

Lordship Salvation

Part I

Lecture #9

For most of you, today's subject will be new. Lordship preaching is so much a part of our evangelical society that we are unaware of it. The next two hours will be spent examining this, as well as other misstatements of the Gospel.

I. Lordship Salvation in perspective.

A. A definition of Lordship Salvation.

The bottom line of Lordship Salvation is salvation through submission. One is saved by obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord. They are not just saying that submitting to Christ is a good thing for Christians to do. They are saying that submission to Christ is necessary for salvation. In other words, you are not saved until you have totally submitted every aspect of your life to Christ.

You may wonder whether people actually preach that sort of thing. Look at this quote: "...until the human will responds to the invitation of Jesus and chooses to receive Him, obey Him, and follow Him, there can be no impartation of eternal life. All offers of salvation in the New Testament are directed to the will to make the choice of surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus" (Ray Stedman, Authentic Christianity, page 12).

Lordship Salvation is by definition salvation through submission.

B. The historical background of Lordship Salvation.

The roots of Lordshipism are in classical liberalism. Bultman (Kittle, T.D.N.T., volume 6, page 205 ff.) says that "to believe is to obey." Deissman in Light from the Ancient Near East states clearly that to believe in Christ is to surrender to Him. Bonhoeffer has a salvation by submission, as well. Given the liberal view of Christ, one is left to a salvation by obedience to moral standards.

I am not saying that those who preach Lordshipism are liberal; that is simply not the case. What I am saying is this. Liberalism has affected the theology of all, even those who are conservative.

II. Support used for Lordshipism.

A. Support from semantics.

1. The meaning of "repentance" proves Lordshipism.

a. We are to repent to be saved (Acts 2:38).

b. "Repent" means "to turn."

c. Therefore, to be saved, we must turn from sin.

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"Conversion...involves a twofold turn, a turn from idols and from sin on the one hand, and a turn to the living God...on the other. The 'turn away' the New Testament calls repentance; the 'turn toward' the New Testament calls faith."

"Only when he has renounced sin can he receive Christ" (John R. Stott, Eternity, September, 1959).

According to the Lordship position, you must turn from sin to be saved. Since not having Christ as Lord is sin, one cannot be saved until Christ is Lord.

2. The meaning of "believe" supports Lordshipism.

a. We are to believe to be saved.

b. "Believe" means "commit."

c. Therefore, to be saved, we must commit our lives to the Lordship of Christ.

Believe means to entrust and therefore to obey. To be saved, you entrust, or commit yourself to Christ. To do that means that you obey Him.

"To 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ' involves more than knowledge, assent, and trust (reliance). True, one must know about God's provision, he must assent to the truth of the Gospel and he must rely on Christ to save him. But to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ means more than to believe that He is Lord and more than to rely on Him to give eternal life. It means to receive Christ as one's own Lord, the ruler of one's own life" ("Eternal Life: On What Conditions?" by Elmer R. Enlow in Alliance Witness, January 19, 1972).

3. The meaning of the word "Lord" supports Lordshipism.

a. We are to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:30).

b. "Lord" means "Master."

c. Therefore, to be saved, we must submit to Him as Lord.

"In Romans 10:9, we read (ASV) 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' To confess Jesus as Lord surely means more than to admit that He is Lord: it means to submit to Him as one's own Lord" ("Eternal Life: On What Conditions?" by Elmer R. Enlow in Alliance Witness, January 19, 1972).

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4. The significance of the term "disciple" supports Lordshipism.

a. All who are saved are disciples.

b. A disciple is one submitted to Christ as Lord.

c. Therefore, to be saved, you must submit to Christ as Lord.

"Perhaps Matthew 11:28-30 gives us the clearest gospel invitation issued by Christ. Too many evangelical preachers have taken this text as if it were confined to verse 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' But to preach the gospel from this text only and to ignore verse 29 is to handle the word of God deceitfully. Jesus continues: 'Take my yoke upon you and learn of me...' Here is the true balance of the gospel. Jesus offers us both rest and a yoke" (John R. Stott, Eternity, September, 1959).