

## Salvation

Salvation means being saved or rescued from the penalty of sin. So the question is, where did sin come from anyway? It all began in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve who were created by God to the height of perfection in humanity, extremely intelligent and pure, rebelled against God. It's a long story but the important fact is that they ushered in sin by betraying God. They ate the fruit of a particular tree that God had instructed them not to. They gave into temptation through a personage named Satan.

They rebelled and fell under divine judgment. The way back to God was now impossible from the human side, for man is the guilty party rendered helpless by sin and with no right of approach.

Once they committed this sin, they were removed from the Garden and severed their unique relationship with God. They were now on their own in the world and it continued to deteriorate from there. The Old Testament reveals how God patiently offered ways to have people return to him in relationship, but they were not interested. (You can read more details in the Book of Genesis.)

The big fact is that through Adam and Eve, a sinful nature entered into every person ever born and through to today.

The Jewish people had a temple where they sacrificed their best animal in a flock as a sacrifice for sins, but it wasn't permanent. It had to be done over and over. To that point there was no one who could remove the sins of "all people," permanently. However, God made a way. In his grace he promised a savior (Gen. 3:15) who would defeat the work of Satan and bring restoration to people. This promise unfolds throughout biblical history. God pledged himself to bless the world through the seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), one who will reign in righteousness, universally and forever. God will himself provide the forgiveness of his people's sins through Jesus, his son's self-offering, substitutional sacrifice and gracious gift of righteousness.

We are all sinners, and the consequence of sin is death—not just physical death, but eternal separation from God in hell. You see, no one really dies, they pass into eternity. God's original love gift to us was to enjoy life forever with no death. We are eternal creatives. Therefore when you die you will live in an eternal state either in heaven or in hell.

Salvation is not about doing certain steps to earn salvation. *It cannot be earned.* Once you become a Christian you need to be baptized and should publicly confess Christ as your Savior. Christians should turn from sin and commit their lives to obeying God. However, these are not steps to salvation. They are the results of salvation.

Because of our sin, we cannot in any sense earn salvation. We could follow 10,000 steps, and it would not be enough. That is why Jesus had to die in our place. We are absolutely incapable of paying our sin debt to God or cleansing ourselves from sin. Only God could accomplish our

salvation, and so he did. God Himself completed the “steps” and thereby offers salvation to anyone who will receive it from Him.

God revealed his great love for us by sending his Son, Jesus, to die for our sins more than 2,000 years ago. Jesus understands us because he lived as a man on earth for 33 years. He lived a sinless life and paid the price for our sins by offering himself as the perfect sacrifice on the cross. He rose from the dead three days later and went up into heaven, where he intercedes on our behalf (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25).

Salvation and forgiveness of sins is not about following steps. It is about receiving Christ as Savior and recognizing that he has done all of the work for us. God requires one step from us—receiving Jesus Christ as our Savior from sin and fully trusting in him alone as the way of salvation. That is what distinguishes the Christian faith from all other world religions, each of which has a list of steps that must be followed in order for salvation to be received.

The Christian faith recognizes that God has already completed the steps and calls on people to receive Jesus Christ in faith. The Bible says we all fall short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23). We all sin, and the penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23). There’s nothing we can do to earn our way into heaven.

Being a saved person is about asking God for forgiveness of your sins; turning away from your sins; and believe that Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, died for your sins and rose again from the death of crucifixion and the absorption of sins. You then become a follower of Jesus, learn what the Bible teaches, and your entire world will transform. You need to attend a church that teaches the Bible and its truths. You will be with others who have experienced much of what you have so you are among people who can support you.

We would be happy to discuss this with you and assure that you understand it clearly so you can make a thoughtful decision.