."

John 3:36

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

1Thessalonians 1:9-10

"For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come."

Scripture is clear that to be saved means that we will escape the wrath of God. According to the L.D.S Third Article of Faith "all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."

The Bible states that salvation comes apart from works; we are not saved because of "obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel".

Galatians 3:2-3

"This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"

Romans 4:1-5

"What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness..."

Titus 3:5

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit..."

John 6:28-29

"They said therefore to Him, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.'"

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the **gift** of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.” (See also Romans 6:23.)

Salvation is a gift of God. You do not work for and earn a gift. If you work for something, it is wages due, and no longer qualifies as a gift. Mormons will refer to the book of James to try to show that we are saved by works. In context, James is not contradicting Paul; he simply is showing that genuine faith produces works. We are not saved by our good works, but if we are genuinely saved, we will naturally do good works. One does not say “baa baa” to become a sheep; one says “baa baa” because one is a sheep.

The L.D.S Third Article of Faith also redefines the word “saved” as something other than how the Bible defines the word “saved”. Remember, “saved” means delivered from the wrath of God (Romans 5:8-9).

Bruce R. McConkie (Mormon(PDF pg. 238)

Mormon Doctrine, pgs.670-671 “Salvation by Grace Apostle)

“Since all good things come by the grace of God (that is, by his love, mercy, and condescension), it follows that salvation itself -- in all its forms and degrees -- is bestowed because of this infinite goodness. However, one of the untrue doctrines found in modern Christendom is the concept that man can gain salvation (meaning in the kingdom of God) by grace alone and without obedience. This soul-destroying doctrine has the obvious effect of lessening the determination of an individual to conform to all of the laws and ordinances of the gospel; such conformity being essential if the sought for reward is in reality to be gained. “Immortality is a free gift and comes without works or righteousness of any sort; all men will come forth in the resurrection because of the atoning sacrifice of Christ(1 Cor. 15:22).In and of itself the resurrection is a form of salvation meaning that men are thereby saved from death, hell, the devil, and endless torment (2 Ne. 9:17-27).‘O the wisdom of God, his mercy and grace! For behold, if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more’,(2 Ne. 9:8).In this sense, the mere fact of resurrection is called salvation by grace alone. Works are not involved, neither the works of the Mosaic law nor the works of righteousness that go with the fullness of the gospel.” (End Quote)

The trouble with Bruce McConkie's statement is that “saved” does not mean “resurrected”, no matter what dictionary you use. The Bible does not teach universal salvation; not everyone will be saved.

John 3:17-18

"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Luke 8:11-12 (Jesus speaking)

"Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved."

It is obvious in these two passages that not everyone will be saved; "saved" cannot mean "resurrection" in the way Bruce McConkie claims. Everyone will not be saved, but everyone will be resurrected, as you can see in the next two passages.

Daniel 12:2

"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."

John 5:28-29

"Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."

In summary, we are not saved by works, but by grace through faith. We do good works because we are saved, not to become saved. Not everyone will be saved, but everyone will be resurrected; some to eternal life, others to eternal judgment. The Third Article of Faith, as well as Bruce McConkie's book Mormon Doctrine are both in disagreement with the Bible.

To go deeper into this subject please see my topic titled Grace verses Works.