

Through the ages there has been much confusion about the way of salvation just because most folks did not know what salvation was. They did not make any distinction between salvation, reward, entering the kingdom, or being a member of the church which is the body of Christ.

Examples: The dying malefactor (Luke 23:39-43). He was not asking about the way of salvation. He already was a believer. See his testimony. He was asking to be remembered in the kingdom.

The rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-23). This one was asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. Now salvation does not come by doing something, neither does it come as an inheritance. Like the malefactor, this man was asking about a place, an inheritance in the kingdom. He was already a believer.

Nicodemus (John 3:1-12). Nicodemus was already a believer, but evidently wanted to know about the kingdom, for the Lord answered the unasked question by saying that for a believer to enter the kingdom, he must be born again or from above.

The ministry of John. His message was, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. John is not telling them to get saved. He says nothing about salvation. He is preaching to Israel, God's chosen people, those who worshiped at the temple and synagogue and believed in the God of Abraham. All these were to repent for the kingdom of heaven was at hand. No need for a salvation message here.

The ministry of the 12. During the time of the gospels they were to preach a message identical to that of John. We do not find one instance of them preaching to people who need salvation. Peter preached in the house of Cornelius, the Roman Centurion, but the group there were believers already. They were added to the kingdom.

The case of Cornelius. In addition to the above, it was noted by the Christians in Jerusalem that God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life when Peter reported to them. At first thought one would say that this was about salvation, but actually they were saying that God had granted to the Gentile believers in the synagogues the same right as the Jews to find a place in

the kingdom of heaven. They were grafted in.

The commission of Mark 16. At first glance one would say that these apostles were to go to all the heathen world and proclaim a message of salvation as we think of it. It says that they did obey this command and that the signs followed. But as we said above, we find no instance of them preaching to any but Jews only (except Peter to Cornelius). So the salvation they proclaimed was an entrance into the kingdom. Water baptism was required for this, but never for everlasting life as we find it presented in John's gospel. So we find that oftentimes salvation speaks of entrance into the kingdom. We must watch the context and rightly divide the Scriptures.

These few examples should put the reader on guard to be very careful of what he believes.