



Revivals And Church History :: Early Church Views On Salvation

Early Church Views On Salvation - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2011/10/7 14:47

Fear is the foundation of salvation; presumption is an impediment to fear. More useful, then, is it to apprehend that we may possibly fail, than to presume that we cannot; for apprehending will lead us to fear, fearing to caution, and caution to salvation. On the other hand, if we presume, there will be neither fear nor caution to save us. Tertullian (A.D. 198) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.4 pg. 19

- I. Salvation only in the name of Christ
- II. The role of grace in salvation
- III. The role of faith in salvation
- IV. The role of obedience in salvation
- V. The righteousness of God vs. the righteousness of the law
- VI. Is it possible to loose your salvation?
- VII. Calling on and confessing the name of the Lord
- VIII. How the early church preached salvation
- IX. How the heretics preached salvation
- X. The violent who take the kingdom of heaven by force

I. Salvation only in the name of Christ (Top)

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

Brethren, we ought so to think of Jesus Christ, as of God, as of the Judge of the living and the dead. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.1

“...We might now be made deserving by the goodness of God, and having made clear our inability to enter into the kingdom of God of ourselves, might be enabled by the ability of God... Having then in the former time demonstrated the inability of our nature to obtain life, and having now revealed a Savior able to save even creatures which have no ability, He willed that for both reasons we should believe in His goodness and should regard Him as nurse, father, teacher, counselor, physician, mind, light, honor, glory, strength and life. Letter to Diognetus (A.D. 125-200) ch.9

"I saw, Sir," say I. "Thus," said he, "no one shall enter into the kingdom of God, except he receive the name of His Son... Whosoever shall not receive His name, shall not enter into the kingdom of God." Hermas (A.D. 150) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.47

"They," said he, "are holy spirits; and no man can otherwise be found in the kingdom of God, unless these shall clothe him with their garment; for if you receive only the name, but receive not the garment from them, you profit nothing... If you bear the Name, and bear not His power, you shall bear His Name to none effect." Hermas (A.D. 150) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.48

Even those that bear His name with their whole heart. He Himself then is become their foundation, and He sustains them gladly, because they are not ashamed to bear His name." Hermas (A.D. 150) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg. 48

The first is Faith, and the second, Continenence, and the third, Power, and the fourth, Long-suffering. But the others stationed between them have these names - Simplicity, Guilelessness, Purity, Cheerfulness, Truth, Understanding, Concord, Love. He that bears these names and the name of the Son of God shall be able to enter into the kingdom of God. Hermas (A.D. 150) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg. 49

II. The role of grace in salvation (Top)

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Titus 2:11, 12

Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious that blood is to God, which, having been shed for our salvation, has set the grace of repentance before the whole world. Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch.7

Let us therefore cleave unto those to whom grace is given from God Â... being justified by works and not by words. For He said; He that said much shall hear also again. Does the ready talker think to be righteous? Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch. 30

For He had mercy on us, and in His compassion saved us, having beheld in us much error and perdition, even when we had no hope of salvation, save that which came from Him. For He called us, when we were not, and from not being He willed us to be. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.1

Though you saw Him not, you believe with joy unutterable and full of glory; unto which joy many desire to enter in; forasmuch as you know that it is by grace you are saved, not of works, but by the will of God through Jesus Christ. Wherefore gird up your loins and serve God in fear and truth, forsaking the vain and empty talking and the error of the many. Polycarp (A.D. 69-156) ch.1-2

Grace; which confers understanding, which reveals mysteries, which announces seasons, which rejoices over the faithful, which is bestowed upon those who seek her, even those by whom the pledges of faith are not broken, nor the boundaries of the fathers overstepped. Letter to Diognetus (A.D. 125-200) ch.11

We must hear the savior speaking thus, "Come, follow Me." For to the pure in heart He now becomes the way. But into the impure soul the grace of God finds no entrance. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.2 pg.595

For God conspires with willing souls. But if they abandon their eagerness, the spirit which is bestowed by God is also restrained. For to save the unwilling is the part of one exercising compulsion; but to save the willing, that of one showing grace. Nor does the kingdom of heaven belong to sleepers and sluggardsÂ...Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.2 pg.597

SEE ALSO: GRACE, FAITH

(Top)

III. The role of faith in salvation (Top)

For her faith and hospitality Rahab the harlot was saved. Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch.12

And so we, having been called through His will in Christ Jesus, are not justified through ourselves or through our own wisdom or understanding or piety or works which we wrought in holiness of heart, but through faith, whereby the Almighty God justified all men that have been from the beginning; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen. What then must we do, brethren? Must we idly abstain from doing good, and forsake love? May the Master never allow this to befall us at least; but let us hasten with instancy and zeal to accomplish every good work. Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch. 32-33

Let us therefore contend, that we may be found in the number of those that patiently await Him, to the end that we may be partakers of His promised gifts. But how shall this be, dearly beloved? If our mind be fixed through faith towards God; if we seek out those things which are well pleasing and acceptable unto Him; if we accomplish such things as beseem His faultless will, and follow the way of truth, casting off from ourselves all unrighteousness and iniquity, covetousness, strifes, malignities and deceits, whisperings and backbitings, hatred of God, pride and arrogance, vainglory and inhospitality. Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch.35

None of these things is hidden from you, if you be perfect in your faith and love toward Jesus Christ, for these are the beginning and end of life - faith is the beginning and love is the end - and the two being found in unity are God, while all things else follow in their train unto true nobility.

No man professing faith sins, and no man possessing love hates. The tree is manifest from its fruit; so they that profess to be Christ's shall be seen through their actions. For the Work is not a thing of profession now, but is seen then when one is found in the power of faith unto the end. Ignatius: to the Ephesians (A.D. 35-105) ch.14

And the second, that is girded about and looks like a man, is called Self-Control; she is the daughter of Faith. Whosoever then shall follow her, becomes happy in his life, for he shall refrain from all evil deeds, believing that, if he refrain from every evil desire, he shall inherit eternal life. Hermas (A.D. 150) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.16

And now, by the parable of the leaven, the Lord shows concealment; for He says, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." For the tripartite soul is saved by obedience, through the spiritual power hidden in it by faith. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.2 pg.463

So that when we hear, "Your faith has saved you," we do not understand Him to say absolutely that those who have believed in any way whatever shall be saved, unless also works follow. But it was to the Jews alone that He spoke this utterance, who kept the law and lived blamelessly, who wanted only faith in the Lord. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.2 pg.505

But how can a man say that he believes in Christ, who does not do what Christ commanded him to do? Or whence shall he attain to the reward of faith, who will not keep the faith of the commandment? He must of necessity waver and wander, and, caught away by a spirit of error, like dust which is shaken by the wind, be blown about; and he will make no advance in his walk towards salvation, because he does not keep the truth of the way of salvation. Cyprian (A.D. 250) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.5 pg.421

SEE ALSO: GRACE, FAITH

IV. The role of obedience in salvation (Top)

...being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. Hebrews 5:9

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Thessalonians 1:8

But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Romans 2:8

Noah preached repentance, and those who obeyed were saved. Jonah proclaimed destruction to the Ninevites; but they, repenting of their sins, made atonement to God by prayer, and obtained salvation, although they were aliens of God. Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch.7

The fear of (God) is good and great and saves all them that walk therein in a pure mind with holiness. Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch.21

Let us therefore cleave unto those to whom grace is given from God. Let us clothe ourselves in concord, being lowly-minded and temperate, holding ourselves aloof from all backbiting and evil speaking, being justified by works and not by works

ds. Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch.30

Blessed were we, dearly beloved, if we should be doing the commandments of God in concord of love, to the end that our sins may through love be forgiven us. Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch.50

Let us therefore be obedient unto His most holy and glorious Name, thereby escaping the threatenings which were spoken of old by the mouth of Wisdom against them which disobey, that we may dwell safely, trusting in the most holy Name of His majesty. Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch.57

For, if we do the will of Christ, we shall find rest; but if otherwise, then nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment, if we should disobey His commandments. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.6

So then, my brethren, let us contend, knowing that the contest is nigh at hand, and that, while many resort to the corruptible contests, yet not all are crowned, but only they that have toiled hard and contended bravely. And if we cannot all be crowned, let us at least come near to the crown. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.7

Wherefore, brethren, if we shall have done the will of the Father and kept the flesh pure and guarded the commandments of the Lord, we shall receive life eternal. For the Lord said in the Gospel, If you kept not that which is little, who shall give unto you that which is great? For I say unto you that he which is faithful in the least, is faithful also in much. So then He means this, Keep the flesh pure and the seal unstained, to the end that we may receive life. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.8

Wherefore, my brethren, let us not be double-minded but endure patiently in hope, that we may also obtain our reward. For faithful is He that promised to pay to each man the recompense of his works. If therefore we shall have wrought righteousness in the sight of God, we shall enter into His kingdom and shall receive the promises which ear has not heard nor eye seen, neither has it entered into the heart of man. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.11

But if we do not the will of the Lord, we shall be of the scripture that said, My house was made a den of robbers. So therefore let us choose rather to be of the Church of life, that we may be saved. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.14

Now I do not think that I have given any mean counsel respecting continence, and whosoever performs it shall not repent thereof, but shall save both himself and me his counselor. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.15

I read to you an exhortation to the end that you may give heed to the things which are written, so that you may save both yourselves and him that reads in the midst of you. For I ask of you as a reward that you repent with your whole heart, and give salvation and life to yourselves. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch. 19

Now He that raised Him from the dead will raise us also; if we do His will and walk in His commandments and love the things which He loved, abstaining from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, false witness; not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing or blow for blow or cursing for cursing; Polycarp (A.D. 69-156) ch.2

"For I know that, if I shall add no more to my sins, I shall be saved." "You shall be saved," he said, "you and all, as many as shall do these things." Hermas (A.D. 150) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.22

"Sir, these commandments are great and beautiful and glorious, and are able to gladden the heart of the man who is able to observe them. But I know not whether these commandments can be kept by a man, for they are very hard." He answered and said unto me; "If you set it before yourself that they can be kept, you will easily keep them, and they will not be hard; but if it once enter into your heart that they cannot be kept by a man, you will not keep them. But now I say unto you; if you keep them not. but neglect them you shall not have salvation, neither your children nor your household, since you have already pronounced judgment against yourself that these commandments cannot be kept by a man." Hermas (A.D. 150) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.29

Go, and tell all men to repent, and they shall live unto God; for the Lord in His compassion sent me to give repentance to all, though some of them, because of their deeds do not deserve to be saved. Hermas (A.D. 150) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.42

And we have been taught that He in the beginning did of His goodness, for man's sake, create all things out of unformed matter; and if men by their works show themselves worthy of this His design, they are deemed worthy, and so we have r

received - of reigning in company with Him, being delivered from corruption and suffering. Justin Martyr (A.D. 160) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.165

Nor did He stand in need of our service when He ordered us to follow Him; but He thus bestowed salvation upon ourselves. For to follow the Savior is to be a partaker of salvation, and to follow light is to receive light. But those who are in light do not themselves illumine the light, but are illumined and revealed by it: they do certainly contribute nothing to it, but, receiving the benefit, they are illumined by the light. Thus, also, service to God does indeed profit God nothing, nor has God need of human obedience; but He grants to those who follow and serve Him life and incorruption and eternal glory, bestowing benefit upon those who serve, because they do serve Him, and on His followers, because they do follow Him; but does not receive any benefit from them: for He is rich, perfect, and in need of nothing. Irenaeus (A.D. 180) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg. 478

For as man, disobeying, drew death upon himself; so, obeying the will of God, he who desires is able to procure for himself life everlasting. For God has given us a law and holy commandments; and every one who keeps these can be saved, and, obtaining the resurrection, can inherit incorruption. Theophilus (A.D. 180) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.2 pg.105

Forgiveness of past sins, then, God gives; but of future, each one gives to himself. And this is to repent, to condemn the past deeds, and beg oblivion of them from the Father, who only of all is able to undo what is done, by mercy proceeding from Him, and to blot out former sins by the dew of the Spirit. "For by the state in which I find you will I judge," Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.2 pg.602

SEE ALSO: COMMANDMENTS KEEPING

V. The righteousness of God vs. the righteousness of the law (Top)

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Galatians 2:16

And again He says to them, "Did I command your fathers, when they went out from the land of Egypt, to offer unto Me burnt-offerings and sacrifices? But this rather I commanded them, Let no one of you cherish any evil in his heart against his neighbor, and love not an oath of falsehood." "...We ought therefore, brethren, carefully to inquire concerning our salvation, lest the wicked one, having made his entrance by deceit, should huff us forth from our life. Barnabas (A.D. 70-130) ch. 2

And Trypho again inquired, "But if some one, knowing that this is so, after he recognizes that this man is Christ, and has believed in and obeys Him, wishes, however, to observe these, will he be saved?" I said, "In my opinion, Trypho, such a man will be saved, if he does not strive in every way to persuade other men - I mean those Gentiles who have been circumcised from error by Christ, to observe the same things as himself, telling them that they will not be saved unless they do so. This you did yourself at the commencement of the discourse, when you declared that I would not be saved unless I observe these institutions." Justin Martyr (A.D. 160) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.218

"...As I have learned also from the memoirs. For He exhorted His disciples to surpass the pharisaic way of living, with the warning, that if they did not, they might be sure they could not be saved; and these words are recorded in the memoirs: 'Unless your righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Justin Martyr (A.D. 160) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.252

The teaching of the Lord, with whom not only is the adulterer rejected, but also the man who desires to commit adultery; and not only is the actual murderer held guilty of having killed another to his own damnation, but the man also who is angry with his brother without a cause: who commanded not only not to hate men, but also to love their enemies; and commanded them not only not to swear falsely, but not even to swear at all; and not only not to speak evil of their neighbors, but not even to style any one "Raca" and "fool;" that otherwise they were in danger of hell-fire; and not only not to strike, but even, when themselves struck, to present the other cheek; and not only not to refuse to give up the property of others, but even if their own were taken away, not to demand it back again from those that took it; and not only not to injure their neighbors, nor to do them any evil, but also, when themselves wickedly dealt with, to be long-suffering, and to show kindness.

indness towards those , and to pray for them, that by means of repentance they might be saved. Irenaeus (A.D. 180) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg. 408

For the tradition of the elders themselves, which they pretended to observe from the law, was contrary to the law given by Moses. Wherefore also Isaiah declares: "Your dealers mix the wine with water," showing that the elders were in the habit of mingling a watered tradition with the simple command of God; that is, they set up a spurious law, and one contrary to the law; as also the Lord made plain, when He said to them, "Why do you transgress the commandment of God, for the sake of your tradition?" For not only by actual transgression did they set the law of God at naught, mingling the wine with water; but they also set up their own law in opposition to it, which is termed, even to the present day, the pharisaical. In this they suppress certain things, add others, and interpret others, again, as they think proper, which their teachers use, each one in particular; and desiring to uphold these traditions, they were unwilling to be subject to the law of God, which prepares them for the coming of Christ. Irenaeus (A.D. 180) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg. 475

"This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me: howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching the doctrines and the commandments of men." He does not call the law given by Moses commandments of men, but the traditions of the elders themselves which they had invented, and in upholding which they made the law of God of none effect, and were on this account also not subject to His Word. For this is what Paul says concerning these men: "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." Irenaeus (A.D. 180) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg. 476

As He does Himself declare: "Unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." For what meant "exceed" (that of the scribes and Pharisees) referred to? In the first place, believe not only in the Father, but also in His Son now revealed; for He it is who leads man into fellowship and unity with God. In the next place, not only say, but we must do; for they said, but did not. And not only abstain from evil deeds, but even from the desires after them. Now He did not teach us these things as being opposed to the law, but as fulfilling the law, and implanting in us the varied righteousness of the law. Irenaeus (A.D. 180) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg. 477

And for this reason did the Lord, instead of that, "You shall not commit adultery," forbid even concupiscence; and instead of that which runs thus, "You shall not kill," He prohibited anger; and instead of the law commanding the giving of tithes, to share all our possessions with the poor; and not to love our neighbors only, but even our enemies; and not merely to be liberal givers and bestowers, but even that we should present a gratuitous gift to those who take away our goods. For "to him that takes away your coat," He says, "give to him your cloak also; and from him that takes away your goods, ask them not again; and as you would that men should do unto you, do you unto them:" so that we may not grieve as those who are unwilling to be defrauded, but may rejoice as those who have given willingly, and as rather conferring a favor upon our neighbors than yielding to necessity. "And if any one," He says, "shall compel you a mile, go with him twain;" so that you may not follow him as a slave, but may as a free man go before him, showing yourself in all things kindly disposed and useful to your neighbor, not regarding their evil intentions, but performing your kind offices, assimilating yourself to the Father, "who makes His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sends rain upon the just and unjust." Now all these, as I have already observed, were not the injunctions of one doing away with the law, but of one fulfilling, extending, and widening it among us. Irenaeus (A.D. 180) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg. 477

Why, then, did the Lord not form the covenant for the fathers? Because "the law was not established for righteous men." But the righteous fathers had the meaning of the Decalogue written in their hearts and souls, that is, they loved the God who made them, and did no injury to their neighbor. Irenaeus (A.D. 180) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.481

For men were of old were accustomed to require "eye for eye, and tooth for tooth" and to repay with usury "evil with evil;" for, as yet, patience was not on earth, because faith was not either. Of course, meantime, impatience used to enjoy the opportunities which the law gave. That was easy, while the Lord and Master of patience was absent. But after He has supervened, and has united the grace of faith with patience, now it is no longer lawful to assail even with word, nor to say "fool" even, without "danger of the judgment." Anger has been prohibited, our spirits retained, the petulance of the hand checked, the poison of the tongue extracted. Tertullian (A.D. 198) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.3 pg. 711

SEE ALSO: LAW MOSAIC

VI. Is it possible to loose your salvation? (Top)

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. 2 Peter 2:20-22

Take heed now to yourselves, and not to be like some, adding largely to your sins, and saying, "The covenant is both theirs and ours." But they thus finally lost it, after Moses had already received it. Barnabas (A.D. 70-130) ch.4

We take earnest heed in these last days; for the whole time of your faith will profit you nothing, unless now in this wicked time we also withstand coming sources of danger, as becomes the sons of God that the Black One may find no means of entrance. Barnabas (A.D. 70-130) ch.4

Take heed, lest resting at our ease, as those who are the called, we should fall asleep in our sins, and the wicked prince, acquiring power over us, should thrust us away from the kingdom of the Lord. And all the more attend to this, my brethren, when you reflect and behold, that after so great signs and wonders were wrought in Israel, they were thus abandoned. Let us beware lest we be found, as it is written, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Barnabas (A.D. 70-130) ch. 4

Watch for your life's sake. Let not your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed; but be ready, for you know not the hour in which our Lord will come. But come together often, seeking the things which are befitting to your souls: for the whole time of your faith will not profit you, if you are not made perfect in the last time. Didache (A.D. 80-140) ch. 16

Look you, brethren, lest His benefits, which are many, turn unto judgment to all of us, if we walk not worthily of Him, and do those things which are good and well-pleasing in His sight with concord. Â... It is right therefore that we should not be deserters from His will. Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch.21

But they that endured patiently in confidence inherited glory and honor; they were exalted, and had their names recorded by God in their memorial for ever and ever. Amen. To such examples as these therefore, brethren, we also ought to cleave. For it is written; Cleave unto the saints, for they that cleave unto them shall be sanctified. Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch. 46

And we ought not rather to fear men but God. For this cause, if you do these things, the Lord said, Though you be gathered together with Me in My bosom, and do not My commandments, I will cast you away and will say unto you, Depart from Me, I know you not whence you are, you workers of iniquity. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.4

The promise of Christ is great and marvelous, even the rest of the kingdom that shall be and of life eternal. What then can we do to obtain them, but walk in holiness and righteousness, and consider these worldly things as alien to us, and not desire them? For when we desire to obtain these things we fall away from the righteous path. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.5

And the scripture also said in Ezekiel, Though Noah and Job and Daniel should rise up, they shall not deliver their children in the captivity. But if even such righteous men as these cannot by their righteous deeds deliver their children, with what confidence shall we, if we keep not our baptism pure and undefiled, enter into the kingdom of God? Or who shall be our advocate, unless we be found having holy and righteous works? Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch. 6

We ought to know that he which contends in the corruptible contest, if he be found dealing corruptly with it, is first flogged, and then removed and driven out of the race-course. What think you? What shall be done to him that has dealt corruptly with the contest of incorruption? For as concerning them that have not kept the seal, He said, Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be for a spectacle unto all flesh. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.7

Wherefore, my brethren, let us not be double-minded but endure patiently in hope, that we may also obtain our reward. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch. 11

Let us therefore practice righteousness that we may be saved unto the end. Blessed are they that obey these ordinances. Though they may endure affliction for a short time in the world, they will gather the immortal fruit of the resurrection. S

Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.19

For since, by the introduction into an appropriation us of the Holy Spirit, we are all "the temple of God," modesty is the sacrifice and priestess of that temple, who is to suffer nothing unclean or profane to be introduced (into it), for fear that the God who inhabits it should be offended, and quite forsake the polluted abode. Tertullian (A.D. 198) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.4 pg. 18

Fear is the foundation of salvation; presumption is an impediment to fear. More useful, then, is it to apprehend that we may possibly fail, than to presume that we cannot; for apprehending will lead us to fear, fearing to caution, and caution to salvation. On the other hand, if we presume, there will be neither fear nor caution to save us. Tertullian (A.D. 198) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.4 pg. 19

SEE ALSO: FREE WILL SYNERGISM

VII. Calling on and confessing the name of the Lord (Top)

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

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. Mark 8:38

Let us therefore cleave unto those to whom grace is given from God...being justified by works and not by words. For He said; He that said much shall hear also again. Does the ready talker think that he is righteous? Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch. 30

For thus says the all virtuous Wisdom: "Because I called and you obeyed not, and I held out words and you heeded not, but made My counsels of none effect, and were disobedient unto My reproofs; therefore I also will laugh at your destruction, and will rejoice over you when ruin comes upon you, and when confusion overtakes you suddenly, and your overthrow is at hand like a whirlwind, or when anguish come upon you. For it shall be, when you call upon Me, yet will I not hear you". Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) ch. 57

Yea, He Himself said, Whoso confess Me, Him will I confess before the Father. This then is our reward, if verily we shall confess Him through whom we were saved. But wherein do we confess Him? When we do that which He said and are not disobedient unto His commandments, and not only honor Him with our lips, but with our whole heart and with our whole mind. Now He said also in Isaiah, This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.3

Let us therefore not only call Him Lord, for this will not save us: for He said, Not every one that said unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall be saved, but he that does righteousness. So then, brethren, let us confess Him in our works, by loving one another, by not committing adultery nor speaking evil one against another nor envying, but being temperate, merciful, kindly. And we ought to have fellow-feeling one with another and not to be covetous. By these works let us confess Him, and not by the contrary. Second Clement (A.D. 100) ch.4

For some are wont of malicious guile to hawk about the Name, while they do certain other things unworthy of God. These men you ought to shun, as wild beasts; for they are mad dogs, biting by stealth; against whom you ought to be on your guard, for they are hard to heal. Ignatius: to the Ephesians (A.D. 35-105) ch.7

Some of it dried up by the sun, they that believed are such as these; the double-minded, and they that have the Lord on their lips, but have Him not in their heart. Therefore their foundations are dry and without power, and their words only live, but their works are dead. Such men are neither alive nor dead. Hermas (A.D. 150) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg. 51

And when you hear that we look for a kingdom, you suppose, without making any inquiry, that we speak of a human kingdom; whereas we speak of that which is with God, as appears also from the confession of their faith made by those who are charged with being Christians, though they know that death is the punishment awarded to him who so confesses. Ju

stin Martyr (A.D. 160) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.166

And let those who are not found living as He taught, be understood to be no Christians, even though they profess with the lip the precepts of Christ; for not those who make profession, but those who do the works, shall be saved, according to His word: "Not every one who said to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Justin Martyr (A.D. 160) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.168

"Why call you me Lord, Lord," He says, "and do not the things which I say?" For "the people that loves with their lips, but have their heart far away from the Lord," is another people, and trust in another, and have willingly sold themselves to another; but those who perform the commandments of the Lord, in every action "testify," by doing what He wishes, and consistently naming the Lord's name; and "testifying" by deed to Him in whom they trust, that they are those "who have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.2 pg.417

Confession is the beginning of glory, not the full desert of the crown; nor does it perfect our praise, but it initiates our dignity; and since it is written, "He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved," whatever has been before the end is a step by which we ascend to the summit of salvation, not a terminus wherein the full result of the ascent is already gained. He is a confessor; but after confession his peril is greater, because the adversary is more provoked. Cyprian (A.D. 250) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.5 pg.428

VIII. How the early church preached salvation (Top)

But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. Acts 26:20

Come then, clear your mind of all its preconceived notions and cast aside the custom that deceives you, and become a new man, as it were, from the beginning, as if you were about to hear a new message. Letter to Diognetus (A.D. 125-200) ch.2

There are two ways, one of life and one of death, but a great difference between the two ways. The way of life, then, is this: First, you shall love God who made you; second, love your neighbor as yourself, and do not do to another what you would not want done to you. And of these sayings the teaching is this: Bless those who curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for those who persecute you. For what reward is there for loving those who love you? Do not the Gentiles do the same? But love those who hate you, and you shall not have an enemy. Abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts. If someone strikes your right cheek, turn to him the other also, and you shall be perfect. If someone impresses you for one mile, go with him two. If someone takes your cloak, give him also your coat. If someone takes from you what is yours, ask it not back, for indeed you are not able. Give to every one who asks you, and ask it not back; for the Father wills that to all should be given of our own blessings (free gifts). Didache (A.D. 80-140) ch.1

SEE ALSO: EVANGELISM

IX. How the heretics preached salvation (Top)

The Gnostics say: Carnal men, again, are instructed in carnal things; such men, namely, as are established by their works, and by an mere (i.e. inferior faith), while they have not perfect knowledge. We of the Church, the gnostics say, are these persons. Wherefore also they maintain that good works are necessary to us, for that otherwise it is impossible we should be saved. But as to themselves, they hold that they shall be entirely and undoubtedly saved, not by means of conduct, but because they are spiritual by nature. Irenaeus (A.D. 180) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg. 324

Others of the yield themselves up to the lusts of the flesh with the utmost greediness, maintaining that carnal things should be allowed to the carnal nature, while spiritual things are provided for the spiritual. For they declare that we (the church)

ch) simply receive grace for use, wherefore also it will again be taken away from us; but that they themselves have grace as their own special possession, which has descended from above by means of an unspeakable and indescribable conjunction; and on this account more will be given them. Irenaeus (A.D. 180) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.324

And in their writings we read as follows, the interpretation which they give, declaring that Jesus spoke in a mystery to His disciples and apostles privately, and that they requested and obtained permission to hand down the things thus taught them, to others who should be worthy and believing. We are saved, indeed, by means of faith and love; but all other things, while in their nature indifferent, are reckoned by the opinion of men - some good and some evil, there being nothing really evil by nature. Irenaeus (A.D. 180) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg.351

They say that God is not to be feared; therefore all things are in their view free and unchecked. Where, however, is God not feared, except where He is not? Where God is not, there truth also is not. Where there is no truth, then, naturally enough, there is also such a discipline as theirs. Tertullian (A.D. 198) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.3 pg.264-265

Marcion has removed from his God all his severity and judicial character... A better god has been discovered, who never takes offence, is never angry, never inflicts punishment, who has prepared no fire in hell, no gnashing of teeth in the outer darkness! He is purely and simply good. He indeed forbids all delinquency, but only in word. He is in you, if you are willing to pay him homage, for the sake of appearances, that you may seem to honor God; for your fear he does not want. And so satisfied are the Marcionites with such pretences, that they have no fear of their god at all. Tertullian (A.D. 198) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.3 pg.291-292

"Be not deceived, God is not mocked." But Marcion's god can be mocked; for he knows not how to be angry, or how to take vengeance. Tertullian (A.D. 198) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.3 pg.438

For this reason it is that they neither regard works as necessary for themselves, nor do they observe any of the calls of duty, eluding even the necessity of martyrdom on any pretence which may suit their pleasure. Tertullian (A.D. 198) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.3 pg.

Let us begin, then, with those words which were spoken to Pharaoh, who is said to have been hardened by God, in order that he might not let the people go; and, along with his case, the language of the apostle also will be considered, where he says, "Therefore He has mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardens." For it is on these passages chiefly that the heretics rely, asserting that salvation is not in our own power, but that souls are of such a nature as must by all means be either lost or saved; and that in no way can a soul which is of an evil nature become good, or one which is of a virtuous nature be made bad. Origen (A.D. 248) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.4 pg.308

Let us now look to the expression, "It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy." For our opponents assert, that if it does not depend upon him that wills, nor on him that runs, but on God that shows mercy, that a man be saved, our salvation is not in our own power. For our nature is such as to admit of our either being saved or not, or else our salvation rests solely on the will of Him who, if He wills it, shows mercy, and confers salvation. Now let us inquire, in the first place, of such persons, whether to desire blessings be a good or evil act; and whether to hasten after good as a final aim be worthy of praise. If they were to answer that such a procedure was deserving of censure, they would evidently be mad; for all holy men both desire blessings and run after them, and certainly are not blameworthy. How, then, is it that he who is not saved, if he be of an evil nature, desires blessing, and runs after them, but does not find them? It is established, then, that to desire and follow after blessings is not an indifferent, but a virtuous proceeding. Origen (A.D. 248) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.4 pg.321

But with respect to the declaration of the apostle, "Therefore has He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens." You will say then unto me, Why does He yet find fault? For who has resisted His will? Nay but, O man, who are you that replies against God? "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why have you made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" So some one will perhaps say, that as the potter out of the same lump makes some vessels to honor, and others to dishonor, so God creates some men for perdition, and others for salvation; and that it is not therefore in our own power either to be saved or to perish; by which reasoning we appear not to be possessed of free-will. We must answer those who are of this opinion with the question, Whether it is possible for the apostle to contradict himself? And if this cannot be imagined of an apostle, how shall he appear, according to them, to be just in blaming those who committed fornication in Corinth, or those who sinned, and did not repent of their unchastity, and fornication, and uncleanness, which they had committed? "...We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one of us may receive in his body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad." For what reward of good will be conferred on him who could not commit evil

I, being formed by the Creator to that very end? or what punishment will deservedly be inflicted on him who was unable to do good in consequence of the creative act of his maker? Origen (A.D. 248) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.4 pg.324

SEE ALSO: HERESIES

X. The violent who take the kingdom of heaven by force (Top)

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force . Matthew 11:12

And what crown is it to those who have not followed in pursuit of it, like those victorious in the contest? On this account, too, did the Lord assert that the kingdom of heaven was the portion of "the violent;" and He says, "The violent take it by force;" that is, those who by strength and earnest striving axe on the watch to snatch it away on the moment. This able wrestler, therefore, exhorts us to the struggle for immortality, that we may be crowned, and may deem the crown precious, namely, that which is acquired by our struggle... Since, then, this power has been conferred upon us, both the Lord has taught and the apostle has commanded us the more to love God, that we may reach this for ourselves by striving after it. Irenaeus (A.D. 180) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg. 520

It is truly a difficult matter, then, as turns out, to find out latent good; since "Before virtue is placed exertion, And long and steep is the way to it, And rough at first; but when the summit is reached, Then is it easy, though difficult ." "For narrow," in truth, "and strait is the way" of the Lord. And it is to the "violent that the kingdom of God belongs." Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.2 pg.410

For it is said, "To him that knocks, it shall be opened: ask, and it shall be given to you." "For the violent that storm the kingdom" are not so in disputations speeches; but by continuance in a right life and unceasing prayers, are said "to take it by force," wiping away the blots left by their previous sins. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.2 pg .448

For the kingdom belongs pre-eminently to the violent, who, from investigation, and study, and discipline, reap this fruit, that they become kings. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.2 pg.315

But the Lord replies, "Because what is impossible with men is possible with God." This again is full of great wisdom. For a man by himself working and toiling at freedom from passion achieves nothing. But if he plainly shows himself very desirous and earnest about this, he attains it by the addition of the power of God. For God conspires with willing souls. But if they abandon their eagerness, the spirit which is bestowed by God is also restrained. For to save the unwilling is the part of one exercising compulsion; but to save the willing, that of one showing grace. Nor does the kingdom of heaven belong to sleepers and sluggards, "but the violent take it by force." For this alone is commendable violence, to force God, and take life from God by force. And He, knowing those who persevere firmly, or rather violently, yields and grants. For God delights in being vanquished in such things. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.2 pg.597

We meet together as an assembly and congregation, that, offering up prayer to God as with united force, we may wrestle with Him in our supplications. This violence God delights in. Tertullian (A.D. 198) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.3 pg.46

Re: Early Church Views On Salvation - posted by dietolive, on: 2011/10/11 12:05

What can mere words do to express the feeling of the soul, the result in the spirit, of reading through all of this?

One goes from the absolute depth of his own utter neediness, to the very pinnacle and height of God's Majestic and Awesome Glory.

In between we read of the grace and goodness of God toward us, and of His merciful plan of salvation, meeting our every spiritual need. We are warned not to depart from His Words, and to eschew the way of the deceiver hunting for our souls.

In the end, we see that God is good; that God is great; that God is to be feared, that God is Love, and is to be loved, with

h ALL our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

"Come then, clear your mind of all its preconceived notions and cast aside the custom that deceives you, and become a new man, as it were, from the beginning, as if you were about to hear a new message." Letter to Diognetus (A.D. 125-200) ch.2

Be encouraged in Him dear Reader: in His Word, and in His Way; in His Grace, and in His Stay.

He will keep us from all evil, Brothers and Sisters, if we do not give up. He will exalt us to Glory, Brothers and Sisters, if we do not give in.

Be well in the Lord all,
Doug