

ABC's of SALVATION

by

John J. Van Gorder

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CHAPTER NINE

IMPOSSIBILITIES

THESE are the days in which men are doing the things which seemed impossible a few years ago. When I was a lad, I read a book entitled "*Around the World in Eighty Days.*" How weird and fantastic did that story seem! Yet today men fly around the world in a mere fraction of that time. Not long ago a lone aviator seemed to accomplish the impossible by a solo flight across the Atlantic. A few years and this seemingly impossible task has become so common that it attracts no attention whatsoever.

Men used to laugh at the statement, "**The law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem**" (Micah 4:2). Today we sit by our radios and hear men, in a few minutes, talk from all the continents of the world.

The man who tinkered with "the horseless carriage" and the two brothers who were trying to make an airplane were really pitied, yet both of these modes of locomotion have become commonplace. Much of the so-called impossible of a few years ago has passed into the realm of the practical.

We want to call your attention to a few things which the Word of God calls "impossible." Today these things are just as impossible as when spoken centuries ago, for the Word of God changes not.

I. Impossible to Change the Human Heart

"**It is impossible but that offences will come**" (Luke 17:1). These words were spoken by the Lord to His disciples. But why is this? Offences spring from the human heart. It is written in Mark 7:21,22, "**For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.**"

Culture and environment do not change this evil heart. Thirty-five centuries ago the human heart caused the infants of a great people to be cast into the river Nile. Recently bombs by the tons were dropped on defenseless women and children. Nowhere does the Word of God speak of improving the human heart. In fact the Word of God says, "**The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be**" (Romans 8:7).

At the new birth man becomes partaker of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4); he is born from above (John 3:3); **“Of incorruptible (seed), by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever”** (I Peter 1:23).

II. Impossible to Deal with Man’s Sin by Form and Ceremony

It is written in Hebrews 10:4, **“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”** The context shows that the writer is referring to that elaborate ritualistic system instituted at Sinai. All this ritualistic system ceased when shadow gave way to substance (Colossians 2:17).

The blood sacrifices before the Cross were but promissory notes issued by faith in the blood of the Lamb of God who did put away sin. Men, before the Cross, were saved by the blood of Christ, for it is written,

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past (sins committed before the Cross), through the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:25).

Yet, in spite of God’s emphatic statement on the impossibility of salvation by forms and ceremonies, men are trusting to be saved by conforming to some ritual.

III. Impossible for the Cup to Pass from Christ

It is written in Matthew 26:39, **“O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”**

When He was dying His enemies spake a profound truth when they said, **“He saved others; himself he cannot save”** (Matthew 27:42).

If sinful man was to be saved, a Sinless One must take his place. The law of the kinsman-redeemer was operating in a new way the day Christ died on the cross. The slave was to be set free by the rich Kinsman-Redeemer paying the price—but the price was death.

The whole race was under the sentence of death for it is written **“in Adam all die”** (I Corinthians 15:22). There has been only One Man who came not under this sentence, consequently He could pay the price of redemption.

Regardless of what interpretation men may put upon this “cup,” one thing is sure, the Sinless One bore the sins of the world. The more virtuous a person is, the more he shrinks from sin.

A fallen woman of the street does not shrink from being placed in a jail, but a virtuous one would probably die of the shock. If this be true, then think of what it meant to the Sinless One to have the crushing weight of all sin put upon Him. But without this there would be no salvation.

IV. Impossible for the Grave to Hold Him

When He died the sun in yonder heaven hid its face, the rocks left their ancient cohesion, and all nature revolted at the scene. His dead body was placed in the tomb and guards were stationed to watch thereat. Hell must have been holding high carnival during this time. It would seem as if the devil had been able to tie crepe on the doorknobs of glory. But all of a sudden the guards became as dead men and the tomb's great stone door was rolled away. Peter, in his Pentecostal sermon said of Christ: **“Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it”** (Acts 2:24).

Sin had planted the seeds of death in the body of every human being. Martha of Bethany knew the operation of this law when she said to her Lord, concerning her dead brother, Lazarus, **“Lord, by this time he stinketh.”** She knew the law of death and disintegration. The former had taken place and the latter was at work. From this law none had escaped, save Enoch and Elijah, and they escaped by special dispensation of God.

But this law did not operate in Christ's body. He was not begotten by man but by the Holy Spirit. There are those who claim it does not matter whether Christ was virgin born or not. That statement is evidence of shallow scriptural thinking, if not the evidence of sheer unbelief. It is written in Romans 1:4, **“Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”** Every claim concerning Him, including that of the virgin birth, was authenticated by the resurrection from the dead.

V. Without Faith It Is Impossible to Please God

In Hebrews 11:6 it is written, **“Without faith it is impossible to please him.”**

Man thinks from the standpoint of a sinner. His thinking is biased and warped. God's revealed Word tells of man's utter ruin and the God-provided redemption. God hangs great promises throughout His Word. He tells man of the finished work of His Son and asks him to believe on Christ as Saviour. This faith in God's Word is imperative, and without it man cannot be pleasing to God—it is impossible, for God says so.

VI. Impossible for God to Lie

It is written in Hebrews 6:18, **“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”**

Space does not permit a full discussion of the context from which it is taken, but two things are shown to be immutable, that is, not possible to change—God's promise and His oath. A covenant has been made. It is based upon the sacrifice of Christ, and God has promised to save all who believe on Him. This covenant is absolutely unconditional—it is final and irrevocable. Listen, reader! Christ has died according to this inter-theistic covenant which antedates time. God has promised to save all who believe on Him. God, who cannot lie, keeps His promise—it is impossible for Him to do otherwise.

VII. Impossible for Man to Be Saved if He Turns from This Revelation

In Hebrews 6:4-6 it is written, **“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”**

Much has been written and spoken on the above Scripture. One thing is sure—the salvation of the Christian is not the subject. Those to whom this was written had been the recipient of every one of these things, yet they seemed ready to turn back from all this revelation of Christ to the forms and ceremonies of the Law. They would be turning from the gospel of the grace of God to the impossible system of works.

What are you doing, dear reader? Do not turn from the simple gospel of salvation through Christ to some ritual, ordinance, or good works. By these you cannot be saved— it is impossible, for:

Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away one stain.

But Christ, the Heavenly Lamb,
Took all our sins away—
A Sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.

~ end of chapter 9 ~

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