The Doctrine of Salvation

All Scriptures are from the English Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction

This treatise will examine the doctrine of salvation, known in theology as soteriology. This term comes from the Greek word “soteria” (so-tay-REE-ah), meaning deliverance, preservation, or salvation. The Hebrew equivalent is “yeshua” which is the basis of the name Jesus.

In the Old Testament, salvation often refers to deliverance from danger or disaster but also includes prophecies of a coming Messiah, an Anointed One, who would bring ultimate spiritual salvation. The New Testament reveals that Jesus Christ fulfills these prophecies, delivering humanity from sin, death, and eternal judgment.

The doctrine of salvation includes several important topics such as universal depravity, divine calling, illumination, repentance, justification, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification. The Bible presents God’s plan of salvation as a divinely ordered process, transforming sinful humanity into holy and immortal saints.

Universal Depravity

The doctrine of universal depravity teaches that every human wants to sin and eventually commits sin. Contrary to modern, liberal views that portray humanity as morally neutral or inherently good, Scripture says that human nature is corrupt and incapable of reforming itself apart from divine intervention. Basically, people are not inclined to seek God or obey His Law.

God created Adam in a state of innocence; he had free will, but his moral character was not yet fixed. In Genesis 2, God gave Adam and Eve a choice between two ways of life, symbolized by two trees in the Garden of Eden. The tree of life represented submission to God, righteousness, and the promise of eternal life. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil symbolized rebellion, sin, and death.

In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve chose to disobey God; as a result, humanity is under the influence of Satan and selfishness. Ecclesiastes 7:20 declares, “Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.” Jeremiah 17:9 further emphasizes human depravity: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” Paul echoes this reality in Romans 8:7: “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.”

This does not mean that all people sin to the same degree, but every person, without exception, has a sinful nature because of Adam’s rebellion. Romans 5:12 states, “just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”

Jesus Christ is the only person who never sinned because He is fully divine and fully human.

Hebrews 4:15 says, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

God’s Holy Spirit is the only power strong enough to overcome the influence of Satan and selfishness. If Adam and Eve had obeyed God and eaten from the tree of life, representing the work of the Holy Spirit, they would have produced the fruit of the Spirit and received the gift of eternal life.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they broke their relationship with God and lost their access to the tree of life, but God had a plan to redeem fallen humanity. That plan started in Genesis and ends in the book of Revelation with humanity fully reconciled with God in paradise once again.

Divine Calling

The first step in God’s plan of salvation is His divine calling. Scripture teaches that no one comes to God on his own initiative; God must first call him or draw him to Himself. Peter mentioned this in Acts 2:39: “For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” Likewise, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:9, “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Because of universal depravity, people naturally resist God. They neither seek Him nor submit to His will. So, God must act first, counteracting the influence of Satan and selfishness. Jesus emphasized this truth in John 6:44: “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.” Again, in John 6:65, He declared, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

This divine calling is not predestination to salvation. Although God initiates the call, individuals must respond. Many people reject God’s invitation, preferring the path of destruction. In Matthew 7:13, Jesus warned, “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.” In Matthew 22:14, He also said, “For many are called, but few are chosen.” So, God starts the process by calling people, but only those who respond can be saved.

The Bible also reveals that God’s calling extends beyond any single nation or epoch. In John 12:32–33, Jesus declared, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” John explained that this referred to Christ’s death on the cross. After His resurrection, Jesus commanded His followers to proclaim the gospel to all nations. Over the centuries, the message of salvation has reached the ends of the earth, fulfilling God’s plan to call people from every tribe and language.

Prophecy reveals that God will call the whole world when Christ establishes His millennial kingdom over the earth. Isaiah 2:2–3 says:

> “It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us

> his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

Isaiah 11:9–10 also says: "They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious."

Even after the Millennium, God's calling will continue. Revelation 20:11–12 describes a final resurrection in which all who have ever lived will stand before Christ: "Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done."

God is a righteous Judge who desires repentance more than condemnation, therefore, this passage suggests that those who never heard the gospel will have an opportunity to respond to God's call. This would include countless billions who lived and died prior to Christ's first coming and billions more who died in infancy or suffered from mental illness. Jesus will draw all people to Himself.

Ultimately, this divine calling is a miracle; no one willingly comes to Christ unless God first draws him. His calling is not coercion, but it demands a free response. Those who respond receive salvation, while those who reject His call remain in their sins.

Illumination

The next step in God's plan of salvation is illumination. The Bible often uses light and darkness as an analogy for truth and error, understanding and ignorance. Illumination refers to the act of shining spiritual light into a person's heart and mind so they can grasp the truth of God's Word.

The world is in spiritual darkness because of Satan's deception. Since the Garden of Eden, Satan has turned people away from God and suppressed the truth. Revelation 12:9 says, "And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him." As the deceiver of the whole world, Satan darkens minds and keeps people in error.

Because of humanity's sinful nature, people are also spiritually blind. Even when someone hears the message of salvation, they cannot truly understand or accept it unless God intervenes. Paul explains this in 1 Corinthians 2:14: "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned."

In other words, spiritual truth can't be grasped by human effort or reasoning; God must shine His light into the mind and remove the blindness of the heart. Paul speaks of this in 2 Corinthians 4:6: "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to

give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Just as God once spoke physical light into existence, He must impart spiritual light into the soul.

People can read the Bible for years and still be spiritually blind if God hasn't called them and opened their minds. Paul described the people of Israel in 2 Corinthians 3:14–16: "But their minds were closed. For to this day the same veil remains at the reading of the old covenant. It has not been lifted, because only in Christ can it be removed. And even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (BSB). Until God removes this veil, the truth remains hidden.

Illumination is not the same as gaining head knowledge. A person can read the Bible for years and still not truly understand it if God has not opened his mind. Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth. God must actively reveal His truth to the heart, not just the intellect.

This divine illumination will expand globally when Jesus returns and establishes His kingdom. At that time, God will restrain Satan, and the nations will no longer be deceived. Revelation 20:1–3 describes this coming event: "He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years... so that he might not deceive the nations any longer." Isaiah 25:7 also looks forward to this time, saying, "And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations."

So, Illumination is another miracle. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, who removes the veil, overcomes spiritual blindness, and enables a person to understand, accept, and believe the gospel. Without this supernatural work, no one could come to saving faith.

Repentance

The next step in God's plan of salvation is repentance. Repentance means turning away from sin and turning toward God in every part of life—mind, heart, and will. It is not just feeling sorry for past mistakes. True repentance involves a deep, personal decision to surrender to God and change the direction of one's life.

God does not accept people just as they are; He requires repentance. Jesus made this clear early in His ministry. Mark 1:14–15 says, "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'" Repentance is not optional; Jesus came to save us from our sins, not in our sins.

Because of human nature, repentance does not come easily. People are naturally selfish and proud. We don't want to admit that we are wrong or give up control. Instead, we make excuses or delay obedience. We resist God like stubborn children who fight against a loving Father who wants to rescue us from harm.

Repentance is also a miracle that God works in the heart. Jesus explained this in John 16:7–8 when He promised to send the Holy Spirit: "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I

will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment." The Holy Spirit confronts people with the truth; He shows them that they are sinners, that God's standard is perfect righteousness, and that judgment is coming.

When God opens a person's mind, they become aware of their need for forgiveness; they begin to see themselves clearly in the light of God's holiness. But even after conviction, a choice must still be made. God does not force people to repent. He calls, He convicts, and He persuades, but each person must freely choose to surrender.

Acts 11:18 records the response of the Jewish believers after hearing that the Gentiles had come to faith: "When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, 'Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.'" This verse shows that repentance is a gift. It is something God "grants," but it still requires a willing response.

Paul reinforced this truth in 2 Timothy 2:25, where he said that the servant of the Lord must correct opponents with gentleness because "God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth." Repentance is not something that we produce on our own. It happens when God opens our hearts and helps us see the truth about our sin and His mercy.

True repentance brings visible change. It does not mean a person becomes perfect overnight, but it does mean someone has a new direction. In Acts 26:20, Paul summarized his message by saying he preached "that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance." A changed heart produces a changed life.

So, repentance is both a divine work and a decision. It begins with conviction by the Holy Spirit, but it must lead to a personal response that includes surrender to God, trust in Christ, and a commitment to live differently. Without repentance, there is no salvation, but with repentance, there is life, forgiveness, and a new beginning.

Justification

The next step in God's plan of salvation is justification. Justification is God's official verdict that a person is no longer guilty of sin but is now righteous in His sight. It is a legal declaration of innocence and acceptance, not based on a person's good deeds, but on faith in Jesus Christ.

This was the message the apostles preached from the very beginning. On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the church, Peter preached to the crowd in Jerusalem. The people were convicted and asked what they should do. Peter replied in Acts 2:38, "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" (NASB). Repentance and faith, followed by baptism, marked the beginning of a new life justified before God.

The same was true for Paul. After his dramatic encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, he met a believer named Ananias who said to him, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (NASB) (Acts 22:16). Paul's response to God's call involved a visible, public act of faith in Christ and a complete change of heart.

Baptism is an integral part of justification because it is a covenant ratification ceremony, like a

wedding. A couple may love each other deeply, but they are not officially married until they take their vows. The same thing is true for believers; you must take the plunge to make it official.

Baptism is the moment when a person publicly commits to Christ, symbolizing death to sin and a new life in Him. It is a tangible demonstration of faith and repentance that brings a person into a new covenant relationship with God.

Baptism alone does not justify anyone; a person must come to God in repentance and faith. 1 Peter 3:21 says, “Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Baptism must be an expression of heartfelt repentance and sincere faith, or it is meaningless and ineffective.

Paul also warned Christians that justification is not a license to live in sin. In Romans 2:13, he said, “For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.” In other words, faith must be lived out. Obedience to God’s Law is not the way we earn justification, but it is the visible evidence of saving faith.

Justification is not simply agreeing to a set of facts about Jesus. It is a total surrender to Him as both Lord and Savior. God will not declare someone righteous if they continue to live in open rebellion. James 2:17 reminds us that “faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” Saving faith will show itself through repentance, obedience, and a transformed life.

So, justification is both a gift and a responsibility. God forgives sin and declares believers righteous based on faith in Christ, not because of anything they have done, but that faith must be real. It must lead to action. Baptism, repentance, and obedience are not substitutes for faith; they are concrete, tangible expressions of it. When a person responds to God’s call with wholehearted trust and submission, God forgives them and justifies them.

Regeneration

The next step in God’s plan of salvation is regeneration. Regeneration means that God gives a person a new spiritual life. It is a fresh start, a spiritual rebirth. In John 5:24, Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” In Colossians 2:13, Paul wrote, “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” (NIV).

When someone believes the gospel, repents, and is baptized, God forgives his sins and places His Holy Spirit within him. This is the beginning of a new life with God. Paul explained it this way in Titus 3:5: “He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”

Baptism isn’t an empty, meaningless ceremony. It is the moment when sins are washed away and the death penalty for sin is lifted. It is also the start of a new life empowered by the Holy Spirit. As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

Christians receive the Holy Spirit through the ministry of the church. After a minister baptizes a convert, he lays his hands on him and prays for him to receive the Holy Spirit. For example, in Acts 8:14–18, Peter and John laid their hands on Samaritan believers, and they received the Holy Spirit. A man named Simon saw this and “offered them money,” trying to buy that power. Likewise, in Acts 19:5–6, when Paul baptized a group of men in Ephesus, he laid his hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Regeneration requires more than just baptism or an emotional experience; it requires real faith and repentance. In Acts 5:32, Peter told the Jewish leaders, “We are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.” God will not give His Holy Spirit to a person who stubbornly refuses to obey His law.

Sadly, many today have been misled by a false gospel that says you can be saved without repentance, obedience, or a changed life. This message avoids the hard truth about sin and makes people feel good without requiring any real surrender to God. The result is a false conversion based on emotional hype, not on the truth of God’s Word.

Regeneration is a divine miracle, but a person must fully surrender as part of the process. When people believe the gospel, repent of their sins, and are baptized, God forgives them and places His Spirit within them. He solves the problem of sinful human nature by transforming the hearts and minds of His people through the power of the Holy Spirit. He helps Christians resist sinful desires and begins the lifelong process of shaping people to become like Jesus Christ.

Sanctification

The next step in God’s plan of salvation is sanctification. Sanctification is the process of removing sinful habits and developing godly character through the power of the Holy Spirit. It begins at regeneration, when a person receives the Holy Spirit, and continues throughout this life.

The Bible urges Christians to grow in holiness and righteousness. Hebrews 12:14 warns, “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” In Matthew 5:20, Jesus said, “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” God expects transformation and a life that reflects His character, not mere belief.

Sanctification is God’s solution to our sinful nature. People normally resist God because human nature is selfish and rebellious, but through the Holy Spirit, God gives Christians supernatural power to resist sin and pursue righteousness. Christianity is not about rituals or religious feelings; it is the transformation of the heart and mind. As Paul wrote in Romans 12:2, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”

Sanctification is a lifelong process. This transformation doesn’t happen all at once. Christians must cooperate with the Spirit of God, daily resisting sin and submitting to His will. As the Holy Spirit works in the believer, godly character begins to grow. In Galatians 5:22–23, Paul said that “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” Christians can enhance their growth by practicing spiritual disciplines such as Bible

study, meditation, prayer, and fasting, but spiritual disciplines are tools for growth, not a substitute for the work of the Holy Spirit.

This doesn't mean Christians become sinless in this life. They will stumble and need ongoing forgiveness. 1 John 1:8–9 says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

God is patient and merciful, but He is also serious about removing sin from His people. That is why He disciplines His children. In Revelation 3:19, Jesus said, "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent." Hebrews 12:6 says, "The Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." Discipline can be painful, but it is an expression of God's love. He is preparing us to live with Him forever, and because He is holy, He cannot dwell with sin.

So, God expects His people to overcome their sins and grow in righteousness, but Christians will not experience complete and final sanctification until the resurrection of the saints when Jesus returns. 1 Thessalonians 3:13 says, "May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones" (NIV).

Many people today have been deceived by a false message of cheap grace. They think they can continue living in sin and still be saved. Some claim, "Once saved, always saved," but that is a dangerous distortion of the gospel. The Bible clearly warns against this mindset. Hebrews 10:26–27 says, "If we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment."

Sanctification is not optional. Christians who continue in willful sin, without repentance or change, put themselves under God's judgment. The Bible is full of examples of people who started out well but fell away through sin or neglect.

Sanctification is a miracle from God, but it is also a responsibility. God gives Christians the power to resist sin and grow in righteousness, but believers must cooperate with that process. God is not interested in shallow confessions or empty religion; He wants a holy people. As Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4:7, "God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness."

True salvation is not just forgiveness; it is a transformation. Sanctification begins with regeneration and continues throughout a believer's life. By the power of the Holy Spirit, God is removing our sinful nature and forming the character of Christ within us throughout this life until we experience complete and final sanctification in the resurrection of the saints when Christ returns.

Glorification

The final step in God's plan of salvation is glorification. Glorification is the ultimate transformation of a Christian into a state of eternal, spiritual perfection. At the return of Jesus Christ, God will raise the righteous dead and instantly transform the living saints. All true

Christians will receive glorified, immortal bodies and share in the glory and authority of God's eternal kingdom. Glorification is the fulfillment of every promise God has made to His people.

The Christian life is not complete until Christ returns and glorifies His people. Paul declared this great truth in Colossians 3:4, saying, "When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." Christians look forward to a bright and happy future. No more sin, no more temptation, no more death—only glory, power, and perfect fellowship with God forever.

The glorification of the saints marks the beginning of a new era for the entire creation. God will remove the curse on the soil that began when Adam sinned. Romans 8:18–21 says that "the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God." When the saints are glorified, creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.

When Christ returns, God will resurrect those who died in Christ and instantly transform those who are still alive. 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 describes this event: "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord." The saints will be united with Christ forever.

Paul describes the nature of this change in 1 Corinthians 15:42–44: "What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory… It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." The natural, mortal bodies of believers will be replaced with new, glorious, spiritual bodies fit for eternity. They will no longer suffer, decay, or die.

This transformation must occur because, as 1 Corinthians 15:50–53 teaches, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable." Paul goes on to say: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed… in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet." The dead will be raised imperishable, and the living will be changed. Our mortal bodies will put on immortality.

Glorification also includes exaltation. The saints will not only live forever—they will rule with Christ. In Revelation 20:4–6, John sees the destiny of faithful saints: "They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years… Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power." These glorified saints will be given authority as kings and priests in God's kingdom.

This reward is only for those who have remained faithful, who have not worshiped the beast or received his mark. God will not glorify the rebellious or the half-hearted. He will only glorify those who endured in obedience, who were cleansed by Christ and transformed by the Holy Spirit.

After the thousand years, glorified believers will inherit the eternal kingdom of God—the new heavens and the new earth. John describes this breathtaking vision in Revelation 21:1–4: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth… and I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem… prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." God will dwell with His people forever. "He will wipe away every

tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more… for the former things have passed away."

There will be no more suffering, no more sickness, no more crying, no more pain. Glorification brings complete deliverance from every consequence of sin. Everything broken by the Fall will be restored. Everything stained by sin will be purified. This is the final and eternal state of the redeemed.

The saints will shine with glory in the presence of their Savior. Daniel 12:3 says, "Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above." Jesus confirmed this in Matthew 13:43: "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Glorification is the moment when Christians will finally be like Christ, because they will see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).

This promise of glorification should encourage believers to remain faithful through trials. No matter how hard life gets, the hope of glorification gives Christians the strength to endure because God will finish the work He has begun.

But glorification is not automatic; it is the reward of the faithful, not the unrepentant. Those who fall away, who return to sin, or deny Christ by their actions will not be glorified. The hope of glorification belongs to those who continue in obedience, walking in the Spirit until the end.

Glorification is a miracle from God. It is the conclusion of regeneration and sanctification. God changes His people from the inside out, and then, in the end, transforms them completely. Christians will be made perfect in holiness, clothed with immortality, and filled with glory. They will reign with Christ in His kingdom and dwell with God forever in the New Jerusalem.

This is the goal of salvation, not just forgiveness of sins, but full transformation into the image of Christ. Glorification is the final victory. It is the moment when sin, death, and Satan are finally defeated forever, and those who belong to Christ will shine forever in the kingdom of God.

Conclusion

The doctrine of salvation is the centerpiece of the Christian faith. It reveals God's love, mercy, justice, and power. From beginning to end, salvation is the miraculous work of God to rescue sinful humanity, restore us to fellowship with Him, and prepare us for eternal life in His kingdom.

The first step is understanding universal depravity. All people are born with a sinful nature because of Adam's rebellion. We are all subject to the influence of Satan and innate selfishness; we all desire to sin and eventually commit sin. No one is righteous, and no one seeks God apart from His initiative. Because of sin, we all deserve the second death in the lake of fire.

But God did not leave us in our helpless condition. He initiates the process of salvation through a divine calling to draw sinners to Himself. This calling awakens the heart and prepares the sinner to respond to God's grace through the gospel.

Through this divine calling, the Holy Spirit opens a person's mind to understand and accept the truth. This illumination leads to repentance, which is the sinner's personal response to God's call. To repent is to turn from sin and turn to God.

When a person genuinely repents and believes the gospel, God declares them righteous through justification. This is a legal act of God where He forgives the sinner and assigns the righteousness of Christ to their account. Justification is by faith, not by works, but justification is only granted to those who are truly repentant.

Along with justification comes regeneration. A believer receives the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and is spiritually reborn. The Holy Spirit changes the person from the inside, giving him a new nature, new desires, and the power to live a holy life.

The next step is sanctification, the ongoing process of becoming more like Christ. Sanctification begins at regeneration and continues throughout the believer's life. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians are called to overcome sin, grow in righteousness, and develop godly character. Sanctification is not optional; it is the concrete evidence that a person has truly been born again.

God's plan culminates in glorification, the final transformation of the believer at the return of Christ. When Jesus comes again, God will give His people immortal, glorified bodies fit for eternity. They will reign with Christ for a thousand years and dwell with God forever in the New Jerusalem. There will be no more death, no more pain, no more sin—only everlasting joy and glory.

Salvation is not just forgiveness. It is a complete transformation—from depravity to glory. It begins with God's call and ends with eternal life in God's presence. Salvation is a miraculous work of God, but humans must willingly respond through faith, repentance, and obedience.

Not everyone who claims to be a Christian will be saved. Scripture warns that many will refuse to repent or will continue to live in sin. The doctrine of salvation is not a license to sin, it is a call to holiness. Only those who obey Christ and remain faithful by the power of the Holy Spirit will receive the final reward.

God wants to save everyone, but He will not glorify those who live in rebellion. The true gospel is not just about personal forgiveness, it is about becoming like Jesus Christ, by developing godly character, and sharing in the glory of God forever.

Salvation is God's gift, God's work, and God's plan. It is accomplished through Christ, empowered by the Spirit, and received through faith, repentance, and obedience. From beginning to end, God is assembling a holy people for His kingdom. We need to respond with faith, humility, and zeal, because salvation is not just what God gives us. It is what He does in us.

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