

God's Plan of Salvation

The Bible calls all believers to be in a lifelong pursuit of increasing in knowledge and love of the LORD and His people.

Philippians 1:9-11 "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that come through Jesus Christ- to the glory and praise of God."

The following 5 page summary is designed to give a systematic yet concise look at how scripture describes the process of Salvation according to the Bible. This packet is intended to help you discover what Scripture says about how God saves sinners. It is simply intended to be used as one tool to help those that would like to see the scriptural references to this topic. Below is a key verse:

Colossians 2:13-15 "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

Three questions that are often raised in regards to this study are:

1. Do I have to understand & agree with this doctrine in order to be a Christian?

Absolutely NOT. To be a Christian all you need to do is Repent and Believe – Mark 1:15

2. Do I have to understand & agree with this doctrine in order to be welcome at WVBC?

Absolutely NOT. Everyone is welcome at WVBC. However we would encourage you to explore God's Word on this crucial subject as it is so foundational to a Biblical perspective of God, ourselves, and how we live – John 8:32. In addition, there is a distinction between fellowship at WVBC and leadership. For those who aspire to be used of God in leadership at West Valley, their approach & view of this doctrine is essential to their involvement as leaders.

3. If I have believed this doctrine for many years then how should I use these summary sheets?

If this doctrine is plain to you, please be humble and loving in your approach to challenge others in their views of God in His role of salvation. Use this summary as a tool to help walk them through and answer any questions they may have. Please do not use it as an 'end all' trump card to an intense discussion. Present it in Love & Humility and be willing to hear the scriptures that they may be struggling with. Remember the words of Jesus "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

1 Thessalonians 2:7 But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.

Our Condition Before Salvation

"Much of our problem in continuing fellowship with a holy God is that many Christians repent only for what they do, rather than for what they are."-A.W. Tozer

Most people today do not have much of a problem admitting that they sin. We all know we do bad things. The Bible teaches, however, that sin is not just something we do, but rather it is who we are. Because of this, we are spiritually dead and unable to comprehend or believe spiritual truth. Therefore, all of us are completely dead and blind to the message of salvation. Let's take a quick look at what the Bible says about who we are before salvation.

- ✓ **We all have fallen short of God's perfect standard**-Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- ✓ **No one seeks God on their own**- Romans 3:10-11 "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.
- ✓ **No one can understand the things of God**- 1 Corinthians 2:14 "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned."
- ✓ **All of our intentions are wicked**- Genesis 6:5 "The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time."
- ✓ **Our hearts are deceitful**- Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"
- ✓ **Even the "good" things we do are filthy**- Isaiah 64:6 "All of us have become one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags."
- ✓ **We do not become this, we are born this way**- Psalm 51:5 "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." Psalm 58:3 "Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies."
- ✓ **We are slaves to sin**- Romans 6:20 "When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness." Titus 3:3 "At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures."
- ✓ **We inherited our sin nature from Adam**- Romans 5:12,18 "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned" 1 Corinthians 15:22a "For as in Adam all die"
- ✓ **Because we are sinners, we cannot choose good**- Job 14:4 "Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!" Matthew 7:18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit." Jeremiah 13:23 "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil."
- ✓ **The result and penalty of all this is physical and spiritual death**- Ephesians 2:1 "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins." Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We are in serious trouble. After surveying the Old and New Testaments we find that we are completely sinful from birth and do not have the ability to do good let alone choose God or the things of God. This realization becomes even more alarming when we realize that God's standard for Heaven is perfection. Jesus said in Matthew 5:48 "Be perfect, therefore as your heavenly father is perfect." God is perfect and thus he cannot allow imperfection into his presence. Take a hard look at the scripture passages above and ask yourself: "If left to myself, would I ever choose God?"

God's Role in Salvation: God Saves Sinners

"What matters supremely, therefore, is not, in the last analysis, the fact that I know God, but the larger fact which underlies it- that He knows me." J.I. Packer

We have seen throughout the whole of scripture that we are born spiritually dead and morally corrupt. Left to ourselves, we would never choose God. Jesus said in John 6:44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." Because we are unable to save ourselves God was left with three choices concerning man. God could have saved none. God could have saved all. God could have saved some. The Bible teaches that God, by his amazing grace, chose to save some.

- ✓ **The Bible teaches that God is in control of all things and of all circumstances-** Psalm 115:3 "But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. Isaiah 46:9-11 "Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do."
- ✓ **God chooses those who will be saved-** 2 Thessalonians 2:13 "But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the LORD, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth." Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the people on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession."
- ✓ **God chose before the foundations of the earth-** Ephesians 1:4 "For he chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight."
- ✓ **The choice is not based on our own merit-** 2 Timothy 1:9 "who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity."
- ✓ **The choice is not based on our foreseen faith-** Acts 13:48 "When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the LORD; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed."
- ✓ **God chose according to His mercy-** Titus 3:4-5 "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit."
- ✓ **God's choice was for God's glory-** Ephesians 1:4-6,12,14 "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will- to the praise of his glorious grace which he has freely given us in the One he loves....in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory....to the praise of His glory."
- ✓ **See also-** Psalm 105:43, 135:4; Matthew 24:22; John 17:9; Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 1:1,2; Acts 16:14; Philippians 1:29; Romans 8:28-30; All of Romans 9

Most people who see the truth of God's choice in salvation for the first time say "That's not fair. Why didn't God choose everyone?" Romans 9:23 says "What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory." The real question is: "Why did God choose me?"

The Cross of Salvation

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Timothy 2:5

The Gospel of John tells us that the last words that Jesus said while dying on the cross were "It is finished." What exactly did He mean? What was finished? What exactly happened when the perfect Son of God willingly gave up His life on the cross?

Why the Cross?

- ✓ **Because God is just, sin must be punished-** Nahum 1:3 "...the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished..." John 3:36 "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." Romans 1:18 "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness."
- ✓ **Because God is by nature a Savior-** Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." 1 Timothy 1:15 "...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners..."
- ✓ **Because God is merciful He chose to do for us what we could not do-** 1 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."
- ✓ **Because God the Father loves Jesus-** John 17:24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world."
- ✓ **Because God loves us-** Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

What happened at the Cross?

- ✓ **God ransomed us-** Matthew 20:28 "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
- ✓ **God redeemed us-** 1 Peter 1:18-19 "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."
- ✓ **God rescued us-** Galatians 1:4 "who gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father."
- ✓ **God reconciled us-** Colossians 1:22 "But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation"

Who did Christ die for on the Cross?

- ✓ **For those who believe-** 1 Timothy 4:10b "who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe."
- ✓ **For His people-** Matthew 1:21 "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."
- ✓ **For His sheep-** John 10:14-15 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me- just as the father knows me and I know the Father- and I lay down my life for the sheep."
- ✓ **For His friends-** John 15:13-14 "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command."
- ✓ **For his bride-** Ephesians 5:25-27 "Husbands love your wives , just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, with out stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless."

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, he paid in full, the penalty of sin for those whom God has chosen before the foundations of the earth. Romans 6:23 says "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." **We are sinners. God must punish sin. On the cross, God punished Jesus in place of those He had chosen. At the cross God's work of redemption was done. That is why Jesus said "It is finished."**

Our Response to Salvation

"And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls." Joel 2:32

The verse above beautifully illustrates the Biblical tension that exists in salvation from our perspective. God holds us responsible to follow Him, but we will not come until He calls. We must be willing to live with the tension that God is sovereign in salvation and yet He calls us to choose to follow Him and have compassion to reach out to the lost. Rest assured, however, there is no tension from God's perspective.

God is sovereign in everything

- ✓ Romans 11:34, 35 "For who has known the mind of the LORD, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again?"
- ✓ Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."

God always does what is right

- ✓ Psalm 19:7-9 "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant giving light to the eyes. The Fear of the LORD is pure enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous."

What must we do to be saved?

- ✓ **Repent of sin-** Matthew 4:17 "From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near.'"
 - God grants the ability to repent- 2 Timothy 2:25 "Those who oppose Him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth."
- ✓ **Believe in the Gospel-** Mark 1:15 "The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe in the good news." John 3:36 "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life."
 - God grants the ability to believe- Philippians 1:29 "For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for him."

Can a person resist God's call?

- ✓ **Jesus said no way-** John 6:37 "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away."

What exactly is the Gospel?

- ✓ **Our condition-** Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- ✓ **God's Grace-** Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His love for us in this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."
- ✓ **Our Response-** Romans 10:9 "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raise Him from the dead you will be saved."

If God is sovereign and chooses, why share the Gospel?

- ✓ **Our hearts should break for the lost-** Romans 9:2, 3 "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ..."
- ✓ **God uses people to save people-** Romans 10:14 How, then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"
- ✓ **We love God** – Philippians 1:15, 16 "It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love..."
- ✓ **Jesus commanded us-** Matthew 28:19, 20 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Our Security After Salvation

"Yet to those who received Him, to those who believed in His name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12

Who are you? Are you a child of God, a son or daughter of the Most High. If you are, the Bible says this will never change. Jesus said in John 10:28 "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand." **The Eternal Security of believers is a fact promised by God throughout the Bible. However, being assured of salvation by the Holy Spirit is something that happens as believers live obedient lives. 2 Corinthians 13:5 says this,** "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you- unless, of course, you fail the test?" **As you read through the scripture in this final sheet, ask yourself this question: Am I really His?**

Eternal Security (Our Position, For all true believers, Once for all, Fact, Reality)

- ✓ **God gives eternal life to all who are His-** John 5:36 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned..."
- ✓ **God will finish what He started-** Philippians 1:6 "...that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."
- ✓ **God will keep us until the end-** 1 Corinthians 1:8 "He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- ✓ **God will bring us safely to heaven-** 2 Timothy 4:18 "The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom."
- ✓ **God has secured our inheritance-** 1 Peter 1:4 "and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-kept in heaven for you."

Assurance of Salvation (Our Practice, For all obedient believers, Ongoing, Feeling, Realization)

- ✓ **Given by the Holy Spirit-** Romans 8:16 "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's Children." 1 John 3:24 "Those who obey His commands live in Him, and He in them. And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us."
- ✓ **Given as a result of obedience-** 1 John 2:3 "We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands."

Evidence That Demonstrates Saving Faith

- ✓ **Growing Love of God and Others-** 1 John 4:7 "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God."
- ✓ **Growing Love of God's Word-** Job 23:12 "I have not departed from the commands of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my daily bread."
- ✓ **Growing Conviction of Sin-** 1 John 1:10 "If we claim we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and His word has no place in our lives."
- ✓ **Growing Devotion to God's Glory-** 1 Corinthians 10:31 "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."
- ✓ **Growing Propensity to Pray-** 1 Thessalonians 5:17 "pray continually"
- ✓ **Growing Sense of Humility-** Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
- ✓ **Growing in Fruitfulness-** John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."
- ✓ **Growing in Obedience to Him-** John 14:15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command."

Jesus said in Luke 6:46 "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

Is Jesus your Lord? Do you know for sure that you are a child of God?

If not, one of two things is true: Either you are not His or you are not living obediently to His word.

The Bible tells us in 2 Peter 1:10 "Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure..." **Please do not wait. Remember,** "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."