

## Principle #2

# Salvation

## *God's great surprise*



### Principles of Discipleship

Our salvation is such an incomprehensible wonder that it's hard to describe with mere words. The Bible uses metaphors, or "illustrations", to tell us what salvation is like. In fact, one picture is not enough - several different images are used to help us understand that which even the angels find amazing.

When you finish this lesson, you should be able to explain four metaphors used to describe salvation. Each of them comes from a different area of life. Each uses some fancy words, so you might begin by looking these up in an English dictionary. Then read the article on the third page before proceeding.

EPH 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,<sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.<sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.<sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,<sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.<sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,<sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.<sup>10</sup> For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

#### Main Passage: Ephesians 2:1-9

Verses 1-4. How does Paul describe our spiritual condition before God reached out to us in love?

Who does Paul say "this world" belongs to?  
How does 2 Corinthians 4:4-6 relate to verse 2 here?



Whose "wrath" is referred to in verse 3? (see Romans 1:18 )

God's "richness" in mercy (verse 4) can be contrasted to our *what*? (see Matthew 5:3)

What phrase is repeated verbatim in this passage?

How many times does the word "grace" appear in this passage?

Write out a definition of "grace" (see a Bible dictionary)

What place do "good works" have in God's plan of salvation, as revealed in this passage?

## Biblical & Theological terms for Salvation

<b>Metaphor of ...</b>	...the temple	...the market	...the courtroom	...the home
<b>toward God</b>	<i>propitiation</i>	<i>ownership</i>	<i>forgiveness</i>	<i>reconciliation</i>
<b>toward Man</b>	<i>expiation</i>	<i>redemption</i>	<i>justification</i>	<i>adoption</i>

Using a Bible dictionary or word book, look up the following terms and write a brief definition of each that makes sense to you. Use the verses as well to clarify the meaning.

- **Propitiation:** (*Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2, 4:10*)
  
- **Forgiveness:** (*1 John 1:9, 2:1-2, 4.10*)
  
- **Redemption:** (*Romans 6:17-23, 1 Cor 6:19-20, 1 Timothy 2:5-6*)
  
- **Expiation:** (*Matthew 26:28, Colossians 1:14, Hebrews 9:13-14*)
  
- **Justification:** (*Titus 3:5-7, James 2:21-26, Romans 4:1-5,22-25*)
  
- **Reconciliation:** (*Romans 5:11, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19*)
  
- **Adoption:** (*Romans 8:15-17, Ephesians 1:5, 2 Cor 5:17-21*)

### **3 Other Major Passages...**



- ◆ **Romans 3:21-26**  
*“But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known...”*

According to this passage, could God have declared us righteous if Christ had not died?

- ◆ **Romans 5:1-19**  
*“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God...”*

According to this passage, what are the results of Christ’s death?

- ◆ **Hebrews 10:1-18**  
*“The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves...”*

Make a chart contrasting the sacrifice of Christ with the sacrifices of the priests.

sacrifice of Christ	sacrifices of the priests





Moved by the perfection of his holy love, God in Christ substituted himself for us sinners. That is the heart of the cross of Christ. It leads us to turn now from the event to its consequences, from what happened on the cross to what was achieved by it. Why did God take our place and bear our sin? What did he accomplish by his self-sacrifice, his self-substitution?

It would be hard to exaggerate the magnitude or the changes which have taken place as a result of the cross, both in God and in us, especially in God's dealings with us and in our relations with him. Truly, when Christ died and was raised from death, and a new day dawned, a new age began.

This new day is *the day of salvation* (2 Cor. 6:2), and the blessings of such a great salvation (Heb. 2:3) are so richly diverse that they cannot be neatly defined. Several pictures are needed to portray them. Just as the church of Christ is presented in Scripture as his bride and his body, the sheep of God's flock and the branches of his vine, his new humanity, his household or family, the temple of the Holy Spirit and the pillar and buttress of the truth, so the salvation of Christ is illustrated by the vivid imagery of terms like *propitiation*, *redemption*, *justification* and *reconciliation*.

They are not alternative explanations of the cross, providing us with a range to choose from, but complementary to one another, each contributing a vital part to the whole. As for the imagery, *propitiation* introduces us to rituals at a shrine, *redemption* to transactions in a market-place, *justification* to proceedings in a lawcourt, and *reconciliation* to experiences in a home or family. My contention is that *substitution* is not a further *theory* or *image* to be set alongside the others, but rather the foundation of them all, without which each lacks cogency. If God in Christ did not die in our place, there could be neither propitiation, nor redemption, nor justification, nor reconciliation.

There is logic in the order in which we are reviewing these great words which describe the achievement of the cross. Propitiation inevitably comes first, because until the wrath of God is appeased (that is, until his love has found a way to avert his anger), there can be no salvation for human beings at all. Next, when we are ready to understand the meaning of salvation, we begin negatively with redemption, meaning our rescue at the high price of Christ's blood from the grim captivity of sin and guilt. Justification is its positive counterpart. True, some justification is the opposite of condemnation (e.g. Rom. 5:18; 8:34), and both are verdicts of a judge who pronounces the accused either guilty or not guilty. To reconcile means to restore a relationship, to renew a friendship. So an original relationship is presupposed which, having been broken, has been recovered by

Christ.

We have examined four of the principal New Testament images of salvation, taken from the shrine, the market, the lawcourt and the home. Their pictorial nature makes it impossible to integrate them neatly with one another. Temple sacrifices and legal verdicts, the slave in the market and the child in the home all clearly belong to different worlds. Nevertheless, certain themes emerge from all four images. First, each highlights a different aspect of our human need. Propitiation underscores the wrath of God upon us, redemption our captivity to sin, justification our guilt, and reconciliation our enmity against God and alienation from him. These metaphors do not flatter us. They expose the magnitude of our need.

Secondly, all four images emphasize that the saving initiative was taken by God in his love. It is he who has propitiated his own wrath, redeemed us from our miserable bondage, declared us righteous in his sighs, and reconciled us to himself. Relevant texts leave us in no doubt about this:

*God ... loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. God ... has come and has redeemed his people. It is God who justifies. God ... reconciled us to himself through Christ.*

Thirdly, all four images plainly teach that God's saving work was achieved through the bloodshedding, that is, the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ. With regard to the blood of Christ the texts are again unequivocal. *God presented him as a propitiatory sacrifice, through faith in his blood. In Him we have redemption through his blood. We have now been justified by his blood. You who once were far away have been brought near (i.e. reconciled) through the blood of Christ.* Since Christ's blood is a symbol of his life laid down in violent death, it is also plain in each of the four images that he died in our place as our substitute. The death of Jesus was the atoning sacrifice because of which God averted his wrath from us, the ransom-price by which we have been redeemed, the condemnation of the innocent that the guilty might be justified, and the sinless One being made sin for us.

## SCRIPTURE

*Which verses significantly impacted you and why?*



## ARTICLE

*What did you personally glean from this article?*



## PRINCIPLE

*Summarize the truth you've learned in a concise statement:*



## LIFE APPLICATION

- 1. What is your spiritual self-image right now? How do you see yourself spiritually, and how do you think God sees you? Do you tend to have a Biblical self-image, or does it depend more on feelings or your recent "track record"?*
- 2. Has this study affected the way you view other people?*
- 3. What can you do to make these truths more of a reality in your life?*

