

In search of...

Truth & Right

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Personal Salvation?

That perfection, on man's terms, is impossible to attain, has been a theme of many recent movies. The 2010 Disney movie *Tron* emphasized this point. There is no perfect system whereby man may save himself, and, in fact, when man seeks to establish some perfect system, man goes horribly astray, committing atrocities the likes of which have not been seen. Recent studies in the history of communism have produced clear historical evidence of this fact. The notion that "there is no God to save us, so we must save ourselves" is a notion born out of the misguided and mistaken enlightenment idea that man intrinsically has within his capacity all of the necessary tools to successfully shape his own destiny in a morally acceptable way. To the contrary, the Bible declares that man is fallible, imperfect, and incapable of providing

for his own salvation.

The message of the Old Testament proves this point exactly. In providing a history for and of Israel, the Old Testament text declares clearly man's failures regardless the position in society that he holds. Consider Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3). Here are two individuals who are tempted and then succumb to moral failure. They do so because of their own misguided thoughts regarding themselves and God. They are cast out of the garden and then begin to produce offspring. These offspring also succumb to moral failure to the extent that God records in Genesis 6:5 "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." God destroyed that wicked earth with a flood. Noah and his family were only

saved because they followed God's instructions, not man's. Nevertheless, it is obvious that individual persons cannot provide for their own salvation.

After the flood, God purposed that He would choose a particular family from the children of Noah, and that through them man's salvation would be fulfilled. God chose Abram, and promised that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through him. Abram and Sarai took it upon themselves to seek to fulfill God's plan in their own way. Abram went in to Hagar, Sarai's handmaiden, and conceived Ishmael. This was not God's plan; it was man's plan. The consequences of Abram's and Sarai's decision are still being suffered in the world today. God corrected Abram, gave him a new name, Abraham, and through him and Sarah came Isaac, the child of promise.

In the family of Abraham, we continue to see moral failure. Isaac's children, Jacob and Esau, fuss and fight over the birthright and blessing. Jacob seemingly makes the same mistake as Abram, thinking that he can gain the birthright and blessing through his own devising, instead of allowing God to work out His plan in His own good time. Jacob's children as well, the twelve sons, perpetuate Jacob's moral failures within their own lives, selling their own brother into slavery (Genesis 37), committing fornication with

Jacob's concubine (Genesis 35:22), lying and engaging in acts of great violence (Genesis 34). The consequences of their decisions are also still felt today. Nevertheless, it is clear by the end of the book of Genesis, that salvation cannot come through the family system (patriarchy).

In making a great nation of the family of Abraham, God moves mankind into a second stage of moral development. This stage involves the creation of a nation. Moses is the man that God chooses to lead his people out of Egyptian captivity and into the promised land. Perhaps what cannot be accomplished through individuals, or through families, can be accomplished in a nation. It is not long, however, before the nation plunges itself into moral degeneracy. All of those who come out of Egypt are punished with dying in the wilderness because of their rebellious spirit (Numbers 14:32-34). The next generation that enters the land of Canaan does not fully obey the Lord, and results in the perpetual troubles with idolatrous nations during the period of the judges, a time when every man did that which was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6, 21:25). Israel again sought to do things their own way, demanding that God give them a king like the nations around them (1 Samuel 8:5). God told Samuel that Israel had rejected Him as King (1 Samuel 8:7). The period of

the kings arrives with Saul who commits suicide after ruining his kingship through jealousy and disobedience to God. David commits adultery, and is a warrior king, not a man of peace. Solomon multiplies wives, makes idols for them, and commits spiritual whoredom. Israel becomes divided with kings ruling in Judah and the North separately. Both are taken into captivity after their iniquity becomes full. God does so to punish them for their sin and wickedness. It is obvious that salvation cannot come through a system of national government.

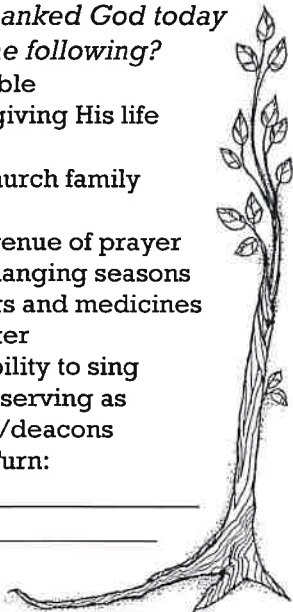
In all of the history the Bible records, the one resounding theme is that man cannot save Himself with his own devices, under his own recognizance. God Himself must provide for man's salvation, and He does this through the person of Jesus, the Christ. This issue of the Christian Worker explores the theme of Jesus Christ, Savior. In thinking about Jesus as our Savior, we must acknowledge that man cannot save himself regardless the means or methods that he may use, be they individualistic, familial, or nationalistic. Salvation is from above – from God alone – and it is only through seeking and doing God's will in our lives as revealed through the person of Jesus the Christ that we may find comfort, hope, and blessing in this life, and in the life to come.

Kevin Cauley

God gave you a gift of
86,400
seconds today. Have
you used one to say
THANK YOU?

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- Jobs
- The avenue of prayer
- The changing seasons
- Doctors and medicines
- Laughter
- The ability to sing
- Those serving as elders/deacons
- Your Turn:



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The Disciples Called

T Z M D G X T N E M Y J M K A W M H V G
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 D A H J W M B O S P M S B S E C Q E T N

DIRECTIONS: Look up the scripture in the Bible, and find the answer in the crossword above.

Matt. 4:18, Jesus was walking by the Sea of _____

Matt. 4:18, There He saw two _____ casting a net into the sea

Matt. 4:19, He said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you _____ of men."

Matt. 4:21, Then He saw James and John with _____ their father

Matt. 9:9, Jesus saw a man called _____ sitting at the tax booth

Matt. 9:11, The Pharisees asked why He ate with tax _____ and sinners

Mark 2:14, This disciple was also called _____ the son of Alphaeus

Luke 5:28, "And _____ everything, he rose and followed Him"

John 1:43, Jesus found _____ and said to him, "Follow me."

John 1:44, Now he was from _____, the city of Andrew and Peter

John 1:45, He then told _____ and told him that they had found the Christ

John 1:46, Asking, "Can anything good come out of _____?"