

What Does Salvation Mean to Me?

Kroy Ellis 4/20/22 (Updated 7/26/2024)

Elsy asked me to respond to this question for you at her church. It is a very good question!

Two words – Jesus Christ

My first thought in a nutshell is – I belong to Jesus now. He saved me from my sin, his wrath against sin and eternal judgement, and now I know that I have eternal life and real fellowship with God the Father, Jesus His Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus has bought me with his blood on the cross and given me his gift of eternal life. John 3:14-19, 3:36

But what exactly is “salvation” and who is Jesus Christ? Those questions have to be answered more completely in order to be able to truthfully say what salvation means to me.

So we must first consider: “What does SALVATION mean?” What is “salvation”?

Here is a dictionary definition for the English word:

1. preservation or deliverance from harm, ruin, or loss
Example: "they try to sell it to us as economic salvation"
2. deliverance from sin and its consequences, believed by Christians to be brought about by faith in Christ
(*Oxford Dictionary*)

As a non-practicing Jew, before I became a Christian in 1974, I used to think that the Salvation Army (in the United States) saved furniture. Seeing a bumper sticker saying “Jesus saves” made no sense to me. Whoever this person is (I knew he had something to do with Christian religion), what did he save? Money? Or perhaps “from” something. I had no idea what the Christian idea of “salvation” meant or that the word even had anything to do with God.

The name Jesus means salvation. It is the name that God has given his Son that is above every name. It is the name which the angel Gabriel who was sent by God the Father commanded the virgin, Mary, to give to her son (Luke 1:26-37). The name, Jesus, comes from the Hebrew word which means “salvation” or Jehovah saves. Only God can truly, eternally “save” someone. **So what is this salvation and from what is one saved?**

God saves from material or physical circumstances:

Salvation is deliverance from danger or suffering. To save is to deliver or protect. The word carries the idea of victory, health, or preservation. Sometimes, the Bible uses the words *saved* or *salvation* to refer to temporal, physical deliverance, such as Paul’s deliverance from prison ([Philippians 1:19](#)).

God saves eternally and spiritually

More often, the word “salvation” concerns an eternal, spiritual deliverance. When Paul told the Philippian jailer what he must do to be saved, he was referring to the jailer’s eternal destiny ([Acts 16:30-31](#)). Jesus equated being saved with entering the kingdom of God ([Matthew 19:24-25](#)).

What are we saved *from*?

In the Christian doctrine of salvation, we are saved from “wrath,” that is, from God’s [eternal] judgment of sin ([Romans 5:9](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:9](#)). Our sin has separated us from God, and the consequence of sin is death ([Romans 6:23](#)). Biblical salvation refers to our deliverance from the consequence of sin and therefore involves the removal of sin [and salvation from God’s eternal wrath].

Who does the saving?

Only God can remove sin and deliver us from sin’s penalty ([2 Timothy 1:9](#); [Titus 3:5](#)).

How does God save?

In the Christian doctrine of salvation, God has rescued us through Christ ([John 3:17](#)). Specifically, it was Jesus’ death on the cross [where he paid the price and penalty required by God for my sin] and subsequent resurrection that achieved our salvation ([Romans 5:10](#); [Ephesians 1:7](#)). Scripture is clear that salvation is the gracious, undeserved gift of God ([Ephesians 2:5, 8](#)) and is only available through faith in Jesus Christ ([Acts 4:12](#)).

How do we *receive* salvation?

We are saved by *faith*. First, we must *hear* the gospel—the good news of [who Jesus is, and of] Jesus’ death and resurrection ([Ephesians 1:13](#)). Then, we must *believe*—fully trust the Lord Jesus ([Romans 1:16](#)) [and receive him as our Lord and Savior]. This involves repentance, a changing of mind about sin and Christ ([Acts 3:19](#)), and calling on the name of the Lord ([Romans 10:9-10, 13](#)).

A definition of the Christian doctrine of salvation would be

“The deliverance, by the grace of God, from eternal punishment for sin which is granted to those who accept [receive] by faith God’s conditions of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus [and his free gift of eternal life].” Salvation [comes by God’s grace (God’s unmerited favor) through faith apart from works] in Jesus ([John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#); [Eph. 2:8,9](#)) and is dependent on God alone for provision, assurance, and [eternal] security.

(From [gotquestions.org](#). Words in brackets added by Kroy)

Who is Jesus Christ? Who *is* He who accomplished this great salvation for me/us? This is the most important question regarding salvation. If Jesus Christ is not who he says he is, if he did not do what God required for our salvation, if he is not risen from the dead and alive and glorified at this very moment, then no one is or can ever be saved. ([1 Cor. 15](#))

When Paul encountered on the road to Damascus the One whom he had been persecuting, his first words were, **“Who are you, Lord?”**

Jesus’ answer was, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.” (Acts 9:1-8)

Jesus is the Son of God, God the Son in the flesh, fully God, fully man, co-equal with God the Father and with God the Holy Spirit. He is Lord of lords and King of kings. He is all-powerful. He is all-knowing. He is omnipresent. He is glorious. He is holy. He is righteous. He is just. He is merciful. He is Truth. He is Life. And He is Love. He is the mediator of the New Covenant in his blood.

He is the one who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, created the heavens and the universe. He, God the Son, was sent to earth by the Father to be conceived in human flesh by the Holy Spirit through a virgin chosen by Him. He was sent and he came to save his people from sin, the grave and eternal punishment. Saved to be with him forever. Jesus always was *with* God and always *was* God. (John 1:1) He was crucified dead and buried. He atoned for our sins by the sacrifice of himself – his body and blood – in our place – on the cross. He rose bodily out from the dead after three days. He is glorified and is coming again. 1 Cor. 15, Rev. 1

God’s salvation, His gift of eternal life through his Son, Jesus Christ, is by his grace – favor with him completely unmerited – through faith and nothing else, nothing of ourselves, not of or by anything we can do to obtain it. Saving faith is the gift of God. Our salvation is not of or through our own works. So that no one can boast of anything from themselves or that they had any part in their salvation.

He regenerates us, births us into new life, eternal life, makes us a new creation in himself. He alone gets all the glory for saving us. It is all his doing, all by his atoning work on the cross, and by his giving us the gift of saving faith in his Son. Nothing of ourselves, nothing based on our own works. Eph. 2:8,9 “This is the work of God; that you believe on Him whom He has sent.” John 6 By his doing, we become new creatures in Christ – created to do good works through Him in us; not to obtain salvation but because he has saved us.

What are the results and benefits of this salvation? See the teaching a series called [“The Benefits of Salvation”](#). There is much to be found in God’s word of what God has given us in our salvation that is in Christ.

- God loves you. He loved you from before the foundation of the world. He loves you with the very love he has for his own son.
- You have been born again. Born from above. The Holy Spirit regenerated you in Jesus Christ. You are a new creature/creation in Him. All things are become new.
- God’s grace – unmerited favor with God.
- God has given you the gift of faith. His faith. “Without faith [the faith of Christ] it is impossible to please God.” Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:8,9; Heb. 11
- Jesus, God’s very own Son, has come to dwell in you. You are a temple of the Holy Spirit.

- God has given you the gift of repentance – Christ having come to dwell in you gives you the power to acknowledge your sin, change your mind and turn from your sin to God and his righteousness.
- God has forgiven you, taken (actually “sent) away of ALL your sin/sins, past, present and future, all of which he put on his own son who took God’s wrath for your sin and paid the full price with his blood on the cross in your place.
- God has brought you into his Covenant. He has bound himself to you and you to him in covenant. He is your God and you are his son through the covenant he made through the shed blood of his son.
- God has “justified” you in his Son. He has declared you righteous, as having the righteousness of Christ. You are holy, blameless and without reproach. Now, by the Holy Spirit working in you, you grow in grace and the knowledge of God and become what he has made you to be in Christ. (Sanctification)
- God has delivered you out of darkness and transferred you into the kingdom of his beloved son. Col. 1:13, 1 Pet. 2:9
<https://www.gotquestions.org/transferred-into-the-kingdom-of-His-beloved-Son.html>
- God has baptized you into his “body”, his “church” (his “ekklesia”, his called out ones in Christ).
- God’s gift of his Holy Spirit.
- God, the Holy Spirit, lives in you and has sealed you as his own for eternity. Eph. 1:13,14
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit for the building up of the body of Christ as he chooses to distribute them.
- You have God’s gift of eternal life in him which Jesus paid for with his own blood on the cross.
- The fear of God – The beginning of wisdom.
- The exchanged life. His life for ours. Jesus took your sinful self on the cross and died, taking it/you to the grave, and rose from the dead raising you up with him, giving you *his* life and righteousness. Rom. 6
- Death to self (in Christ), alive to God (in Christ).
- The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus you made me free from the law of sin and death. Rom. 8:2
- God has seated you in Christ in the heavenlies. Eph. 2:6
- We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Eph. 2:10
- You have God’s Law written on your heart. No longer trying to keep the Law with outward works of the flesh which cannot please God, but from Jesus Christ in you. The only works (Jesus in you) that God accepts and is pleased with. Jesus working *in* you. His works not yours.
- You have direct access to and fellowship with God through the blood of Jesus.
- God will hear your prayers. And with faith, especially *his* faith, will answer them beyond anything you could ask or think.
- We get to work for, serve, worship, glorify and enjoy God forever.
- We now work for and serve God by grace in the power of the Holy Spirit. He working *his* works in/through us for his glory. The one who does not work, but believes in him who

justifies (declares righteous with Christ's righteousness) the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.

- God's, Jesus' joy as we obey him and keep his commandments by the power of the Holy Spirit in us. John 15
- God's rest. Mat. 11:28-30, Hebrews 3 and 4.
- God's chastening. God our Father chastens us out of his love to make us mature sons who will bear the fruit of Christ's righteousness.
- God's written word, the Bible, through which, by his Holy Spirit in you, he will teach you and reveal to you himself, who you are in him; he will speak to you, convict you of sin to confess and repent of, comfort you, encourage you, heal you, strengthen you, and many other things.
- God will continually reveal himself to you, who he is, how he is One, yet Three Persons (his Tri-unity or Trinity), his holiness, his gloriousness, his sovereignty, his love, as you study his word, the Bible.
- God's promises. Under the New Covenant in Christ he keeps his promises to you. We inherit the promises of God.
- You have all of this from God and much more, completely unmerited, undeserved. This is called God's grace – His unmerited favor on you and love for you even though we *deserved* the opposite.

There are hundreds more benefits of salvation that God has bestowed on us.

What are five aspects of Jesus Christ's atonement? Here is a good outline of the five aspects of Christ's atonement for us with scripture references: "[The Five Aspects of Christ's Atonement](#)".

So what does this salvation in Jesus Christ mean to me?

Salvation is in the One true and living God Himself. Through God's son, Jesus Christ and his atoning work on the cross, I now have eternal fellowship and eternal life with God forever. Jesus Christ is my Lord and savior. God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is my exceedingly great reward. Jesus purchased me with his blood on the cross. It was at great cost. He chose me before the world ever was. (For no good reason that I know – God's grace.) While I was his enemy, at enmity with Him, he loved me; he gave himself for me and saved me.

"Christ appeased God's righteous wrath by dying on the cross in our place (see Rom. 3:21-26). Although completely perfect and sinless, Christ voluntarily submitted to the penalty of sin, His agonizing death on the Cross. This voluntary sacrifice of Himself for our welfare satisfied the justice and holiness of God." *NKJV Study Bible Notes, Commentary on Heb. 2:17, Earl D. Radmacher*

Before I was saved I did everything I could to reject God, to reject Christ. But God on a day in June, 1974 he showed up in my bedroom (not physically) after a year-long struggle on my part to not believe in him. Something like a light (not visibly) suddenly went on inside of me. At that point I suddenly knew that he had saved me (even though I still didn't know exactly what that meant), that I had him, or rather he had me, and I had eternal life. He gave me the gift of

himself, the gift of saving faith, the gift of repentance and the gift of eternal life in him. He gave me the gift of his Holy Spirit, but that was beyond my understanding at that point. I only came to understand this more fully years later. He lives *in* me. I live in him. He is my life. Now and for eternity. I still fail him often, but HE is faithful to his promise to protect and keep me/us. 1 Pet. 1:3-5

I have been “justified”, declared by God as “righteous” with the righteousness of Christ; He has imputed (credited) his own righteousness to me before God the Father though I was by nature a child of wrath, and sanctified and is sanctifying me (“setting me apart” to/for God, making me holy). All while I was and deserved the opposite. This is the astounding total grace (undeserved gifting/favor) of God.

Salvation for me includes knowing, reckoning (an accounting term) – putting into my account ledger – what God has already done – that I am crucified with Christ, buried with him and risen with him. I have died and my life is hidden with Christ. (Rom. 5-8, Gal. 2:20, Col. 3:1-5) We, having been crucified in Christ, are buried and risen and seated with him. In him, “by the blood of the Lamb,” we overcome satan, sin and the grave.

I am saved to serve and to worship him as the Holy Spirit empowers me. I fail often, I lose faith often, but as Paul said, though I am even faithless *he* remains faithful; he does NOT fail, for he cannot deny himself. 2 Tim. 2:13 I did not choose *him* but he chose *me*. That I might bear much fruit for him. The fruit of God’s righteousness. This is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. John 15:16, 1 Cor. 13, Gal. 5:16-25

Salvation to me includes having my conscience cleansed from dead works – from empty works of the flesh that could never please God. Salvation from sin and sins, past, present and future, that are more than the hairs of my head – my conscience cleansed and clear continuously from all sin and dead works *by the blood of Jesus* to serve the Living God. Only his blood continuously cleanses our consciences to confidently be in fellowship with and serve him unhindered. (Heb. 9,10) And we continually confess and repent as the Holy Spirit convicts of sin or anything that gets between us and Him. Jn 1:9

Saved to serve. And saved to worship! By God’s grace through *his* faith. In my first years as a born-again Christian I studied God’s word and served and worked for God with (almost) all of my heart. I strove for holiness and the conquest of sin with (almost) all my strength. In time I collapsed physically, emotionally and spiritually. My faith collapsed.

One day, having finally given up on God and “Christianity” (I knew everything in God’s word was true, but somehow it wasn’t working for me) I heard the words in my mind, “Well, I’ve been waiting for you to come to this.” After getting over my shock, I began seeking God again and found that I needed the faith OF Jesus. E.g. Gal. 2:20 (The word here in the Greek text is “the faith OF the Son of God”, not faith IN the Son of God, as in many other Scriptures in the Greek also.) My faith would no longer carry me. I needed the faith of Christ and the life and power of the Holy Spirit.

You cannot serve or please God with the works of the flesh. And you cannot go beyond what or where God has called you to go. (Please excuse bad grammar!) Or apart from the faith that God gives you. “Apart from Me you can do nothing.” (John 15) He does not accept anything but what comes **from Himself** in and through us. (1 Cor. 3:12-15) Our faith is not enough. HIS faith never fails. We must come to the end of ourselves, to the end of our own faith and move into the life and faith of Jesus. (e.g. Gal. 2:20 the faith OF Christ.)

But God is always moving us forward in him. When going forward with God we must often start with what seems like “the flesh”. It may seem like he is not there. But as we step out in faith in him, if we are following him, he will take over. It is a journey, often seemingly more down than up at times. But He will keep us on the road to completion as we press on, press forward to know him and serve him with the faith of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Phil. 3:7-14, Rev. 3:20,21

Addendum:

The word of God is our source for all life, truth and practice. If we are being led by the One True and Living God of the Bible, He will always lead us according to his word based on sound doctrine. God’s will and leading do not contradict what he has given us in his word.

A few hymns...

[Jesus! What a Friend for Sinners! / Our Great Savior](#)

[And Can it Be that I Should Gain](#)

[Thank you Jesus](#)