

Salvation

"Jesus Saves!" This two-word message can be found everywhere; printed on plaques in Christian homes, shining in neon letters over inner city churches, scribbled in the margins of old Bibles, and painted on walls as graffiti.

Some Christians like to tell their friends, "I've been saved," or "Jesus saved me!" Or they ask their friends, "Have you been saved?" What does it all mean?

THE TWO MEANINGS OF "SALVATION"

The New Testament word translated "saved" has two meanings: "rescue" and "heal." In the Bible, God is the Rescuer and Healer, and we are those to be rescued and healed.

What are we rescued from? Because we've done things we knew were wrong, we owe a debt to justice. Until it's paid we bear the guilt of our wrong actions.

We also need to realize the natural human condition is separation from God. No one can see or touch God. He lives in another realm--a spiritual realm. If we go on living without God, we'll die and spend eternity without Him.

These two problems converge. Our wrong actions are ultimately self-destructive, because they intensify our separation from God who is both just and good. So we need to be rescued from our wrong actions (sin), but also from its guilt and consequence (hell).

What is it that needs to be healed? Simply, our natural tendency to do wrong, and our broken link with God.

HOW ARE WE "RESCUED" AND "HEALED"?

Separated from God, we're in spiritual darkness. However, God shined a light into our darkness, showing us the way to rescue and healing. Jesus Christ, the light of the world shows us the path to God's door. The life and teaching of Jesus tells us everything we need to know about God.

By dying on the cross—a death He did not deserve—Jesus made it possible for us to be rescued from our sin, guilt, and punishment. When our sins are forgiven, we're enabled to see God in Jesus, and our relationship with Him is healed.

Jesus is the center of salvation. His name means "The Lord's Salvation," and He is called "The Savior."

THE PROCESS OF SALVATION

Salvation is a process affecting our past, present, and future. We "have been saved" because Jesus died and our sins are forgiven. We "are being saved" because God is working in our lives. We "will be saved" when we're physically resurrected to enjoy eternal life with God. This process is described by these theological terms:

Atonement: sins are atoned, "covered," "put away" by the blood Jesus shed on the cross.

Justification: to be declared "right" in God's court because Jesus paid our penalty.

Sanctification: "to make holy" or "make saints." This is what God is currently doing in the lives of those He saves.

Reconciliation: changed from God's enemies into His friends through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

Regeneration: birth of a new and spiritual life, "born again."

Substitution: Jesus taking someone else's place: their sin, guilt, and punishment.

ACCESS TO GOD'S SALVATION

If you were drowning in the ocean, wouldn't you scramble into a rescue boat? The Bible assumes we need rescuing and will eagerly reach out for God's salvation. The first step is to recognize our spiritual condition.

God's salvation is free. Our staff is trained to introduce people to Jesus Christ and lead them into salvation through loving instruction and prayer.

If you have questions, please give us a call.

