

Major Bible Themes

52 Vital Doctrines of the Scriptures Simplified and Explained

Adapted from the book *Major Bible Themes*
written by Lewis Sperry Chafer and revised by John f. Walvoord

Salvation from the Penalty of Sin

- The Meaning of Salvation
 - The divine revelation concerning salvation should be mastered by every child of God.
 - ✦ This revelation discloses the full measure of God's love.
 - ✦ This is the message which God has committed to believers to proclaim to the world.
 - A principal use of the term "salvation" in the Bible is to encapsulate the entirety of the work of God by which He rescues man from the eternal ruin and doom of sin and bestows upon him the riches of His grace, including both eternal life now and eternal glory in heaven.
 - Although the revealed details concerning the Savior have varied from age to age, salvation has always been by grace through faith in God's promised Redeemer.
 - ✦ Seed of the Woman (Gen 3:15).
 - ✦ From the line of Shem (Gen 9:26).
 - ✦ The "seed" of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gen 21:12; 22:18; 35:12).
 - ✦ From the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10).
 - ✦ A descendant of David (2 Sam 7:12-16).
 - ✦ Born of a virgin (Isa 7:14) in Bethlehem Ephrathah (Micah 5:2).
 - ✦ Jesus of Nazareth (Matt, Mark, Luke, John, Acts 10:34-43).
 - Salvation is in every aspect a work of God in behalf of man and is in no sense a work of man in behalf of God.
 - God's work of salvation in this present age includes...
 - ✦ Expiation, Propitiation, and Unlimited Atonement.
 - ✦ Imputed Righteousness, Justification, & Positional Sanctification.
 - ✦ Regeneration, Eternal Life, and Eternal Security.
 - ✦ The Indwelling, Sealing and Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - ✦ Redemption, Freedom from the OSN and from the Law.
 - ✦ The Royal Family, Priesthood and Ambassadorship.
 - ✦ Access to God, Spiritual Gifts, Problem Solving Devices, etc.
- Salvation as God's Remedy for Sin
 - Sin is always equally and completely sinful whether it is committed by a lifelong criminal or a respected businessman, a housewife or a queen, a believer or an unbeliever.

- Sin can be “cured” only on the ground of the shed blood of the Son of God (Eph 1:7 cf. Col 1:14; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18).
 - ✦ Divine forgiveness of sin is not based upon some act of leniency by God in remitting the penalty of sin.
 - ✦ Sin is forgiven only when a substitute has met the holy demands of God against the sinner.
 - ✦ This was anticipated in the animal sacrifices of the O.T.
- Salvation Before and After the Cross
 - The divine method of dealing with sin prior to the cross is said to have been by atonement – the “covering over” of sin.
 - ✦ The Hebrew word for atonement is כִּפָּר (caphar) which means to “cover over”.
 - ✦ The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins (Heb 10:4).
 - ✦ When the sinner laid his hand on the head of the animal (Lev 1:4) he was identified with the animal whose shed blood symbolically anticipated the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
 - ✦ This symbolic act accomplished nothing (in and of itself), but if the sinner was truly repentant of his sins, the animal sacrifice signified that God, in His mercy, would “pass over” his sins (Rom 3:25).
 - The divine method of dealing with sin after the cross is stated in Rom 5:6, 8 – Christ has died for helpless, ungodly sinners.
 - ✦ When Jesus was on the cross He did not cover over the sins of the world, rather He bore the sins in His body (1 Pet 2:24) and took them away (John 1:29; 1 John 3:5).
 - ✦ God the Father is now perfectly just in declaring as justified the sinner who believes in His Son (Rom 3:26).
 - ✦ This justification is applied “retroactively” to all O.T. saints who had placed their faith in God’s promise (Rom 4:5, 9).
 - ✦ The work of the cross dealt completely with sin (John 19:30) such that the only thing one must do is believe in Him for salvation.
- The Three Tenses of Salvation
 - For a believer, salvation from the penalty of sin is referred to as being wholly brought to completion in the past at the moment of faith in Jesus Christ (Eph 2:8), so perfect a work that it cannot be undone (Rom 8:38-39; 1 John 5:13).
 - For a believer, there is also present salvation from the power of sin in the daily life (Rom 6:11-14; 8:2; 1 John 1:7).
 - For a believer, there is also the promise of future salvation (1 Pet 1:5) from the very presence of sin as we are set free from this body of death (Rom 7:24; 1 Cor 15:49) and perfectly conformed to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29; Phil 3:21).
- Salvation as the Finished Work of Christ
 - It is critical to distinguish between the finished work of Christ on the cross for all, which is completed to infinite perfection, and the saving work of God which is wrought for (and in) the individual at the moment he believes in Christ.

- Jesus declared His earthly ministry complete in His prayer (John 17:4) and then declared the work of salvation on the cross complete when He said, “It is finished!” (John 19:30).
- The Father was completely satisfied with the finished work of Christ on the cross which made redemption (1 Tim 2:6) and reconciliation (2 Cor 5:19) available to everyone (1 John 2:2).
- The sacrificial death of Christ does not (in and of itself) save anyone, but rather provides sufficient ground for God the Father to save all who believe in His Son (even the worst of all sinners) without any compromise to His infinite holiness.
- When an individual believes in Jesus Christ, the blood of Christ is applied to him personally as God accomplishes the work of salvation for (and in) that individual.
- This is pictured in the Passover when the lamb was first slain, but the process was not complete until the blood was applied to the doorposts and the lintel of the house (Ex 12:1-7).
- Salvation as the Saving Work of God
 - The saving work of God is accomplished the moment someone believes in Jesus Christ & includes redemption, reconciliation, regeneration, imputation, justification, sanctification, etc.
 - By this work believers are given the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21), made children of God (John 1:12), brought near to God (Eph 2:13), made citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20), qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints (Col 1:12), made a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), made members of the household of God (Eph 2:19), made complete in Christ (Col 2:10), delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col 1:13).
 - The recipient of this saving work is forgiven all trespasses and is justified forever before God.
 - God could not forgive and justify anyone apart from the cross of Christ, but only those who believe in Jesus Christ and are recipients of this great work of salvation will reap the benefit of His sacrificial death.
 - Forgiveness of sins is never reckoned to the unsaved apart from the whole work of saving grace on the ground of believing on Christ as Savior.
- Salvation as Related to the Sin of the Saved
 - The effect of the Christian’s sin, among other things, is the loss of fellowship with the Father and the Son (1 John 1:6) and the grieving of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30).
 - The believer that sins does not need to be saved again, but must once again trust in the cross of Christ by recognizing that the sins have already been laid upon Him and will be forgiven once they have been confessed to the Father (1 John 1:9).
 - Sin in the life of a believer is an offense before God and a cause for loss of reward, so we should avoid sin at every turn even though we know we have an Advocate in heaven (1 John 2:1).
- Salvation Conditioned upon Faith Alone
 - There are roughly 115 passages in the N.T. which declare that the salvation of the sinner depends only upon believing and another 35 which state that salvation depends upon faith.
 - Believing in Jesus Christ constitutes more than an intellectual understanding of His life and work, but is not based upon an emotional response of some kind either.

- Instead, believing is a definite act in which the individual wills to receive salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Believing is the opposite of doing a work; it is trusting in the work of another instead.
- The study of Scripture does not affirm that salvation comes only to those who “believe and pray”, “believe and confess sin”, “believe and confess Christ”, “believe and be baptized”, “believe and repent”, “believe and make restitution”, etc.
- These six added verbs are mentioned in Scripture (and they have their full intended meaning where stated), but if they were essential to salvation they would never be omitted when the way to be saved is stated (John 1:12; 3:16, 36; 5:24; 20:31; Acts 16:31; Rom 1:16; 3:22; 4:5, 24; 5:1; 10:4; Gal 3:22).
- Thus, salvation is by grace through faith alone in Christ alone.
- Questions
 - Why should a child of God master the doctrine of salvation?

 - What is a principal use of the term “salvation” in the Bible?

 - What two universal facts are brought out in Scripture concerning sin and salvation?

 - How did God deal with sin in the Old Testament?

 - How does God’s dealing with sin after the cross differ from the Old Testament method?

 - What are the three tenses of salvation?

 - Distinguish between the finished work of Christ on the cross and the saving work of God as it applies to the individual the moment he believes.

 - Why is it true that Christ died for the sins of the whole world, yet not all are saved?

 - Name some of the important phases of God’s gracious work in saving men as embodied in some important doctrinal words.

- What are some of the aspects of the work of God accomplished when an individual is saved?

- How is salvation related to forgiveness of sins?

- In dealing with the sins of Christians, what is involved in their forgiveness?

- If a Christian fails to confess sin, what does he lose?

- Discuss the Biblical evidence that salvation is conditioned upon faith alone.

- Why is intellectual acknowledgement or an emotional reaction to the gospel insufficient for salvation?

- What is the error of attaching certain works to believing?

- Discuss the fact that works are a result of believing unto salvation, not a condition of salvation.

- Summarize what man must do to be saved.