

## God's Way of Salvation

Now that we know who God, man, and Jesus Christ are, as well as what the results of sin are, we have a foundation for understanding salvation. We have already concluded that because of sin, man is in a fallen state. Therefore, we can never fellowship with God until that sin is dealt with. What can God do about this terrible dilemma?

One possible solution would be for God to simply wipe the slate clean and act as though sin had never happened. As simple and ideal as this solution might appear, it is not consistent with God's nature. For Him to allow man in his sinful state to enter into His presence would require the compromise of God's holiness. Holiness not only means God cannot sin; it also means He cannot ignore sin. The idea of God's overlooking sin may seem attractive, but it would make God indulgent, permissive, and in the long run, of no benefit to us. So, for man to regain the original state God intended, He has provided a way of salvation that is clearly revealed in the Bible.

Explain how each of the following verses reveals God's way of salvation:

1. The Basis for His Salvation (John 3:16)
2. The Reason for His Salvation (Isaiah 59:2)
3. God's Way of Salvation (John 14:6 & Romans 5:8)

The way of salvation began with the atonement of Christ on the cross. The word atonement means "reconciliation" (Rom. 11:15 & 2 Cor. 5:18). Therefore, the basic idea behind the word "atonement" is to reconcile a difference, or to bring together two who have been separated. Because of the atoning work of Christ on the cross, reconciliation between God and us is possible.

The New Testament also uses the word ransom to describe Christ's atonement. A ransom is paid so someone who is held captive may be freed. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid our ransom so we can be released from the bondage of sin. His blood atonement was the payment for our release. Christ's death is mentioned at least 175 times in the New Testament. Yet, most people today do not like to talk about it because blood and crucifixion are too morbid for the modern mind. But, without the Cross there is no Gospel and no forgiveness of sin.

When most people think of salvation, they consider it only in terms of redemption from sin or rescue from hell. However, a careful study of salvation from a biblical perspective reveals that it involves three different stages, beginning with ...

## **I. Regeneration**

This first stage of salvation, which is also called “conversion,” is instantaneous. It occurs immediately upon receiving Christ as Savior. Two elements are always involved in regeneration. Read Luke 13:3 and Acts 3:19, and list the first element of regeneration:

The word repent is a translation of the Greek word METANOEŌ (meta-nah-eh'-oh), which means a change of mind, heart, and attitude. It is a change of mind with respect to sin and brings a change of lifestyle. It is an inward experience that manifests itself in an outward change of one's behavior. In repentance, one changes from hating or just ignoring God to loving Him and turning one's life completely over to Him.

True repentance is always accompanied by the second element of regeneration. What is it, according to Acts 20:21 and Romans 5:1?

Faith, which is always involved in repentance, is more than intellectual belief, for the demons believe intellectually (James 2:19). In the New Testament, faith comes from a Greek word (PISTIS), which means a firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing. It is believing something to the extent it changes your life.

As far as salvation is concerned, the amount, or degree, of your faith is not nearly as important as the object of your faith. The kind of faith that accompanies salvation is not in a book, a church, or a creed, but in a Person—Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). Repentance must be toward the Lord Jesus Christ, because He is the One who died for our sins.

The purpose of God's salvation is to redeem us from the depraved state that is the result of sin. The first part of this purpose is accomplished in the instantaneous portion of salvation—regeneration. Then comes the next part of salvation ...

## **II. Sanctification**

This part of salvation is progressive. The word “sanctification” comes from a Greek word (HAGIAZŌ, hog-ee-od'-zoh), which means “to separate” or “to set apart.” The word “holy” also comes from this Greek word. Read the following scriptures, and answer the questions:

1. What is the means of sanctification (John 17:17–19 & 2 Thessalonians 2:13)?
2. What is the purpose of sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30–31 & 1 Peter 2:2)?
3. What is the goal of sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:8 & Ephesians 1:4)?

Repentance and faith, which together result in regeneration, begin the salvation process, and sanctification continues it, ending in a glorious consummation in the very presence of Jesus Christ. This brings us to the ultimate stage of salvation ...

### **III. Glorification**

Glorification refers to complete salvation, which will only be realized in heaven. This does not mean we are not saved until we get to heaven, for eternal salvation begins the moment one turns to Christ in repentance and faith. That person then grows in knowledge and grace all through his physical life, culminating with his glorification in heaven.

Answer the following questions for a better understanding of glorification:

1. Who is the means of glorification (Romans 8:16–18 & 30)?
2. Explain the company of the glorified (1 Thessalonians 3:13 & Revelation 21:3):
3. Describe the home of the glorified (Revelation 21:4):
4. Describe the eternal body of the glorified (Philippians 3:20–21):

The New Testament clearly teaches salvation is in three parts: the initial stage called regeneration, the progressive stage called sanctification, and the ultimate stage called glorification.

Therefore, salvation is ...

Regeneration, which is salvation from the penalty of sin;

Sanctification, which is salvation from the power of sin; and

Glorification, which is salvation from the presence of sin.

In which stage of your salvation are you right now?

MEMORY VERSE: Romans 10:9–10