

What are the Benefits of Salvation?

We sometimes think salvation is mainly a past event where we say a prayer to accept Christ into our lives, get a ticket to get into heaven, and the rest of our lives is just a waiting game before we die and finally get to enter into the presence of the LORD. It is true that we are waiting for our true home (Hebrews 11:13-16). Yet while we are still on this side of heaven we are called to be ready to meet Christ (Matthew 25:1-30, Luke 12:35-48, 1 John 3:3). Paul says that it was better for him to be with the Lord but realized that it was also necessary for him to be on earth to minister to the believers (Phil 1:23-24, 2 Corinth 5:8). Peter made it clear that we are strangers and pilgrims in this world indicating that we are only passing through (1 Peter 2:11). Salvation isn't just a way to get to heaven, but it is something that happens FOR US (Christ's Sacrifice), WITH US (We Must Have Faith), and TO US (We experience an inner change). It is also something that happens in the PAST, has manifestation in the PRESENT, and is a hope for the FUTURE. We will go over some important terms that describe different aspects of our Salvation.

What is Justification? - (Genesis 15:6, Romans 4, Galatians 3, Isaiah 6:4-7, Colossians 2:14, Matt 18:21-35, Zechariah 3, Luke)

This term emphasizes our judicial relationship with God when God declares us righteous. It is a judicial pardon. This can also look like a cancelled debt. The important aspect of this pardon, is that it is because of what Christ has done that we are able to be declared righteous before God. It is something that we have to accept by Faith, and is something that we do not earn. Paul in his letter to the Romans and Galatians, points to the life of Abraham as evidence that righteousness has always been a matter of Faith. In Genesis 15:6, it says that Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Isaiah when he has a vision of God recognizes his sin, and God through an angel pronounces that his guilt was taken away and his sin was covered. Justification is not a PROCESS but a PRONOUNCEMENT. A great picture of this in the Old Testament is the vision God gives Zechariah of Joshua the Priest.

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a log snatched from the fire?" Now Joshua was clothed in filthy garments and was standing before the angel. And He responded and said to those who were standing before him, saying, "Remove the filthy garments from him." Again He said to him, "See, I have taken your guilt away from you and will clothe you with festive robes." Then I said, "Have them put a clean headband on his head." So they put the clean headband on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the LORD was standing by. And the angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, "The LORD of armies says this: 'If you walk in My ways and perform My service, then you will both govern My house and be in charge of My courtyards, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing *here*. Now listen, Joshua, *you* high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you—indeed they are men who are a sign: for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch. For behold, the stone that I have put before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I am going to engrave an inscription on it,' declares the LORD of armies, 'and I will remove the guilt of that land in one day. On that day,' declares the LORD of armies, 'every one *of you* will invite his neighbor to *sit* under *his* vine and under *his* fig tree.'" - Zechariah 3 (NASB)

What is Propitiation? - (1 John 2:2, 4:10, Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17, Genesis 22, Exodus 12:1-50)

When John the Baptist introduces Christ, he announces him as "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world" (1 John 1:29). Jesus would be symbolized as a Lamb who was slain in the book of Revelation (Rev

5:6), and it would be by his blood that we would be freed from our sin (Rev 1:5). Jesus would be that sacrificial lamb that would appease God's wrath against sin and would make available a restored fellowship with God for those who put their trust in His sacrifice (Lamb typology - *a picture that represents an idea* - Genesis 22:1-24, Exodus 12:1-13). Scripture makes it clear that our sin creates a separation between us and God (Isaiah 59:2) , sin brings God's wrath (Romans 1:18), and sin brings death (eternal separation from God) (Rom 6:23). Something must be done to restore our relationship with God, and our works are not sufficient (Rom 3:20). God requires a sacrifice to be made to appease his wrath (Lev 17:11). The concept behind the word Propitiation from a non-Christian view, is a sacrifice that pleases the wrath of the god's. In the Biblical view, it is a sacrifice that appeases God's holy wrath against sin so that fellowship can be restored. Here is a link to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (<https://www.internationalstandardbible.com/P/propitiation.html>) for a more detailed discussion.

What is Redemption? - to buy back from the marketplace - Rev 5:9, 1 Corinth 6:19, Galatians 3:13, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Romans 6:15-23, 2 Peter 2:19, Hosea, Ruth, Philemon

When we were living in sin, the Bible says that we were slaves of sin (Romans 6:15-23, 2 Peter 2:19) and we were also servants of Satan (1 John 3:8). The concept behind redemption is explained by three Greek words: *Agorazo* which means "to purchase from the marketplace" which denotes Jesus paying the price for our Salvation. *Exagorazo* which means to pay the price to deliver someone from the power of another (See Galatians 3:13 - we were delivered from the domination of the curse of the law). The last word is *Lutroo* which means paying the price to secure one's freedom (1 Peter 1:18-19). So Redemption is Jesus paying the price our sin demanded, so that he would be set free from the power of sin to make us his own possession (1 Peter 2:9-12). The book of Hosea, offers a great picture of redemption. The prophet is told to marry a promiscuous woman who eventually ends up on the slave market. God commanded Hosea to buy her back for fifteen shekels of silver (11 grams) and a homer (9 bushels) of barley (Hosea 3). In the book of Ruth, Boaz to keep Ruth's late husband's property within the family must make Ruth his wife. Ruth is in a way redeemed from being a widow to being a legitimate member of the Jewish people and the family of Naomi (Ruth 4). Ruth was the great great grandmother of King David (Ruth 4:22). We are called to use this freedom to serve God (1 Peter 2:16).

What is Adoption - We are brought into God's Family with adult privileges - Rom 8:15, Gal 4:6, Romans 11, 2 Samuel 9:1-13

When we are saved, we are not only delivered from the penalty of sin and freed from the slavery of sin, but we are welcomed into a new family with all the adult privileges that come along with it. Charles Ryrie in his book Basic Theology defines adoption,

"Adoption is the act of God that places the believer in His family as an adult. In contrast, being born again emphasizes the idea of coming into God's family as a babe with the attendant need for growth and development (John 1:12; 3:3). Concomitant [this means associated] with adoption is the divesting of all relationships and responsibilities of the previous family relationship. Both being adopted and being born occur at the moment of saving faith, but they indicate different aspects of our relation to the family of God."

The result of this adoption is that we are given all the adult privileges and adult responsibilities that come with being a part of God's family. We don't have to wait to claim the blessings of Salvation: Spiritual Enlightenment (1 Corinth 2:1-16, Eph 1:15-23, Eph 3:14-20), Spiritual Growth (1 Peter 2:1, 2 Peter 1:1-14), Hope for the future - the Resurrection (1 Corinth 15) and Heaven (Rev 21) just to name a few. We are also able to claim a new spiritual ancestry being 'grafted into' the people of Israel with Abraham being our spiritual father (Romans 4, 11, Galatians 3).

In this new relationship God is our Heavenly Father (Romans 8:15, Gal 4:6) who, as a good father, gives gifts to his children (Matt 7:11, Luke 11:11-13) and disciplines us for our good (Hebrews 12:7-11 see also 1 Peter 1:14, Rom 8:28-30). An Old Testament picture of this would be when David wanted to honor the family of Saul for his friend Johnathan's sake and took Mephibosheth into his family and restored Saul's land to him:

Then David said, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul, so that I could show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" Now *there was* a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they summoned him to David; and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "*I am your servant.*" Then the king said, "Is there no one remaining of the house of Saul to whom I could show the kindness of God?" And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan, one who is disabled in both feet." So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar." Then King David sent messengers who brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar. Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself. And David said, "Mephibosheth." And he said, "Here is your servant!" Then David said to him, "Do not be afraid, for I will assuredly show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you yourself shall eat at my table regularly." Again he prostrated himself, and said, "What is your servant, that you should be concerned about a dead dog like me?"

Then the king summoned Saul's servant Ziba and said to him, "Everything that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. You and your sons and your servants shall cultivate the land for him, and you shall bring in *the produce* so that your master's grandson will have food to eat; nevertheless Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, shall eat at my table regularly." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then Ziba said to the king, "In accordance with everything that my lord the king commands his servant, so your servant will do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table one of the king's sons. Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. And all who lived in the house of Ziba were servants to Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he ate at the king's table regularly. And he was disabled in his two feet. (2 Samuel 9:1-13)

Regeneration - 2 Corinth 5:11-17, Colossians 3:9-11, Galatians 6:15, 1 Samuel 10:6, Numbers 11

Regeneration is a theological term for what we know as being "born again" (John 3). We are given the Holy Spirit which empowers our process of sanctification and makes us more into Christ's image. The Scripture teaches that if we are in Christ we are a New Creature (2 Corinth 5:17) and have a New Man that we are called to put on (Colossians 3:10). Salvation is not just a change in SITUATION but a change in BEING. Evidence of this change should be new desires (Romans 8:5, Galatians 5:16-25), a new relationship with sin (Romans 6:21, 1 John 3:4-10), and a new way of thinking (Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 2:1-16). In 1 Samuel 10:6, The Prophet Samuel, before he is anointed king, is told that when he arrived at the oak of Tabor he would be filled with the Spirit and turned into another man. In Numbers 11, the seventy elders under Moses are filled with the Spirit and they also prophesied. The evidence of Salvation is a genuine change facilitated by the Holy Spirit.

Sanctification - Hebrews 12:1-11, Romans 8:28, John 17:17, Romans 12:1-2

Sanctification is the process where we move farther away from sin and evil and closer to God as our character becomes more like Christ's. It is the process of Romans 8:28 where God through the Spirit help us conform to the image of Christ. Paul commands us that we are not to be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1-2). God also helps us in this process by disciplining us so that we can continue to grow (Hebrews 12:1-11, see also Prov 3:12, 2 Corinth 12:1-10). An example of God's working to help us grow is God's dealings with Israel. While Israel was delivered from Egypt, God still needed to get Egypt

out of their hearts and used the wilderness experience to teach them to rely and trust on Him (Deut 8:1-20). God used a “thorn in the flesh” in Paul’s life to keep him humble (2 Corinth 12:1-10). Jerry Bridges in his book, The Pursuit of Holiness describes the process of Sanctification:

“A farmer plows his field, sows the seed, and fertilizes and cultivates-all the while knowing that in the final analysis he is utterly dependent on forces outside of himself. He knows he cannot cause the seed to germinate nor can he produce the rain and sunshine growing and harvesting the crop. For a successful harvest he is dependent on the things from God. Yet the farmer knows that unless he diligently pursues his responsibilities to plow, plant, fertilize and cultivate, he cannot expect a harvest at the end of the season. In a sense he is in a partnership with God, and he will reap its benefits only when he has fulfilled his own responsibilities. Farming is a joint venture between God and the farmer. The farmer cannot do what God must do and God will not do what the farmer should do. We can say just as accurately that the pursuit of holiness is a joint venture between God and the Christian. No one can attain any degree of holiness without God working in his life , but just as surely no one will attain it without effort on his own part . God has made it possible for us to walk in holiness. But He has given to us the responsibility of doing the walking . He does not do that for us.”

Paul says that we are to work out our own salvation for God is working within us (Philippians 2:12-13), and that he presses toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ (Philippians 3:14-15). While Sanctification is the work of God, part of his process involves participation and effort.

What is my personal responsibility?

Salvation is a wonderful thing but it is up to us individually to examine ourselves to see if we really have been “Born Again”. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:5 shares:

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test! - (ESV)

We must take the time to go through the Scriptures, using the Scripture as a mirror (James 1:22-25) to examine ourselves to see if we are truly born again. If you are unsure, it is never too late to seek God and pray and put your faith in Jesus Christ for your Salvation! If you need help below are some good places to start in Scripture:

1 John - The Apostle John give the qualities of someone who is born again

Romans 6-8 - talks about the battle within and how we can have victory through the Holy Spirit

Sources:

The New Believers Handbook - Max Anders

Key Words of the Chirstian Life - Warren Wiersbie

BasicTheology - Charles Ryrie

The Pursuit of Holiness - Jerry Bridges