

Searching the Scriptures / 80 / Crying To God, Believing, Or Remorse Do Not Guarantee Salvation / Part 5

Our Bible study lesson for today examines why crying out to God, believing, or remorse do not guarantee salvation. We will be looking at two men in particular:

1. Esau, the Brother of Jacob
2. Simon, the Sorcerer

1. Esau, the Brother of Jacob

Heb 12:14–17 contains a commentary on the life of Esau, Jacob’s twin brother: *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”*

Both the “birthright” and the “blessing” have to do with salvation. The idea of tears, or crying, can also be understood by 2 Cor 7:10, *“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”* Esau demonstrated remorse at what he had done (based on the “sorrow of the world”), but not repentance (based on “godly sorrow”), which is a gift from God and has everything to do with salvation.

The statement *“lest any man fail [or lack] of the grace of God”* in Heb 12:15 means that if somebody lacks of the grace of God, they are not a child of God. Then we read *“lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”* A “root” can refer to Christ, as we find in Rev 22:16, *“I am the root and the offspring of David...”* However, the parable of the sower in Luke 8:13 speaks about those who don’t have any root: *“They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.”*

A similar analogy is found in Deu 29:18, *“Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood.”* And both gall and wormwood are poisonous and typify God’s judgment.

2. Simon, the Sorcerer

The following passage in Acts 8:9–24 gives us further insight into the nature of salvation: *“But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip,*

and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John : Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given , he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.”

Though Simon believed and was baptized he was not saved according to what we can glean from the biblical record. It is also interesting to note that God uses the same imagery in describing both Esau as well as Simon. Remember, we read in Heb 12:15, “... lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau.” We can compare that to Acts 8:22–23 where Peter, under divine inspiration, says of Simon: “... for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.”

May God have mercy upon you and me that we might not be found following in the footsteps of Esau or Simon, the Sorcerer, but that He might grant us eternal life through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.