

GROWING IN GRACE

CEDAR CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

Introduction to the series

- There are many benefits and truths which are ours because of our salvation.
- Some of these truths took place before we were ever born; only to be applied in our time when we responded to the truth of the gospel.
- Some of these benefits are ours today, after salvation, because we are now unified with Christ and have His mind.
- Some of these benefits will not be realized or experienced until after we are gone from this life and stand face to face with the Lord.
- None of these benefits can be truly experienced today, though known extensively, because of the remaining effects of sin in man, even after our salvation.
- Over the next several months, we are going to start with mankind's need for salvation.
- Why do all people need to be saved? Are all people equally sinful or bad in God's eyes? Did Jesus have to die for our sins? Did Jesus death make salvation only possible or by His death did He secure salvation for those who would believe? If we are saved, why do we still struggle with sin? Do I still have to keep the law to be saved? What role do the 10 Commandments have in my life as a Christian? Who is the Holy Spirit and what role does He place in our salvation, sanctification, and continued life in Christ? What does being saved have to do with church membership, spiritual gifts, one another ministry, and fellowship? Can anyone take me away from Jesus after I have been born again? What do I owe God after being born again? Can I ever be perfect in this life? What about shame, guilt, and other feelings about my sin?
- This is just a small snapshot of some of the questions that we are going to look at and answer as we work through the doctrine of salvation.
- Everyone is in a different place in their walk with the Lord so we are all going to have different understandings and questions when talking about our salvation.

- It is important to allow people to grow in their depth of understanding...as long as we all start at the same place.
- **Ephesians 2:8-9** “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”
- **Romans 10:9-10** “...that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”
- This must be your starting point with regards to salvation. As Peter said in **Acts 4:12** “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

Study of the Doctrine of Salvation

- Doctrine: a set of beliefs held and taught by a church
- Theology: “Theos” means God and “-logy” is a study of interest or words.
 - Thus, to study Theology means to study God or things believed about God (difference between Theology and theology)
- Just by way of introduction to the overall study of Theology.
- The doctrine of salvation comes in a particular order within systematic theology.
- Most systematic theologies are organized in a similar way:
 - Bibliology, the study of the Word of God.
 - Theology Proper, the study of God the Father.
 - Angelology, the study of angels and demons.
 - Anthropology and hamartiology, the study of man and sin.
 - Christology, the study of Christ.
 - **Soteriology, the study of salvation.**
 - Pneumatology, the study of the Holy Spirit
 - Ecclesiology, the study of the church.
 - Eschatology, the study of the last things or end times.
- If you notice, the study of salvation comes in a logical place.
- You must know God’s Word, have a fundamental basis for your understanding.
- From God’s Word, we can know who God is, what He did, and what He expects.

- We then can know about our issues as mankind, we are sinners in need of a savior.
- Then we read about our Savior, Jesus Christ.
- It is then we get to our salvation, what was done for us in our greatest need.

10 REASONS TO STUDY THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION¹

1. To Understand the Depth of God's Love

Salvation reveals the extent of God's love and His desire for relationship with humanity.

John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.”

2. To Recognize Humanity's Need for Redemption

A study of salvation begins by acknowledging our fallen condition and need for a Savior.

Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

3. To Appreciate Christ's Atoning Work

Understanding salvation deepens gratitude for Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection.

Romans 5:8 – “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

4. To Strengthen Assurance of Faith

Knowing what salvation truly is provides believers with confidence and peace in Christ.

1 John 5:13 – “These things I have written to you... so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

5. To Guard Against False Teachings

Sound doctrine protects believers from counterfeit gospels and spiritual deception.

Galatians 1:8-9 – “Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached... he is to be accursed!”

¹ AI Generated

6. To Grow in Spiritual Maturity

Salvation leads to transformation—living out the faith empowered by God’s Spirit.

Philippians 2:12–13 – “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you...”

7. To Cultivate a Heart for Evangelism

Understanding salvation motivates believers to share the gospel with others.

Romans 10:14–15 – “How are they to believe in Him whom they have not heard? ... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

8. To Rejoice in the Security of God’s Grace

Salvation is the work of God’s grace, not human effort, giving believers lasting assurance.

Ephesians 2:8–9 – “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves; it is the gift of God...”

9. To Live in Hope of Eternal Glory

Salvation promises believers a secure, eternal inheritance in Christ.

1 Peter 1:3–4 – “He has caused us to be born again to a living hope... to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled.”

10. To Glorify God for His Redemptive Plan

The ultimate purpose of salvation is to bring praise to the glory of God’s grace.

Ephesians 1:7–8, 12 – “In Him we have redemption through His blood... to the praise of His glory.”

Summary

Studying the doctrine of salvation strengthens faith, deepens gratitude, guards against error, and draws believers closer to God’s heart. It is essential for spiritual growth and faithful living.

Key Theological Definitions in Soteriology with Scripture References²

1. **Soteriology**: The branch of Christian theology that deals with the doctrine of salvation. It explores how God saves humanity from sin and its consequences, through the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - **Romans 1:16** "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."
 - **1 Timothy 2:3-4** "This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."
 - **Psalms 62:1-2** "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken."
2. **Sin (Hamartiology)**: The transgression of God's law or the failure to conform to God's moral character. It encompasses acts of commission (doing what is forbidden) and omission (failing to do what is commanded).
 - **Original Sin**: The sinful state and guilt inherited by all humanity from Adam's first sin. It refers to both the corrupted nature and the legal culpability.
 - **Romans 5:12** "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—"
 - **Psalms 51:5** "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me."
 - **Total Depravity**: The doctrine that sin has affected every part of a person's being (mind, emotions, will, body), rendering them unable to save themselves or perfectly obey God without divine intervention. It does not mean people are as evil as they could be, but that every part is *depraved*.
 - **Romans 3:10-12** "as it is written: 'None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.'"
 - **Jeremiah 17:9** "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

² This list and definitions were generated using AI and the ESV and NASB

- **Ephesians 2:1** "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins..."
- **Actual Sin:** Individual acts of disobedience or rebellion against God's commands, committed by a person.
 - **Romans 3:23** "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"
 - **1 John 1:8** "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
- 3. **Atonement:** The work of Christ on the cross to deal with sin and restore the relationship between God and humanity.
 - **Propitiation:** Christ's death satisfying God's righteous wrath against sin. He turned away God's anger by bearing the penalty Himself.
 - **Romans 3:25** "whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins."
 - **1 John 2:2** "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."
 - **Expiation:** The removal or cancellation of sin and guilt. Christ's death purged sin, making reconciliation possible.
 - **Hebrews 9:26** "But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."
 - **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."
 - **Reconciliation:** The restoration of a broken relationship between God and humanity, from a state of enmity to one of peace and favor, made possible through Christ's work.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:18-19** "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 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 5:10** "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."

- **Redemption:** The act of "buying back" or setting free from slavery (to sin, death, and the law's curse) through the payment of a price (Christ's blood).
 - **Ephesians 1:7** "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,"
 - **Colossians 1:13-14** "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."
 - **Substitutionary Atonement:** The core idea that Christ died "in our place" or "on our behalf," bearing the penalty for our sins that we justly deserved.
 - **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,"
 - **2 Corinthians 5:21** "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
 - **Penal Substitution:** A specific understanding of substitutionary atonement where Christ bore the *punishment* (penalty) for our sins as our substitute.
 - **Isaiah 53:5** "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed."
 - **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 hanged on a tree'—"
4. **Grace:** God's unmerited favor toward undeserving sinners.
- **Ephesians 2:8-9** "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."
 - **Titus 2:11** "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,"
 - **Romans 11:6** "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace."
5. **Election (Predestination):** God's sovereign choice, before the foundation of the world, of those He will save.
- **Unconditional Election:** The belief that God's choice is based solely on His own sovereign will and not on any foreseen merit or response in the individual.

- **Ephesians 1:4-5** "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,"
- **Romans 8:29-30** "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."

6. **Calling:** God's invitation to salvation.

- **General Call:** The universal proclamation of the Gospel to all people.
 - **Matthew 22:14** "For many are called, but few are chosen."
- **Effectual Call (Irresistible Grace):** The specific, internal, and supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the elect, enabling them to respond in faith and repentance.
 - **John 6:44** "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day."
 - **Romans 8:30** "And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."

7. **Repentance:** A change of mind that leads to a change of heart and action concerning sin and one's relationship with God.

- **Acts 3:19** "Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,"
- **Luke 13:3** "No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."
- **2 Peter 3:9** "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

8. **Faith:** Trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

- **Hebrews 11:1** "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."
- **Romans 10:9-10** "because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."

- **Ephesians 2:8** "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,"
9. **Conversion**: The act of turning from sin to God through repentance and faith.
- **Acts 20:21** "testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - **1 Thessalonians 1:9** "For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,"
10. **Regeneration (New Birth)**: The instantaneous, supernatural work of the Holy Spirit where a spiritually dead person is made spiritually alive, receiving a new nature and a desire for God.
- **John 3:3** "Jesus answered him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.'"
 - **Titus 3:5** "he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,"
 - **2 Corinthians 5:17** "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."
11. **Justification**: God's instantaneous legal declaration that a sinner, by grace through faith in Christ, is righteous in His sight.
- **Imputation of Righteousness**: God crediting Christ's perfect righteousness to the believer's account, while their sin is simultaneously imputed to Christ on the cross.
 - **Romans 4:5** "And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,"
 - **Philippians 3:9** "and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—"
 - **2 Corinthians 5:21** "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
 - **Forensic Act**: A legal declaration by God as Judge, rather than an internal change in the person's character.
 - **Romans 5:1** "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

12. **Adoption:** God's act of bringing believers into His family as full-fledged children, with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of sonship.
- **Romans 8:15** "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"
 - **Galatians 4:4-5** "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."
 - **John 1:12** "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,"
13. **Union with Christ:** The intimate, spiritual, and mystical bond that exists between Christ and every believer.
- **John 15:5** "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."
 - **Galatians 2:20** "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."
 - **Romans 6:5-6** "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin."
14. **Sanctification:** The lifelong, progressive process by which a believer is set apart for God's purposes and increasingly conforms to the image of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Positional Sanctification:** The immediate, once-for-all setting apart of a believer at conversion, identifying them as holy in God's eyes.
 - **1 Corinthians 1:2** "To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:"
 - **Hebrews 10:10** "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."
 - **Progressive Sanctification:** The ongoing, cooperative work of God and the believer to grow in holiness and overcome sin.

- **1 Thessalonians 4:3** "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;"
- **Philippians 2:12-13** "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."
- **2 Corinthians 3:18** "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

15. **Perseverance of the Saints (Eternal Security)**: The doctrine that those who are truly justified by God will be kept by His power and will persevere in faith to the end, ultimately being glorified.

- **John 10:27-29** "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."
- **Romans 8:38-39** "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- **Philippians 1:6** "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

16. **Glorification**: The final stage of salvation, occurring at Christ's return, when believers will be completely freed from the presence and effects of sin, receive glorified bodies, and experience perfect communion with God eternally.

- **Romans 8:30** "And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."
- **1 Corinthians 15:42-43** "So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power."

- **Revelation 21:3-4** "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there any longer be mourning nor crying nor pain, for the former things have passed away.'"
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ASPECT OF SALVATION	WHEN IT TAKES PLACE	DESCRIPTION	BIBLICAL REFERENCES
FOREKNOWLEDGE	Before time (Eternity Past)	God, in His infinite understanding, intimately knew and set His love upon individuals before creation.	Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:2, 20
ELECTION / PREDESTINATION	Before time (Eternity Past)	God's sovereign choice and determination of an individual's destiny for eternal life; a part of His eternal purpose.	Eph. 1:4-5; Rom. 8:29-30
GOSPEL CALL	In time (Life on Earth)	The outward proclamation of the gospel message to all people.	Rom. 10:14; John 3:16

EFFECTUAL CALLING / REGENERATION	In time (At conversion)	The Holy Spirit's work of drawing an individual to Christ and bringing them from spiritual death to life ("born again").	John 6:44; John 3:3; Eph. 2:1, 4-5
CONVERSION (FAITH AND REPENTANCE)	In time (At conversion)	The human response of placing faith in Christ and repenting of sin, enabled by regeneration.	Acts 16:31; Acts 3:19
JUSTIFICATION	In time (At conversion)	A one-time legal declaration by God that the believer is righteous in His sight, freed from the penalty of sin.	Rom 5:1; Rom 8:30; Eph 2:8-9
ADOPTION	In time (At conversion)	The act of God making the believer a full member of His family, an heir of God.	Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 8:15

SANCTIFICATION	Before, In time (Ongoing process)	The ongoing work of the Holy Spirit to make the believer more like Jesus Christ; being saved from the power of sin.	1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 2:11; Rom. 6:1-14; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 4:3
PERSEVERANCE	In time (Ongoing process)	The continuous work of God in keeping the believer in the Christian faith until the end.	1 Pet. 1:5; John 10:28-29
GLORIFICATION	Beyond time (At Christ's return or after death)	The final stage, we are completely freed from the presence of sin and given a new, resurrection body, perfected in holiness.	Rom. 8:30; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2

THREE WAYS THE BIBLE TALKS ABOUT OUR ONE SALVATION

- In the Bible, salvation has three aspects: past, present and future.
 - In our 7-week class we are going to cover all of those and what they mean for the believer.
- Here is an example of how the Bible talks about our **past salvation**:
 - **Ephesians 2:8-9** “For by grace *you have been saved* through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”
 - It is an act, you being saved, which took place in the past *and* without you doing anything. You were acted upon for your salvation, you did not act for your salvation.

- Here is an example of how the Bible talks about our **present salvation**:
 - **1 Corinthians 1:18** “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”
 - Salvation, then, in its present reality, allows us to slowly but continually be freed from the power of sin. Having been once-for-all declared right in God’s eyes, we have been freed from our guilt and now can begin to be freed from sin’s power.³
- Here is an example of how the Bible says our salvation is **future**:
 - **Romans 10:9** “...that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved...”
 - Passive, once again, the subject is being acted upon in the sentence.
 - We did not become savable but we were saved.
 - When you put this together, there is something acting upon you that states the fact that in the future you will be saved.
 - The future becomes the present reality when in our own time we confess and repent.

³ <https://www.challies.com/articles/salvation-a-past-present-future-reality/>