

Examining Christian Doctrine

Lesson 28: The Doctrine of Salvation Part 5 – Salvation in Christ

In continuing the doctrine of salvation, we will explore the concept of salvation in Christ as is presented in the New Testament. Christ is seen as the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant as well as the Davidic Covenant. He is the one who ushered in the New Covenant. He is the promised Messiah and Suffering Servant that the Prophets spoke of, and was the fulfillment and goal of the Law as it pointed to faith in Christ for salvation.

The Gospels: Salvation Foundation

In the Gospels, we can see how Jesus' life, teachings, and miracles lay the foundation for the fuller understanding of salvation revealed through His death, resurrection, and the spread of the Gospel through the early church. While the full picture of salvation is completed later, the Gospels provide rich insights into its themes and implications.

We know that Jesus was born as a Jewish man, in Israel during the first century, and was sent to the nation of Israel to show himself as Israel's Messiah. In looking at the scriptures, we see the reason that Jesus was born:

- Matthew 1:21, the angel proclaims to Joseph about Mary, *"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*
- Luke 1:32-33, we find the angel telling Mary, *"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."*
- Galatians 4:4, the Apostle Paul writes: *But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.*

These scriptures set the tone for who Jesus will be and what his life and ministry was about. When Jesus begins his ministry and he preaches, teaches, heals, forgives and does miracles, these are all 'works of salvation', which bring light and relief to the human condition of people. Ultimately all of these works were meant to lead to *faith*, that people would believe in Jesus.

So, what are some ways in which Jesus proclaims and teaches the principles of salvation in the Gospels?:

1. Jesus is Seen as the Fulfillment of Old Testament Promises and Prophecies
2. Through Acts of Forgiveness of Sins and Healing
3. Jesus' Teaching on Eternal Life and Judgment
4. Jesus as the 'I AM', the Truth, and the Way to the Father
5. The Bringing in of the New Covenant
6. The Work of the Cross and the Atonement
7. Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life
8. Jesus' Call to Discipleship and Commissioning His Disciples

Also, who are some of the people in which Jesus 'brings salvation' to? (Notice the diversity of men, women, Jews and Gentiles)

1. The Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42)
2. Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)
3. The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:1-11)
4. The Paralytic Man Lowered through the Roof (Mark 2:1-12, Matthew 9:1-8, Luke 5:17-26)
5. The Gadarene Demoniac Possessed with a Legion of Demons (Mark 5:1-20, Luke 8:26-39)
6. Blind Bartimaeus Who Cried to Jesus to have Mercy on Him (Mark 10:46-52, Luke 18:35-43)
7. The Thief on the Cross (Luke 23:39-43)
8. The Canaanite Woman Seeking Help for Her Demon Possessed Daughter (Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30)
9. The Centurion's Servant In Which Jesus Spoke Healing Over Him (Matthew 8:5-13, Luke 7:1-10)
10. The Ten Lepers Who Were Healed (Luke 17:11-19)
11. Jairus' Daughter Who Was Dead (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43; Matthew 9:18-26, Luke 8:40-56)
12. The Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-27, Matthew 19:16-30, Luke 18:18-30)
13. The Roman Centurion at the Cross (Matthew 27:54, Mark 15:39, Luke 23:47)

Jesus' Death Explained

Jesus did many mighty works of salvation that showed he was Israel's Messiah, and that through these works, people should believe in Jesus and put their trust in Him. But the ultimate act of salvation would be through Jesus' atoning death on the cross. This work in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection is known as 'the finished work of Christ' because it is there that Jesus atoned for the sins of the world, freely offers salvation, and paid the debt for sin when he cried out, "It is finished" or 'it is paid in full' (Greek: *Tetelestai*).

While the Gospels tell us what happened on the cross and what events led up to Jesus' death and resurrection, it is the rest of the New Testament that gives us the details of what that death and resurrection means.

The New Testament provides a rich theological explanation of what Jesus' death and resurrection mean for salvation, focusing on themes such as atonement, redemption, justification, reconciliation, and victory over sin and death.

Here's an outline of key passages and the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection:

1. The Necessity of Jesus' Death: The death of Jesus was necessary because of human sin. Jesus' death was the fulfillment of God's plan to atone for sin, redeeming humanity through His blood.

- Romans 3:23-25 – "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith."

2. Jesus' Death as Atonement for Sin: Atonement is the means by which sin is 'dealt with' – Jesus died as the 'atoning sacrifice for our sin' – this fulfills the role of the Old Testament sacrifices that atoned for sin in a limited way.

- Isaiah 53:5-6 (Old Testament prophecy) – "But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds, we are healed."
- 1 Peter 2:24 – "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds, you have been healed."

3. The Substitutionary Nature of Jesus' Death: Jesus became a substitute for sinners, taking on their sin so that believers could be made righteous in God's sight. In the cross, we see that His death was our death. Jesus died for us, but also as us.

- 2 Corinthians 5:21 – "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
- Romans 5:8 – "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

4. The Forgiveness of Sins through Jesus' Death: Forgiveness of sins refers to the act of releasing or pardoning an individual from the moral or spiritual consequences of their wrongdoing or offenses.

- Colossians 2:13 – "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins"
- 1 John 1:9 – "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

5. The Redemptive Power of Jesus' Death (Redemption): Redemption is the act of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment or clearing a debt. Jesus paid our sin debt so that we can be freed from sins penalty and power.

- Ephesians 1:7 – "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace."
- Colossians 1:13-14 – "For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

6. Justification by Faith in Jesus' Death: Jesus' death brings justification, meaning believers are declared righteous before God through faith in Christ's atoning work.

- Romans 5:9 – "Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!"
- Galatians 2:20 – "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

7. Right Standing with God (Righteousness) Through Jesus' Death: Righteousness is obtained through faith in Jesus Christ, granting all believers, regardless of background, the right standing before God.

- Romans 3:21-22 – “But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:21 – “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

8. Reconciliation with God Through Jesus' Death: Jesus' death brings reconciliation, ending the enmity between humanity and God and restoring a relationship of peace.

- Romans 5:10 – “For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!”
- 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 – “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.”

9. Made Holy Through Jesus' Death (Sanctification): Holiness is not an external condition that we work to achieve, but true holiness is first a truth of our position by the cross. We are made holy and sanctified (or set apart) through Christ.

- Hebrews 10:10 “And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”
- 1 Corinthians 1:30 “It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.”
- Hebrews 2:11 “Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.”

10. The Victory Over Sin and Death Through Jesus' Death: Jesus' death and resurrection broke the power of death and sin, giving believers victory and hope of eternal life.

- 1 Corinthians 15:55-57 – “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Hebrews 2:14-15 – “Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”

11. Victory Over Satan Through Jesus' Death: Through His death and resurrection, Jesus defeated Satan and disarmed the spiritual powers of evil, demonstrating His ultimate authority and victory over the power of darkness.

- Colossians 2:15 – “And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”
- 1 John 3:8 – “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.”
- John 12:31-33 – “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” 33 He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

12. The Power of the Resurrection: The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of new life for believers, both now and in the future.

- Romans 6:4-5 – “We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we will certainly also be united with Him in a resurrection like His.”
- 1 Peter 1:3-4 – “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-22 – “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.”