

# Understanding Salvation & How to Receive It

## Understanding Salvation

The purpose of this lesson is to take compile many passages to help us understand our salvation and how we receive it. I'm hoping it will be useful in three ways:

1. Help us understand our own salvation better
2. Help us understand the truth of salvation so we won't fall to false teachings about salvation
3. Help us to understand our salvation in a simple way so we can explain it to others

### What is salvation?

Salvation is being saved from something. So when the Bible speaks of salvation, what is it saying that we are being saved from? The Bible speaks of our salvation from sin:

- Mat 1:21: *She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins*
- I Tim 1:15: *It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*

### How are we saved from sin?

To be saved from sin, our sin needs to go away. The only way our sin can go away is if it is forgiven us. So therefore, our salvation from sin is our forgiveness of sin.

- Lk 1:77: *To give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins*

### Why do we need to be saved from sin?

Because we sin, there are terrible consequences. Being saved from sin means we are not going to suffer those terrible consequences.

EX: Car wreck

What are the consequences of sin?

- Wrath (justice for sin):
  - I Thess 5:9: *For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ*
- Eternal death of our souls:
  - Rom 6:23: *For the wages of sin is death*
  - Jms 5:20: *Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death*

Salvation from sins means we don't have to be punished for our sins and suffer eternal death which is our souls being eternally separate from God.

*[Scripture also speaks of salvation as our final deliverance from this world and entrance into heaven. That's obviously related, but not the the same concept of salvation that we are discussing today]*

### **Who does God want to be saved?**

Everyone is in sin (Rom 3:23), but fortunately God desires for everyone to be saved.

- I Tim 2:4: [God] desires all men to be saved

### **Who is saved?**

If our sins are against God, then God is the only one who can forgive (Mk 2:7). We already learned God wants all to be saved, but does that mean everyone will be saved? Will everyone be saved unconditionally? Or does God have certain stipulations or requirements necessary for people to receive their salvation? How does God choose who will be saved? How can I receive this salvation? These are the questions we will answer in today's lesson.

## **How To Receive Salvation?**

Obviously, the previous questions can only be answered in scripture. Let's now look at what the Bible says about our salvation and forgiveness of sins. There are many things in scripture that are said to save us or forgive us. Let's look at all these things and consider how they all explain our salvation and how to get it.

### **What God has done to save us**

When it comes to our salvation, there are things that God has done to provide salvation, and things we must do to receive this salvation. Let's first look at what God has done to save us.

#### **Grace**

- Acts 15:11: *But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus*
- Eph 2:4-5: *But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)*
  - The first thing necessary for our salvation is God's grace.
  - Grace = kindness that gives undeserved gifts.
  - God loves us. Therefore He wants to be merciful and not punish us as we deserve. Instead, He is graceful to give us forgiveness that we don't deserve.
  - Our forgiveness is a gift from God that we didn't deserve (Eph 2:8).
  - Grace is the first thing necessary for salvation, because if God didn't want to save us, no one could or would ever be saved.
    - There are two ways to be saved without God's grace:
      1. Never sin, so you won't need God to forgive you
      2. After you've sinned, do something so amazing that it makes your sin go away.

- None of us could ever do either of these things, therefore we all NEED God's grace and desire to save us for any of us ever to be saved.
- If we are saved based on God's desire to save us rather than our own accomplishments, who gets the credit for our salvation? God does (Eph 2:9-10).
- **We are saved because God is good, not because we are good.**

### The blood of Christ

- Rom 5:9: *Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him*
- Eph 1:7: *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace*

- The second thing necessary for our salvation is the blood of Jesus Christ.
- Just because God wants to save us doesn't mean He can.
- God is loving and therefore wants to forgive us, but God is righteous and just and is therefore morally obligated by His own character to punish sin.

EX: Judge

- All of us who have sinned have committed a crime and are going to face the justice of that crime (Rom 1:18: For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness).
- Each sinner must bear the penalty for his own sins.
- So how can God be just to punish sin, but also merciful to forgive the sinner?
- God can only do so if He bears the penalty Himself.

EX: Parking ticket

- God paid the price for sin with the blood of His Son when He died on the cross.
- Mat 26:28: *this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins*
- Col 2:13-14: *When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*
- Why did God do this? Because He loves us (Jn 3:16: *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life*)
- **We are saved because of what God has done, not because of what we have done.**

This is what God has done to provide our salvation:

1. Have grace to desire to save us
2. Give the blood of Jesus to pay for our salvation

## What we must do to receive salvation

But what about us? Is there something we need to do to receive this salvation? Yes there is. The Bible tells us what we must do in order to receive this salvation that God has provided. Knowing the answers in scripture is the first thing necessary for us to be saved (Jn 5:34; Acts 11:14, 13:38; I Cor 15:1). If we don't know how God tells us to be saved, then we'll never be saved.

## Faith

- Eph 2:8: For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God
- Acts 10:43: Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins
  - The first thing necessary for us to do to be saved is to have faith in Jesus Christ and believe that He died to save us.
  - God has the right to require something from us for us to receive our salvation.
  - Fortunately, what He requires of us is to have faith in Jesus.
  - Is believing in Jesus what we do to earn our salvation? No! Believing that the death of Christ saves us is admitting that we can't earn our salvation.
  - It's not like believing in Jesus is hard like solving a math equation.
  - It's only hard because it's challenging for us to admit that we aren't righteous and can't save ourselves. It's hard to believe that Jesus and His death is the only way to salvation, but that's essential if we are to be saved (Acts 4:12: there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved)
  - Consider the Jews. They didn't want to accept that Jesus was the Christ and that His death is what can save them. So they continued to try to be saved by their own righteousness. That plan didn't work for them. It won't for us either.
  - If God saved us by the great sacrifice of His Son, it makes sense that He requires us to acknowledge that before we can be saved.
  - **We aren't saved because we did anything amazing, we are saved because we believe that what God did was amazing.**

However\*

James 2 helps us understand what Biblical faith is.

- Faith only: just belief with no action
  - That faith can't save Jms 2:14
  - That faith is dead Jms 2:17
  - That faith is useless Jms 2:19-20
- We aren't saved by faith only, we are saved by faith. Faith works and responds to what God says.
  - Jms 2:18: faith works
  - Jms 2:22: faith works and the works are the completion of faith
  - Jms 2:24: we are saved by a faith that works

So for us to be saved we need faith, but is God going to require us to do something? Yes.

## Confession

- Rom 10:8-10: But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”— that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.
  - To be saved, we must not just believe, but also confess that Jesus saves us.
  - This is a confession for others to hear.
  - The point here is our salvation is so easy for us to attain.
  - **We aren't saved by doing something amazing, we are saved by confessing that God did something amazing.**

## Repentance

- Lk 24:27: and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations
- Acts 2:38: Peter said to them, “ Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
- Acts 3:19: Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lordx
  - If faith is necessary for us to be saved, then a life of faith is necessary for salvation.
  - When we want to be saved by Christ through faith, we promise to live a life of faithful repentance because He offers us our salvation.
  - We didn't earn our salvation by repentance, rather we repent because God has saved us.
  - It is necessary for us to continue in faith if we desire to be saved by faith, but repentance isn't earning our salvation.
  - If we earned salvation by repentance, that would require being forgiven once, and then never sinning again.
  - God's grace has set up salvation that can accomplish our forgiveness even though we sin after being saved.
  - So why repent? Repenting is the life of gratitude we live for the one who saved us (II Cor 5:14-15: For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf)
  - **We aren't saved because of amazing deeds we've done, we commit to do amazing deeds because we can be saved.**

## Baptism

- Acts 2:38: Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”
- Acts 22:16: Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.
- I Pet 3:21: Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you— not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ
  - Finally, we receive this salvation on the occasion of our baptism.

- Baptism is our prayer calling upon the name of the Lord for a clean conscience that comes from the knowledge that our sins have finally been washed away.
- Did we earn our salvation when we got baptized?
- Did Naaman earn his cleansing of leprosy when he washed in the water? Did the Israelites deliver themselves from Egyptian slavery when they wiped blood on the door? Of course not!

EX: Signing a check

- Our baptism is simply saying “yes please” to Jesus.
- **We aren't saved by what we've done, we are saved by receiving what God has done.**

## Conclusion

It is clear that our salvation is due to God's greatness. Let's do what He tells us to be saved, and then live a life glorifying Him because He has saved us, and tell others about it.