

God Chat

SALVATION - YOUTH GROUP

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We trust the reality that God is love (1 John 4:8). Love is other-centered, not self-seeking. The full representation of the love of God came in human flesh through the person of Jesus Christ, who created all things in the universe by the word of His mouth, lived a life of service to humanity and saved us from our sins, our rebellion, our own desire to live without Him. By His death and resurrection we have assurance of a future without pain, hurt and selfishness.

We also trust the ancient scriptures hold the evidence for the story of this passionate God, how He intended the world to be, what happened to get the world in the mess that it is in and if this mess is ever going to end.

Throughout these studies from the books of the bible we will see enough evidence that can give us assurance God loves us deeply, has won the hearts of most of the universe, except for this little planet, but His light is shining on the heart of humanity brighter and brighter each day. As restored followers of Christ, we will also show outwardly how to live a life of other-centered love, helping others in physical, material, emotional and spiritual need.

SALVATION

To get a true grasp of what salvation really is, we need to understand a few things:

1) WHAT/WHOM DO WE NEED TO BE SAVED FROM? WHY DO WE NEED TO BE SAVED?

We need to be saved from SIN

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.” (NIV)

Notice the angel doesn't say to save his people from their enemies, like in Old Testament times, or even an angry God, like some believe... but “their sins”.

WHAT IS SIN?

1 John 3:4

Sin is lawlessness (anomia – anarchy, rebellion)

REBELLION FROM WHAT? AGAINST WHAT?

Matthew 7:23

And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’

“I never knew you”. Could it be that man rebelled against God, not wanting to become intimate with him? What is this rebellion?

In the garden, the serpent proposed to them that God was a liar, saying “you shall not surely die.” God is holding something back from you, don't trust him.

And we believed. Adam, representing the human race, rebelled. Even as innocent as he must have been, yet the doubt most assuredly crossed his mind about God withholding something from them. And the act of eating of the fruit was the culmination of that rebellion. His mind was already changed though.

Ever since then, humankind has believed and bought into the lies of the devil. That's why Jesus came on the scene to bring down the works of the devil, to save us, to heal us.

2) WHAT DOES SALVATION ACCOMPLISH?

We are not condemned, we receive eternal life.

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.

17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Salvation is free, but not a get out of jail free card.

Ephesians 2:4-5

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—

9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Titus 3:5-7

5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,

7 so that, having been justified (made right) by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

But what truly is eternal life? Getting “out of jail” free is enough, right? Meaning, going to heaven is what is the ultimate goal of being saved. Right? How does the bible define eternal life?

John 17:1-3

1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

According to Jesus himself, eternal life is to know God. The word know in the bible always equates to intimacy, like in the garden, Adam knew Eve and she conceived.

Having an intimate relationship with God is the ultimate meaning of eternal life. Merely getting “out of hell” free is not God's intention. He wants a relationship of love, trust, admiration, a change of heart and mind.

Therefore, salvation goes much deeper than getting “fire insurance”, to be “off-the-hook”. To understand all the facets of salvation, let's examine how the word is used in the bible.

SALVATION IS DELIVERANCE (FROM ENEMIES) IN OT

Salvation in the Old Testament, almost exclusively is equated with deliverance from enemies.

Exodus 15: 1-2

“I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea.

2 “The Lord is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. (NIV)

Psalms 18:1-3

I love you, Lord, my strength.

2 The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

3 I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies. (NIV)

Isaiah 64:

5 You assist those who delight in doing what is right, who observe your commandments. Look, you were angry because we violated them continually. How then can we be saved?

6 We are all like one who is unclean, all our so-called righteous acts are like a menstrual rag in your sight. We all wither like a leaf; our sins carry us away like the wind. (NET)

Even this verse, if you read the whole chapter, is in the context of the Lord abandoning Israel into captivity to their enemies.

So where did we get this idea that Salvation is related to something spiritual? For that we look into the New Testament. It's there that it becomes clear that eternal Salvation is not from physical enemies, but spiritual ones. It's salvation from our sins and our condition.

So why the shift? Well, what interesting to note is that the bible talks A LOT about the need of restoration from sin, being free, being healed. In fact the word healing could almost be equated with the word salvation in the New Testament, and in fact it is.

SALVATION IS HEALING

HEALING IN OT

Psalm 30:2-3

2 Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me.

3 You, Lord, brought me up from the realm of the dead; you spared me from going down to the pit.

Psalm 41:4

4 I said, "Have mercy on me, Lord; heal me, for I have sinned against you."

Isaiah 53:5 (NIV)

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Jeremiah 17:14 (NIV)

Heal me, lord, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise.

Lamentations 2:13-14 (NIV)

What can I say for you? With what can I compare you, Daughter Jerusalem? To what can I liken you, that I may comfort you, Virgin Daughter Zion? Your wound is as deep as the sea. Who can heal you?

Can a city be healed? God is talking about the people inside...

HEALING IN NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 9:20-22 Also Luke 8:43-48; Matthew 5:25-34

20 Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak.

21 She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."

22 Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed at that moment.

Other people that Jesus mentioned your faith has "healed" you was the 1 leper who came back to thank Jesus and the blind beggar. (Luke 17 and Luke 18 & Mark 10 – Bartimaeus)

Luke 7:48-50

48 Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

49 The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

50 Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

GREEK, made whole, cured, healed = saved (root - SOZO; sesoken)

The word and its variations are used 108 times in the new testament, about 10% of the time it's associated with healing connected to either faith or being freed from the powers of demons.

laomai – 27 times, "to heal"

Therapeuo – 43 times, "care, medical treatment, healing"

Matthew 13:15 (NIV)

For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal (iaomai) them.'

Jesus isn't talking about physical healing here, but spiritual.

1 Peter 2:24 (NIV)

"He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed. (root – iaomai)"

SALVATION DISPELLED DARKNESS / REMOVED THE DEVIL'S GRIP

Luke 1:76-79

76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;

for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,

77 to give his people the knowledge of salvation

through the forgiveness of their sins,

78 because of the tender mercy of our God,

by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven

79 to shine on those living in darkness

and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the path of peace."

John 12:46-48

46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

47 "If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.

It's interesting that God said in Genesis, "let there be light". In John 1, it says that the word (Jesus) was the light that came into the world and darkness could not overcome it. This darkness in the bible has some interesting parallels with not knowing the truth about God.

Jeremiah 4:

22 "My people are fools; they do not know me...

23 I looked at the earth, and it was formless and empty; and at the heavens, and their light was gone.

The same terminology with Genesis 1, and yet, it's talking about spiritual things and the knowledge of God.

Acts 26:17-18

17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them

18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

1 Timothy 2:25-26

25 Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,

26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

Galatians 1:3-4

3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

4 who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

Colossians 1:13-14

13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

SALVATION BROUGHT RECONCILIATION AND PEACE

Colossians 1:19-22

19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him

,20 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.

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—

Romans 5:1

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

Romans 5:10 (NIV)

10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

11 Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation (in KJV – atonement).

The word atonement in the time of the KJV meant reconciliation, not making amends, or placating wrath.

Acts 10:36

You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 2:14-17

14 For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us.

15 He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups.

16 Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

17 He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21

18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Another translation, more modern, more about the meaning of the words: (GNT)

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

18 All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also.

19 Our message is that God was making all human beings his friends through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins, and he has given us the message which tells how he makes them his friends.

20 Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: let God change you from enemies into his friends!

Reconciliation here is equated with being/becoming God's friends, like Abraham, Moses.

SALVATION IS NOT A LEGAL LOOPHOLE TO LET YOU INTO HEAVEN

Salvation is not a contract, but a covenant. You don't stay as you are when you "accept" Jesus. What you should be saying is, "how can I make this relationship flourish more every day?", rather than "how much can I actually get away with it without losing my salvation?" "How much of a sinner do I have to be in order to lose my salvation?"

Salvation is not a "get out of jail free" card, it involves our entire being. It involves our healing of the rebellion problem, it frees us from the bondage of sin and the devil, it gives us peace and reconciles us to God.

Forget the courtroom when thinking of salvation and think marriage, think commitment out of love, respect and admiration.

Our segway topic on Salvation will be about the "how":

HOW DID JESUS ACCOMPLISH SALVATION FOR US?

In theology, this is called the atonement (at-one-ment/reconciliation).

Jesus died in order that we receive salvation, but why did Jesus have to die? Could salvation only come through death? What happened when he died?

Was Jesus a middle-man that needed to placate God's wrath, that stood in between and took our punishment just so God's wrath would be satisfied?

Or was God "in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not counting their sins against them"?