

PlanoBibleChapel

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT SALVATION

SALVATION IS NEEDED BECAUSE HUMANS ARE DEPRAVED

Salvation is the great work of God (Jonah 2:9) in which He forgives sin and gives eternal life to a believing sinner as a free gift of His grace (Eph. 2:8-9). Forgiveness is needed because all people are born sinners showing their sin nature soon after birth (Gen. 6:5; Ps. 14:1-3; 51:5; Rom. 3:10-18). New life is needed because all people are born spiritually dead, separated from God (Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1-3). Having a sin nature and being spiritually dead results in people being totally depraved meaning that they are unable to please God by the good deeds they may achieve (Isa. 64:6; Jer. 17:9; Mk. 7:20-23; I Cor. 2:14; Gal. 5:19-21). The sinner is under the just condemnation of God who is perfect in holiness, purity, and righteousness (Ezra 9:15; Ps. 22:3; Ps. 48:10; Isa. 6:3; Jer. 9:24; Hab. 1:13) and must judge sin (Ezek. 18:4; Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 6:23).

WHAT IS SIN?

Sin is any lack of conformity to the holy character of God (Rom. 3:23). The sin nature is expressed in selfish thoughts and actions and rebellion against the will and plan of God (Jn. 3:19-20; Gal. 5:19-21). The creature expressing its will over the will of the Creator is sin because the Creator has the right of authority over His creation for His will to be done (Isa. 14:12-15; Rom. 1:18-32, 8:5-8; 9:19-21).

SIN HAS A PENALTY

God loves all people and desires them to be with Him, but He cannot tolerate sin and sinners in His presence because of His holiness and righteousness. He must condemn and judge sin. The penalty for sin is death, both physical and spiritual (Gen. 2:16-17; Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23). Physical death is separation from life in this world; spiritual death is separation from God. Sinners are unable to die for their sins and live, and are unable to make themselves acceptable to God by any works of righteousness (Isa. 64:6; Rom. 8:7-8; Tit. 3:5). God's righteous justice must be satisfied another way. Motivated by love, mercy, and grace (1 Jn. 4:8) God devised a plan to pay the price Himself in order to save and make people right before Him and welcome in His presence.

THE WORK OF CHRIST

To accomplish His plan, God sent His Son to be joined to humankind (Jn. 1:1-2, 14). This occurred in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20-23). The plan included Jesus, the Christ, dying by crucifixion as a substitute for all sinners (Ps. 22:1, 11-18; Isa. 53:3-12; Rom. 5:6-8). Jesus had no sin of His own but permitted all sins to be placed upon Himself (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:21-24). He evidenced being separated from God in the words, "*Why have you forsaken me,*" spoken from the cross (Matt. 27:46). His words, "*It is finished,*" declared the payment to be completed (Jn. 19:30). His resurrection from the dead three days later proved that sin and death had been conquered, the price fully paid (Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:3-5, 20-23). His separation from God in death and the shedding of His blood paid the redemption price (Eph. 1:7) fully satisfying God's righteous justice (1 Jn. 2:1-2) and providing the basis for sinners to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18-19). His death rendered God propitious or free to extend His mercy.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Christ's payment of the price for sin freed God to save sinners. This work in an individual begins with the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit creating a consciousness of sin and a sense of need for salvation (Jn. 16:8-10). When the truth of the gospel that Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for sin is learned, the Holy Spirit illumines the individual so that the message may be understood (1 Cor. 2:11-12) and believed.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SINNERS

Sinners receive redemption by believing that Jesus Christ died for their sins and was raised from the dead (Jn. 1:12, 3:16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 1:16-17, 10:9-14; 1 Cor. 15:1-5). Believing is trusting in or relying upon Christ and not on self-works or anything else to save from sin. The faith that God requires to give salvation is the opposite of "doing" anything; it is depending on the Savior to do the work of saving. The New Testament mentions "faith" or "believe" as God's only requirement to be saved in more than one hundred verses such as those cited in the first sentence of this paragraph.

REGENERATION GIVES NEW LIFE

When sinners receive Christ as Savior by faith, God forgives all sins and gives eternal life (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14; 1 Jn. 5:13). This new life is spiritual and imparted by the regenerating ministry of the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5); it is a new birth (Jn. 3:3-8) making believers born again children of God (1 Jn. 3:1-2). This eternal life is received by grace through faith alone apart from any works of righteousness (Jn. 3:17-18, 36; 20:30-31; Eph. 2:4-9).

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FOR BELIEVERS

Many other blessings are received at salvation including being justified or declared righteous by faith (Rom. 3:21-26, 4:1-8), being baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (Acts 1:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:13), being indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16-17; Rom. 8:9-11), being adopted as a son or daughter into the family of God (Eph. 1:3-5), and being transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God (Col. 1:13).

THE PART REPENTANCE PLAYS

Trusting in Christ as Savior requires a change of mind about being a sinner, about the awfulness of sin, about not being able to make oneself acceptable to God by good works, and about who Jesus is and what He did. It also requires a change of confidence from self or any other to confidence in Jesus to save. This change is called repentance (1 Thess. 1:9-10). Being convicted of sin and changing the mind about being a sinner can and should produce regret about being sinful. But sorrow alone is not sufficient.

True repentance is also a conscious decision to trust Christ as Savior, a transfer of confidence from self to the Savior. The free gift of God's grace is received. Peter told those who had crucified the Lord Jesus that His resurrection and ascension into heaven proved He is both Lord and Christ. They were challenged to repent to receive forgiveness (Acts. 2:22-38). This meant to change their minds about Jesus being the Messiah (Christ). They did, and their change of mind is described as "*those who had received his word*" (Acts. 2:41); their repentance was shown in believing the message.

Paul coupled repentance with faith as two parts of one message (Acts. 20:21). And in Romans, he wrote that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16). Then he stated that the kindness of God leads to repentance (Rom. 2:4). After that, he described being justified by faith (Rom. 3:21-28). This sequence demonstrates that belief is the crucial issue in being saved and that a change of mind in repentance is included in believing. The mind is changed transferring a person's trust from self to the Savior. Further proof that repentance does not need to be a separate or distinct act from faith is the Gospel of John. It is the one New Testament book written to tell someone how to be saved (Jn. 20:21), and the only requirement John gives is "believe" (Jn. 3:16, 18; 5:24).

SANCTIFICATION BEGINS AT SALVATION

When an individual becomes a child of God by faith, a new nature is given (2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Pet. 1:2-4). Then God begins transforming the life and producing good works. This is called progressive sanctification.

Positional sanctification is also given at the new birth; the new believer is immediately set apart to God in holiness and completely acceptable to God (1 Cor. 1:30, 6:11; Eph. 2:19; Heb. 10:10, 14). For example, the Corinthians were called saints (1 Cor. 1:2), but they needed to correct their behavior as described in the remainder of the epistle. Ultimate sanctification refers to the complete perfection in holiness that the believer will experience in the presence of God when glorified (Rom 8:29-30; Eph. 1:4, 5:27; 1 Jn. 3:1-3; Jude 1:24).

In the present the believer is to put away sin and practice righteousness becoming sanctified (Rom. 6:1-22, 12:1-2). God's plan and will is that good works be done by every believer (Eph. 2:10; Tit. 3:8). The indwelling Holy Spirit provides supernatural power to produce the character qualities of Christ and to do good deeds that honor God (Rom. 8:2-4, 11-14; Gal. 5:22-25). Sanctification or becoming more like Christ is to continue throughout life (Rom. 8:28-30; Phil. 1:6). However, the lives of many Biblical characters as well as many Biblical passages show clearly that sanctification in the life of a believer may take place rapidly or slowly and include a great amount of sin and failure (1 Cor. 3:14-15; 5:3-5; 6:6-8; Heb. 5:11-12; 11:32-34; 2 Pet. 2:7-8; Rev. 2-3).

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST AND THE BELIEVER

Since God is the all powerful Creator (Gen. 1:1; Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17) and completely sovereign (Ps. 103:19), and since Jesus Christ is declared to be the Head of the church which is His body (Eph. 5:23-24), believers who are subjects in the Kingdom of God and members of the Body of Christ owe Him allegiance and submission to His authority and direction (Rom. 12:1-2). A decision to make Christ Lord in life may happen at the time of receiving Him as Savior, but it may also occur later. This is a process and a walk that continues throughout the life of a believer. Honest Christians cannot claim that Jesus Christ is Lord of every area of their lives at any one point.

In the name "*Lord Jesus Christ*," the word Lord emphasizes His deity, the name Jesus is the human name given because He is the Savior (Matt. 1:21), and the title Christ is the Messiah, the Anointed One (Jn. 1:41), chosen to be the exclusive Savior (Acts 4:12). The commands to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31), to confess Him as Lord (Rom. 10:9), and to call on the name of the Lord (Rom. 10:13) all refer to believing in His deity, that He is God. Lordship in life is the work that God begins to effect when a person is saved and new life has begun; this work continues throughout the life of the believer.

THE BELIEVER CAN HAVE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Assurance of salvation is possible by knowing what the Word of God gives as the requirement for salvation and by knowing that the requirement has been met. It is stated above that faith in Jesus Christ as Savior is the only requirement to be saved. John 3:36 declares that the believer has eternal life. John 5:24 states that the believer has eternal life, will not come into judgment, and has passed out of death into life. These present tense verbs mean that eternal life is a present possession of the believer.

The Apostle Paul instructed the Phiippian jailer to, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved*" (Acts 16:31). The Apostle John explained that eternal life is a gift that God has given in His Son, that those who have the Son have life, and that those who believe in the name of the Son of God can know that they have eternal life (1 Jn. 5:13). Thus, knowing that God's requirement is to believe, that faith is sufficient, and that faith has been placed in Christ gives assurance that salvation is real and possessed.

THE BELIEVER'S SALVATION IS ETERNALLY SECURE

Eternal life is declared to be the present possession of the believer in Christ as Savior (Jn. 3:36; 5:24). And since eternity is forever, the life possessed is not temporary; it is permanent. Eternal life has begun and there will be no end to it. Jesus stated that those whom He gives eternal life will never perish because He holds them in His hands, and they are securely in the Father's hands also. None is able to snatch them out of their hands (Jn. 10:27-30). This promise assures that believers have eternal security.

Romans 8 begins with the affirmation that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (placed there by Spirit baptism at the instant of salvation). The chapter ends with the assurance that nothing can separate believers from the love of God. This truth also assures that believers are eternally secure. Salvation is a present permanent possession of every believer!

