

Teaching Sound Doctrine

Calling Upon the Name of the Lord

The world cries out that one must call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. Christ 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" (Matt. 7:21). Notice what Christ said! Not every one that says "Lord, Lord," will be saved.

To find out what "calling upon the name of the Lord" means, we simply need to look to the scriptures. What saith the Lord about this "calling"?

Call

Some believe they must call out the Lord's name to be saved. I ask who's calling whom? The Bible teaches it is God who calls man through the gospel to obedience of his will. "Whereunto he called you by our gospel" (2 Thess. 2:14). The gospel is God's power to save man. Paul points out that he was "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). We see then that God calls men through the gospel and that this call is not something mysterious, as some would have us to believe. In other words, you don't have to get something, or say "Lord, Lord, save me." First you must hear God's Word, and that is the drawing power.

In Romans 10:16 Paul said, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel." There were some who had not obeyed the gospel and if they had not obeyed the gospel, then they had not yet called upon the name of the Lord to be saved. Obeying the gospel and calling upon the name of the Lord are equal. If not, why not? The Hebrew writer said that Christ is "the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). Men must obey the gospel to be saved.

The word "call" here comes from a Greek word which means "to make an appeal to." This same Greek word is found in Acts 25:11 when Paul said, "I appeal unto Caesar," which means to appeal to an authority. Paul called upon Caesar. This did not mean he called out his name. Rather he made an appeal to a higher court. In court, one might appeal a case, which means to call upon a higher court. One does not stand there and say, "higher court, higher court," does he? Neither does one cry out, "Lord, Lord," to be saved. Our appeal must be made to the scriptures, which has the power to save man.

To Call Involves a Process

Most folks turn to Romans 10:13 and say all one has to do is call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. I ask, has one ever bothered to read on and see what all

is involved in this calling process? Notice the questions asked in Romans 10:14: (1) "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" (2) "And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (3) "And how shall they hear without a preacher?" These questions suggest one must hear the gospel and then believe the gospel in calling upon the name of the Lord to be saved.

Part of the process of calling involves a preacher preaching the gospel of Christ so that men might hear, believe and obey. Christ in the great commission said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:16). Paul said, "And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:15) Christ sent the apostles forth on a great mission, to preach the gospel, so that men might hear, believe and obey it. Preaching is an important part of the process enabling men to call upon the name of the Lord and be saved.

Before one can "call" upon the name of the Lord he must first have faith. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Preaching the gospel produces faith in the hearer. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). One must have faith which comes from hearing God's Word. After one hears, he must obey to be saved. That's what it means to call upon the name of the Lord. It doesn't matter how many times someone says, "Lord, Lord, save me," without the scriptural process, one is lost!

Name

W.E. Vine defines the word name as follows: "For all that a `name' implies, of authority, character, rank, majesty, power, excellence, etc., of everything that the `name' covers." We must call upon Christ to save us. We do that through obedience to the gospel. Christ has the power and authority to release us from the bondage of sin. That's why we call upon the name of Christ and no other name upon this earth, for he and he alone has the power to save man. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). You cannot find salvation in any other name, but Christ's.

The Day of Pentecost

Before Peter began to preach he quoted the prophet Joel as saying, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). Peter was telling men that this prophecy was being fulfilled that very hour, and that the time had come when men could "call on the name of the Lord" and be saved. Peter went on to preach Christ and him crucified unto the people. Peter closed by saying "that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Thus, we call upon the name of

Christ to be saved because he is our Lord, and has all authority and power. This is what Paul told the Romans: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13). Christ is our Lord!

When the people heard the gospel on the day of Pentecost they were pricked in their hearts; they wanted to know what to do to be saved (Acts 2:38). Peter answered their question. The answer Peter gave is what people do when they call upon the name of the Lord. Before we look at Peter's answer, let's back up and look at the process involved that leads up to them calling upon the name of the Lord.

Peter began his sermon by saying, "Ye men of Israel hear these words" (Acts 2:22). So we see, that one must hear gospel preaching. After they heard the Word of God they were "pricked in their hearts" (Acts 2:37). The gospel they heard, produced faith in their hearts. They believed. These people heard the gospel, believed the gospel and said, "Lord, Lord, save me." Right? Wrong! They heard, believed and then were told what to do to be saved. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). What did these people do when they "called upon the name of the Lord"? First they heard the gospel, believed the gospel, repented of their past sins, confessed Christ as the Son of God and were baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38).

Being baptized "in the name of" means by the authority of Jesus Christ. We are rendering obedience to the "Lord of Lords." Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:16). It's just that simple, obey the Lord and be saved.

The Apostle Paul

A good example of what it means to "call upon the name of the Lord" can be seen in the conversion of Paul.

In Acts 9:1-6, Saul believed that Christ was Lord. "And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus" (Acts 9:5). "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6) The Lord said, "Saul call out my name and you will be saved." Right? No indeed. And the Lord said unto him, "Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). Ananias was sent to Saul by the Lord to tell him what he needed to do to be saved. Acts 9:18 says Saul was baptized. Some years later, Paul, gave an account of what happened. He said Ananias came to him and said, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). When Paul was baptized what was he doing? "Calling on the name of the Lord."

Are there any examples of conversion in the Bible where someone said, "Lord, Lord, save me" to be saved? If so, where is the passage? When we look for what

saith the scripture about "calling upon the name of the Lord," it becomes very simple and clear to understand what this means. Don't be fooled by men who say all you have to do to be saved is just say "Lord, Lord, save me." This is a false doctrine! God said, "There is a way which seemeth unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). Man may think it's right, but it's God's way or no way! "Our faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:5). When one hears the gospel, believes it, and is baptized for the remission of sins, he is then "calling upon the name of the Lord."

Whosoever

Once one understands what it means to "call upon the name of the Lord," then he needs to obey the gospel. God wants all men to be saved and is "longsuffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13). All need salvation, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

The Bible teaches that God is no respecter of persons. Peter said, "Of a truth I shall perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). Peter also points out that all who work righteousness shall be accepted with God. Righteousness is what's right with God, doing what God wants us to do; whatever or whoever submits to the revealed will of God. It doesn't matter the color of one's skin, how rich, how poor, or how famous he might be. The invitation is for all, "Whosoever will" (Rev. 22:17).

God has given us a choice, to accept or reject the invitation in order to have eternal life. "And the spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). This verse has been compared to the ringing of the bells of Heaven. The invitation has been given from God to man to come and take of the water of life freely that he might have the hope of eternal life. Salvation is offered to "whosoever will." Do you want to have eternal life? What are you waiting on? "Now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).