

Doctrinal Statement

Salvation

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God designed all mankind to live in relationship and union with Him, thus bestowing common grace, His unmerited favor, on all mankind (Gen. 1:26-27; Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:16-17). Therefore, He desires all to be saved, and draws all mankind into a restored relationship with Him (John 3:16, 1 Tim 2:4; 1 Pet. 3:9). God is solely responsible for unmeritedly initiating, sustaining, and concluding salvation through the election of Jesus, the blameless lamb and atoning sacrifice, and consequently, all who are united with Him through faith in Him (Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 4:10-12; 1 Pet. 1:19-20). God's love and prevenient grace enables all of humanity, though fallen and unable to restore themselves to full relationship with the Father, to respond to the gospel, but He never forces anyone to come to Him (Gen. 3:8-9; Tit. 2:11; John 12:32). Despite His enablement, many resist to live in relationship with God by rejecting Jesus and preferring to worship and serve themselves and other gods (Matt. 10:33; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 2:22).

Those who positively respond to the gospel repent, change their heart and mind about Jesus as King and Messiah, and put their faith, trust and allegiance, in Jesus (Acts 2:36-38; Gal. 2:16). This is the first part of salvation, called conversion. At conversion believers are justified, that is, declared forgiven and cleansed of sins and restored as His image bearing children (Rom. 5:1-10; Gal. 2:16). All who are justified are set back into right relationship with God and are imputed the righteousness of Jesus (1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 1:16-17). Concurrent with conversion is the receiving of Holy Spirit, who regenerates a person (Acts 2:38; John 3:1-11). Regeneration is the transformation of someone into a new creation with a renewed spiritual identity, nature, and heart through the indwelling of God's Spirit (Gal. 4:6-7; 2 Cor. 5:17). The person spiritually reborn is welcomed into the family of God as an adopted son or daughter, sharing in Jesus' sonship and inheritance (1 John 3:1-3; Rom. 8:14-17; Col. 1:12).

From creation to the tabernacle and the temple, to the current church age, and one day in the new heaven and new earth, the goal of salvation has and will always be union with God (Genesis 1-2; Ex. 29:46; Isa. 40:1-11; Ez. 37:27; John 17:3; 2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 21:3-4). A regenerated person is united with Christ through the baptism of Holy Spirit and is an agent in advancing the kingdom of God by partaking in His life, death, and resurrection (1 Cor. 3:16; Romans 6; Gal. 3:26-27). As a result of a union with Christ, one is sanctified, that is, set apart and made Holy (1 Cor. 1:30; Col 3:12). Because followers of Jesus are sanctified and have received a cleansed heart through the indwelling of Holy Spirit, they are freed from power and bondage of sin and are able to walk perfectly in step with His Spirit (Romans 6; Gal. 5:16-26; 1 John 3:2-3). The ongoing process of sanctification is the choice to live every second in the complete holiness of Jesus, who inhabits the believer (Gal 2:20; 1 Pet. 1:16). For this reason, one must always take action to keep off the old self and its actions and put on the newfound realities of the transformed self (Col. 3:1-17; Gal. 2:20).

Those who put their hope and faith in the atoning work of Christ are eternally secure and do not need to fear condemnation, for God is faithful and His promises are unfailing (Ex. 34:6-7; Rom. 8:1; John 6:37; 10:27-29). They can have confidence that they will share in His glorification, identified as the eternal union and relationship with the Trinity, as well as the experience of a new heaven and new earth rid of all sin, pain, disease, evil, and disorder (Rom. 8:16-18; John 17:20-26; Rev. 21-22). While salvation is the work of God and the regenerate follower of Jesus cannot lose their salvation, they can reject Jesus and God's forgiveness, leaving them to the destruction of their own merits (John 15:6; Heb. 6:4-7; 10:26-3; 1 Tim. 1:18-19). Therefore, it is essential that believers persevere in their trust in Jesus (Col. 1:23; Heb. 3:14; 4:14; 2 Pet. 1:10-11).