

How to Cheat Yourself Out of Salvation

Introduction:

- I. In II Peter 1, Peter tells his readers how to ensure their salvation. We studied recently about the “Christian Virtues,” found in verses 5-7.
 - a. He tells them that by keeping and increasing these qualities they will ensure their salvation (10-11).
 - b. Verse 12 shows the seriousness of ensuring salvation. He wanted them to know the authority of the apostolic teaching (16-18) and the Scriptures (19-21), because false teachers would come in deceiving the people (2:1-3).
- II. The truth is that too many people today are heading for their own destruction, and they do not realize it. They do not see themselves in danger. They are in denial of their sad state before God, and just like it was for those prophets in verse 1, they are “bringing upon themselves swift destruction.”
 - a. How can we be tricked by this world into losing our salvation?
 - i. It is not something that is taken from us. It is something we give up of our own accord. However, there are various ways that we give away our salvation without realizing it.
 - ii. The Bible gives us dozens of warnings about this, because it can be stopped if we pay attention to how we live.
 1. “Be *sober* and *vigilant*” (I Peter 5:8).
 2. “*Awake*, you who are sleeping” (Ephesians 5:14).
 3. “Do not be *deceived*.”
 - iii. If you are careful, and if you pay attention, you will not be likely to give up your salvation. However, if you are not vigilant—if you are not awake—you will be deceived, and you will cheat yourself out of your salvation. But how?

Discussion:

- I. Live without regard to the consequences.
 - a. There is no more dangerous lifestyle than the one that ignores the future. When we live without regard to the future, we set ourselves up for trouble.
 - i. Credit cards, as opposed to saving.
 - ii. Staying up late loafing, as opposed to preparing or resting for tomorrow.
 - iii. It is easy to see how we do this. We mistreat our body by not exercising or eating right. We treat our children like this when we do not train them up from early childhood how to *be* a Christian.
 - b. Galatians 6:7-10 – A man sows what he reaps.
 - i. Psychologists define “psychotic” as receiving an answer, trying the same experiment the same way, and expecting a different answer. If I plant strawberries and they grow strawberries, I would be crazy to think that the next time they will grow into apples.
 - ii. My wife is good at pointing out my “psychosis,” if you will. I’ll say, “I don’t understand why my computer doesn’t work,” and a few days later she’ll catch me taking it apart and say, “I wonder why it never works.”

- c. Matthew 7:15-20 – You shall know them by their fruits.
 - i. I know a strawberry plant because I can see the strawberries!
 - ii. This is not a hard concept! However, when we do not want the real answer, we seek a more difficult answer. We try to find a loophole in the Scriptures, just like many people do in our legal system today.
 - 1. Peter talked about false prophets that would deceive believers, and Jesus said, “It’s easy to spot a false teacher. Look at his fruit.”
 - 2. The same holds true for false Christians. You will know them by the results of what they do. Jesus did not say, “Every tree that brings forth bad fruit is hewn down,” but “Every tree that bringeth **NOT** forth good fruit.”
 - a. I can sit here and say that I am not doing anything wrong, but I can say the same thing about any dummy in a store window!
 - d. We must build for the future. If a plant is not bearing fruit, it is wasting time, soil, space, etc. The only way to plan for the future is to have plants that will bear fruit, which allows for there to be seeds to plant the next season, and the next season, and so on.
- II. Act like you have not sinned.
 - a. The second way we cheat ourselves out of salvation is by denying our sins and acting like we are doing no wrong.
 - i. When we want to explain two things as obviously different, we talk about is as “light and dark.” There is no confusion, no doubt, no question as to which is which.
 - ii. I John 1:5-10 – John says the same thing about being in fellowship with God (what many mean by saying a “relationship” with God). It is a matter of light and dark. You are, or you are not, in fellowship with God.
 - 1. There is *NO* darkness in God at all. God *NEVER* walks in darkness. So can I *AT ANY TIME* consciously walk in darkness *AND* be in fellowship with God? *NO!*
 - a. If we say we do, we are lying (6).
 - b. If we truly do, we do have fellowship with him, and our sins are washed away (7).
 - c. If we say we have no sin, we cheat ourselves (8).
 - d. If we confess our sin, we have forgiveness (9).
 - iii. It is as simple as that.
 - 1. John uses a word in this letter five times that my mother never let me use: “Liar”
 - a. I Jn 1:10, 2:3, 22; 4:20; 5:10 – almost 1 per chapter.
 - 2. He also talks about “deception.”
 - a. 1:8; 3:7; II John 7
 - iv. We are the ones making it difficult on ourselves by lying to ourselves about our sins and listening to deceptive people who are okay with us the way we are.
 - b. When I was in college we were joking about how gullible some people are. Turn with me to Hezekiah chapter three and read about an example!

- i. We'll ask how many animals of each kind Moses put on the ark, or what did Jonah swallow. The reason these are "trick" questions is that they are easy questions when asked correctly. They become difficult when they are twisted to the wishes of the one asking the question.
 - 1. II Peter 3:11 – Peter says, "See, this is simple!" However, he realizes that Paul wrote about the same things, and that "they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [them]...unto their own destruction (cf. II Peter 2:1).
 - a. Notice who brings about their own destruction.
 - i. Unlearned – Those who don't know the Bible.
 - ii. Unstable – Those who don't commit fully to the Bible.
 - b. We sometimes joke about not knowing enough about the Scriptures, but it is no laughing matter. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."
 - i. Hosea 4:6 – Are we the royal priesthood of God?
 - 1. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I have rejected you from being priest."
 - ii. You want to lose your salvation? If so, deny your weaknesses and do not seek to grow in knowledge. Don't be committed to keeping it.
- III. Think that your sin is not serious enough to send you to hell.
 - a. This is perhaps the worst thing we can do for our salvation.
 - i. Romans 1:29-32 – Look at this list of sins that are "worthy of death."
 - 1. Envy (selfishness)
 - 2. Debate (people who just want to argue)
 - 3. Deceit (not being true to your word)
 - 4. Whisperers (gossip, spreading rumors)
 - 5. Proud (arrogant, "I don't need anyone")
 - 6. Disobedient to parents (rebellious, refusing them)
 - 7. Without understanding (not seeking to learn, either)
 - 8. Covenant breakers (do not keep promises)
 - 9. Being without compassion (not concerned with the problems of others)
 - b. If you are doing these things, Congratulations! You are buying yourself a one-way ticket to a place of eternal punishment!
 - i. And if you are thinking, "How can he be so flippant about saying this?"
 - 1. How seriously do you take these sins in your life?
 - 2. How seriously do you consider your relationship with God?
 - 3. How seriously do you plan for your future eternal home?
 - 4. How seriously do you think you will get to heaven according to I Peter 4:17-18?
 - a. Who is the one being "flippant" about salvation?