

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

What Does Salvation Mean?

Ephesians 2:1-10

1 What does it mean to be saved?

“Salvation” is a technical, theological word which few non-believers understand. Christians use it differently than the secular world does and often, even, differ from one another. What does it mean, then, to be saved? 2

I would like to base our thinking on the following scripture; Ephesians, chapter 2, verses 1 through 10. It reads, *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were*

dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.^{1 3}

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.^{2 4}

I. What is Salvation?

What is salvation? ⁵

The word **save** in the original language, ³ meant to rescue, deliver, keep from harm and preserve. ⁶

Jesus used this word to mean **physical healing**. ⁷

¹ Ephesians 2:1-6.

² Ephesians 2:7-10.

³ σώζω.

When the woman with the issue of blood ⁴ snuck up behind the Lord to touch His garment, she said to herself, ⁸ **If I only touch His cloak, I will be healed (saved)**. ⁹ **The Lord answered, Take heart, daughter, your faith has healed you (saved you)**. ¹⁰

When blind Bartimaeus was brought before the Lord, the Lord said to him, **Your faith has made you whole (saved you)**. ⁵ ¹¹

When Jesus healed the ten lepers but only one came back to say, “Thank you”, the Lord said to him, **Rise and go; your faith has made you well (saved you)**. ⁶ ¹²

Jesus used this word also to mean **escape from physical harm**. ¹³

⁴ Matthew 9:20-22 - Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.” Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has healed you.” And the woman was healed from that moment.

⁵ Mark 10:52.

⁶ Luke 17:19.

Just before Lord Jesus calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee, ⁷ the disciples in the sinking boat cried out, **Lord, save us! We're going to drown!** ¹⁴

When Lord Jesus was walking across the water, again on the Sea of Galilee, Peter attempted to walk on the water as well but began to sink. As he was sinking, he cried out, **Lord, save me!** ^{8 15}

While Jesus was hanging on the cross, the Chief Priests mocked Him, saying, **He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God'.** ^{9 16}

⁷ Matthew 8:23 -27 - Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "**Lord, save us! We're going to drown!**" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

⁸ Matthew 14:30.

⁹ Matthew 27:42-43. This was predicted in Psalm 22:6-8.

There is only a short step from salvation from disease and danger to salvation from death to eternal life! ¹⁷

II. What Does Salvation Do for You?

What does salvation do for you? ¹⁸

The Bible says you are saved **from** something, **to** something, **for** something! ¹⁹

You are **saved from**: being lost, ¹⁰ ²⁰ perishing and hell, ¹¹ ²¹ your sins, ¹² ²² this body of death, ¹³ ²³ and the curse from the Law of Moses. ¹⁴ ²⁴

You are **saved to**: repentance, ¹⁵ ²⁵ satisfying your spiritual hunger and thirst, ¹⁶ ²⁶ and a new beginning as a new creation. ¹⁷ ²⁷

¹⁰ Luke 19:10 - For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

¹¹ John 3:16-17 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

¹² Matthew 1:21 - She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

¹³ Romans 7:24-25 - What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!

¹⁴ Galatians 3:13 - Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree".

You are **saved for**: rest, ¹⁸ ₂₈ eternal life, ¹⁹ ₂₉ bearing fruit, ²⁰ ₃₀ peace, ²¹ ₃₁ reconciliation to God, ²² ₃₂ a holy calling, ²³ ₃₃ and becoming heirs of eternal life. ²⁴ ₃₄

¹⁵ Acts 2:38 - Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

¹⁶ John 6:35 - I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

¹⁷ II Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

¹⁸ Hebrews 4:9-10 - There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. (The context here identifies this rest as eternal life after you die)

¹⁹ John 5:39-40 - You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

²⁰ John 15:5 - I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

²¹ Romans 5:1 - Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . .

²² Colossians 1:19-20 - For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

²³ II Timothy 1:8-9 - So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, ^{who} has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.

²⁴ Titus 3:7 - . . . having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

III. How Do I Get Salvation?

How do I get salvation?

The ways people have tried to get salvation fit into three categories. ³⁵

There's the **merit system.**

In the military you could earn merits by your behavior and accomplishments. You could also lose merits (demerits) by getting in trouble. ³⁶

In the Christian arena we try earning our salvation by keeping all the laws of God. Life becomes a giant book keeping system. ³⁷ If my good deeds outweigh my bad deeds, I'm saved! This is the system that most of the religions of the world use. ³⁸

What's wrong with this system? It opposes God's biblical plan of salvation which is salvation by God's grace. It assumes bad deeds can be offset with good deeds. The problem with this is that only God determines what it would take to cancel out a bad deed. Certainly not you! ³⁹

The second category is the **miracle system**.⁴⁰ The miracle system is an overreaction to the merit system.

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If you're not saved by earning merit, what saves you?⁴² It's faith! Intellectual faith; faith alone! Ephesians, chapter 2, verses 8 and 9, **For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.**⁴³

But if faith is produced by you, isn't that a merit?⁴⁴ Not so says this system; because you can't get faith unless God supernaturally gives it to you!⁴⁵

But how do I know if I have it?⁴⁶ God gives you a supernatural conversion experience.⁴⁷

What's wrong with this system?

A knowledge of the original language helps us here.⁴⁸

In the verse we just referred to, **Gift** refers to **saved**, not **faith**. Lord Jesus gave you salvation in John, chapter 3, verse 16! ²⁵ ₄₉

Besides, if God gives faith supernaturally, why doesn't He give it to everybody! Second Peter, chapter 3, verse 9, says, **The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.** ⁵⁰

Besides that, nobody is saved by faith only; or anything else only! James, chapter 2, verse 24, **You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.** ⁵¹

In the Bible other things are also involved in salvation. We are saved by: the gospel, ²⁶ Jesus' life, ²⁷ grace, ²⁸ ₅₂ faith and baptism, ²⁹ obedience, ³⁰ and hope. ³¹ ₅₃

²⁵ John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

²⁶ Romans 1:16 - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes . . . and I Corinthians 15:2 - By this gospel you are saved . . .

The third category is the **mercy system**. This is the Bible way!

There are two parts to this system; God's part and your part. ⁵⁴

God's part is found in John, chapter 3, verses 16 and 17, **For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**

The Father sent His Son to teach us how to live, to live it personally and perfectly to show us it could be done, and then went to the cross and died there. ⁵⁵

²⁷ Romans 5:10 - . . . shall we be saved through his life!

²⁸ Ephesians 2:5 - . . . it is by grace you have been saved.

²⁹ Mark 16:16 - Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved . . .

³⁰ Hebrews 5:9 - he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

³¹ Romans 8:24 - For in this hope we were saved.

Lord Jesus died on the cross to make salvation available to whoever wants it. ³² 56

Your part is found in Philippians, chapter 2, verses 12 and 13, **Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.**

If you receive a check you need to cash it before you get the money. God gave you the check - **salvation** - when Lord Jesus died on the cross for you. 57

You cash that check by making life changing decisions! **Believing** is the decision to trust Jesus; having faith. **Repenting** is the decision to obediently change your lifestyle. **The Good Confession** is the decision to proclaim your personal statement of faith. **Christian baptism** is the decision to identify with Lord

³² Matthew 16:25 - For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

Jesus, His gospel and symbolize what you plan to happen in your life. **Allowing the Holy Spirit to take charge** of your life is your decision to make it a holy one. 58

God may make changes to His biblically revealed plan if He desires. But you and I are commissioned to proclaim the one way He has revealed.

Let's go proclaim it!

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