

Salvation – God’s Way for All People

July 21 & 28, 2013

As members of the Rice Flock we are called upon to know and to promote the basic doctrines of Christianity. We will be studying God’s process of Salvation with an emphasis on how people have accepted through the ages. Has it changed or has it been the same since the beginning of time? This series was in part developed using my response to Doctrinal questions addressed during Deaconship.

Different views exist on various parts of our Study after many centuries of debate. We will not solve all of them in this lesson, but this should stimulate further study and debate. Even with that fact, we should know and be able to readily discuss our biblical position to a dying and lost world. This is designed to deepen the knowledge that all Christians should have regarding their faith in the Lord.

Critical Salvation Questions we hope to answer by the end of our study:

- Since Adam, are there different ways of salvation that God provided?
- How do people become saved?
- Can someone who has never heard of Jesus be saved?
- What is the unpardonable sin? What does scripture say about this with respect to salvation? Can a person commit this sin while still living or is this in essence consummated at death?

Some very important questions you must answer to determine your positions:

1. Is the salvation process the same for every person that has ever lived and those to come?
2. If yes, then how did the people prior to Jesus become saved?
3. How does God hold all people accountable for judgment, which by definition would include those that may not have heard about Jesus directly?

Class 1 – Examining Salvation

In the past we have studied Salvation and its many parts as outlined below. This series will concentrate on being Called and Converted, but addressing these in a new way. We want to be able to study, debate and decide on the salvation process for all people from the beginning of time to the current people alive. Are we all saved the same way, has it been this way since the beginning of time? While easy on the face of it, this has many deep mysteries and intriguing discussions.

The Order of Salvation

1. Foreknowledge, Election (Election into God’s Family)
2. Called (When God calls someone to Him)
3. Conversion (Being Born Again and response to the Faith and Repentance)
4. Justification (When God puts us in right Legal standing before Him)
5. Adoption (When God makes us a part of His Family)
6. Sanctification (When God enables us to live rightly and morally)
7. Perseverance (When we remain Christians despite trials, tribulations and temptations)
8. Death (When we finally get to see the Lord face to face)
9. Glorification (When we receive our new resurrected bodies)

Faith “Hall of Fame” Chapter Hebrews 11 – The Type of Faith that Brings Salvation

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. ²This is what the ancients were commended for. ³By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. ⁴By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. ⁵By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not

be found, because God had taken him away.” For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.⁷ By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.⁹ By faith he made his home in the Promised Land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.¹¹ And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise.¹² And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.¹³ All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.¹⁴ People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.¹⁶ Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son,¹⁸ even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.”¹⁹ Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.²⁰ By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.²¹ By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph’s sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.²² By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.²³ By faith Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.²⁴ By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.²⁵ He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.²⁶ He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.³¹ By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.³² And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets,³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions,³⁴ quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. . . .³⁹ These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised,⁴⁰ since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

New Testament Path for Salvation – Romans Road for Sinners

The Romans road, as it is called in Paul’s letter is the way to Jesus Christ and salvation. A sinner through the following steps:

- Romans 1:16 – Salvation is available to everyone and a person needs to accept that God has the power and plan for salvation
- Romans 3:23 – A person recognizes that they are a sinner and do not meet God’s glory
- Romans 6:23 – Our sin means eternal death and it is through Jesus that He gives us a free gift of everlasting life. It is not earned by our actions or merits.
- Romans 5:28 – Jesus loves sinners and died in our place.

- Romans 10:9 – We must confess with our mouths and believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus and that we are saved through Him.
- Romans 8:38 – Once we believe in Jesus as our savior, no one can take it away and it is eternal

While the Romans road outlines the steps for a non-believer to follow, basically a person must accept that they are sinners, repent of their sin and accept Jesus as their personal savior to take away their sins

John 14:6-14 – Jesus The Way, Truth and Life

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” ⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” ⁹ Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Key Points:

- Faith in the One True Living God generates salvation for the individual
- By Faith in God, Christians live, love and worship God
- Repentance is required prior to salvation
- Post Jesus, Salvation is available to everyone who accepts Christ as their personal savior
- Christ covers our sin and sin nature so that we can have a relationship with God
- Jesus clearly defines himself as the only way to God for salvation; Always was and Is Even before His physical appearance on Earth; Broader interpretation is that John 14:6-14 applies to all people of all time, not just after His time on earth
- Direct verses General Revelation

Missionary Examples of God’s Existence – Salvation Experience?

- Book *“Eternity in Their Heart”*, by Don Richardson
- General Revelation – Creation and other spiritual revelations make His Majesty Clearly Known
- Specific Revelation – Direct knowledge, exposure or evangelized (OT: Israel influence, NT: Matthew 28:18-20)
- Examples of “Pagans/Heathens” that seemed to worship the true God prior to arrival of any Christian missionaries
- Existed for possibly thousands of years before the arrival of “Post Jesus” missionaries
- Relating the Pagans “religion and worship” to what the Old Testament or New Testament define
- Pagan tribes very receptive to the Christian missionaries since they had similar stories in their own culture
- How do you explain? Is this analogous to stories of Melchizedek’s society and Romans 1:18-28 for knowing and understanding the True God?
- Intellectual knowledge or True Faith?

Key Points:

- Faith in the One True Living God through General Revelation generates salvation for the individual?
- Pagans/Heathens have exhibited knowledge, faith and worship in their own culture of the same God?

Group Questions:

1. Discuss the Faith described in Hebrews 11, why does it not mention Jesus or a savior?
2. Discuss Faith in the One True Living God; does this differ from faith in Jesus? If so, how?
3. Review the Roman Road, any new thoughts on the salvation process when integrating Hebrews 11?
4. How is Hebrews 11 consistent with the Roman Road and specifically John 14:6-14?
5. Do you believe that there is a singular process for salvation that has been in place since the beginning of time for all people that have lived?
6. How is Jesus' statement in John 14:6-14 consistent with a singular salvation process for Old Testament and all others?
7. Does John 14:6-14 define God's new path to salvation after Jesus death? What about people who have not heard of Jesus or understand about sin and salvation? Can there be salvation for those people?
8. Can there be someone who has not heard about Jesus and still is saved through Faith in the True Living God?
9. Discuss the missionary examples. Do you believe they could have had the belief and faith in the one and only God? How did they receive the message?
10. Integrate the Missionary Examples with the above scripture, how could this be?