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## Who Gets Saved?

**Acts 16:31: (NASB) They said, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.**



For Christians, the concept of salvation is one of the most prominent and necessary beliefs that we hold. Its necessity cannot be understated, for without it, we truly would be lost and miserable. One of the key questions regarding salvation is, who participates? Do you have to be a member of a particular denomination? Do you have to be a member of a particular church? Do you have to be just a Christian? Not even a Christian? We will look into this all-important Biblical teaching and attempt to ask the tough questions, looking for the best scriptural answers that we can find. Who gets saved?

### Questions for consideration:

1. Why do we believe that salvation is necessary?
2. Who is in line to get saved?

#### 1. Why do we believe that salvation is necessary?

 **The God of the Bible, Pastor John MacArthur**

- *Once you affirm the God of the Bible, you get His law, His commandments and His morality.*

For a lot of people, the God of the Bible is very limiting. To begin answering our questions, we need to go back to why salvation was necessary in the first place.

Adam was a perfect man, given the ability to think and choose

• **Genesis 1:27-28: (NASB)** *<sup>27</sup>God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup>God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.*

Adam was a perfect creation of God put in a great position of authority on the earth. However, he was also given rules.

Adam chose disobedience

• **Genesis 3:6: (NASB)** *When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.*

Eve may have been deceived, but Adam made a choice. He knew better and did it anyway. The consequences of the curse really fell on Adam.

His choice led to a life of sin that ended in death

• **Genesis 3:17-19: (NASB)** *<sup>17</sup>Then to Adam He said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat from it: Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup>Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; <sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

The dying process included a life now to be built within the confines of imperfection, which meant toil and failure on a regular basis.



All of Adam's children inherit this terminal disease of sin that leads to death

• Romans 3:23: (NASB) *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...*

All of us are born with sin. We have no choice.

Because of this inherited disease of sin and death, mankind cannot solve its problems

• Romans 7:23: (NASB) *but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.*

Romans was written by the Apostle Paul. Even as a tower of Christian strength, he himself was struggling. He was constantly in conflict with himself, trying to rise up to a higher standard.

All of mankind is doomed!  
All sin, all die!

• Romans 7:24: (NASB) *Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*

Because of Adam's original sin, we are all born with the genetic defect that dooms us to the same fate - death. Salvation, therefore, is the rescuing of the human race from this fate. As a race, we have been put on

a path that goes the wrong way and we need to be saved from that path of destruction. Salvation is an important part of the Gospel. But what does it really mean?

## 2. Who is in line to get saved?

Here is where this topic gets clouded. The wide variety of Christian denominations provides a wide variety of answers for this all important question.



**CNN Interview, Pastor Joel Osteen with Mike Alano**

- *Jesus came as a sacrifice for our sins and he is the only way.*

Is salvation by the name of Jesus only? Acts 4:10-12 Romans 10:9-10: Yes, salvation is by the name of Jesus only! But what about the promises given to the Jews? Where do they fit? How about non-religious people that still live a righteous life? Does that count for something?



**Salvation is a Gift, Pastor David Grice**

- *By grace are you saved through faith - not anything that you've done can save you - it's a gift.*

Is salvation a gift? John 6:44: One can only come to Jesus by the Father's drawing. 1 Corinthians 1:26-30 Philippians 3:12-14: Not only is salvation a gift, but it seems to be by invitation only!



**Observations about salvation so far:**

- Salvation is necessary to cancel the sin of Adam which brought sin and death upon us all;
- Salvation is only available through the name of Jesus;
- Salvation seems to be by invitation only.

**Are there "problems" with the concept of salvation?**

- ? If it is by invitation only, then what about the billions and billions who were not invited?
- ? If it isn't by invitation only, then doesn't that negate personal responsibility? If everybody gets saved, does it matter what you do?
- ? If it is by the name of Jesus only, then what about all of the people who lived during the 4,000 years before Jesus, not to mention all those who never heard his name since?
- ? How do we understand salvation with Jesus himself purposely speaking in parables so that some wouldn't understand?



Mark 4:11-12: How do we deal with these issues? **First of all, Satan controls this world:** Matthew 4:8-10: Jesus never disputes Satan that the kingdoms aren't Satan's (under his control). He instead warns not to tempt. Revelation 12:9: If Satan is in control as these scriptures say that he is, does that have any bearing on the just application of salvation?



#### Vicarious Redemption, Christopher Hitchens

- Christianity shackles itself to the terrible books of the Jewish Old Testament...With this insufferable burden you have saddled yourself with a wicked religion...The fault that is to the pure Christian religion is a doctrine that I think is strictly immoral, the idea of "Vicarious Redemption."*

2 Corinthians 11:14-15: Satan disguises himself? Doesn't that make salvation even more difficult? Satan's goal is to confuse so that the truth cannot be found, both inside and outside of Christianity.



#### Definition of Salvation, Pastor Paul Washer

- At this moment God commands all men to repent and believe - that today is the day of Salvation. Flee from the wrath to come...*
- Repentance is simply giving up to stop fighting against God...and to fall upon Christ...*

How can this be in light of mankind being blinded by Satan? 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: If Satan blinded the eyes of the unbeliever, who is accountable? The one that has been blinded or the one doing the blinding? If you've been blinded by an outside source, where is your accountability?



#### HOW DO WE HARMONIZE ALL OF THESE:

- ✓ The scriptural concept of Jesus as the way to salvation;
- ✓ The scriptural concept of an individual invitation for those being drawn by God; implying not all are drawn;
- ✓ Jesus speaking in parables, not wanting to convert the masses;
- ✓ The scriptural concept that everyone should be able to understand God, but does that automatically lead one to Jesus; and
- ✓ The scriptural concept of Satan purposely confusing the whole issue!

To get to the bottom of this, let's look closely at what true Christians are "called out" to be and to do. Genesis 22:18: This promise given to Abraham was repeated over and over again to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But what does this mean? Galatians 3:16: The Apostle Paul makes the connection from the Old Testament to the New Testament by telling us that Jesus is the seed of Abraham, so Jesus is the conduit for the blessing of all.



#### Vicarious Redemption, Christopher Hitchens

- ...The torture and human sacrifice of somebody...which I did not ask for, commits me and I have no choice in the matter and that my sins are forgiven by this human sacrifice...If I like you I can pay your debt - I can do it for love or for suffering humanity...what can't be done is to take away your sins...*

Galatians 3:27 and 29: Okay, what is it that you inherit? 1 Peter 2:9: There are those who "belong to Christ" and are a "people for His name" as well as a "royal priesthood." It looks like here is the concept of an invitation to do a special work. What does the Bible say about those that are *not* called out, then? Romans 8:19-21: The rest of the world is looking for the answers to their misery. Who are the "sons of God" for whom the rest of creation is waiting? If they are doomed, why are they waiting for the revealing of the sons of God? The masses of humanity are given the same freedoms, even though they weren't of the invited ones? It seems to be saying that salvation has two different parts. 1 Timothy 4:10 1 John 2:2 1 Timothy 5:24: All of these are being spoken of in the context of salvation. How does that fit in with the concept of an invitation and the name of Jesus when most people don't even acknowledge it? According to Scripture, there are two different groups that have a path to salvation -1) the called out ones,



and 2) the rest of the world. 2 Corinthians 5:17-19: This describes a two-phased process wherein we have been reconciled, so we pass this ministry on to the world.

### **Condemning Vicarious Redemption, Christopher Hitchens**

- *Regarding Vicarious Redemption - I didn't ask for it and would rather live without it... Wait, it wasn't an offer - you refuse it on pain of death! I'm not free to refuse this offer, you're making me an offer I can't decline...was that a threat?*

John 5:29-30: There are two classes of people described here: 1) Those who did good deeds come forth to a resurrection of life; 2) those who did evil deeds come forth to a resurrection of judgment. We believe that Mr. Hitchens' strong reactions are for naught, because we don't think that he understands what Jesus' sacrifice really did. Acts 24:15 Acts 17:30-31: He is calling for repentance now because there is a coming day of judgment. "Being saved" doesn't mean we can do whatever we want because of grace. It just means the handicap has been removed and we are now accountable for what we do. Romans 2:5-9: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>*But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,* <sup>6</sup>*who will render to each person according to his deeds: (accountability)* <sup>7</sup>*to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; (these are the true followers of Christ)* <sup>8</sup>*but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. (everybody else)* <sup>9</sup>*There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,*

### **Christopher Hitchens concludes on Vicarious Redemption**

- *To take away your sins is to take away your responsibility, I can't relieve you I can't wash you white as snow again and make you new again...It's more than can be and more than should be promised...Vicarious Redemption is scapegoating...It's an old primitive practice from the middle east, it doesn't deserve the attention of civilized or thoughtful people...*

But Mr. Hitchens is not correct - Jesus took away the handicap that wasn't our fault - he didn't remove our responsibility! We still have to do the will of God - either now or later. Later Satan will be bound and will not be able to influence those turning to the Lord. Jesus' sacrifice does *not* take away the personal responsibility for the things for which you are personally responsible. Jesus' sacrifice *does* take away personal responsibility and consequence for the things that were given to you by way of inherited disadvantage - things that were completely beyond your choice and control.

1 Timothy 2:3-4: (KJV) <sup>3</sup>*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior;* <sup>4</sup>*Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the **knowledge <1922>** of the truth.*

**Knowledge: Strong's #1922 recognition, full discernment, acknowledgement**

In the previous example, the called ones were to believe first and then come to salvation. Here, men are coming to knowledge of the truth *after* they are saved. The first group are called out Christians, the believers. ("Believe on the Lord Jesus and be saved.") The message to the second group is, "Be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth."

2 Peter 3:7-9: When God wants it, it will happen. What seems like is taking forever is an instant to God. Isaiah 42:1-4: There will be a time when justice reigns upon the earth, as a result of the Day of Judgment. This is good news! Daniel 7:13-14: This is an earthly picture in the prophecy of Daniel, talking about a kingdom with all people, nations and languages. Jesus said there is a resurrection for all - with accountability, and this kingdom is the end result.

Colossians 1:20: Jesus' objective was to reconcile all things to himself - not just a few, not just the elect, not just the royal priesthood, but the whole earth that is waiting in pain for the manifestation of the Son of God. If it's torment, they wouldn't be looking forward to it. We see in the Scriptures that salvation has two parts: 1) those who follow after Jesus now, and 2) everybody else. The good news is, it involves everybody! The good news is everybody is accountable.

**So who gets saved?**  
**For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...**  
**Think about it...!**