

The True Savior Of The World!

What We are Delivered From

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Today, secular and religious sources make such proclamations as:

1. "Prince Charles Proclaimed 'SAVIOR OF THE WORLD,' and a Statue is Planned for him!"
2. LewRockwell.com had an article titled—"Was Jesus?or Lincoln?the Savior of the World?"
3. The Iran Daily society page, ran an article titled—"Savior of the World' (referring to the Imam Mahdi)
4. Russia Today carried an article titled—"Obama: 'Savior of the world' or just another politician?"

All religions believe in a savior of the world, and urge their followers to pray for his emergence; and because faith in a savior makes the tough conditions of life tolerable by giving hope, albeit false hope, to look forward to better life conditions, all people of all nations whether secular or religious more often than not—desire a savior of the world.

The ancient Israelites were no different, except although they had the one true Savior, they forgot Him.

Psalm 106:21-27 They forgot God their Savior, Who had done great things in Egypt, wondrous works in the land of Ham, awesome things by the Red Sea. Therefore He said that He would destroy them, had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath, lest He destroy them. Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe His word, but complained in their tents, and did not heed the voice of the LOORD. Therefore He raised up His hand in an oath against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness, to overthrow their descendants among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.

Jesus arrived at a time when the Israelites (especially the Jews) had been groaning for a long time under physical and spiritual exile and bondage to foreign rule. At the time, the angel declared that "a savior" is born in Bethlehem. The unspoken Gentile belief was that a "savior" was already enthroned in Rome—that was Caesar Augustus, whose monuments declare him "savior of the world."

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Against this backdrop, the anticipation of a savior within Israel seemed filled with danger.

The fact that God the Word, God the Spokesman, was literally transformed into a human and walked among humans, when realized to its fullest, blows the human mind—it short circuits it like a lightning bolt to a computer. But the world never really recognized Him, even though the Savior of the world had arrived.

Why did they not see Him for who He was? Was it because the true Savior of the world did not fit their personal mental fabrication of what a savior should be?

Let us see how the process of truly saving the world began. The apostle Paul summarizes how the Word was transformed into Jesus:

Philippians 2:6-8 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

The Word literally purged Himself of divine God nature, and became the man Jesus Christ. The Word took on the same kind of flesh-and-blood body all humans have. Paul tells us, in Galatians 4:4, that "When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law."

The Word became human, so that He could receive death for everyone. But Jesus had another righteous responsibility beyond dying for all human beings. He also had to live a perfect, sinless life for humanity. Jesus proved it was possible for humans with God's mind to also live in obedience to God.

Jesus had the Holy Spirit, the mind of God, joined to His own spirit or consciousness, but He was only different in the amount of that Spirit, and that He received it at conception. He was the only person ever born who lived His entire life without a single sin.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

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Jesus suffered greatly during his life. While tremendous pressures tried to push, and temptations tried to pull him to sin, He resisted every temptation. The apostle Paul wrote:

Hebrews 5:7-8 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

No man could have suffered more; but Jesus was willing nevertheless. He had told the disciples, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." Earlier He had said, "I lay down my life for the sheep."

Christ, in this way, became the perfect Passover Lamb, sacrificed for the sins of the human race.

What a tremendous triumph! Paul described the risen Christ in this way:

Hebrews 2:17-18 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

This does not mean that He would not have had "power" to assist others if He had not gone through these sufferings, but that He is now qualified to sympathize with others from the fact that He has persevered through similar trials. He knows what we are feeling, He knows what we are going through, He knows our weaknesses, and He knows our strength as human beings.

Since Jesus Christ Himself has been called to suffer, He is better able to sympathize with everyone who suffers. He can identify with us and put himself in our shoes for a more accurate and sympathetic perspective. When we are tempted, He is able to understand what we are going through; when we are sick, He is able to understand the suffering. He is qualified to sympathize with us in our sickness; when we have sorrowfully buried a friend, He has done the same, and He understands the heartbreak.

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A person who has not personally gone through these things has a much harder time empathizing with another individual's suffering. How can someone who has not experienced these things effectively console another without experiencing similar suffering himself? As Christians, we are exhorted to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Because we suffer with Jesus Christ, we also understand the suffering of another.

What is a Savior? More specifically, what is our Savior?

In contemporary Christian vernacular the term 'savior' is nearly synonymous with Jesus. It may come as a surprise then that, strictly speaking, the term savior (Gk. soter) appears only twenty-four times in the New Testament, with eight instances referring to God and sixteen referring to Jesus Christ.

Luke 2:8-11 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

In the apostle Paul's letters, "savior" refers to Jesus (rather than God) in six out of twelve instances, and all but two of these occur in the Pastoral letters. But these statistics do not reveal the entire pattern, because we find the words 'salvation' (soteria) and 'save' (sozo) used many more times in the New Testament, and frequently with Jesus as the subject.

Luke is the gospel writer who best highlights the profile of Jesus as a savior. In Luke 2, the angel declared to the shepherds that "a savior" is born in the city of David. The devout people we read about in Luke's gospel make reference to Old Testament promises of deliverance.

In Luke 1, Zechariah speaks of a "mighty savior," and of being "saved from our enemies." In Luke 2, Simeon, who has been looking for the "consolation of Israel," thanks God that he has lived to see God's "salvation" in the face of the infant Jesus. Also in Luke 2, Anna rejoices over the child in the presence of all who are "looking for the redemption of Jerusalem."

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John the Baptist also speaks of a great judgment and renewal within Israel associated with the coming of the Lord. Luke summarizes John's activity, in Luke 3, as preparing a highway for the divine warrior so that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Initially in his writing, Luke does not emphasize a savior who will bring "spiritual" salvation, but he emphasizes what the Old Testament emphasizes, and that is, physical salvation, which is interesting. He waits for later, and for the other writers to expound on that.

I John 4:9-14 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.

It is interesting to notice that John only twice in the whole of his writings uses the term, "Savior." In both cases it is as "Savior of the world." You find it again in John 4, in connection with the woman of Samaria, but it is not a characteristic of his writings.

John 4:42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

Since Luke was a Gentile, in fact, he was the only Gentile to have written any book of the Bible; it may be that he saw the expression, "Savior of the world" as a more inclusive phrase that gives hope to the Israelite and Gentile alike.

In examining the apostle Paul's epistles, we find that he often makes use of the expression "Savior."

It is important that we understand the meaning of the term 'Savior.'

The apostolic witness and testimony with regard to the person Jesus Christ, is the emphasis that Jesus is the Son of God; and that, of course, is logically the understanding that comes first. The essential teaching, concerning Jesus Christ, is always the two-fold doctrine: His person and His work. There is a sense in which we

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simply cannot understand the work, and the nature of the work, until we are perfectly clear about the person Himself.

And so, with that essential and foundational understanding of who the person Jesus is, I want to look at the work that is done by the person—"we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world."

Salvation is brought about through God's saving action, in Jesus Christ. Modern English translations correctly bring out the sense of saving, with the word 'heal.' There is also the aspect of being delivered from something. When Jesus proclaims, "Your faith has saved you," whether from sins, from a disease, from an injury, or from a birth defect, it is in the sense of, "Your faith has made you whole."

In Luke 8, the Gerasene man was delivered from a legion of demons, and then clothed and in his right mind, was "saved" from them. And, in the same chapter, Jairus is not to fear, but "only believe" (that is, have faith) and his daughter "will be saved from death." We see that application as it was made in the early writings of the gospels having to do with being saved from physical death. Then, as we read through the gospels, and also through the epistles, we see the building of the idea and the important aspect that the saving is of a spiritual nature.

By identifying these key events as acts of salvation, that is, the work of the Savior, Luke encourages us to view all of the other healings and deliverances as salvation.

Healings and deliverances are also acts of salvation in the Old Testament; the Savior is at work in Israel, opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, causing the lame to leap, and proclaiming liberty to the captives. This prophetically proclaims the good news of salvation that was coming to Israel by way of the Savior.

Isaiah 61:1-2 The Spirit of the Lord GOOD is upon Me, because the LOORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LOORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.

That this refers to the Messiah is easily proven by the fact that Jesus Christ specifically applied it to Himself in Luke 4:21. This is a description of Israel's end-time salvation, and Jesus told the Jews in person, they are "this day fulfilled in your hearing."

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These illustrations of salvation are examples of people experiencing God's power in Jesus, and that with God all things are possible.

Luke 18:18-26 Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?"

The Savior brings an outward change, as the result of an inner transformation.

We find this characterized in the story of Zacchaeus. In Luke 19, Jesus tells the despised and ostracized tax collector, Zacchaeus, "I must stay at your house today." At his house Zacchaeus repents, and Jesus the guest, announces, "Today salvation has come to this house." Salvation is present with Jesus the Savior. Zacchaeus voluntarily vows to give half of his possessions to the poor, and give restitution to those he has defrauded. A man and his household experience the Savior, and the effects are felt in his hometown of Jericho. The Son of Man has come for this, "to seek out and to save the lost." And by doing this, we see that it not only saves that person, but it also massively benefits society, and even the family of the person who is saved.

What I would like to do here is to highlight some of the essential things that are conveyed by this magnificent and glorious word—'Savior.' What does it mean exactly?

It is very important for us to ask this question, because one of the greatest difficulties in connection with theology and Christian thought, especially in this time of redefining our language to fit the politically correct deception of progressiveness, is that people keep on using Christian terminology, but have emptied it of the real meaning and have imposed their own perverse meaning. It is amazing how many times we see politicians who do not have an ounce of Christian spirit in them, use "biblical" phrases and terms.

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We have seen, and are seeing, this happen in secular society today in ways that are redefining what used to be basic understandings of words that we hold very dear. To non-perverse people, many of these social re-engineering changes show a degeneration and disintegration of the fabric of society.

Bob Unruh, of WorldNetDaily, reported on this type of thing recently. In his article, Webster's dictionary redefines 'marriage' to now include references to same-sex relationships.

Mr. Unruh writes:

One of the nation's most prominent dictionary companies has resolved the argument over whether the term "marriage" should apply to same-sex duos or be reserved for the institution that has held families together for millennia: by simply writing a new definition.

The new definition references "marriage" as the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife. But the definition also includes "the state of being united to a person of the same sex in a relationship like that of a traditional marriage."

A dictionary version from 1913 that has been posted online not only didn't mention same-sex "marriage," it supplemented its definition of traditional marriage with references from the Bible.

"Marriage," it said, is "the act of marrying, or the state of being married; legal union of a man and a woman for life, as husband and wife ... Marriage is honorable in all." Heb. 13:4.

But today, even the basic *Webster's New World College Dictionary* lists "same-sex marriage," and the *Learner's Dictionary* cites "a similar relationship between people of the same sex."

So, what we are finding, even in mainstream "Christianity," so that they can bring about the one world religion, is that they are re-writing the terms of Scripture. Actually, this has been done for centuries. The Catholic Church did it all along, and the Protestant churches as well, forming their own definitions from their own traditions for words that are used in Scripture. We always have to go back to Scripture, to the original meanings, and sometimes even to the original Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic words.

With regard to "Christianity", there are people who talk of Christ as Savior, but certainly do not mean by that what the New Testament means. Let me illustrate this by explaining what the primary function of the Savior was and is not.

The word 'Savior' does not merely mean a helper. We are not told that the Father sent the Son to help mankind; it does not mean that He is just someone who assists, nor does it mean that He is just one who teaches or indicates to us what we should do; He is not merely an instructor.

In addition, the term 'Savior,' and its connotation, should not be thought of in terms of an example or pattern or encourager. I use these various terms because so often people speak about Jesus Christ as 'Savior,' but if you ask them to define what they mean by it, they tell you something similar to the terms I just mentioned.

Their wrong conception of Christ as Savior can be put something like this: He saves us by preaching the Sermon on the Mount and by describing a certain kind of life. He does this by setting before us a flawless example—as One who lived perfectly; and He is constantly calling us to rise to the same level of perfection.

The underlying inference in what they say is that they can save themselves by being good—but that is impossible. We are saved by the Savior!

These misled progressives say that Christ as Savior is one who is marching ahead of us and who is leading the way, turning around occasionally to appeal to us and to inspire us to follow in His footsteps, so that ultimately we will succeed in scaling the heights with Him and will arrive in the presence of God.

Now the element that is seen in all of those ideas is this: that ultimately it is you and I who have to save ourselves and what the Lord does is to aid and assist us—to give us encouragement and make it somewhat easier for us. That is what Satan would have us believe.

Now that, of course, is clearly a complete denial not only of the Biblical teaching, but also of the historic faith and doctrines of God's true church. We are saved by the Savior! Granted, some of those terms do refer to the aspects that come out of Jesus' teachings and what He does do in a general sense. But that is not what He does as Savior, and that is the point of the sermon today: what is our Savior?

To use the term 'Savior,' with regard to Jesus Christ, and mean something totally unscriptural is dishonest, because it takes the original meaning right out and substitutes

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for it something that is completely foreign to the New Testament. The problem with mainstream Christianity is that they have used tradition to define Savior, rather than the inspired written Word of God.

In a sense, Jesus Christ was instrumental in all those things I described, but they are not specifically what a Savior is and does.

Maybe the best way to put that is this: If that is all that is meant by 'Savior', then Jesus Christ is no Savior at all. That is something that had already been tried, and it had failed before He ever came into this world. There have been many false religions and there have been many false understandings of God as Savior.

God confronted the children of Israel and gave them the Ten Commandments and the moral law. He said to them in Leviticus 18:5, "You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the Lord."

That was God's challenge, in a sense, in the giving of the law to the children of Israel, and the whole story of the Old Testament shows us that people failed, and failed entirely.

Romans 3:10-12, 19, 23 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one." . . . Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. . . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

That describes the world as the result of trying to save itself. The world is a complete failure at that, as we see, and even today they are still trying to come up with saviors of the world.

Who can understand the mentality of people who effortlessly talk about imitating Christ, and who believe that they are meant to save themselves? They think that Jesus Christ just helps them in some external way, by giving them a kind of general encouragement. That would be extremely discouraging to talk of the life of Jesus Christ in that way. If we are left to ourselves we are totally undone, we would be in an insane mental state like the rest of the world, and without real hope.

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But the world's version of being saved is a total misinterpretation and misrepresentation of what is meant by the phrase 'the Savior of the world.' Simply put, the true Biblical meaning of this specific term should be phrased more like this: Christ is the Savior as the result of something He has done.

The Biblical representation is that God sent Jesus Christ into the world to do something, and that we are saved as the result of something that He has done, quite apart from ourselves and our own action. He has acted, and it is His action that produces salvation, and the way of escape for us.

Salvation, according to the New Testament, is something that is worked out by God the Father and His Son. It is the righteousness of God that is given. Christ is the Savior; we do not save ourselves. It is He who saves, and our salvation arises from Him, and is derived from something that He has done, once and forever, on our behalf. 'The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.' Who can argue with that?

How does Christ save us? He is the Son of God, He is the one who came, who was sent into the world. He was not an ordinary man, born like others; He was sent from heaven, by God's supernatural power. It was a miracle that He was sent, in the flesh, into the world.

So how does He save? Let us summarize what the vast principles of the Bible teach us.

First, we are told that He saves us by His life of perfect obedience to God's holy law. So the life of Jesus Christ has its importance in that way. When we talk about salvation, we have to realize our predicament and our position, and here it is: God has given the law to mankind, and He has told everyone that they must keep the law.

God said that if they do not keep the law, that they will be punished, and the punishment is death. God's law stands forever, and it can never be uprooted. It is eternal; it is an expression of the character of God Himself, and before anyone can be saved, that law of God has to be fulfilled; it has to be honored and kept perfectly. Not by us as individuals, because remember we are not saving ourselves. We are required to keep the law, and we are required to move on to perfection, but only Christ has ever done it fully, completely, and perfectly.

That was the first requirement confronting Christ. No one had ever succeeded, or could ever succeed, in keeping the law, and that law must be kept; so the first thing He did was to live a life of absolute obedience to it. In all things, He fulfilled righteousness;

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every demand of the law positively was answered, and was kept by His blameless, spotless life.

But, of course, that is not the end—because the law not only makes its positive demands on us—it pronounces its judgment on us, and it has already pronounced that judgment: 'the wages of sin is death,' as Romans 6:23 informs us. Those who fail to keep the law know that they are under the wrath of God, and the punishment decreed by God for this failure is death.

Therefore, the second thing that Christ had to do was to deal with this problem of the guilt of humans face-to-face with the law of God. According to the Scriptures, He has done so once and forever, by going to His own cruel death by crucifixion on the stake. We are always confronted by His crucifixion; it is central in the New Testament.

I John 2:1-2 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

We cannot get away from the meaning of His blood in the New Testament. It is central; without it there is no salvation.

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

The law of God demands sin's punishment, and the punishment is death; so Jesus Christ came face-to-face with that demand as we do. Before He could be 'the Savior of the world,' He had to fulfill the demands that the law makes on guilty sinners in the sight of God. He fulfilled the law perfectly, never having sinned.

The message is that He went to the stake; He set His face with conviction to Jerusalem; He would not allow Himself to be delivered. He told His servants in effect, 'I could command twelve legions of angels; but if I did, how could I fulfill all righteousness? I must meet the demands of the law.'

Let us look at the importance of the personal sacrifice that God made in sending His Son to be the propitiatory sacrifice.

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The apostle Paul speaks of God setting forth Jesus as a 'hilasterion', a Greek term translated as "propitiation," "expiation," "mercy seat," or simply "sacrifice of atonement".

Romans 3:21-26 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

We read earlier, in I John 4:10, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." His Son is all that is needed for propitiation on behalf of our sins, the propitiatory sacrifice, provided by the Father's love, removes the estrangement, it appeases God's righteous wrath against the sinner.

Jesus' "blood" is an essential sacrificial element in propitiation, as Paul mentions in his message to the Ephesians, where he pictures "the church of God, that he bought with his own blood." and as Peter writes of "the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."

He gave Himself as an offering and a sacrifice; He died passively there on the stake, and God poured on Him His wrath against the sins of mankind. He is our Savior by His atoning death, as well as by His perfect, blameless, spotless life of obedience.

But, even that does not exhaust this idea of Christ as our Savior, because we find that what the apostle Paul writes, in his epistle to the Hebrews, takes us beyond that. He tells us that Jesus Christ has become the great High Priest. There on the stake, He was the sacrifice and the offering, and He is also the High Priest.

Paul says that Christ entered into heaven by His own blood.

Hebrews 9:12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

Because He is without sin, He does not need to sacrifice for Himself, but for the people. And the sacrifice He offers is not of bulls or goats but of Himself, His own body and blood. This sacrifice, unlike the repeated offerings in the Old Testament, is offered once and for all.

Hebrews 10:8-14 Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

So, Christ's sacrificial death fulfills God's will, and perfects the sanctified. The sanctified are those who are made holy by that offering. We have been brought under the influence of that gospel that sanctifies and saves.

By His own precious blood that was shed on the stake, He purchased the release of the captives—the setting free of the guilty—the forgiveness of the sins of mankind. And because of the work that He accomplished there on the stake, He entered into heaven. But, He does not stop at that either, because we are told that He is seated at the right hand of God, and that He is there interceding on our behalf, and that is why He is able to save those who come to God by Him.

Hebrews 7:25-26 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens.

'To the uttermost' does not specify whether completeness in time (i.e. "forever") or completeness in extent (i.e. "completely") is intended; the original Greek can mean both. Since a "complete" salvation would endure for all time, and since a salvation "for all time" would eventually include every aspect of life, it may be that the apostle Paul intends us to understand both senses.

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Christ always lives to make intercession (that is, to bring the requests of the saints to the Father); on behalf of those who approach God through Christ. Since the ever-living Christ intercedes for us, we can have total confidence that we will never eternally die while following Him. In fact, we can know that "all things" in our lives will "work together for good," because God the Father will answer the prayers of his Son.

The apostle John put it like this, in I John 2:1, "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." He is there advocating our cause by His presence, interceding on our behalf with God. He is persuading God to look on us and to forgive us, and have mercy on us, because as John tells us, it was the Father Himself who 'sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.'

His presence guarantees that we are forgiven, and in a sense, is offering His blood, and it is in this way that God forgives us.

But there is even more! We are told that if we pray, our prayers are taken by our Lord and Savior, and He offers them up to the Father. He adds the incense of His own holiness. He takes our undeserving prayers and requests, transmutes them with His own perfection, and presents them to the Father, so that in all of these actions He is the Savior. He is acting as our Savior; He is representing us before God. And in this way, in Him God looks on us, and absolves us from all our sin.

But according to the New Testament, this idea of Savior is even richer than that because He not only saves us by the objective work that He does in the way that I have been trying to describe, but He saves us also by coming to dwell in us by His Holy Spirit.

God dwells in us, and we in Him. He has already said that He has given us His Holy Spirit; and by entering into our lives by the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ is carrying on God's plan of salvation. Not only do we need to be represented in the presence of God, to be justified by the law, before we can stand in God's presence, and dwell with God for all eternity, but we also need to be perfect, to be cleansed and purified.

So Christ, we are told, enters within us and dwells within us, and works within us.

John 17:20-23 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me;

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that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

What we read there, in John 17, is what He is doing for His good pleasure.

And then the last step in this powerful work that Christ does as our Savior, is the work that yet remains for Him to do.

While on earth, He kept the law, and died for us. He then ascended into heaven, and presented His offering. He is seated there, and He intercedes and acts as an advocate for us. He enters into us and works within us, and even still the work there is not finished.

The apostle Paul tells us that there is still something final that remains to be done.

Philippians 3:20-21 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

What Paul means by that, of course, is that before our salvation is complete, we have to be raised, changed, glorified, and given eternal life.

So, that is a quick summary of these great aspects of the work of our Savior Jesus Christ.

At this point, I think the best way to proceed is for me to give you a summary of what it is that He saves us from. Not that you do not know, but it is helpful to review these things, especially before Passover.

This idea of salvation obviously carries with it this need of being saved and delivered from something, and that can be put like this: Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is clearly the One who saves us from the guilt and the penalty of sin. We have all been guilty before God, and before His holy law; so, the first thing that we need is to be saved from the guilt of our sin. We need a Savior in that respect, apart from anything else.

We have broken the law of God, and before our calling and conversion, we were under the condemnation of that holy law; so before we can talk about salvation, or about being saved, we must be perfectly clear that we are delivered from the guilt of sin. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ paid the penalty and has wiped the record clean of our guilt in breaking God's law.

Christ came to pay the penalty for all of our sins. Accepting Christ's sacrifice releases us from the penalty of death, incurred through our sin, and cleanses our conscience from all guilt. It is no use facing the future, and proposing to live a better life, when we are confronted by our own past. We cannot avoid it; we cannot escape it, and we cannot get rid of it. We have broken the law, therefore we must deal with the problem of our guilt, but we cannot do it ourselves, because we cannot undo the past. We cannot make atonement for our misdeeds, and for everything that we have done against God.

We have to be delivered from the guilt of our sin—but only Christ can deliver us. By His death, Christ has wiped out the note of guilt, and the debt that we owed as a result of our sins. Having the assurance that the guilt of our sin has been dealt with, the second thing is that we are still confronted by the power of sin.

The world is against us; it does not encourage us to live God's way of life; quite the contrary, it hinders us. We battle the world, the flesh, and Satan. Forces and factors outside us are trying to drag us down, and we are aware of their terrible power. The whole outlook of the world, the whole of its pleasures and organizations—the whole mentality of the modern world—is something that is opposed to our righteous interest.

When we consult the Bible, we find that no one can deliver himself from this evil power. God's people throughout the centuries have testified to this terrible harmful power that is opposing us in the world, and we cannot conquer it on our own.

There is only one who has conquered Satan, there is only one who has conquered and defeated the world, and that is this Son, whom the Father sent into the world to be its Savior. Jesus Christ can deliver us from the power of sin as well as from the guilt of sin.

The third and last thing that He delivers us from is the pollution of sin. We are not only confronted by sin all around us, but there is sin within us. The apostle Paul said that he had discovered that nothing good dwelt in him.

Romans 7:18-20 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that

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I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Our very nature is polluted; there is a desire for, and an inclination toward, evil. Separately from my actions, my nature is sinful, and that is where all sinless perfectionists, who think of sin only in terms of actions, go so sadly and hopelessly astray. Of course, we have the Holy Spirit in us, and as we receive more of the Holy Spirit, and use it, it replaces our own nature. We are in the process of conversion to righteousness and God's way of life, but it is a process and it takes time.

Christ fulfilled the law, by living it perfectly, and showing us that there is more to the law than just the letter of the law, the spirit of the law must be kept as well.

Before we do anything, our nature is polluted; there is a sinful propensity in us, and we must be delivered from that. We must be saved from it; and thankfully, according to the Scriptures, Jesus Christ, our Savior, deals with that problem also. He not only saves from the guilt of sin, and the power of sin, but also from this terrible pollution of sin, and that is done by the power given to us through the Holy Spirit within us. Sin is revealed to us and we develop disgust for it. With this revelation of the enormity and abomination of sin, comes the desire for righteousness and holiness.

Jesus Christ encourages us to engage in good works. That encouragement, in once sense, comes from our Savior. And the result of this work, ultimately, will be that Christ our Savior will present us faultless and blameless, without any vestige of pollution in the presence of God, in glory.

The plan of God continues to move forward. God's purpose for the human race always took, and continues to take, precedence. Nothing can stop it; neither grief, nor pain—not even a gruesome death.

Even while in agony during His life, Jesus put the fate of the human race before His own needs. He prayed, seeing His own suffering looming on the horizon. John records Christ's expression of the agony within Him.

John 12:27-28 "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

In that context, John 3:16 takes on its true and profound meaning. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

The goal was reached, late that Passover afternoon, as the Son of Man hung on the stake—tired, bruised, in pain, bleeding. "It is finished," Jesus finally said, as his blood was shed. "And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, into your hands I commend My spirit.' And having said this, He breathed His last." And the Son of God was dead.

With his death, Jesus wiped out the spiritual note of debt—the penalty of sin—that all humans had brought, and would bring, upon themselves.

The truth of Jesus the Savior is so closely joined with God the Savior, that in Paul's letter to Titus, the two are joined in the phrase "our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." The return of this Savior, in glory, is the "blessed hope" of the church.

Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

This appearing will be the moment of the Savior's restoration of all things, the full realization of Israel's multifaceted hope of salvation.

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is not a helper, nor is He an assistant. He is not merely one who encourages us; He is more than an example to follow. We cannot, without the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, live up to such a high standard, and even then, it is the righteousness of Christ that we receive, not our own.

Primarily, this is the message in a nutshell: The Word, God's Son, Jesus Christ, is the only Savior. He has kept the law perfectly—and He offers us His righteousness.

He is working in us in a great way, in order to deliver us from sin in all its aspects, and eventually, He will take us by the hand, and will present us to His Father, and we will be received into everlasting glory.

He, and He alone, is our personal Savior—and He, and He alone, is the Savior of the world!