



THE WELL INSTITUTE

SOTERIOLOGY
[THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION]

PART 1

SOTERIOLOGY [THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION]

Read the following packet of information carefully, your life (eternal life) may depend on it. This packet will guide you through spiritually-oriented questions to intellectually-oriented questions, from faith to knowledge. The first pages deal with what matters most: that YOU *know* God and have truly experienced His salvation -spiritual death to spiritual life. Nothing could be worse than reading and studying about biblical salvation and never having tasted it for yourself. Please read carefully! After we spend some time unpacking **what** Salvation is (i.e. what happens at the moment of salvation), and what God intends to do in your life through salvation (sanctification), then we'll dive into a more difficult and controversial understanding of **how** God saves and **who** God saves. No doubt the latter portion of this study will raise many questions in your mind. Good! Study God's Word for yourself and seek His face to understand better (Acts 17:11). Even though this material may confuse you, discourage you, or at best, stretch your belief and your theological "comfort zone"— what you are embarking upon in this study should make you a better Christian as you "*study to show yourself approved . . . handling accurately God's Word*" (2 Tim. 2:15).

Know that what is presented below is a combination of "sides" between those who embrace more firmly Man's freedom in salvation (known loosely by the namesake "Arminianism") and those who hold more firmly to God's sovereignty in Salvation (known loosely as "Calvinism") – and those who hold to truths somewhere in the middle of those two positions or "camps." Though all these sides will be presented without bias, so that you can make up your mind and seek the Scripture's answers to these many claims, your task is to ask God for wisdom and spiritual insight into His Word that He may give you an enduring peace when you cannot "reconcile" the seeming paradoxes and twin truths of salvation in Scripture which in the end... are still mysteries to the human mind and heart (James 1:5; Phil 4:6-7).

With that said, there will be some conclusions which represent my best effort to merge these seemingly contradictory perspectives. Please note that many of the conclusions which are underlined below represent my perspective (Matthew's), my best educated guess as a professional theologian and pastor and these views do not necessarily represent The WELL as a whole, the elders, the pastoral staff, or you ☺. Though I present my findings below, the point is that within evangelical Christianity and at The WELL there is room enough for us to peaceably, respectably, and lovingly disagree. Truly, it's ok to disagree (Acts 15:36-39). Most important however, is our willingness to focus on those things which are essential to our common faith and wonderful fellowship in Christ Jesus (Gal. 5:22-23). I pray this packet spurs healthy and encouraging discussion.

"In Essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity"

Embracing God's mystery:

Several weeks ago, we considered the question, “why study theology at all?” Well, here you are ten weeks later—and I pray that you are a more fulfilled believer for it! When we considered the question of why tackle the study of theology, we appealed to a direct verse in the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 29:29: “*The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may (obey) do all the words of this law.*” We considered two realities from this verse: (1) there are divine mysteries that we—as humans on this earth—will never be privileged to unravel or know in any great depth (Is. 55:8-9; 1 Cor. 13:12; Rom. 11:33-35) such as the mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of the incarnation of Christ, and the mystery of salvation (how and who God saves), employing both God's perfect sovereignty and man's free will. These are “mysteries,” realities which are blocked in our limited, finite, and depraved state. Though we will grapple and struggle to understand these theological enigmas fully, on this side of heaven—these deeper realities of God's nature and action will remain mysteries. Perhaps one day God will fully reveal all these truths in a way that glorified humans can perceive and embrace them in all their glory (1 Cor. 12:13).

In Deut. 29:29, we see that God has also duly revealed certain truths, laws, and divine mysteries which mankind can perceive and “wrestle with” whereby man can establish logical truths and systematic understanding (explanation) from God's natural and specific revelation given through God's Word, Jesus' life, and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Thus, what God wants us to know, He has given and made “clear” through His Word which is illuminated through His living Spirit. Therefore, just as there are divine mysteries hidden from us, so there are also great biblical truths we as Christians are to embrace, know, and teach our families, churches, and communities. God has not called His children to be ignorant or lazy toward the deeper things of God.

Therefore, rather than being confused with the topic of salvation and rather than “fighting” about the great mysteries of salvation (as many Christians have disagreed over the nuances of how we are saved), I believe God is much more interested in the reality of whether or not YOU have tasted authentic salvation and that you have been truly converted in your soul from death to life!

Salvation—the process of Salvation, the “order” of salvation, the design of who is or can be saved, and why they are saved (within the study of salvation) are all mysteries to the human heart. **“Salvation,” defined as the movement of God to rescue the human soul from spiritual death and the ultimate presence of sin and destruction,** is a biblical fact and personal reality to be experienced spiritually and (ultimately) physically—why/how?? **BECAUSE GOD makes it so!** (Eph. 2:4-5). This is what God not only wants YOU to know but to experience, His saving love and gracious giving of eternal life. He wants you to know that HE SAVES and that He is still “in the business” of saving and changing lives (Ps. 68:20).

Ultimately, the only reason why you have been converted from death to life, or converted from being an unbeliever to a Believer, or “saved” (if you are a Baptist ☺) is because *God saved you*. The Bible says that Christians are those now who have been “rescued” from the domain of darkness and placed into God's kingdom of light and righteousness (Col. 1:13-14). This salvation is from God and is a gift from God who alone is our hope. My prayer is that as you read these very lines you will pause to consider the depths from which God has pulled you and delivered you into light, love, and an eternity with Him. May you reflect on what it means to be truly saved, truly a part of God's family, to be truly a new creature who ever lives to give God glory and thanks for saving you (2 Cor. 5:17). More than simply knowing the process by which we are saved (the study of salvation), God wants you to know Him personally and *experience salvation*—today

Have YOU experienced God's Salvation?

Well, you might say, what's the big deal with salvation? So what? You may feel that today's churches place too much emphases on evangelism and calling for people to be saved. You might reason that you are "spiritual" or a very "religious person" or that you are basically a "good person" and will probably make it into heaven based on your "good" life, religious dedication, and God's good grace. Well, the Bible has an answer for this rationale: (Matthew 7:13-14—"*The gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction (hell), and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to eternal life, and there are few who find it.*"). Jesus says in those days, "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'*" (Matthew 7:21)

******Nowhere in the Bible does God give permission to anyone to be reconciled to Himself (saved) because of their "good" life, good deeds and actions, or because they were faithful in church, were baptized, or have said some prayer(s). None of these things can bring spiritual life (Is. 64:6; Ro. 2:11; Heb. 9:27; Titus 3:5). For you and me, as human beings, *God's salvation is everything*. Without God, without the possibility of salvation, and without the actuality that *you* have been saved – there is no hope (1 Cor. 15:17) and no life. Rather, without God changing our life and rescuing us from our sin, from our sinful natures and choices, and from our selfish sin-wrecked world, our lives amount to little-- a temporary miserable experience in this broken hopeless world. God's salvation is everything and *you* were created to glorify God through your life and His saving you!

*******Have you experienced this life-transforming reality of "salvation?" Have you ever truly asked God into your life to save you, to rescue you? Have you confessed your truest need of God as a Savior, recognizing that you are a sinner and are in need of being spiritually rescued? Jesus Christ died on the cross and took our punishment for all of our sins that ***IF*** we ask Christ to save us, He will save us and remove from us our sin, our guilt, and our shame; Christ will convert your heart from death to life and give to you eternal life [heaven – as His greatest gift to you] (Rom. 10:13). If you have never asked Christ into your life, if you have never repented of your sins and begged God for mercy, for redemption, then I beg of you. . . do it now! Right now, stop what you are doing and **pray**:

"God forgive me, I know I am a sinner and I need to you to save me. Please come into my life, please come into my heart and save my needy soul. Jesus I am sorry for my sinful life and I will turn away from my sinful actions and habits. Lord, help me. Lord save me. I ask that you come into the deepest part of me and change my soul for good. I invite you in. I invite you to take charge of my life. Lord, you are in control of all of me from this day forward. I believe that you are the Savior of the world and that you, as God's Son, as God in the flesh, did rise from the grave. I believe in you and I trust in you with all of my life. Lord, Jesus, save me. Thank you for saving me."

(After you pray and ask Christ into your life, then tell someone of the greatest decision of your life) Salvation, if you have experienced the deepest grace of God's life toward you, then that is enough. Surely, we don't have to understand it in order to have it. Jesus says unless you become like a child, and have "child-like" faith – then you cannot be saved (Mt. 18:3). In other words, trusting in Christ for salvation is not an intellectual process (even though our Christian Faith is very rational). Rather, trusting in Christ to save us is our deepest heart trusting in the person of God to do what He promised He would do – to save needy sinners who ask by faith (Ro. 10:13).

The work of the TRINITY in Salvation

Scripture teaches that the whole **Trinity** is *sovereignly* involved in the process of salvation:

- (1) God the Father lovingly and mercifully decrees in eternity past those whom He will save (by election). God the Father then draws individuals from every place on the earth to be reconciled into right relationship with Himself (by salvation) through the perfect redemptive work of His Son, Jesus (John 6:44) and applied in time and space (in our historical chronology) through the Spirit.
- (2) Jesus Christ died on the cross as humanity's sacrificial substitute for the just penalty of all human sin and He paid with His own life the inevitable consequence of sin: physical death (2 Corinthians 5:15).
- (3) In drawing men to Himself, God sends His Holy Spirit, then, to regenerate spiritually dead hearts into new lives and into new spiritual beings, "new creations," (2 Cor. 5:17) through God's saving power as **He gives** (gifts) men saving faith to repent and to trust on Christ for salvation (Titus 3:5; John 6:63).

Salvation is, therefore, the merciful act of a loving and sovereign Triune God to redeem helpless man! Thus, we see the Holy Trinity perfectly at work together in salvation.

The Work of the Father. While there is human responsibility in salvation, there is first a divine side to salvation in which God sovereignly acts to secure the sinner's salvation.

(1) Election. The doctrine of Election states that God chose *some* people from eternity past (the elect), to be saved unconditionally (i.e. not based on any foreseen faith or merit within them), and only those elect will genuinely respond to the gospel to be saved (Mt. 22:14; Jn 6:37; 44; 65; 8:47; 10:26-29; Rom. 8:29-30; 9:6-23; 11:5-10; 1 Cor. 1:26-30; Eph. 1:4-5; 1 Thes. 1:4; 2Thes. 2:13; Jas. 2:5) The question concerning election is not whether or not one understands it, but whether or not the Bible teaches it. If, indeed, the Bible teaches election (or any other doctrine), then one is obligated to believe it. The doctrine of election includes a number of areas: Israel is elect (Deut. 7:6); angels are elect (1 Tim. 5:21); the Levitical priests were elect (Deut. 18:5); Jeremiah the prophet was elect (Jer. 1:5); and believers are elect (Eph. 1:4).

The election of God is "that eternal act of God whereby He, in His sovereign good pleasure, and on account of no foreseen merit in them, chooses a certain number of people to be the recipients of special grace and of eternal salvation." One of the principal passages concerning election is Ephesians 1:4 in the statement "He chose us." The verb "chose" is the Greek *eklego*, which means "to call out" from among the people. The word means that God selected some individuals from out of the masses. Moreover, the word is always used in the middle voice meaning God Himself chose these *for Himself*. This describes the purpose of the choosing—God chose believers to be in fellowship with Him and to reflect His grace through their living a redeemed life.

Several characteristics are to be noted in election: it took place in eternity past as a decree of God (Eph. 1:4); it is an act of a sovereign God, and it is according to His sovereign will (Rom. 9:11; 2 Tim. 1:9); it is an expression of the love of God and is accomplished for His pleasure/desire alone (Eph. 1:4-5, 9, 11); it is **not** conditioned on man in any way -not based on man's faith or any foreseen goodness in man (2 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 9:11); it reflects both the justice AND mercy of God; there can be no charge of injustice against God in election -since God did not have to elect any; if He did not elect any, all would perish naturally since all have a sin nature and willfully rebel against God (Rom. 3:10-12; 9:14, 20). Thus, when people decry that God is unjust (unfair) to elect some to salvation and not others, in reality, justice requires that God send all of humanity to hell since all of humanity has sinned against holy God and rejected Him. The fact that *any* are even elected at all is a work of grace (Rom. 3:26; John 3:18)

C. S. Lewis summarizes this truth in his classic work, *The Great Divorce*: “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’ All that are in Hell, choose it.”

(2) Predestination. The word *predestination* comes from the Greek *proorizo*, which means “to mark out beforehand,” and occurs six times in the New Testament (Acts 4:28; Rom. 8:29–30; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5, 11). The English word *horizon* is derived from *proorizo*. God by His sovereign choice marked believers off in eternity past. Several characteristics of predestination can be seen: it includes all events—not just individual salvation (Acts 4:28); it determined our status as adopted sons of God (Eph. 1:5); it assures our ultimate glorification (Rom. 8:29–30); it is for the purpose of extolling the grace of God (Eph. 1:6); it secures our eternal inheritance (Eph. 1:11); and it is according to the free choice of God and according to His will (Eph. 1:5, 11).

Election and predestination do not, however, take away man’s responsibility. Even though election and predestination are clearly taught in Scripture, man is still held accountable for his choices -sin man as a free moral agent willingly chooses sin and willfully rejects Christ as Savior. Scripture never suggests that man is lost because he is not elect or has not been predestined; **the emphasis of Scripture is that man is lost because he refuses to believe the gospel.**

(3) Adoption. The word *adoption* (Gk. *huiiothesia*) means “placing as a son” and describes the rights and privileges as well as the new position of the believer in Christ. The word is taken from Roman custom where, in a legal ceremony, the adopted son was given all the rights of a natural-born son. In this rite, four things happened. “[a] The adopted person lost all rights in his old family, and gained all the rights of a fully legitimate son in his new family. [b] He became heir to his new father’s estate. [c] The old life of the adopted person was completely wiped out. For instance, legally all debts were cancelled; they were wiped out as if they had never been. [d] In the eyes of the law the adopted person was literally and absolutely the son of his new father.”

Paul employs this Roman background to describe the Christian’s new status in Christ. In adoption the believer is released from slavery into freedom and maturity in Christ (Rom. 8:15). In adoption the believer is released from bondage under the law into a new status as a son (Gal. 4:5). In adoption the believer enjoys a new relationship wherein he may address God as “Abba! Father!” (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6), an intimate term of address used by a child in addressing its father. Ephesians 1:5 indicates the act of adoption is connected with predestination, having taken place in eternity past but realized when the person believes in Jesus Christ.

The Work of Christ. In discussing the process of salvation, the work of Christ is supreme in achieving man’s salvation. Primarily, it involves the death of Christ as a substitutionary atonement for sin in securing man’s release from the penalty and bondage of sin and meeting the righteous demand of a holy God.

Another important aspect of salvation, not previously mentioned, is sanctification. The word *sanctification* (Gk. *hagiasmos*) means “to set apart.” The same root word is found in the English words *saint*, *holy*, and *holiness*. Sanctification and its related terms are used in a variety of ways in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. With respect to the New Testament believer, however, there are primarily three aspects of sanctification:

(1) Positional sanctification. This is the believer’s position or standing before God, based on the death of Christ. In positional sanctification the believer is accounted holy before God; he is declared a saint. Paul frequently began his letters by addressing the believers as saints (Rom. 1:7; note, the

supplied word “as” hinders the statement by Paul; it simply reads, “to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called saints.” Compare 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; and Eph. 1:1). It is noteworthy that so carnal a group as the church at Corinth is addressed as “those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor. 1:2). This positional sanctification is achieved through the once-for-all death of Christ (Heb. 10:10, 14, 29). In Positional Sanctification new believers are declared to be holy, righteous, and now justified (no longer guilty of their sins because Christ has paid for those sins and He IMPUTES His very righteousness to us).

(2) **Experiential Sanctification.** Although the believer’s positional sanctification is secure, his experiential sanctification may fluctuate because it relates to his daily life and experience. Paul’s prayer is that believers should be sanctified entirely in their experience (1 Thess. 5:23); Peter commands believers to be sanctified or holy (1 Peter 1:16). This experiential sanctification grows as the believer dedicates his life to God (Rom. 6:13; 12:1–2) and is nourished by the Word of God (Ps. 119:9–16) and is only accomplished through the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit).

(3) **Ultimate Sanctification** (Glorification). This aspect of sanctification is future and anticipates the final transformation of the believer into the likeness of Christ. At that time all believers will be presented to the Lord without any blemish (Eph. 5:26–27).

The Work of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit in salvation involves the convicting ministry to the unbeliever (John 16:8), spiritually regenerating the person to give him spiritual life (Titus 3:5), indwelling the believer for life (Rom. 8:9), baptizing the believer into union with Christ and other Christians (Eph. 4:4–9), and sealing the believer (Eph. 1:13). (See expanded discussion “Pneumatology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.”)

What did Jesus accomplish by His Death on the cross?

Being the perfect, incarnate Son of God, fully man and fully God, Jesus’ sinless life afforded only to Him to be the unflawed and necessary sacrifice who could take the world’s deserving punishment by being killed for them. Jesus’ death was a sacrificial death, a ransomed death on behalf of another. Jesus’ death on the cross actually accomplished, uniquely and **perfectly accomplished salvation**. So, we are only saved because of what Jesus accomplished through His death on the cross.

What did Jesus actually accomplish by His sacrificial death on the cross?

1. Justification

The word “Justification” is a legal term utilized in courtrooms. In a sense, the word justification relates to how a person has standing before the court/judge. In essence, because all of humanity has legally imputed sin through Adam (original sin) (Rom. 5:12), inherent sin (our sin nature), and because we choose personal sin in our lives (willful rebellion against God) – we are all guilty (Rom. 3:23; Heb. 10:22). Thus, in our sin and guilt, we are in a state of bad standing with holy God (who is our righteous judge). As we stand guilty before God, we are declared guilty of sin and sentenced to a just punishment of eternal death. This is what we have earned as sinners (Rom. 6:23). However, in God’s supreme mercy and because of His love toward us (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8), God sent His Son Jesus to die as a sacrifice (taking our place as those judged guilty) and

through Christ's perfect, sinless life and death – Jesus paid the ultimate, substitutionary penalty through shedding His blood (dying) on our behalf for our guilt.

Therefore, because of Christ's sinless life and perfect status as the only possible substitutionary sacrifice for a truly guilty world, God the Father reckoned to new believers that because of Jesus' death – they could now have eternal life AND be reckoned as No LONGER GUILTY. Justification is the legal, forensic declaration that believers in Jesus Christ are no longer guilty and have a renewed, right standing with God the Father, our holy and righteous judge (Rom. 8:33-34).

The grounds of our justification is Christ alone (Rom. 5:9). It is through His death and resurrection as the perfect sacrificial ransom for guilty humanity that God sees the cross and justifies us. Christ paid the penalty our sin deserves (Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 3:18).

-Christ's very own righteousness is the ground of our righteousness. His righteousness is IMPUTED (gifted) to us (2 Cor. 5:21). The righteousness required by the Law is the righteousness of Christ given to us as a gift (Rom. 3:24; 5:15, 17; Titus 3:7).

- Christ's righteousness consists of perfect obedience to the Father and to the Mosaic Law (Rom. 5:19). Believer's new imputed righteousness now consists of Christ's perfect righteousness and full obedience to the Lord.

- Christ Himself, in His obedience and death, is our justification (Rom. 10:4; 1 Cor. 1:30).

- The means of our justification (salvation) is faith alone (trust in) Jesus' death and saving work on the cross (Rom. 3:22, 25-26, 28; 4:1-5; 5:1; Gal. 2:16; 3:24; Phil. 3:8-9). Thus, Justification is the legal declaration that the sinner's sin and guilt have been forgiven (by imputation from Christ to us). The sinner, now saved, is also immediately and perfectly righteous before God and His holy Law (by the imputation of Christ's righteousness).

2. Substitution (Penal Substitution)

On the cross, Jesus took our rightful place and he absorbed our just punishment. Jesus substituted His (guiltless) life for our guilty lives and He became our very sin (2 Cor. 5:21). Therefore, Jesus is our substitute and He took our just punishment which was the penalty of death (Isa. 53:6; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18). Jesus became our Penal Substitution on the cross, dying in our place (1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). As a result, God's justice is satisfied, and those who accept Christ can be forgiven and reconciled to God.

The word *penal* (as in penalty) means "related to punishment for offenses," and *substitution* means "the act of a person taking the place of another." So, *penal substitution* is the act of a person taking the punishment for someone else's offenses. In Christian theology, Jesus Christ is the Substitute, and the punishment He took (at the cross) was ours, based on our sin.

According to the doctrine of penal substitution, God's perfect justice demands some form of atonement for sin. Humanity is depraved, to such an extent that we are spiritually dead and incapable of atoning for sin in any way (Ephesians 2:1). Penal substitution means Jesus' death on the cross propitiated, or satisfied, God's requirement for justice. God's mercy allows Jesus to take the punishment we deserve for our sins. As a result, Jesus' sacrifice serves as a substitute for anyone who accepts it. In a very direct sense, Jesus is exchanged for us as the recipient of sin's penalty.

Penal substitution is clearly taught by the Bible. In fact, much of what God did prior to Jesus' ministry was to foreshadow this concept and present it as the purpose of the Messiah. In Genesis 3:21, God uses animal skins to cover the naked Adam and Eve. This is the first reference to a death (in this case, an animal's) being used to cover (atone for) sin. In Exodus 12:13, God's Spirit "passes over" the homes that are covered (atoned) by the blood of the sacrifice. God requires blood for atonement in Exodus 29:41–42. The description of Messiah in Isaiah 53:4–6 says His suffering is meant to heal our wounds. The fact that the Messiah was to be "crushed for our iniquities" (verse 5) is a direct reference to penal substitution.

During and after Jesus' ministry, penal substitution is further clarified. Jesus claims to be the "good shepherd" who lays down His life for the sheep in John 10:10. Paul, in Romans 3:25–26, explains that we have the righteousness of Christ because of the sacrifice of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:21, he says that the sinless Christ took on our sins. Hebrews 9:26 says that our sins were removed by the sacrifice of Christ. First Peter 3:18 plainly teaches that the righteous was substituted for the unrighteous.

The story of the Passover lamb (Exod. 12 and 1 Cor. 5:7), illustrates the meaning of substitution as here used: one life given in the stead of another. "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us. Christ Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree—this is substitution. Christ died in our place, bore our sins, paid the penalty due our sins; and all this, not by force, but willingly (John 10:17-18). The idea of substitution is well illustrated by the nature of the preposition used in connection with this phase of Christ's death: In Matt. 20:28, Christ is said to give His life a ransom *for* all (also 1 Tim. 2:6). That this preposition means *instead of* is clear from its use in Matt. 2:22—"Archelaus did reign in the room [or in the stead] of his father Herod." Also in Luke 11:11—"Will he *for* a fish give him a serpent?" (See Heb. 12:2, 16.) Substitution, then, as used here means this: That something happened to Christ, and because it happened to Christ, it need not happen to us. Christ died for our sins; we need *not* also die for them if we accept His sacrifice. Jesus took our just punishment on the cross in our place; we need *not* also face judgment for those same sins now covered, forgiven, and forgotten forever (Rom. 8:1). For further illustrations, see Gen. 22:13; God providing a ram instead of Isaac; also Barabbas freed (as a tradition, being a substitute for the Passover feast in Israel) and Christ bearing his cross and taking his place.

3. Redemption (Ransom Payment)

Redemption is the work of Christ on the Cross directed toward sin to buy back precious lives created and owned by the Father. Grk: *antilutron*: "Anti" connotes substitution, while "lutron" connotes payment for the freedom of a slave. The human race is regarded as being born with an old sin nature (original sin), spiritually dead toward God (Eph. 2:1; 5). This means since the Fall, mankind is born in "the slave market" of sin (with the only exception being Christ). Redemption is therefore the saving work of Christ whereby He purchased our freedom from the slave market of sin and purchased us back for God's glory and purpose of reconciliation.

The "coin" for this purchase is called the **blood** of Christ (Christ bearing our sins and dying for sinful humanity) (Note: Gal. 3:13). Jesus paid for our sins with His precious life-blood. The blood of Christ is the ransom money for the purchase price of redemption.

-Eph.1:7 *"In whom we keep on having redemption through His blood; the cancellation of sins according to the wealth of His Grace";*

-Col.1:14 *"By means of whom we have redemption through His blood the cancellation of sins."*
 -1Pet.1:18,19 *"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold from your empty manner of life but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ as of a lamb without spot or blemish."*

Jesus Christ is the only qualified redeemer (Isa.53:9; Jn.8:46; 19:4; 2Cor.5:21; Heb.1:3; 4:15; 7:26-28; 1Tim.3:16; 1Pet.1:18,19, virgin birth, kenosis, impeccability).

Christ was not only the only One capable – as the perfect Mediator between holy God and sinful man – but Jesus was also willing to redeem mankind (both His sovereignty and human volition coincided in this redemptive reality):

-Lk.22:42 *"Father if it be Your will, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not My will but Yours be done* [speaking from human volition, He made His decision. The divine decision was made in the divine decrees]"; Rom.5:19 *"For as through one man's disobedience many were made sinners even so through the obedience of one man will all be made righteous"*; Phil.2:8 *"And being made in fashion as a man He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death"*

The doctrine of redemption was portrayed in the OT by means of the blood of animal sacrifices - Heb.9:22 *"And according to the standard of the law nearly all things were cleansed by animal blood and without the pouring out of animal blood, forgiveness does not happen"*; Job.19:25,26 *"As for me, I know that my redeemer lives"*).

It is the soul of the believer which is redeemed in salvation (Ps.34:22 *"The Lord redeems the soul of His servants; none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned"*).

Redemption also removes the condemnation of the Mosaic Law (Gal.3:13 *"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law having become a curse for us for it stands written [Deut.21:23] 'cursed is everyone that hangs on the wood'"*; Gal.3:10 *"For as many as are under the works of the law are under the curse of the law, for it stands written [Hab.2:4] cursed is everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law to do them"*).

Jesus was also a **ransom** for sinners (Matt. 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:18; 1 Tim. 2:6; Gal.3:13).

The meaning of a ransom is clearly set forth in Lev. 25:47–49: To deliver a thing or person by paying a price; to buy back a person or thing by paying the price for which it is held in captivity. So again, sin is like a slave market in which sinners are “sold under sin” (Rom. 7:14); souls are under sentence of death (Ezek. 18:4). Christ, by His death, buys sinners out of the market, thereby indicating complete deliverance from the service of sin. He looses the bonds, sets the prisoners free, by paying a price—that price being His own precious blood.

To whom this ransom is paid is a debatable question: whether to Satan for his captives, or to eternal and necessary holiness, to the divine law, to the claims of God who is by His nature the holy Lawgiver. The latter, referring to God and His holiness, is probably preferable. Christ redeemed us from the curse of a broken law by Himself being made a curse for us. His death was the ransom price paid for our deliverance.

Therefore, the results of redemption are:

A. Deliverance from the curse of the Law (Gal.3:13; 4:46).

B. Total forgiveness of sins (Isa.44:22; Eph.1:7; Col.1:14; Heb.9:15).

C. Basis for justification (Rom.3:24). Basis for sanctification (Eph.5:25-27). Basis for eternal inheritance (Heb.9:15). Basis for strategic victory of Christ in the Angelic Conflict (Col.2:14,15; Heb.2:14,15). Basis for redemption of the body in resurrection (Eph.1:15). Related to mediatorship of Christ (1Tim.1:5,6). Basis of our sonship.

4. Forgiveness

Christ not only perfectly accomplished justification and redemption on the cross as the perfect, sacrificial substitute for sinful humanity, but He actually made a way for total forgiveness of sin for those who are united to Him by faith. The Christian doctrine of forgiveness is that God has lifted the sentence of condemnation upon Christians for their sins through the death of Christ on their behalf and no longer counts them as guilty. Scripture teaches that because of Christ's work on the cross on believers' behalf that the Father invokes selective amnesia and chooses not only to forget all sins committed against Him, but has put them away eternally from us and Him (Ps. 103:12; Is. 43:25; Jer. 31:34; Note Heb. 9:26).

One of the things Scripture most emphasizes about God is his *justice*. God "is not partial and takes no bribes," but "executes justice for the fatherless and the widow" (Deut. 10:17–18). He "will render to a man according to his work" (Ps. 62:12). When Abraham asked God, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" (Gen. 18:25), the implied answer is clear: Absolutely! Scripture also emphasizes that God is *merciful*. When God made all His goodness pass before Moses, he declared, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy" (Exod. 33:19). He is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love" (Ps. 103:8). As we consider below, both God's justice and his mercy are foundational for the doctrine of forgiveness.

Also foundational is the reality of human guilt. Many people in the world call certain deeds "wrong" or "immoral," but when Christians speak of "sin," they imply that God is the one they've ultimately offended. David may have grievously wronged Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Sam. 11), but he still confessed, "Against you [God], you only, have I sinned" (Ps. 51:4). To sin against God renders a person guilty. **This is a legal or judicial idea.** To be guilty is to stand condemned under God's just judgment. Because all are sinners, all are "accountable to God" (Rom. 3:19). Adam's first sin provoked God's "judgment" which "brought condemnation" for the human race (Rom. 5:16). Since God is just, as considered above, it makes sense that sin brings us under his judgment.

Forgiveness, then, is also legal or judicial. **Forgiveness means that God lifts his sentence of condemnation for our sins and no longer holds us guilty for them.** We stand in need of forgiveness because God is just, and we have hope of forgiveness because God is merciful.

This last statement, however, raises difficult theological questions that have been a source of debate for many years. Can God really be just and merciful at the same time? If he forgives sin rather than punishes it, is he acting unjustly? Didn't God say, "I will not acquit the wicked" (Exod.

23:7)? Scripture makes very clear that God *is* both just and merciful, but it is not immediately obvious *how* he can be both.

God's declaration that He will not acquit the wicked (Exod. 23:7) cannot be dismissed so easily. We would ordinarily be horrified to learn that a human judge, with a notorious criminal standing before his court, announced that this person was immediately forgiven and would not be punished as the law demands. We wonder why it would be different for God, especially when He declares that the one who "justifies [declares righteous] the wicked" is an "abomination" to Him (Prov. 17:15). God is just, and this signals that He will not treat guilty people in the way He treats innocent people. Yet, God does forgive. He "justifies the ungodly" (Rom. 4:5)—which is what other biblical texts say God will *not* do! There must be an explanation deeper than appealing to God's discretion.

Scripture provides an explanation: Christ's atonement -the basis of forgiveness. Throughout His perfectly obedient life on earth Christ bore "our griefs and carried our sorrows," and climactically on the cross "He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities," for the Lord "laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:4–6). Jesus "bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24). Just prior to His striking claim that God justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4:5), Paul wrote about "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood" (Rom. 3:24–25).

In short, God remains just when He mercifully forgives our sin because Christ has stood in our place and became that very sin for us (i.e. He became our sin and with it our guilt). Though Jesus was not personally sinful, He took our guilt upon Himself and suffered the punishment we deserved. In forgiving His people, God does not wink at sin or overlook it. He administers the just penalty for sin, but a substitute bears it in our place -sinless Jesus who became a pariah for us. God's righteous Justice is therefore served. Divine forgiveness is thus rooted in the "substitutionary" or "vicarious" atonement, as this view is often called.

One may question, "If God receives full payment for our sins in Christ's atonement as a matter of justice, then he doesn't really *forgive* us or show us mercy." If Christ suffered our penalty, one may reason, there's nothing left to forgive. Yet, interminably, *God Himself* provided the substitute -His one and only Son. The judge Himself took the place of the condemned in the Person of Jesus, fully God and fully man. This is mercy beyond compare! Rather than saying that God does not need to forgive because He satisfied His justice through Christ, we should look at it the other way around: because God wished to forgive us, He did exactly what was necessary—send His Son to die for us—if He was to forgive us in a way fully consistent with His righteous demand for justice.

5. Reconciliation

As the perfect Mediator between holy God and sinful man, Jesus reconciled believers to the Father by way of His death on the cross. *"For He is our peace, Who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the Law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of both one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were near"* (Eph. 2:14-17).

Jesus accomplished complete reconciliation between man and God through His death (partially on the earth at regeneration and fully when believers are glorified and remain in God's presence in heaven) (Rom.5:10; 2Cor.5:18, 19; Eph.2:16; Col. 1:20).

Reconciliation has two sides; active and passive. In the *active* sense we may look upon Christ's death as removing the enmity existing between God and man, and which had hitherto been a barrier to relationship with God. This state of existing enmity is set forth in such scriptures as Rom. 8:7—"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God." Also Eph. 2:15; Jas. 4:4.

In the *passive* sense of the word it may indicate the change of attitude on the part of man toward God, this change being wrought in the heart of man by a vision of the Cross of Christ; a change from enmity to friendship and new fellowship thus taking place, cf. 2 Cor. 5:20. It is probably better to state the case thus: Because of Jesus' death, God is fully propitiated, and the sinner is now reconciled (2 Cor. 5:18–20).

A wall of separation has been constructed between God and man because of man's sin (Isa. 59:2). There is need for a Mediator to remove this wall of separation (Job 9:33). The need for reconciliation implies that warfare and destruction of peace and fellowship has taken place:

- “ A quarrel, or breach of friendship; and sin has made a breach;
- “ It has broken the friendship between God and man;
- “ It has broken the friendship between man and his fellow man;
- “ The sinner is filled with enmity against God and mankind; and
- “ The sinner is the offender and God is the offended one.

Reconciliation is a work of God in which God both mediates the conflict and then removes the alienation between God and man. According to the Bible, God's holiness has been offended by man's sinfulness resulting in alienation from one another. Jesus is the bridge between God and man and allows man (through Christ) to return to fellowship with the Father (Col. 1:20; rom. 5:5).

The word "reconciliation" comes from the Greek word, *katalagay*, and means "the making of things right." God the Father takes the first step in reconciling the sinner to Himself. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 Jn. 4:19). He did this, of course, while we were still "sinners," "enemies," and "without strength" (Rom. 5:8, 10; Col. 1:21). God brings us, the lost from afar, and brings us near to Him (Heb. 4:16). The means by which the sinner is reconciled to God is an accomplished act of God. It is history! It is finished completely—long before the sinner believes. The application of its wonderful, peace-giving results awaits only the sinner's response in faith to the promise and testimony of God concerning the work of Jesus Christ.

Thus, God Himself "has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 5:18-19). Christ is the perfect and appointed Mediator/Peacemaker (Eph. 2:14-17). Paul also considered the Gospel

of Grace to be “the Word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19). Believing members of the Body of Christ are the appointed “ambassadors” of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:20) -taking the good news of the gospel to the lost as the only means of calling sinners to repent and believe upon Christ as Savior and Lord (Rom. 10:14-17).

6. Adoption

The three greatest needs a person has who is lost, without hope or a future, and who is dead spiritually is a new legal status, a new name and family, and most importantly, new spiritual life. Christ accomplishes all this on the cross and made adoption for us possible as new believers, new sons and daughters united to the Father through the Son (Eph. 1:3-6; Gal. 4:4-6; Rom. 8:14-17).

J.I. Packer makes this intriguing statement: “Our understanding of Christianity cannot be better than our grasp of adoption.”

Adoption is an act of God’s free grace, whereby, for the sake of Christ, He formally translates the regenerate from the family of sin, Satan, and death into His own, and legally confirms them in all the rights, immunities, inheritances, and privileges of His children.” - Girardeau

The background to the word ‘adoption’ is the Greek: *huiiothesia* – “placing as a son.”

Adoption is a redemptive term; a legal term; and a relational term: Father and son/daughter.

The Privileges of Adoption: the Present inheritance - God Himself (Ps. 73:24-25) and our future inheritance - glorification and glory (Rom. 8:17; Eph. 1:14)

- “Adoption is the apex of redemptive grace and privilege.” John Murray
- “To be right with God the Judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is greater.” J.I. Packer

7. Imputation/Sanctification

Sanctification is the application of the work of Christ on the cross to our daily lives. Sanctification is living out life in union with Christ made possible only by His sacrifice on the cross to declare us justified, redeemed, forgiven, reconciled, adopted, and then righteous. Christ imputed (gifted) His very righteousness to us (declaring those righteous who are united to Christ by His death through saving faith) (Rom. 5:1). Because the Law first demanded Israel’s righteousness (Ex. 19:6; Lev. 21:8), and then Jesus also demanded that all true believers in God be (remain) righteous and holy (Mt. 5:48; 1 Pt. 1:15-16), humans have failed miserably to actually achieve holiness or be consistently righteous (Rom. 3:23). Every human has failed to meet God’s standard of righteousness which is the definition of falling short of God’s glory and sinning (Rom. 3:10-12; Is. 53:6). Thus, the only hope for humans to ever become righteous (to have a right standing with God and no longer be guilty of sin, of falling short of God’s glory and holy personal standard of righteousness) is for God to give His very own righteousness to us. God’s imputation (giving) of His own righteousness is what Martin Luther called a forensic (legal) “Alien” righteousness – something coming to us from outside of us- from God Himself.

Sanctification is the necessary and final cumulative result of election (Eph. 1:3-4); of Christ's atoning work (Titus 2:13-14; Heb. 10:14; 1 Pet. 2:24); of the Spirit's regeneration (Ezek. 36:26-27; 1 Jn. 3:9); of actually being converted (the effectual calling - 1 Thess. 4:7; 2 Tim. 1:9); and of Justification (Rom. 5:1-6:23).

If there is no holiness, there is no heaven since nothing unholy (outside the moral character of God is approaching God's throne in heaven) (Heb. 12:14; Rom. 8:13; 2 Thess. 2:13)

Definitive Sanctification is that Jesus declares us righteous and holy as we are united to Him, in union with His Person/holiness (Acts 20:32; 26:18; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 10:10). Definitive sanctification implies the believer has died to sin and has become a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-11; 1 John 3:6-9).

Progressive Sanctification is "the process by which the believer is gradually transformed in heart, mind, will and conduct, and conformed more and more to the will of God and to the image of Christ" (Murray, 227). This is a daily process for the rest of the believer's life (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 4:1; Heb. 10:14). The earthly life of temptation and flesh implies that progressive sanctification is a constant battle and happens in proportion to the believer's denying self, dying to self, and humbly taking up the mantle to die to all aspects of the flesh (Lk. 9:23; Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:14-25)

As Jesus declares us righteous and imputes His righteousness upon us, our newfound sanctification is to control our:

Mind/Intellect (Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 3:1-2); our Affections/emotions (1 Jn. 2:15-17; 1 Jn. 5:3; Eph. 5:1-2); our Will (Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Jn. 2:17); our Conduct (1 Thess. 4:3-7) and outcome of our Faith (perseverance).

The goal of sanctification is for the glory of God (Col. 3:17), the Mortification of sin (Rom. 8:13); the Vivification of Christian graces through the putting off of the flesh and putting on Christ (Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Pet. 1:5-7; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:8 (putting off) - Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10-11 (putting on); the Conformity to the image of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1; Col. 3:10; Phil. 2:5); the Conformity to the revealed will of God (1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:14); and complete spiritual transformation (2 Cor. 3:18).

Images of Progressive Sanctification:

1. Walking in the Spirit/new life - Rom. 6:4; Gal. 5:16-26
2. Warfare - Eph. 6:10-20
3. Child-Parent - 1 Pet. 1:14-17; Eph. 5:1-2
4. Athletics - 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Heb. 12:1-2; etc
5. Fulfilling the Law by love - Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:13-14

The daily Means of Progressive Sanctification:

6. Identifying the crux of the battle: our own flesh vs. the Spirit's help (Rom. 7-8)
7. The Word and Spirit
8. Trials/Testing/Temptation
9. The means of grace (under perseverance)

8. Propitiation/Atonement (Expiation)

Propitiation is the merciful act of Jesus to actually become the sinless sacrifice on behalf of the sinful world by which He becomes the very object of God's just punishment and righteous judgment to appease God's wrath (holy indignation) toward all sin and rebellion. Jesus' death is said to satisfy God's just requirements for the penalty of sin – this is expiation or atonement (1Jn 2:2; Rom. 3:5; Heb. 2:17).

Christ *is* the propitiation for our sins; He is set forth by God to be a propitiation through His blood. Propitiation means 'mercy-seat,' or covering. The mercy-seat covering the ark of the covenant was called a propitiation (Exod. 25:22; Heb. 9:5). The Ark of the Covenant with its mercy-seat on top of the Ark was in the holy of holies (God's presence when He tabernacled on earth). It was only in God's presence where He allowed covering for sin through a blood sacrifice sprinkled on the mercy-seat. It is that blood sprinkling sacrifice of Christ (through His own death) by which God covers, overlooks, and pardons the penitent and believing sinner because of Christ's substitutionary penal atonement. Propitiation furnishes a ground on the basis of which God could set forth His righteousness, maintain His justice, and yet pardon sinful men (Rom. 3:25-26; Heb. 9:15). Christ Himself is the propitiatory sacrifice (1 John 2:2). The death of Jesus Christ is set forth as the ground upon which a righteous God can pardon a guilty and sinful race without in any way compromising His righteousness or justice.

Scriptures describing Jesus' atonement as appeasement and conciliation of God's justice for sin: The atonement was divinely ordained (Luke 2:30, 31; Gal. 4:4, 5; Eph. 1:3–12, 17–22; 2:4–10; Col. 1:19, 20; 1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8).

- The atonement is called a mystery (1 Cor. 2:7, with context; 1 Pet. 1:8–12).
- The atonement of Christ was made **but once** and for **all sin** (Heb. 7:27; 9:24–28; 10:10, 12, 14; 1 Pet. 3:18).
- The atonement of Christ was the basis of redemption (Matt. 20:28; Acts 20:28; Gal. 3:13; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 9:12; Rev. 5:9).
- The atonement of Christ was foreshadowed in the OT (Gen. 4:4; Heb. 11:4; Gen. 22:2; Heb. 11:17, 19; Ex. 12:5, 11, 14, with 1 Cor. 5:7; Ex. 24:8; Heb. 9:20; Lev. 16:30, 34; Heb. 9:7, 12, 28; Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22).

UNSCRIPTURAL VIEWS OF CHRIST'S ATONING DEATH

There are certain so-called *modern* views of the atonement which it may be well to examine briefly, if only to show they are expressly unscriptural -and therefore untenable doctrinally. That the modern mind fails to see in the doctrine of the atonement what the orthodox Faith has held for centuries to be the truth of God regarding this fundamental Christian doctrine, there is certainly no doubt. To some minds today the death of Jesus Christ was but the death of a martyr, counted in the same category as the historical deaths of Christians John Huss or Savonarola. Or Christ's death was simply an exhibition to a sinful world of God's wondrous love. Or it may be that Christ, in His suffering of death, remains forever the sublime example of adherence to principles of righteousness and truth, even to the point of death. Or, again, Calvary may be just an episode in God's government of the world – namely that God, being holy, deemed it necessary to show to the world His hatred of sin, and so His wrath fell on Christ. The modern mind does not consider Christ's death as in any sense vicarious, or substitutionary-since the modern mind cannot conceive that mankind is inherently sinful and in need of a Savior. Indeed, it fails to see the justice

as well as the need or possibility of one man, and He so innocent, suffering for the sins of the whole race—past, present, and future. Every man must “bear the penalty of his own sin,” so we are told; from that there is no escape, unless, and it is fervently hoped and confidently expected, that God, whose wondrous love surpasses all human conception, should, as He doubtless will, “overlook the eternal consequences of man’s sin because of the great love wherewith He loves the race.” The love of God is the hope of the race’s redemption.

What shall the Christian Church say to these things, and what shall be her reply? To the Word of God must the Church resort for her weapons in this warfare. If the so-called modern mind and its doctrinal views agree with the Scriptures, then the Christian Church may allow herself to be influenced by the Spirit of the age. But if the modern mind and the Scriptures do not agree in their results, then the Church of Christ must part company with the modern mind. Here are some of the modern, errant theories of the atonement:

(a) THE ACCIDENT THEORY

Briefly stated, this is the theory: The Cross was something unforeseen in the life of Christ. Calvary was not in the plan of God for His Son. Christ’s death was an accident, as unforeseen and unexpected as the death of any other martyr was unforeseen and unexpected.

To this we reply: Jesus was conscious all the time of His forthcoming death. He foretold it again and again. He was always conscious of the plots against His life. This truth is corroborated by the following scriptures: Matt. 16:21; Mark 9:30–32; Matt. 20:17–19; Luke 18:31–34; Matt.

20:28; 26:2, 6, 24, 39–42; Luke 22:19, 20. Further, in John 10:17, 18 we have words which distinctly contradict this false theory: “Therefore my Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

In addition to this we may make mention of the many, many references and prophecies of the Old Testament to the fact of Christ’s death. Then there is Christ’s own testimony to the fact of His death being predicted and foretold by the prophets (Luke 24:26, 27, 44). See also (Is. 53; Ps. 22; 69.)

(b) THE MARTYR THEORY

It is as follows: Christ’s death was similar in kind to that of John Huss, or Polycarp, or any other Christian or noble man who has given up his life as a sacrifice for a principle and for truth.

To this we reply: Then Christ should have so declared Himself. Paul should have said so. That word was used for other Christian deaths, why not for Christ’s? Then there is no mystery about the atonement, and the wonder is that Paul should have said anything about the mystery. Further, if Christ died as a martyr He might, at least, have had the same comforting presence of God afforded other martyrs in the hour of their death. Why should He be God-forsaken in that crucial hour? Is it right that God should make the holiest man in all the ages the greatest sufferer, if that man were but a martyr? When you recall the shrinking of Gethsemane, could you really—and we say it reverently—call Jesus as brave a man facing death as many another martyr has been? Why should Christ’s soul be filled with anguish (Luke 22:39–46), while Paul the Apostle was exultant with joy (Phil. 1:23)? Stephen died a martyr’s death, but Paul never preached forgiveness through the death of Stephen. Such a view of Christ’s death may beget martyrs, but it can never save sinners.

(c) THE MORAL EXAMPLE THEORY

Christ’s death has an influence upon mankind for moral improvement. The example of His suffering ought to soften human hearts, and help a man to reform, repent, and better his condition. So, God grants pardon and forgiveness on simple repentance and reformation. In the same way a

drunkard might call a man his savior by whose influence he was induced to become sober and industrious. But did the sight of His suffering move the Jews to repentance? Does it move men today? Such a view of Christ's death does not deal with the question with which it is always connected, viz., the question of sin.

(d) THE GOVERNMENTAL THEORY

This means that the benevolence of God requires that He should make an example of suffering in Christ in order to exhibit to man that sin is displeasing in His sight. God's government of the world necessitates that He show His wrath against sin.

True, but we reply: Why do we need an incarnation for the manifestation of that purpose? Why not make a guilty, and not an absolutely innocent and guileless man such an example of God's displeasure upon sin? Were there not men enough in existence? Why create a new being for such a purpose?

(e) THE LOVE OF GOD THEORY

This theory contends that Christ died to show men how much God loved them. Men ever after would know the feeling of the heart of God toward them.

True, the death of Christ did show the great love of God for fallen man. But men did not need such a sacrifice to know that God loved them. They knew that before Christ came. The Old Testament is full of the love of God. Read Psalm 103. The Scriptures which speak of God's love as being manifested in the gift of His Son, tell us also of another reason why He gave His Son: "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16); "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

We believe that Christ's Cross reveals the love of God, and that throughout all these ages men have been bowed in penitence as they have caught a vision of the One who hung thereon. But if you were to question the multitudes that have believed in God because of the Cross, you would find that what moved them to repentance was not merely, if at all, certainly not primarily, that the Cross revealed the love of God in a supreme way, but the fact that there at that Cross God had dealt with the great and awful fact of sin, that the Cross had forever removed it.

"I examine all these views, beautiful as some of them are, appealing to the pride of man, but which leave out all thought of vicarious atonement, and say, 'But what shall be done with my sin? Who shall put it away? Where is its sacrifice? If without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, where is the shed blood?' These views are neat, measurable, occasionally pathetic, and frequently beautiful, but they do not include the agony of the whole occasion and situation. They are aspect theories, partial conceptions. They do not take in the whole temple from its foundation to its roof. No man must set up his judgment against that of another man in a dogmatic way, but he may, yea, he must, allow his heart to speak through his judgment; and in view of this liberty, I venture to say that all these theories of the atonement are as nothing, most certainly shallow and incomplete to me ... As I speak now, at this very moment, I feel that the Christ on the Cross is doing something for me, that His death is my life, His atonement my pardon, His crucifixion the satisfaction for my sin, that from Calvary, that place of a skull, my flowers of peace and joy blossom forth, and that in the Cross of Christ I glory."—*Joseph Parker*.

THE NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S ATONING DEATH

The necessity of the atonement lay in a two-fold fact: The holiness of God, and the sinfulness of man. The doctrine of the atonement is a related subject, and it cannot be properly understood unless it is viewed as such. It is related to certain conditions existing between God and man—a condition and relation which has been affected by sin. It is necessary, therefore, to know this relation and how it has been affected by sin. This relation between God and man is a personal one. No other construction can legitimately be put upon the passages setting forth this relationship. “*YOU* have searched *me*, and known *me*.” “*I* am continually with *you*.” It is, moreover, an ethical relationship, and that which is ethical is at the same time personal and universal, that is to say, that God’s dealings with mankind are expressed in a moral constitution of universal and eternal validity. These relationships are disordered by sin. No matter how sin came to be here we are morally conscious, by the testimony of a bad conscience, that we are guilty, and that our sin is not merely a matter of personal guilt but a violation of a universal moral law. Why was the Christ’s atonement necessary?

(a) THE HOLINESS OF GOD

We should carefully note the emphasis laid upon the doctrine of God’s holiness in the Old Testament (remember the discussion of God’s holiness in the Attributes of God). The Levitical law, the laws of clean and unclean, the Tabernacle and the Temple with its outer court, its holy and most holy place, the priestly order and the high priest, the bounds set around Mt. Sinai, things and persons that might not be touched without causing defilement, sacred times and seasons, these, and much more, speak in unmistakable terms of the holiness of God. We are thus taught that if sinful man is to approach unto God, it must be through the blood of atonement. The holiness of God demands that before the sinner can approach unto and have communion with Him, some means of propitiation must be provided. This means of approach is set forth in the shed blood of a substitutionary sacrifice.

(b) THE SIN OF MAN

Light and erroneous views of the atonement come from light and erroneous views of sin. If sin is regarded as merely an offence against man, a weakness of human nature, a mere disease, rather than as rebellion, transgression, and enmity against God, and therefore something condemning and punishable, we shall not, of course, see any necessity for the atonement. We must see sin as the Bible depicts it, as something which brings wrath, condemnation, and eternal ruin in its train. We must see it as guilt that needs expiation. We must see sin as God sees it before we can denounce it as God denounces it. We confess sin today in such light and easy terms that it has almost lost its terror.

In view of these two biblical realities, the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man, the question naturally arises: How is the mercy of God to be manifested so that His holiness will not be compromised by His assuming a merciful attitude towards sinful men in the granting of forgiveness, pardon, justification? The answer is: The only way in which this can be done is by means of the atonement.

(c) THE FULFILLMENT OF THE SCRIPTURES

We may add this third thought to the two already mentioned. There is a sense in which the atonement was necessary in order to the fulfillment of the predictions of the Old Testament—predictions inseparable from the person and work of the Messiah. If Jesus Christ were the true Messiah, then these predictions regarding His sufferings and death must be fulfilled in Him (Luke 24:25–27, 44; Is. 53; Ps. 22; 69).

THE EXTENT OF CHRIST'S DEATH

Was the death of Jesus Christ for all mankind—for every human being in the world, OR only and ultimately for the elect, the soon to be regenerate—the chosen Church? Was Christ's death for all mankind, irrespective of their relation to Jesus Christ, or must we limit the actual benefits of the atonement to those who are spiritually united to Christ by faith? That the death of Christ is intended to **benefit all mankind** (i.e. an Unlimited atonement) seems clear from the following scriptures: Is. 53:6; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 John 2:2, cf. 2 Cor. 5:19; Rom. 14:15; 1 Cor. 8:11.

-The scriptures which to some seem to **limit** (i.e. a Limited atonement) the effects of the atonement are John 10:15, cf. vv. 26, 29; Eph. 5:25–27.

It is clear that the doctrine of the atonement is presented in Scripture as competent to procure and secure salvation for all. Indeed, it was not only competent, but efficacious to do this very thing - were that God's intention -to save all the world (Universalism). If Christ's blood is powerful enough cover (atone for) just one man's sin, it could cover all sin - all sin for all time. The power and efficacy of Christ's suffering and death is not in question. The value of the atonement is unlimited, its worth, power, and efficacy to expiate sin (any and all sin). Yet, not all people are saved or will be saved (Mt. 7:14-21). It might seem therefore that there is an apparent contradiction in the above-named scriptures. The atonement, in its actuality (what it does, what it actually accomplishes), should realize and actualize the eternal purpose of God for why He decreed it. But what was the full **intention** of God in Christ's atoning death? What is set forth (God's eternal intention) as God's real desire that all men should be saved and come to a saving knowledge of the truth through Jesus Christ? On the cross, Jesus' atonement made it possible for all mankind to be saved. Christ's atonement *is* the foundation of the general and universal call (the real invitation) of humanity to partake of the blessings of Christ's death and its saving benefits. Christ's atonement is the basis for salvation for all people of all time (past, present, and future). **Thus, the genuine offer of the Gospel to all is not a pretense, but a reality on the part of God** because Christ's atonement was real, effective, and offered to all (as His blood was sufficiently capable to cover all sin for all the world). The divine willingness that all men should share the benefits of the atonement is all-inclusive; God really means what is offered (2 Pet. 3:9; Ez. 18:23; 33:11; Mt. 23:37). God's intention of Christ's atonement is seen to be the very substance of a universal provision and offer of salvation – a genuine desire to see the salvation of the world (1Tim. 2:14-16). Jesus' death makes salvation for all possible, but it is *not actual until* the life-giving benefits of the atonement through the Spirit's regeneration are actually applied to every specific individual throughout time/history. Yet on the other hand, we cannot overlook the fact that, from another point of view, the effects of the atonement seem to be functionally **limited** to the sphere of the elect (those who will actually be saved (i.e. "true Church")); that *only* those who are actually united to Christ by faith truly share in the merits of the atonement. So, is the atonement of Christ just provisional for all or is it limited just to the elect of God? Could it be both at the same time? Could God's intention and application of Christ's death serve cross purposes?

Let us put it this way as the 12th century theologian Peter Lombard said:

"The atonement is *sufficient* for all; it is *efficient* for those who believe in Christ (i.e. the elect).

The value and scope of the atonement itself, so far as it lays the basis for the redemptive dealing of God with all men, is *unlimited*; the *application* of the atonement is limited to those who actually believe in Christ. Jesus is the Savior of all men *potentially* (1 Tim. 1:15), but of believers alone *effectually* or actually (1 Tim. 4:10). The atonement is limited only by men's unbelief (from a temporal -human perspective) – which means only to those the Holy Spirit applies saving regeneration (from a divine/spiritual perspective).

(a) Christ died FOR THE WHOLE WORLD:

The Scripture declares unequivocally that Jesus died for all the world: “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also **for the sins of the whole world**” (1 John 2:2). Christ's death was the ground on which God, who is absolutely holy, could deal with the whole race of men in mercy, and pardon their sins. Jesus' death atoned for the sins of all the world -the attribute of salvation was extended for any and all persons (past, present, and future) who are sinful and need salvation. There is no type of human salvation cannot reach and there is no sin too heinous God cannot forgive. The only unpardonable sin is the sin of unbelief in Jesus, the total and irrevocable rejection of Jesus as Savior (Heb. 10:29; 1 John 5:16).

-John 1:29—“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away **the sin of the world**.” Not the sin of a few individuals, or of an elect race, like Israel, but the sin of the whole world. This was a striking truth to reveal to a Jew.

-1 Tim. 2:6—“Jesus, Who gave himself a ransom **for all**, to be testified in due time.” It is for this reason, as the context of this passage shows, that we may pray for all men. If all men were not capable of being saved, how then could we pray to that end?

(b) Christ died FOR INDIVIDUALS:

Not a single individual man, woman, or child is excluded from the blessings offered in the atonement. Heb. 2:9—“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death **for every man**.” Leo the Great (461) affirmed that “So precious is the shedding of Christ's blood for the unjust, that if the whole universe of captives would believe in the Redeemer, no chain of the devil could hold them.” General Booth of the Salvation Army once said: “Friends, Jesus shed His precious blood to pay the price of salvation, and bought from God enough salvation to go around.”

(c) Christ died FOR THE SINFUL, UNJUST, AND UNGODLY

Sinners of all sorts, degrees, and conditions may have a share in the redemptive work of Christ. The ancient empires of Greece invited only the cultured; Rome sought only the strong; Judea bid for the religious only. But, Jesus Christ bids all those that are weary and heavy-hearted and overburdened to come to Him (Matt. 11:28).

Rom. 5:6–10—“Christ died for the ungodly.... While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.... When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” 1 Pet. 3:18—“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust.” Christ died for *sinners*—those in open opposition to God; for the *unjust*—those who openly violate God's laws; for the *ungodly*—those who violently and brazenly refuse to pay their dues of prayer, worship, and service to God; for *enemies*—those who are constantly fighting God and His cause. For all of these Christ died. 1 Tim. 1:15—“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” Paul was a *blasphemer*, a *persecutor*, *injurious* (v. 13), a *murderer* (Acts 22 and 26), yet God saved him; he was included in the atonement. Note also that it is in this very connection that the apostle declares that the reason God saved him was in order that his salvation might be a pattern, or an encouragement to other great sinners, that God could and would save them, if they desired Him to do so.

(d) Christ died FOR THE CHURCH

There is also a peculiar sense in which it may be said that Christ's death is for the Church, His Bride, His Body, the universal assembly of those who believe in Him as Savior. There is a sense in which it is perfectly true that Christ's death avails *only* for those who believe in Him; so, in that sense, it can be said that **Jesus died for the Church more particularly**. He is "the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4:10). Herein lies the truth that is contained in the theory of a "limited atonement."

-Eph. 5:25–27—"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Not for any one particular denomination; not for any one organization within any four walls; but for all those whom He calls to Himself and who follow Him.

-Gal. 2: 20—"The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Here the individual member of the Church, the Body of Christ, is specifically mentioned as being included in the efficacy of the atonement. When Luther first realized this particular phase of the atonement, he was found sobbing beneath a crucifix, and moaning: "*Mein Gott, Mein Gott, Für Mich! Für Mich!*" – 'my God for me, me.'

-1 Cor. 8:11—"And through your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?"

How all-inclusive, all-comprehensive, far-reaching is the death of Christ in its effects! Not a few, but many shall be saved-but Not ALL. He gave His life a ransom for *many* (Mk 10:45). God's purposes in the atonement shall not be frustrated. Christ shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. Many shall come from the north, the south, and east and the west and sit down in the kingdom. In that great day it will be seen (Rev. 7:9–15).

UNLIMITED ATONEMENT

The doctrine of unlimited atonement, as understood by evangelicals, means that Christ died for every person, but His death is effective only in those who believe the gospel. The arguments for unlimited atonement are as follows:

(1) If the statements of the New Testament are taken at face value, then it is evident they teach Christ died for everyone.

(2) Limited atonement is not based on exegesis of the texts of Scripture but more on the logical premise that if Christ died for everyone and everyone is not saved, then God's plan is thwarted. Some of the Limited Atonement perspective hold that Christ's blood would be "wasted" (shed in vain) if it was shed for the whole world but not everyone receives it.

(3) The *world*, as John describes it, is "God-hating, Christ-rejecting, and Satan-dominated. Yet that is the world for which Christ died" (John 1:29; 3:16; 17; 4:42; 1 John 4:14). These passages emphasize a universal atonement.

(4) The word *whosoever* is used more than 110 times in the New Testament and always with an unrestricted meaning (John 3:16; Acts 2:21; 10:43; Rom. 10:13; Rev. 22:17).

(5) The word *all*, or an equivalent term, is used to denote everyone – not just "all types" of people. For example, Christ died for the ungodly; that statement is a generalization and includes all people on the earth simultaneously since everyone on earth is actually ungodly and sinful (Rom. 3:23; 3:10-12; 5:6-8); Scripture is clear in that Christ died for "all," suggesting everyone (2 Cor. 5:14–15; 1 Tim. 2:6; 4:10; Tit. 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 2 Pet. 3:9).

(6) 2Peter 2:1 indicates Christ died for the false teachers who were “denying the Master who bought them.” The context indicates these are heretics doomed to destruction, yet it is said of them “the Master bought them.” This mitigates against the limited atonement view.

(7) The Bible also teaches that Christ died for ‘sinners’ (1 Tim. 1:15; Rom. 5:6–8). The word ‘sinners’ nowhere means ‘church’ or ‘the elect,’ but simply all of lost mankind.

Consider these scriptures which indicate Christ’s death being unlimited in its scope and extent:

***1 Timothy 4:10**

“For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is **the Savior of all people, but especially of those who believe.**” *The Lombardian (12th Cent.) Salvation Formula: Jesus’ death was **sufficient for ALL, and efficient for the Elect.***

1 John 2:2 “Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also **for the sins of the whole world.**”

Hebrews 2:9

“But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God **he might taste death for everyone.**”

1 Timothy 2:5-6

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave himself as a ransom **for all**, which is the testimony given at the proper time.”

John 1:29

“The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, **who takes away the sin of the world!**”

1 John 4:14

“And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the **Savior of the world.**”

Titus 2:11

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing **salvation for all people,**”

2 Corinthians 5:15

“**And he died for all**, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

“For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; **and he died for all**, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”

2 Corinthians 5:19

“That is, in Christ God was reconciling **the world** to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”

Romans 8:32

“He who did not spare his own Son but **gave him up for us all**, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once **for sins**, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

Isaiah 53:6

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity **of us all**.”

Romans 5:18-19

“Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and **life for all men**.”

Revelation 5:9

“And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God **from every tribe and language and people and nation**,”

John 3:16-17

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever** believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that **the world** through Him might be saved.”

1 Timothy 2:3-4—“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **who desires all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

LIMITED ATONEMENT

The doctrine of Limited Atonement suggests that Jesus died specifically on the cross *only* for the elect, and did not simply make provision for salvation possible for mankind. Moreso, those who hold to limited atonement emphasize rightly that Jesus actually accomplishes salvation (on the cross) for those elect. A term that is preferable to “limited atonement” is **definite** or **particular redemption**, suggesting that the atonement of Christ is limited to a definite or particular number of people. The defense for particular redemption is as follows:

There are a number of passages that emphasize Christ died for a particular group of people and not for everyone. As the Good Shepherd, Christ laid down His life for the sheep (John 10:15); not everyone is included in this flock. Christ gave His life for the church (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25); He died for the elect (Rom. 8:32–33). Therefore, the objects of God’s love are particular; He does not love everyone with the same love (cf. Rom. 1:7; 8:29; 9:13; Col. 3:12; 1 Thes. 1:4; 2 Thes. 2:13). “Since the objects of the Father’s love are particular, definite, and limited, so are the objects of Christ’s death.” This truth is also reflected in verses such as 1 John 4:10, and Romans 5:8; 8:32. Further, if Christ actually made an atonement for sin then the objects of that atonement must be a particular group. Otherwise, the atonement’s effect is weakened because not everyone is saved for whom Christ made atonement (i.e. universal atonement could be said to be a waste of Christ’s precious blood since it is not actually applied to all people).

Other arguments advanced for limited atonement include the following: If God is sovereign (Eph. 1:11), then His plan cannot be frustrated; but if Christ died for all people and all people are not saved then God's plan *is* frustrated. If Christ died for all people, then redemption has been made for all and all *should be* justified. Logically this leads to "Universalism" (a heretical idea that everyone will eventually be saved). In passages stating that Christ died for the "world," it means He died for "people from every tribe and nation—not only the Jews." Similarly, when the word "all" is used (2 Cor. 5:15), it means all classes/types of people, but not every person individually.

The EXTENT of Christ's Atonement SUMMARY:

1. Concerning God's intention of the extent of Christ's death on the Cross, God's design and intention was in perfect agreement with the Trinitarian purpose (namely God's glory in the redemption of mankind), its design (Christ's death & resurrection), and its plan (Christ's perfect execution and the Spirit's application),

-God planned for and accepted Christ's atonement before it occurred temporally (in time) on earth. Thus, the intended purpose and result of the atonement is for God to be able to judge (declare guilty and punish) ALL sin and death, to be able to cover all of sin's effects, and to eradicate all of sin's power and enslavement, sin's destruction and ultimately all death – with the eternal reality that sin will be eradicated ultimately in glory (Mt. 25:34; 1 Pet. 1:18-20; Rev. 13:8; Acts 2:23).

-Thus, in the atonement, the intention is to eradicate all consequences and real presence of sin, once for all—for any and all who have sinned, and for any and all sin itself (potential, actual, and future); the atonement was to cover for all who could/would be redeemed by God that they would receive forgiveness in Christ (Is. 53:6; Mt. 26:28; 1 Jn. 1:7-9; 1 Pt. 3:18-20).

-Jesus's blood covers all sin, every sin, once for all. But that gift of atoning blood must be applied actually to every soul on the earth and its application is conditioned (limited) to only those who receive Christ by faith. Christ's work is accomplished perfectly on the cross; salvation is paid for fully! But, man is still required to claim (receive) that salvation as a gift through saving faith and have the Holy Spirit apply His blood and payment to their individual lives, and individual sins.

2. Concerning the actual application Christ's atonement, there appears to be a dualism: Just as the atonement is Universal in its value and scope (i.e. Christ's blood can pay for/cover every sin and every man), the atoning blood is only effectually applied to believers – by their faith in Christ. Thus, though there is a universal atonement aspect to Christ's death, there is also a particular application to the elect – of those who will actually receive the benefits of the atonement.

Christ's Atonement, therefore was:

A. Intended for all; & perfectly given to all; (Ti. 2:11; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:14; Ro. 6:10; Col. 1:19-20; 2 Cor. 5:19)

B. BUT, *IS* actually *only* applied to some (the elect). The atonement was only effectual for the elect, those predestined and chosen in eternity past for future salvation (1 Tim. 4:10).

Just as God's revelation of Himself was given to all, though many rejected this knowledge (Truth) –(Rom. 1:18-32), similarly, the offer of the gospel is given to all (Lk. 2:10-11), though not all will receive it. Just as the "rain falls upon the just and the unjust" (Mt. 5:45), and as God does wonders and heals many, though only a few recognize it is God and thank Him (Lk. 17: 17), so God perfectly provides for the world's needs while many outright reject His provision.

Christ's death, payment, substitution, propitiation (covering), forgiveness – was perfectly accomplished –provisionally- for all humanity.

Yet, ultimately, Christ's provision was not applied (equally applied) to all. Tragically, some people—perhaps most, will still have to “pay” for their *own* sins and experience God's wrath as punishment due to their own sinful natures and willful transgressions against God's nature and presence. Most people on the earth will have to pay for their own sin and guilt with their own deaths and eternity to satisfy God's wrath (since these have actively rejected Jesus who was their only hope as a substitute and propitiated sacrifice) (Mt. 7:13-21). The lost willfully reject their only “means of salvation” by willfully rejecting Christ Jesus, and for these lost rebels, God does *not* intervene so as to save and render the gift of the Holy Spirit (salvation/regeneration). God's choosing to pass over the lost and not elect them to salvation is called “Reprobation.”

So, what else did Jesus accomplish by His Death on the cross?

IN RELATION TO THE PHYSICAL OR MATERIAL UNIVERSE

Just as the material universe was in some mysterious manner affected by the fall of man (Rom. 8:19–23), so also is it affected by the death of Jesus Christ, which is intended to neutralize the effect of sin upon the creation. There is a **cosmical effect** in the atonement. The Christ of Paul is larger than the second Adam—the Head of a new humanity; He is also the center of a universe which revolves around Him, and is in some mysterious way reconciled by His death. Just how this takes place we may not be able to explain yet:

Col. 1:20—“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” Some day there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Pet. 3:13). See also Heb. 9:23, 24; Is. 11 and 35.

IN RELATION TO THE WORLD OF MEN

(1) The Enmity Existing Between God and Man is Removed.

Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:20–22. For explanation, see under Scriptural Definition of Christ's Death. The ground of enmity between God and man—whether in the active or passive sense of *reconciliation*—is removed by Christ's death. The world of mankind is, through the atonement, reconciled to God.

(2) A Propitiation for the World's Sin Has Been Provided.

1 John 2:2; 4:10. See under A Propitiation. The propitiation reaches as far as does the sin.

(3) Satan's Power Over the Race Has Been Neutralized.

John 12:31, 32—“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” Also John 16:9, 10; Col. 2:10. The lifting up of Christ on the Cross meant the casting down of Satan. Satan no longer holds undisputed sway over the sons of men. The power of darkness has been broken. Man need no longer be the slave of sin and Satan.

(4) The Question of the World's Sin is Settled.

It need no longer stand as a barrier between God and man. Strictly speaking, it is not now so much of a *sin* question as it is a *Son* question; not, What shall be done with my sin? but, What shall I do with Jesus, which is called Christ? The sins of the Old Testament saints, which during all

the centuries had been held, as it were, in abeyance, were put away at the Cross (Rom. 3:25, 26). Sins present and future were also dealt with at the Cross. By the sacrifice of Himself, Christ forever put away sin (Heb. 9:26).

(5) The Claims of a Broken Law Have Been Met, and the Curse Resting Upon Man Because of a Broken Law Removed.

Col. 2:14—"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." Thus every claim of the holy law of God, which sinful man had violated, had been met.

Gal. 3:13—"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (See v. 10 for the description of the curse.) The wages of sin, and the curse of sin, is death. Christ by His death on the Cross paid that debt and removed that curse.

(6) Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, access to God, an Inheritance, and the Removal of All Fear of Death—All This is Included in the Effect of the Death of Christ in the Behalf of the Believer.

Rom. 5:9; Gal. 4:3–5; Heb. 10:10; 10:19, 20; 9:15; 2:14, 15. How comforting, how strengthening, how inspiring are these wonderful aspects of the effects of the death of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

(c) THE EFFECT OF CHRIST'S DEATH ON SATAN

The devil must submit to the Victory of Christ. The dominion of Satan, so far as the believer in Christ is concerned, is now at an end: his dominion over the disobedient sons of men, too, will soon be at an end. Christ's death was the pronouncement of Satan's doom; it was the loss of his power over men. The power of the devil, while not yet absolutely destroyed, has been neutralized (Heb. 2:14). The evil principalities and powers, and Satan himself, did their worst at the Cross, but there they received their deathblow (Col. 2:14, 15).

What happens to *me* at the moment of Salvation?

Regeneration

Regeneration is the salvific process often referred to as the new birth, being born again, being born from above, conversion, or spiritual renewal. Regeneration means re-birth or renewal (new beginning). Regeneration is the miraculous moment when the dead heart is wonderfully transformed to new spiritual life (Col. 1:13). This is a spiritual work accomplished **ONLY** through God's power because of His grace and mercy toward us. This **IS *the*** spiritual act of salvation of Christ's death applied to our hearts in a moment in time (temporal). Regeneration is salvation.

Regeneration is when **God** the Holy Spirit *causes* a spiritual change which is radical and all-pervasive, a change which cannot be explained in terms of "any combination, permutation or accumulation of human resources, a change which is nothing less than a new creation by Him who calls the things that be not as though they were, who spoke and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast. This, in a word, is regeneration." (Murray, RAA, 96).

Regeneration is a spiritual, invisible, secret act of God in which He imparts new spiritual life to us. Scripture views regeneration as something that affects us as whole persons (Grudem, 699, 701).

Regeneration refers, therefore, to the total transformation of a person; in the restricted sense, it has in view the implantation of new life that then leads to conversion and further sanctification (Bavinck, IV, 32).

- Regeneration is a moment in time (not a process). (Ezek. 36:25-27; Titus 3:5; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Eph. 2:4-5; 1 Pet. 1:3, 23; John 1:12-13; John 3:1-8). Whereas Christ's imputation of His righteousness means we are both declared righteous/sanctified (which is a moment in time at the moment of conversion/regeneration) AND a process – which is progressive sanctification. (Deut. 30:6; Jer. 32:39-40; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24; Jas. 1:18; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18)

The Nature of Regeneration is a sovereign work (Jn. 1:12-13; 3:3-8; Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:3)

-It is a radical work (Ezek. 36:26-27; 1 Jn. 3:9).

-It **precedes** and *causes* faith and repentance (1 Jn. 5:1; Eph. 2:5, 8-9; Phil. 1:29).

-The Agent of regeneration is the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:3-8; Titus 3:5).

-The Instrument of regeneration is the Word of God (Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; Rom. 10:14-17).

What happens to me at the moment of salvation . . .

In Relation to God the Father:

1. We have access to God's grace. Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Ephesians 2:18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

2. We are adopted into the family of God as God's sons. Galatians 4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

3. We gain a spiritual and Heavenly inheritance. 1 Peter 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has caused us to be born again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you, Colossians 3:24 Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ.

4. We are elected (chosen) for salvation. Ephesians 1:4 According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: 1 Peter 1:2 we are Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

5. We become a child of God. John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:

6. We get Heavenly citizenship. Ephesians 2:19 Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

7. We become an heir of God. Galatians 3:29 And if you are Christ's, then you are of Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.

8. We become a new creature. 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

9. We become a servant of God. Romans 6:22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

10. We become a priest of God. 1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light:

11. We are reconciled to God. Romans 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

12. We are Sanctified. 1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you: but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

In Relation to God the Son:

13. We are accepted in the beloved. Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved.

14. We are baptized into Christ's body. 1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. Romans 6:4 Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

15. We are a love gift from the Son. John 17:9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which you have given me; for they are yours.

16. We are buried with Christ. Colossians 2:10-12 And you are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried

with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the dead. Romans 6:4 Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

17. We are indwelt by Christ. John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

18. We possess eternal life. John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

19. We are saved by Christ. Acts 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, and your house. Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. John 14:6 Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me.

20. We have peace with God. Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

21. We become a friend of God. John 15:15 Henceforth, I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what His lord is doing: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

22. We have our name recorded in the book of life in heaven. Luke 10:20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. Philippians 4:3 and with other my fellow labourers, whose names are in the book of life.

23. We are seated with Christ in heavenly places. Ephesians 2:6 And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

24. We receive a blessed hope. Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;

25. We come in fellowship with the Trinity. 1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

26. We have a mansion prepared in glory. John 14:2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (This becomes ours the moment we receive Christ.)

In Relation to God the Holy Spirit:

27. We are born again. John 3:3-7 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into His mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of

the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

28. We are anointed by the Holy Spirit. 1 John 2:27 But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in him. John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 16:13 When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.

29. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13 In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.

30. Our body becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost. 1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own?

31. We are given spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12; Rom 12

32. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. 2 Timothy 1:14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. 1 Corinthians 3:16 Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

In Relation to the Recipient:

33. We are forgiven. Luke 7:48 And he said unto her, your sins are forgiven. 1 John 1:9

34. We are justified. Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: Romans 4:5 But to Him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, His faith is counted for righteousness.

35. We are redeemed. Revelation 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 1 Peter 1:18-19 Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

36. We have an advocate (attorney for defense). 1 John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

37. We have the possibility of getting victory over sin. Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin,

live any longer therein? Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Romans 6:11 Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace.

38. We become an ambassador for Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be you reconciled to God.

The Right Questions about SALVATION:

So, what have people been fighting about (disagreeing about) when it comes to the topic of salvation? Though we may have experienced salvation personally, many Christians still push the boundaries of God's mystery in salvation and seek to "understand" all the *why's* and *how's* of salvation. Ultimately, all we can know is what God has revealed. Thus, when searching out the deeper realities of God's saving design and purposes for the world, we must begin and end with Scripture. When considering the topic of salvation, seven main questions are typically proposed:

- Relevant questions within the study of salvation

- 1) Is Salvation in some way limited or do all people ever born go to heaven eventually (Universalism).
- 2) Does God have two "wills" or desires or intentions- in that He desires the salvation of the world (mankind – 1 Tim. 2:4), but yet not all are ultimately saved (Mt. 7:13-14)?
- 3) Did Christ die for all people on the Cross (pay for all sins provisionally) or did Christ die only for those who will be saved- that is the elect?
- 4) If God is truly sovereign over ALL things, then how is it possible for mankind to be truly FREE? Aren't sovereignty and freedom incompatible (self-defeating) concepts?
- 5) What is man's responsibility in salvation? Can man truly reject God and God's Spirit?
- 6) For God's own perfect and righteous purpose, will, and redemptive design -does God reprobate some from the beginning of the world (restrict them from salvation), simply "not" choose some for salvation, or just pass over some while positively choosing others?
- 7) If I am truly "saved" or converted, can I ever lose my salvation? (Experience apostasy or reject my faith)?

Though we cannot in such short space tackle all seven questions with any depth, we will focus on a few basic answers which will help shape the discussion of soteriology for you and others, giving you the tools to seek Scripture in search of meaningful answers.

- Let's Begin: The Limiting of Salvation vs. Universalism (= all will be saved)

Even though God clearly expresses His desire that all men would respond to Him and His gracious offer of an eternal (reconciled) relationship with Him through salvation (Ps. 81:10-13; 2 Pt. 3:9, 1 Tim. 2:4; Mt. 18:14; Ez. 18:23; 33:11), within God's gracious redemptive History plan, salvation is at some point LIMITED –since Not all are saved (vs. universalism) – Mt. 7:13-14; vs. 21

If then, as the Bible demonstrates that salvation is at some point limited, that is, that not every person ever born will eventually be in heaven, on what (how??) is salvation limited / OR conditioned upon? [This is the question which drives Christians and theologians to explore all Scripture and attempt a cohesive and rational answer for HOW GOD SAVES.]

II. How Salvation is limited:

1) A plausible answer to the limitation of salvation is that salvation is limited based entirely upon man's response to God's offer of salvation. That means that God saves men based on God's perfect foreknowledge of man's future free choices. Since man is truly free, man can and might respond to God's offer of salvation. Since man is truly free, then he can also reject God and God's offer of salvation. In eternity past, God knows which way every man will decide (to accept or reject Christ) – and God predestines the future based on man's future response to God's offer. Thus, in this perspective, salvation is limited (i.e. not all are saved) based on man's personal and significant freedom to accept or reject Christ's offer of salvation.

-This theological perspective is one of the facets of **Arminianism**:

2) A second plausible answer is that salvation is limited based entirely upon God's desire and own good pleasure. Since God is perfectly just, merciful, gracious, and loving – not to mention sovereign in all things, whatever actions God embraces –these action reflect His loving and just character. Therefore, since in God's redemptive plan, because of Adam's sin all have a sinful nature and eventually choose sin on their own, all are already condemned –God graciously intervenes and saves some (not all) for His glory and purpose. In God's righteousness, He does not have to save any. God is just to allow men to stand condemned in their own sin and wayward depravity. In God's mercy, He spares some of their deserved judgment of hell. In God's grace and for His own perfect will and pleasure, God intervenes and rescues some to spend eternity with Him. The rest, God allows to suffer their own just punishment. All of this works out perfectly, the redeemed and the lost, to render God the greatest possible glory within His redemptive purposes for creation.

-This theological perspective is one of the facets of **Calvinism**:

3) There are a few other possibilities, such as the "Middle-knowledge" position. In brief, those who adhere to **Molinism** or Middle-knowledge believe that God knowing all the potential worlds which could have been created (counter-factuals), God chose to create the one *actual* world (our present universe) where the most possible people could and would be saved. In this perspective, God retains His sovereignty and man retains His genuinely free will.

*From these perspectives, (1) and (2) being the most popular throughout the Church age since the Reformation (1500's), both sides argue biblically that man is truly free while the other position (2) focuses more on God's sovereignty. Does the Bible teach both? Does the Bible teach both God's Sovereignty and Man's Freedom (free moral agency)

*READ John 6:29-70:

In these passages, 7 times Jesus states plainly that man is responsible for His own salvation (i.e. that man must choose Christ or respond in belief for salvation). Further, 7 times, Jesus declares that God alone is the sole author of man's salvation and is the causal agent which enacts salvation on behalf of man.

In short, just in this one passage, the Bible teaches both that man has free will and is responsible for His response to God (per perspective # 1 [Arminianism] AND that God is sovereign in salvation and is responsible for man's salvation. In this passage and many like it, we see *both happening at the same time* (Jn. 6:29, 37, 40). In the Bible, we see that God teaches BOTH that God is sovereign over all things while (at least in this universe – temporally) man' is responsible for His actions and "faith" toward God. Since both God's sovereignty AND man's responsibility (free will) are taught in Scripture, we might call these "Twin Truths."

* Twin Truths are not paradoxes or contradictions. The Bible reveals twin truths of both God's sovereignty and man's freedom and responsibility.

READ these "Both And" verses: Jn. 1:12-13; Acts 17:26-27; 2 Tim. 2:25-26; 2 Thess. 2:13. – what do they all have in common? Can you identify the act of God's sovereignty in these verses? Man's responsibility and action?

- If God is not confused and He has declared that both Twin Truths of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are biblical ideals and part of our universe (temporal reality), then how could we explain what is happening in salvation?

In summary: I (Matthew) hold that only God is truly autonomous. Man is not. Only God is truly (entirely) free as in libertarian free. Man is limited in this universe by both natural (physical) and spiritual laws. Worse still, man is depraved and has the scourge of moral depravity in His life because of Adam's original sin (Ro. 5:12). Thus, even though man retains the marred image of God within himself after the fall of Adam, man's ever desire is to continually sin against God and rebel (Gen. 6:5; Ps. 53:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Ro. 3:10-12)

III. How God Can be both Sovereign in salvation while allowing Man's responsibility:

Thus, in a basic, healthy, internally consistent soteriology (study of salvation), one needs to be able to answer all relevant data and questions with a consistent biblical hermeneutic (Bible interpretation) and in light of **all** of the biblical data revealed. In other words, if we are to attempt an answer of how we are saved in light of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, we must include ALL the biblical data. We cannot ignore those verses which we do not like or which may not seem to make sense. We must incorporate all the relevant Scripture into our understanding in order to have a most accurate attempt of understanding how God saves.

- **How are we saved?** Two perspectives: From our (human) view & from God's

Man's Responsibility/Man's Experience in Salvation:

In the **Present, Temporal Reality**: (our individual experience of salvation -what we feel & do)
As the Gospel is preached (Rom. 10:17ff), the Word of God delivered, the Holy Spirit working and drawing (Jn. 6:44; 63), and Christ's genuine offer of salvation is made plainly available to the world (mankind) [Ephesians 1:13] = man "feels" God's prompting and must come to terms with the:
A. **Light** – he has been given (Acts 8; Ethiopian Eunuch; 10 Roman, Cornelius) = Truth about God's existence, his own reality & worldview, his own spiritual emptiness and desire for God (Ec. 3:11).
B. **Natural Revelation** (Rom. 1:16ff) of God's reality and complex/design of creation (God's sovereignty and providence as Creator and the fact that they are NOT God)
C. **Special Revelation** (Jn. 3:16-20) (i.e. Jesus is only way to heaven: John 14:6; Acts 4:12)

And through man's perceived free will and desire [his moral agency], man then:

1. Thinks about God and man's own void of God (Ro.1:18-23)
2. Desires to know more about "God" (Acts 8 –Ethiopian Eunuch; Acts 10 Cornelius)
3. Responds to the light given about God -that He actually exists (John 14:12-14; Mk. 11:24)
4. Embraces more truth given about God -that He truly is good and can save (Ro. 10:17; Eph. 1:13)
5. Experiences conviction in his spirit/soul that he is sinner and needs a savior (Rom.10:9-10; 1 Jn. 1:9)
6. Responds by belief that he needs to repent of sins in order to be saved (Acts 2:38; 3:19; Heb. 11:6)
7. (Chooses Christ), "faiths"/believes/TRUSTS on Christ to save him (Jn. 3:16; 3:36; Mk. 16:16; Rom. 10:9, 13; 1 Jn. 5:1; Rev. 22:17).

In feeling the power of the truth that Jesus loves us, can save us, and will -IF we ask, then man responds by faith and chooses to put his trust in Christ by saying a "sinners prayer" & is saved!

*The Bible teaches that man is responsible for himself to respond to the gospel, inferring that he can and should: (Mt. 11:28; Lk. 5:31-32; 13:3; Acts 2:40; 3:19; 13:38-39; 17:30; Jn. 5:24; 8:24).

Erroneous views of Man's responsibility and capability in salvation:

There are a number of false views of the human condition(s) for salvation. These views add conditions to man's response of faith and thereby nullify the grace of God and corrupt the purity of the gospel. Some of the false views are as follows.:

(1) Repent and then believe. Repentance should not be understood as a separate condition for believing in Christ. If repentance is cited as a condition of salvation in terms of feeling sorry for one's sins, then it is a wrong usage of the term. It should not be understood as a separate step in salvation. Acts 20:21 indicates that repentance and faith should not be seen as separate items in response to the gospel but together they signify belief in Christ. To believe in Christ is to change one's mind about Christ and trust Him alone for salvation.

(2) Believe and be baptized. This suggestion is taken from a misunderstanding of Acts 2:38. Peter did not suggest that baptism is necessary for the forgiveness of sins, rather, he was calling for members of that generation which was guilty of having crucified Christ to separate themselves from a generation under the judgment of God. That separation was to be publicly signified through baptism. Moreover, the baptism signified that the people *had* received the forgiveness of sins.¹⁸ A second passage sometimes cited to suggest that baptism is necessary for salvation is Mark 16:16. The phrase "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved" is not the same as saying baptism is necessary to salvation; this is seen in the last half of the verse, which omits the reference to baptism. Condemnation comes from refusal to believe, not from a failure to be baptized. Additionally, it is tenuous to argue the point from Mark 16:16 because some of the oldest New Testament manuscripts do not contain Mark 16:9–20.

(3) Believe and confess Christ. The condition of publicly confessing Christ for salvation is sometimes added to faith on the basis of Romans 10:9. This passage, however, is not establishing an additional condition for salvation. Rather, to confess Jesus as Lord means to acknowledge His deity. That was and always will be a critical issue in terms of salvation. The one who believes in Christ as Savior must of necessity acknowledge His deity. That is the meaning of Romans 10:9.

(4) Believe and surrender. The issue here is whether or not one can become a Christian simply by believing the gospel, or whether or not one must surrender to Christ as the Lord of one's life. Part of the answer lies in a misunderstanding of Romans 10:9. Confession of Christ as Lord identifies Christ

as deity; the issue is not concerning His Lordship. In addition, if surrendering one's life to Christ as Lord is necessary for salvation, then there could be no carnal Christians, yet Paul makes it clear that the Corinthians whom he speaks of as being "in Christ" were indeed carnal (1 Cor. 3:1). Lordship is based on application of the knowledge of Scripture, and the knowledge of Scripture comes with spiritual maturity, which in turn *follows* salvation. Lordship is important, but it cannot be a condition for salvation; that is adding to the gospel. A further problem in this view relates to a misunderstanding of the term *disciple*. When Jesus called men to follow Him as disciples (cf. Luke 14:25–35), He was not calling them to salvation. It was a call to follow Him as a learner, which is the meaning of disciple. Discipleship always follows salvation; it is never a part of it, otherwise grace is no longer grace. Furthermore, if discipleship is a condition of salvation, then so is baptism, because being baptized is part of becoming a disciple (Matt. 28:19, 20).¹⁹

(5) Faith *plus* works. That somehow man's faith must be accompanied by sincere works to show the willing condition of the heart of true repentance or belief. The idea that man can somehow work "in concert" with God to accomplish his own salvation is both unbiblical and undermines all that Christ alone accomplished on the cross FOR sinners since sinners by nature are lost and spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1,5; 2:8-9).

These scriptures indicate that saving faith is never accompanied by saving works/deed: Jn. 5:28-29; 14:12; Rom. 2:5-10, 12-16; 3:20, 27-28; 4:5-6; 9:11, 30-32; 11:6; Gal. 2:16; 3:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10; Col. 1:9-10; 1 Thess. 1:3; 1 Tim. 5:9-10; 6:18; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:5, 8, 14; Heb. 6:10; 10:24; Jas. 2:14, 17, 18-26; 1 Pet. 2:16; Rev. 2:5, 19, 26; 3:2; 20:12-13

Three Models of Faith and Good Works:

- A. Faith + works = salvation
- B. Faith + 0 = salvation \neq works (works may or may not be present)
- C. Faith + 0 = salvation = works

When we speak of faith alone, we mean that faith is the sole *instrument* of our justification, apart from works. John Frame states, "Yes, justification is by a living faith, not a dead faith, a faith that works rather than a mere profession. It justifies because its nature is to trust, in this case to trust the grace of God in Christ. That trust motivates us to please God and therefore to do good works. Since God has saved us from sin, this is the only appropriate response. *But salvation is not through the works, but through the trust that motivates them*" (*Salvation Belongs to the Lord*, 205).

Rom. 3:24-25, 28; 4:5, 6; 9:10-11; 9:30-32; 10:1-4; Gal. 2:16; 3:1-5, 10-11 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5

Faith alone pleases God (Heb. 11:6) and works cannot work toward our salvation (Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9). Martin Luther states, "It is a further function of faith that it honors him whom it trusts with the most reverent and highest regard since it considers him truthful and trustworthy... So when the soul firmly trusts God's promises, it regards him as truthful and righteous. Nothing more excellent than this can be ascribed to God. The very highest worship of God is this, that we should ascribe to him truthfulness, righteousness and whatever else should be ascribed to one who is trusted" (Luther's Works, XXXI. 350).

Faith is the line of distinction between good works and works of the law/flesh (Gal. 3:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10), When we say that saving faith is accompanied by good works, we *do not* mean that faith is the *sole means or source* of good works. (Good works are acts of obedience and righteousness and all attitudes, thoughts, affections and deeds that are Christlike).

Good works flow from our faith, from a life radically transformed by the love of Jesus (Jas. 2:22, 26; Rom. 1:5; 16:26; Gal. 5:6; 1 Thess. 1:3; Titus 3:8)

Good works come from a renewed heart (1 Jn. 2:29)

Good works come from love to Christ (Jn. 14:15)

Good works come from union with Christ (Jn. 15:5)

Good works come from prayer (Jn. 15:16);

Good works...

come from grace training us: Titus 2:11-12

come from the indwelling Holy Spirit: Gal. 5:16, 22-23, 24-25

come from gratitude: 2 Cor. 5:15

come from a "by grace through faith salvation": Eph. 2:8-10

come from God working in us: Phil. 2:12-13

come from looking to the life to come: 1 Tim. 6:17-19

come from being instructed: 1 Tim. 6:18 (cf. Eph. 4:11-12)

come from Christ's redemption from us: Titus 2:14

come from gentle wisdom: Jas. 3:13

come from the Christian's character as salt and light: Matt. 5:13-16

come from the encouragements of other Christians: Heb. 10:24

come from repentance: Rev. 2:5

and remind us that we were created for good works as a testimony of having been wonderfully saved by grace (and NOT those works) (Eph. 2:8-9). More so, we faithfully pursue good works as a daily witness to a lost world that Christ has transformed us and our lives & purpose are wholly His for His glory and others' spiritual blessing (Mt. 5:16).

Good works, therefore, *are necessary* to salvation as a *consequence* of saving faith.

"There is an unbreakable connection between what we do and what we truly believe. . . What we do reflects our inner realities." (Julian, *Righteous Sinners*, 124-125). Matt. 7:17-20; Jas. 2:14-26

Our works are *not the ground or basis* of our salvation, but our works verify and vindicate our faith.

This is why judgment is "according to works."

Biblical view of Man's responsibility and capability in salvation:

Many passages of Scripture affirm that man's only responsibility in salvation is *believing* the gospel, the good news of salvation through Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection from the grave. In short, man's responsibility is to believe what God says is true about Jesus as the One and only Son of God and Jesus' death and resurrection --Jesus being the only way (THE spiritual means) to heaven. (John 1:12; 3:16, 18, 36; 5:24; 11:25-26; 12:44; 20:31; Acts 16:31; 1 John 5:13). But what is faith? What does it mean to believe the gospel? Faith may be succinctly defined as "confiding **trust**." To believe in something is to have faith in something -which in essence is putting your trust in something. So, Faith is more than simple belief, it is trusting in wholeheartedly the object of that faith- namely Jesus. To "faith" in Christ is to trust in Christ with one's whole self. For example, one can believe a plane will take off safely and deliver to a desired destination. However, to actually board the plane and ride on it is to completely trust in that plane. John's use of the word *faith* is similar to Paul's use in describing

faith as believing “into Christ” and trusting Him for complete spiritual rescue. For John, faith “is an activity which takes men right out of themselves and makes them one with Christ in trust.”

Saving faith, however, is not mere intellectual assent to a doctrine, truth, or a process; it involves more than that. Saving faith involves at least three elements:

(1) Knowledge. This involves the *intellect* and emphasizes that there are certain basic truths that must be believed for salvation. Jesus claimed to be God; belief in His deity is the central issue in salvation (Rom. 10:9–10). Unless a person believed that Jesus was all He claimed to be, he would die in his sins (John 8:24). Saving faith, then, involves believing the basic truths fundamental to man’s salvation: man’s sinfulness; Christ’s atoning sacrifice; and His bodily resurrection. John wrote down the claims of Christ in order that people might believe these truths about Christ to be saved (John 20:30, 31). Believing is choosing to trust what God says about Himself, His Son, and reality is true.

(2) Conviction. Conviction involves the *emotions*. This element emphasizes that the person has not only an intellectual awareness of the truths of Scripture, but that there is an inner conviction or agreement (cf. John 16:8–11) of their truthfulness. Conviction is agreement with God about His goodness and holiness, and our sinfulness and need of a Savior.

(3) Repentance. Repentance is best defined as a real change of mind regarding sin and grace with a real turning away from sin and toward the Savior. Repentance is the spiritual “U-turn” necessary in one’s life having been convicted of sin and knowing that God will rescue the sinner from the lifestyle of sin. Repentance is not a “work” that one can conjure in order to be saved. Repentance is a divine gift of God, a divine work to lead the sinner away from sin and death toward Christ and true and eternal life (Jer. 31:18; Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25).

The Bible teaches that as a spiritual gift of regeneration (the Spirit’s work to transform the soul from death to life), the physical outworking of that regeneration is conviction of sin, contrition of sin (godly sorrow), and a new desire to change from a lifestyle of sin. This is repentance. Scripture declares that Repentance as deep spiritual remorse and a heart for change is necessary to true conversion (Is. 55:7; Lk. 13:1-5; Acts 2:38; 3:19-20; 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10).

Repentance is described as the other side of faith, which is not merely sorrow but an attitude of renewal and spiritual resolve to change (Mk. 1:15; Acts 20:21; 26:18-20; 2 Cor. 7:8-10)

Martin Luther states, “Repentance is not penitence alone but also faith, which apprehends the promise of forgiveness, lest the penitent sinners perish.”

Thus, all true faith is repentant faith and all true repentance is believing repentance (1 Thess. 1:9). All true repentance bears fruit and is a lifelong disposition of change and transformation reflecting the inner soul which has been brought to life and holiness (Lk. 3:7-8; Prov. 28:13).

Luther continues, “To probe and ponder how bad you have been is not enough if you do not ponder and probe much more how good you desire to become.”

Saving Faith

As a result of knowledge about Christ and a conviction that Scripture is true concerning the Lord and our sinful nature and need, there must also be a settled trust, a moving of the *will*—a decision must be made as an act of the will. The “heart” frequently denotes the will, and that is Paul’s emphasis in the statement, “believe in your heart” (Rom. 10:9). To have saving faith, then, is to trust wholly upon

Christ to save, to actually believe what is true about Christ and place one's complete trust in what is believed (in Who is believed). Saving faith is a gift of grace and is the necessary human (individual) response to the free offer of the gospel for salvation (Rom. 12:3; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 1:29; 1 Tim. 1:13-14).

Saving faith is *in* a Person (Jesus), not a proposition or idea (Jn. 17:3; 1 Jn. 5:20; Phil. 3:10).

Saving faith is an act of the *mind*, the *will*, and the *affections/emotions* of the heart and soul. It includes knowledge, assent, trust, surrender, and joy. The **mind** apprehends the truth of Christ (revealed in the Gospel and the Word of God) with agreement (1 Cor. 2:10-16; 2 Cor. 4:6). The **will** embraces Christ, with a self-commitment to Him (a "whole-souled commitment") (Rom. 6:16; Mk. 8:34). The **affections** delight with joy in Christ and all that He is and has done.

Bavinck states, "Biblically speaking, faith is trust-filled surrender to God and His Word of promise. God saves by causing Himself to be known and enjoyed in Christ"

Charles C. Ryrie states, "To believe in Christ for salvation means to have confidence that He can remove the guilt of sin and give eternal life. It means to believe that He alone can solve the problem of sin which is what keeps a person out of heaven. You can also believe Christ about a multitude of other things, *but these are not involved in salvation*. . . The issue is whether or not you believe that His death paid for all your sin" (*So Great a Salvation*, 119).

Saving faith is therefore an obedient faith, trusting submissively in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ alone to rescue that soul (Jn. 3:36; Heb. 5:8; Rom. 1:5; 1 Jn. 2:3; Jn. 6:35; Mt. 13:44; 1 Pet. 1:8).

Saving faith is also an enduring faith, leading the sinner to trust with all his life for all of his life in the finished work of Jesus to save to the uttermost (Heb. 3:6, 14).

Jonathan Edwards states, "A temporary faith does not justify... 'Tis not a vanishing faith, but a durable faith that justifies."

Man's REAL Problem

The Bible **also** teaches that in man's inherently rebellious and sinful nature, he naturally and willfully (acting upon one's own deepest desire) rejects God and cannot rightly respond to God or "be" good enough even to have conviction, belief, or trust in Christ (Mt. 23:37; Lk. 7:30; Heb. 12:15). The Bible is clear that left to man's own devices, he will *never* seek out God by himself so as to be saved (Rom. 3:10-12). Thus, man in His spiritually dead state do what all dead men do. . . *nothing*. In other words, the rest of the biblical data reveals that man does not initiate His salvation, nor can he truly, rightly even respond to God by faith since (before God works in man's heart to regenerate life in it – Titus 3:5) he is spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1, 5). Man is not basically good and cannot "save" himself, nor do enough "good" deeds to be saved or "work with God" to complete His salvation (Ro. 3:10-12). In short, man is lost, and damned, and stands already condemned (John 3:18), and worse...he is dead without hope of spiritual change . . . UNTIL God shows up to intervene and causes new life – (Eph. 2:4-5).

THEREFORE . . .

God's Sovereignty in Salvation

In **Spiritual Reality** (Non-temporal/eternal reality): (What God is doing invisibly within us)

Before the foundation of the world, God knew you, loved you, and chose you In HIM before He ever created you (Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8; 17:8). Because of His love toward us and for His own good pleasure, God elects individuals to salvation, predestines them to be saved, and applies the atonement of Christ's death in their life through the regeneration of the Spirit to actually save them.

- Thus, **Salvation is from the Lord**: Jonah 2:9.

- God saved us **not** based on our "faith" present or foreseen in eternity past (our works or our merit) (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; 2 Tim. 1:9). God saves because He is a God of love, grace, and mercy!

In saving us, the **Holy Spirit** then:

1. Initiated the concept and need for salvation in your life; shows you you're a sinner (Jn 15:26; 16:8-11)
2. Drew you to God and showed you your guilt & lostness (Jn. 6:44; 65; Eph. 1:18; 1 Cor. 2:14)
3. Called you to salvation and eternal life through the gospel of salvation (Titus. 2:11; Rom.10:17)
4. Provided you with saving faith as a grace gift of God (Eph. 2:9; 1 Th. 1:9; 2 Cor. 7:7:10)
5. Enabled your belief/trust in God for salvation (Ez. 36:26)
6. Regenerated your heart from death to life (Jn. 6:63; Titus 3:5; 1 Pt. 1:2; 2 Th. 2:13-14; 2 Cor. 3:6)
7. Filled you permanently with life (Ro. 8:10) -which results in our actual salvation/sp. transformation

Thus, when we were DEAD spiritually, **Christ alone made us alive** (Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13; 1 Pt. 1:3)

Salvation then is **based solely in GOD**, for God's glory and by His good will and pleasure.

- He elected and chose us BEFORE the foundation of the world (Mt. 42:22; 1 Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:4; Jn. 15:16; 2 Th. 2:13; Rev. 17:14)
- He Predestined us to salvation (Ro. 8:29; Acts 13:48)
- God grants repentant hearts (2 Tim. 2:25) & The Lord *opens* hearts (Acts 16:14)
- God can and does also *close* the heart and "seal" one's fate to heaven or hell (2 Th. 2:10-12)

Thus, in my (Matthew's) estimation, Salvation is **NOT** based on:

-Man's choice of God; Man's future belief or choice in God; God's foreknowledge of man's future free acts/choices. I believe Arminianism gets it wrong because they give too much weight to man's apparent libertarian free will to choose Christ or reject Him on their terms in their timing.

NOR do I believe that Molinism gets it correct:

-Middle Knowledge (Molinism) of the perfect potential world where as many as possible will believe in Christ. Again, I believe that Molinism is attempting to uphold man's libertarian free will and accommodate both God's sovereignty and man's significantly free will. I don't see the Bible making the same distinction. God is all sovereign. Man does have freedom, but it is limited in many ways.

-Consider then this verse from Jesus' own mouth: "**Who then can be saved? But Jesus looked at them and said to them, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'**" (Mt. 19:25-26)

Remember Again: Though God is completely sovereign in election and predestination over all who are saved throughout eternity, based in God's justice – **All** of mankind are already damned, and justly condemned to Hell (Rom. 3:23; 5:12; 5:18; 6:23; Jn. 3:18). The reality that ANY at all are saved = God's Mercy and Grace. Since spiritually dead men cannot will themselves to "do good" or truly "respond to faith" they don't possess within themselves, all men are 100% dependent on God to intervene, to initiate salvation, to regenerate the soul, and provide the gift of faith (Eph. 2:9), enabling man to rightly respond to God as God moves in man's life.

Review of the Nature of Salvation

- 1-God is Holy, Righteous, Just, and the very essence of Love (Ps. 77:13; 2 Thess. 1:6ff; 1 Jn. 4:8). It is God who lovingly saves through eternal election for His pleasure and good will toward man.
- 2-God has provided for the salvation (atonement) of the whole world (1Jn. 2:2) via Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross. Christ's atonement is sufficient for all sins, all people; though Christ's atoning death and all its salvific benefits are only applied to some, the elect of God.
- 3-Heaven and eternity with God is a reality and a possibility for those who are saved (Jn. 3:16). This is God's promise, gift, and God's reward for some. God's heart is reconciliation, redemption & relationship. For those who are saved, the eternal prize of heaven is God Himself. He is the prize!
- 4-Likewise, Hell (the eternal separation from God's presence) is real and exists to demonstrate God's utter Love and Justice within mankind in that God *forces no one* into heaven (Matthew 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mark 9:43-47; Luke 12:6; 16:23). Hell is the vivid reality that *in love* God gives people what they want most -to be their own 'god' and to live an existence free from the presence of the One True God. Hell exists as the ultimate separation of God from mankind forever.
- 5-The Bible teaches that though God is love, heaven is real, and salvation is possible for the entire world through Christ's universal atonement, that STILL... the majority of humanity will spend an eternity in Hell separated from holy God (Mt. 7:13- 14). WHY? Because of man or God?
- 6-Thus, God created this universe where in eternity past (spiritually) & in time (temporally) *simultaneously* God both hands over sinners to sin, death, and hell [Rom. 1:24ff; 2 Thess. 2:11-12 (i.e. He passes them over in their natural state of lostness) the non-elect/LOST –*while* the non-elect simultaneously choose to reject God and seek their own way. Their natural, unrepentant hearts are bent away from God innately and He simply allows them to have (satisfy) the desires of their own heart/will which is separation from God (His holy, all-consuming presence) (Dt. 4:23-24; Heb. 12:29).
- 7-God is just that awesome that He is able to create a universe where simultaneously He is sovereignly directing the paths and eternity of all men (Pr. 21:1; Ezra 1:1; Dan. 1:9), while men, *temporally*, are existing in true, free will, choosing and responding to God by faith. He initiates salvation as the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2) and brings to completion what He starts in man's life (Phil. 1:6) to God be the glory –*not man* (Eph. 2:8-9).

Therefore, in temporal reality, founded in God's justice, mercy, and enduring love:

1. God forces Himself on no one (none who would/will resist/reject Him); He does not force His will on those who do not want to be saved (i.e. 2 Cor. 8:16-17) and no one can will himself to want to be saved.
2. God does no violence to our free moral agency as human beings in salvation; though God is sovereign and can do what He wants to whom He wants (Is. 14:27; Job 42:2), God does not violate our free will to force us into salvation. No one who rejects God willfully will be made to love God, to honor Him, or be forced into salvation unwillingly.
3. None who *are* saved, wanted or truly desired to reject God or were passionate to resist God's saving grace. Those who want Christ get Christ. God does not reject the truly repentant who trust in Christ for salvation. God does not say no to some who want to be saved by faith.
4. Conversely, none of the reprobate ever earned any grace and all who are damned and condemned are each guilty of original and active sin. They actively reject God!
5. None of the reprobate ever wanted or truly desired God, or saving faith, but only continually desired own free choice to reject God, resist God, and cut off all means of Truth and Christ as the only way to Salvation. In essence, God does not reject and damn any that ever wanted Christ and truly desired salvation in Him.
6. Though man can seemingly resist the Holy Spirit, the elect (those who will be saved) don't resist the Spirit. Though they can't understand the invisible salvific work of the Spirit in their heart to regenerate them, they feel as if they are lost and desire to be saved, calling upon Jesus to save them and he does in love. Jesus saves sinners like you and me.
7. God does know who desires, who would desire, who will desire to be saved – though He does not base salvation on their future free act of desiring to be saved or on any merit (faith) whatsoever in the present. People are saved because *God* saves them. Salvation is a complete work of grace!

Order of Salvation:

1. Election (God's gracious decree to choose those who He will save) (2 Thes. 2:13; Eph. 1:3-4)
2. The Gospel Call – Efficacious Call (the call to salvation) (Rom. 10:14-15)
3. Regeneration (new life created in the dead heart BY the Holy Spirit) (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5)
4. Conversion (spiritual death to life in the heart) (James 1:18; 1Pet. 1:23)
5. Justification (sinful guilt removed and now in right standing w/ holy God) (Rom. 5:1-10)
6. Adoption (new identity as God's redeemed, blood bought son/daughter) (Rom. 8:15)
7. Sanctification (positional & progressively made into His likeness daily) (1 Thes. 5:23-24)
8. Perseverance (those who are In Christ forever remain in Him) (1 John 2:19)
9. Glorification (at our death, we are spiritually transformed into our new glorified state in heaven) (1 Cor. 15:12-14; Rom. 8:23-25, 30)

Summary, for the study of salvation

In the end, the Bible makes no excuses that God alone is the Author and Finisher (completer) of our faith-of our salvation. The Bible does not try and hide that tragic reality that all are not saved and most won't ever be saved. Salvation is limited. This is part of the hidden decree and purpose of God (Dt. 29:29). The Bible plainly teaches that *eternal* hell and torment is real and awaits the lost masses who are innately sinners and willingly reject Christ as their only hope of salvation. Why? Because God does not force Himself on any. Mankind, today, actively rejects God. But, the Bible also makes clear that God could –If He so wanted- have redeemed the whole world since He is sovereign and has providence over every soul. The fact that He does not save all people leads us biblically to contend with the difficult reality that God does not choose to save all, and those who are saved, He chose purposely and for His glory. If I am saved, it is solely due to God's grace, not my action, self-goodness, or even faith. Faith itself to believe in Christ for salvation is a gift from above (Eph. 2:8-9). Even those who are lost & damned – can still glorify God in their life and eternal death as they play out their purpose in this life & eternity as a testimony to the Church of God's ineffable grace to save anyone at all, much less me...much less you! (cf. Romans 9:22-24).