

Three Views of Salvation Promoted in our Day

Calvinism - Predestination

John 17:1-3

1. **Total Depravity** - Man's original sin, inherited from Adam, causes him to be so depraved he cannot do anything good of himself, not even repent or believe in God.
2. **Unconditional Election** - God in His mercy has chosen the elect before the world began and chooses to forgive men regardless of any choice or merit of their own.
3. **Limited Atonement** - Jesus did not die for the lost or they would be saved. He only died for those who are chosen to be saved.
4. **Irresistible Grace** - If a person is chosen by God for salvation, then the recipient cannot resist or reject this grace.
5. **Perseverance of the Saints** - Those chosen for salvation cannot resist it; they cannot choose to not be saved. Therefore, they will persevere until the end. If God has chosen you for salvation, you cannot be lost.

What must I do to be saved? Do nothing – When God reveals His grace in your heart, you will become holy. When God moves in your heart you will not be able to resist, but will show signs of grace.

*A choice-free salvation.
This is based on confusing Scriptures
that speak of one's calling or position
in life with one's personal choice
of salvation.*

Free Grace Salvation

Ephesians 2:8-9

1. **Salvation vs Discipleship** - There is a difference between becoming saved and being a disciple. All saved go to heaven even those who are disobedient, but diligent disciples will receive special rewards. Much is made of getting born again and receiving Christ as Savior.
2. **Faith vs Works** - Faith is separated from obedience. Faith is the passive persuasion that Jesus is the Messiah, and active works are not necessary for salvation.
3. **Once Saved - Always Saved:** A person does not need to promise good works or disciplined behavior in order for salvation, thus one cannot lose his salvation through personal sinning or potential failure.
4. **Carnal vs Devoted Christians:** Carnal Christians have many evil deeds in their lives which must be burned up after death and before one can enter heaven. Some saved will dwell in "outer darkness," far, far away from the throne of light, but they are still saved.
5. **Radical vs Moderate View:** Radicals claim belief for one nanosecond will assure one of eternal life for all eternity. Moderates believe if your life does not produce a change, you have not truly believed. Both believe, "Once a son, always a son."

What must I do to be saved? Only believe. Anything more than belief shows you think you need works for salvation. You may call Jesus Lord only to show you believe He has authority to save you without any obedience.

*A formula salvation
based on selected Scriptures
and choosing to ignore other Scriptures.*

Discipleship Salvation

1 John 3:5-10

1. **Living vs Dead Faith** - A faith that saves cannot be separated from a faith that obeys. Repentance, confession of sin, confession of Christ and baptism are all requirements for salvation. A faith without obedience is the condemning faith of devils. (Jas 2:19)
2. **Saving Obedient Works vs Provisional Works** - Man can do nothing to provide salvation; these are the "not of works" Eph 2:8-9 refers to. However, man must make many choices to respond to and obey Divine commands to partake of salvation. (Rom 6:6)
3. **Personal Possession vs Empty Profession.** Saying "Lord, Lord" is not enough to enter heaven. Personal discipleship is required. (Mat 7:21)
4. **Fruit of the Spirit vs Works of the Flesh.** A person's walk with the Lord will be lived out in everyday life. A person who does not give evidence of Spirit fruit or who lives with un-repent sins unto death in his life is damned. (Eph 5:5-7,9)
5. **Collective vs Individual Salvation** Many New Testament commands cannot be lived out alone but are practiced within the context of church life. Church membership in itself will not save, but refusing membership creates a lifestyle of disobedience and may bring damnation. (1 Cor 5:1-13)

What must I do to be saved? Believe in Jesus which includes a lifestyle of obedience to the commands of Christ and His Apostles and a daily self-denial and cross bearing.

*A lifestyle salvation
based on comparing all Scriptures
that speak to man's salvation.*

We don't live like the nominal Christianity because we don't believe the doctrines of nominal Christianity. Beliefs have consequences for time and also eternity. A false view of salvation will create a lifestyle of disobedience and a lifestyle of disobedience creates an eternity of separation from Christ.

While Calvinism actually came into existence through the imagination of Augustine (354-430) the overshadowing power of church control kept the doctrine from affecting the rank and file seeker.

After the Reformation, John Calvin (1509-1564) summarized Augustine doctrines in such simple terminology that many lay members and churches began to operate on the platform he summarized.

About 125 years ago, a reaction against the determinism of Calvinism broke out and rapidly spread throughout the Protestant churches. This new doctrine (Free Grace) emphasized that salvation was the result of man exercising his free will, that it did not come through predestination. While originally the free grace doctrine was an improvement over Calvinism, it brought a worse error into Christianity.

Let's now examine the teachings of these doctrines, and contrast them with what we understand the Bible to teach as the answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

Differences Produced by these Doctrines

Does God love everyone the same?

Calvinism - No. "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." (Romans 9:13)

Free Grace - Yes, So much so that possibly everyone is saved, especially those who have professed to believe in Jesus.

Discipleship Salvation - Yes and No. God is no respecter of persons and all are offered salvation. However, God's wrath is upon all who go against His will and He has special love for those who walk in Jesus' commandments. John 14:21,23

Is all sin the same?

Calvinism - For the non-elect, all sins are mortal, i.e. will destroy mankind's relationship with God. For the elect only, sins are venial, because God in His mercy has chosen to forgive their sins and they are not counted against them.

Free Grace - "God justifies the sinner on the sole condition of faith in Christ, not righteous living." There is no significant difference in God's eyes in sins.

Discipleship Salvation - There are sins not unto death and there are sins unto death. (1Jo 5:16-17) Some sins may be forgiven by personal repentance and some need to be brought before the church in public confession and/or discipline.

Does Discipleship Salvation have Snares?

Since Discipleship Salvation places an emphasis on obedience and on brotherhood, there is the tendency to Phariseeism in church life. This is why Jesus spent so much time and energy encouraging us to beware these deceptions - He understood the common snares of obedience salvation. We'll name a few snares.

Hypocrisy: When we lose the vision that our salvation is about keeping a love relationship with our Lord, we may make religion all about looking good to the church. Personal devotion, family worship and soul winning fade away and life may be filled with temporal pursuits. When temptations come the hypocrite is powerless to resist and will hide sins under a blanket of false piety.

Legalism: When church life becomes a system of rules, then trust and honor is given to those who appear loyal to traditions and church administration.

Stair step apostasy: Because of disillusionment with legalism, succeeding generations may make choices that accommodate worldliness and compromise in incremental steps. In the church of Jesus Christ, there is should be no generational gap but each should put full energy into serving Christ's kingdom in a united way.

Church contentions and divisions: When "things" matter, then differences may arise. If we lose our vision of Christ's love for each other and what is most important in church life, we may turn differences into cliques and cliques into bitter divisions over preferences that really have no eternal value.

Let us help each other follow the teachings of Christ and the Apostles.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. (1 John 3:4-10)

- H. Stephen Ebersole
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What Must I Do to Be Saved?

Acts 16:30

Present day theologies
that produce different life-styles.

*We don't live like nominal Christendom
because we don't believe like nominal Christendom...*

You will recognize this urgent question as coming from the lips of the Philippian Jailor. He realized had he died from suicide as he intended, he would have been eternally lost. Just as the Jailor needed a proper answer to his heart-felt question, we too need to know how to be saved. We too linger on the edge of eternity. We too will either depart and be with Christ or one day inhabit the destiny of the damned.

The Jailor received a simple answer. Before the night was over he and his household had chosen to become a part of the new body of disciples at Philippi.

Today the answers one receives to this question are quite diverse and quite confusing.

Originally the answer was confused by the Catholic church organization as it became a state religion. The church was seen as the body of Christ, so the simple answer was -- "Do what the church tells you," even when it departed from the teachings of the Bible.

(Sadly, many of the descendants of the Anabaptists who saw the need for personal relationship with Christ and obedience to Him through His body, now also find a supposed salvation by doing what the church says.)

The Protestant and Anabaptist reformation spurred a new vision -- the vision of individuals needing to come to a personal belief in Christ. Anabaptists believed the requirement for salvation was a personal choice to follow Christ's commands. On the inside of this pamphlet, we have a basic outline of the options given people as they desire salvation.