

SALVATION
in the
APOSTOLIC FATHERS

Paul Lorenzen

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WHO ARE THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS?

- Collection of Writings – 16 Documents
 - I Clement – Author unknown
 - II Clement – Author unknown
 - Letters of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch to
 - Ephesians
 - Magnesians
 - Trallians
 - Romans
 - Philadelphians
 - Smyrnaeans
 - Polycarp

WHO ARE THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS?

- Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians
- Martyrdom of Polycarp
- The *Didache* (Teaching of the Twelve Apostles)
- Epistle of Barnabas
- Shepherd of Hermas [not included in this study]
- Epistle to Diognetus
- Fragments of Papias

WHEN DID THEY WRITE?

What	When
Didache	50-150
I Clement	95
II Clement	100-170
Ignatius	110
Polycarp	110
Papias	130
Barnabas	70-135
Shepherd of Hermas	70-175
Diognetus	150-225
Martyrdom of Polycarp	155-67

- ### WHAT TYPES OF WRITINGS?
- Letters to Churches or Individuals
 - I Clement – From Rome to Corinthians
 - Ignatius – From Bishop to six churches and one bishop
 - Polycarp – From Polycarp to the Church at Philippi
 - Martyrdom of Polycarp – From Smyrna to Philomelium
 - Church Manual
 - Didache – Διδαχή - *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*
 - Doctrinal Instruction
 - Papias – 5 volumes *Expositions of the Sayings of the Lord*
 - Barnabas – Homily or doctrinal treatise
 - Shepherd of Hermas – Extended allegory
 - Apology/Sermon
 - Diognetus – evangelistic apology to political leader
 - II Clement – sermon to believers

- ### WHY THIS STUDY?
- Something Missing From Many of These Writings
 - Jesus viewed as an “example” rather than “Savior”
 - Cross of Jesus overlooked or minimized
 - “Grace” seems to have *disappeared* from message
 - Salvation References Appear to be Works Oriented
 - Salvation is result of *human effort*
 - *Assurance of salvation* missing
 - Purpose of This Study
 - Determine the *Doctrine of Salvation* [Soteriology] in the Second Century of the Church

SALVATION TERMINOLOGY USED

- Source of the Word Group – *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

- Five Greek Terms in the Word Group

- σώζω – *sozo* - save
- σωτηρία – *soteria* - deliverance
- σωτήρ – *soter* - savior
- σωτήριος – *soterios* - salvation
- διασώζω – *diasozo* - save

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

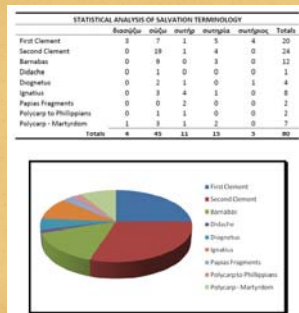
1. Establish a Base Line Doctrine
2. Create a Concordance of the Greek Terms
3. Analyze Each Occurrence in Each Document
4. Extract a “Theology” of Salvation of Each Author
5. Summarize the Conclusions

1. ESTABLISH BASELINE THEOLOGY

- Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. [New American Standard Bible]

5. RESULTS OF THE STUDY



RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Writing	Summary	Consistent with NT?	Main Concern
First Clement	Salvation is that which is achieved rather than received. Grace opens the eyes but the believer must achieve his future salvation. His views could be easily endorsed by Pelagius.	No	Ecclesiology
Second Clement	Salvation comes from Jesus through his suffering on the cross, and is viewed as a past event, present possession and future expectation. It is to be shared by the believer's witness to the world. Good works follow the present possession of the gift of salvation.	Yes	Soteriology
Ignatius	Salvation achieved by suffering and death of Jesus on the cross, and is obtained passively by faith in the finished work of Jesus, and there is the need to preach this so others could be saved.	Yes	Ecclesiology, Unity
Polycarp to Philipppians	Jesus Christ bore our sins on the cross. Discussion is more about perseverance than initial salvation. He believed that one could forfeit his salvation but that it was received and maintained by faith rather than works.	Yes	Soteriology, Discipleship

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Martyrdom of Polycarp	Jesus Christ is the source of salvation and the means by which the believer passively receives salvation. It is a present possession. The ultimate condition of the believer is to become part of the kingdom of Jesus as one of the elect.	Yes	Martyriology
Didache	The source of salvation is Christ, not one's ability to endure. One may forfeit his salvation if his faith does not endure to the end.	Yes	Ecclesiology
Barnabas	Salvation is a future reality not a present possession, obtained by the believer receiving special knowledge and following the commandments understood because of that special knowledge. If attained, it can be forfeited by committing sins rather than losing faith.	No	Soteriology
Diognetus	Salvation is by grace, through faith not of works, entirely by the suffering of Jesus Christ. The most accurate reflection of NT doctrine of atonement.	Yes	Apologetics, Evangelism
Papias	Does not directly deal with soteriology, but the Christology presented is completely consistent with the NT picture of Christ.	Yes	Christology

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

1. Barnabas & First Clement – *Very Disappointing*
2. Second Clement & Diognetus – *Crystal Clear Soteriology*
3. Other Documents – *Soteriology is not clear* but the objectives of the document did not deal *directly* with this doctrine

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

CONCLUSION OF THE PAPER [pg 122-23]

“Finally, it is encouraging to see that through the early centuries of the church, the message *did* survive even though some even within the church did not fully understand, or were not able to clearly communicate, the New Testament message. It is also especially encouraging that, although the *Epistle of Barnabas* circulated for centuries actually incorporated within some of the collections of what eventually became the New Testament canon, the church, in its wisdom, eventually rejected *Barnabas* as not being worthy of inclusion in the accepted canon.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

“I am reminded as I close the conclusion of this paper of an experience I had as an associate staff member in a Nazarene Church in Sparks, Nevada years ago. On a Wednesday evening, while trying to teach a group how to use the “diagnostic questions” in *Evangelism Explosion*, by D. James Kennedy, I decided to demonstrate by asking the questions of an old, long-time, board member of the church, thinking that he would give the correct answer and demonstrate how well the questions worked.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

"I asked the first question: *'Have you come to the place in your spiritual life where you know for sure that if you were to die tonight you would go to heaven?'* He answered with a resounding 'yes.' *So far so good.*

"I asked the second question: *'Suppose you were to die tonight and stand before God and he were to ask you, 'why should I let you into my heaven?' what would you say?'* His answer was a confident statement that he had been a member of the Nazarene Church for 60 years, paid his tithe, etc., etc., etc., and he was confident that he was good enough! [***Not the right answer!***]

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

"I rephrased the question several times trying to solicit the correct answer of Jesus dying for his sins and his trust in Jesus alone for his salvation. Try as I may, I could not get him to say *anything* about what Jesus had done for him on the cross or that he was relying on Jesus to make him acceptable to God. After about five minutes, I finally gave up and tried to salvage the presentation in another way.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

"The old Nazarene board member sometime in his past probably had experienced a true saving spiritual connection with Jesus. He just had no capacity to *communicate* that when given the opportunity. Perhaps that's the best we can say about some of the writers of the Apostolic Fathers documents. Thankfully, there are others, like *Diognetus* and *Second Clement*, who were able to write with clarity of the gospel of grace.

Thankfully, the church preserved their writings.
