

In His discussion with Nicodemus (John 3), Jesus put a name to what happens in the human heart when we first turn to the Lord. He called it being "born again."

When Jesus spoke with Nicodemus, the cross was still in Jesus' future, yet right then He made a doctrinal statement that many think applies only to the Church:

JOH 3:3,10 "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ... Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

Even though the Old Testament was all the Scripture Nicodemus had, the Lord expected him to know what being born again was all about.

So here is the question: How could Nicodemus have understood the born-again principle before Jesus died on the cross?

Answer: He could only have understood being born again before the cross if Old Testament believers *could* be born again before the cross.

Here are a couple of the many Old Testament verses that stress heart condition unto salvation above ritualistic observance:

Gen 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Hab 2:4 Behold . . . the just shall live by his faith.

Psa 51:16-17 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Since Jesus said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven," then Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Job, Daniel, and the rest of the great Old Testament saints had to be born again, or we will not see them in Heaven.

We saw Moses and Elijah (in their glorified bodies) on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus -- before the cross so we can prove they were born again, unless we wish to believe . . .

that God would permit His glory to radiate through the faces of the unregenerate.

Eze 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

Old Testament or New, there is NO difference in how a soul is saved. The only difference is doctrine, and doctrine is determined by how the Lord willed to reveal Himself to man AT A GIVEN TIME.

Old Testament saints and Christians have different doctrines, but the method of salvation is the same.

1Co 10:1-4 I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

And did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and **that ROCK was CHRIST.**

True saints have always been born again "by grace through faith," regardless of the era in which they lived. This is a major issue in some churches, so please make an effort to understand the argument.

We said all that to get to this: When Jesus went to the cross, there were Old Testament Jews, spread all

over the world.

They were in Africa, Spain, England, even as far away as India. If they were true believers, they must have been born again. Elect, just like you and I are (Rom 11:28).

Many of them must have been unaware of Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection.

So here's the question: Did those dispersed Jews lose their salvation the moment Jesus went to the cross and they were suddenly and unknowingly thrust into the Christian Era?

If we believe so, then we are saying a man is saved by his doctrine, rather than by his heart condition.

The point being: If a Jew, under God's covenants given to him through the patriarchs and prophets could be saved by faith in his coming Messiah for one millisecond into the Christian Era . . .

then a Jew *in that same spiritual condition* can be saved under those same covenants a thousand, or even 2000 years later.

The only way that would not be true is if salvation is based upon where we are positioned in history, and the correctness of our doctrine.

Numerous times in the Old Testament the Lord speaks of His everlasting covenant with the children of Israel, including the following verse:

Gen 7:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Some Dispensationalists claim that Old Testament saints were saved by an observance of the law while New Testament saints are saved by grace.

That is not what the Bible says. Hebrews 11 declares that salvation has always been by grace and always through faith.

Hab 2:4 Behold . . . the just shall live by his faith.

Micah 6:8 He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

end of study

I guess it's burning at the stake time for me, so have at it. <smile>