

Salvations

The discussion among religions regarding who is and who is not saved has gone from the extreme of Universal Salvationism to the extreme of claiming that unless one belongs to a specific religion, he is lost forever.

We fervently believe that the true and Biblical answer about salvation is satisfying, reasonable, and lovely. In essence, we believe that Judaism only had half of the story, and Christianity has lost the half which Judaism had. Therefore, please look at

THE OTHER HALF OF THE GOSPEL.

Genesis begins with the fall of man. Revelation concludes with the restoration of man. In Genesis the curse falls on man. In Revelation the curse is “no more.” In Genesis are the promises that the “seed of the woman” and the seed of Abraham will destroy the enemy and bless all of the families of the earth. In Revelation, that seed (the Lamb and 144, 000) destroys the enemy and blesses all of the families of the earth. This is the kernel of the Gospel.

To understand the concepts of salvation, seven basic questions need answers:

- (1) Why did God create the earth and mankind?
- (2) What is God doing in the earth today?
- (3) What is the Gospel?
- (4) What is the Church?
- (5) What is the ultimate purpose of the Church?
- (6) Are all outside the Church forever lost?
- (7) What about the Jew?

“The Other Half of the Gospel” suggests that what we regularly hear preached as the Gospel is incomplete—and this is, indeed, the case. An examination of the Scriptural definition of the Gospel will prove that the Gospel is actually “good news” in a fuller sense than most Christians have ever dreamed.

In Galatians 3:8 the Apostle Paul makes an interesting statement. He claims that the Gospel was preached to Abraham. This is a concept not generally appreciated—that the Gospel is also in the Old Testament. Abraham and his descendants believed God and His promises, and their belief, the core of traditional Judaism, is based upon the Gospel which God preached to Abraham. What is this belief? It basically is this: Messiah will come and bless everyone on earth through the agency of Abraham’s children (or seed). This blessing will include resurrecting those who died. (It was because of Abraham’s faith in the resurrection that he was willing to offer his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to God. Hebrews 11:17-19)

Paul summed up all of this belief in the words spoken to Abraham, “In thee shall all nations be blessed.” *Remember*, Paul called this very promise “the Gospel.” It is a beautiful Gospel, too. It promises that *all* mankind will be blessed. (See the original promise in Genesis 22:15-18.)

Christianity generally does not define the Gospel in quite the same manner. The teaching of Christendom about the Gospel has been basically this: Faithful believers in Christ will go to heaven when they die.

A chart to compare these two versions of the Gospel might be helpful:

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO:	
JUDAISM:	CHRISTENDOM:
Messiah will bless all on earth through Abraham’s seed and will even raise those who have died to enjoy the blessings.	Faithful Christians go to heaven after death.

On the surface Judaism seems better, doesn’t it? After all, it *includes all* men in the blessing, whereas Christendom *excludes all* except Christians. But our examination of the matter is not complete. As we look into it more, remember that we cannot immediately judge either of these definitions of the Gospel as being wrong. Judaism got its belief from God’s own prophets; we would, indeed, be presumptuous to ignore that testimony. And Jesus, who was a Jew, never disputed the Gospel as preached to Abraham. But we must acknowledge that the Bible also teaches that faithful Christians will go to heaven. These two versions of the Gospel are not inharmonious. By accepting them both, we learn the full Gospel.

The Gospel is summarized in God’s promise to Abraham. “In thy seed shall all nations be blessed.” What does this mean? Notice that it involves two distinct and separate parts:

1. Abraham’s seed
2. All nations (or families) of earth.

Abraham’s seed is not totally as Abraham might have expected, for the Apostle informs us in Galatians 3:29 that “If ye be Christ’s. then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.” This is a key to our understanding. *It says that faithful Christians are counted by God as being Abraham’s seed or children.* It also says that *because* of this they become “heirs” according to the “promise.” *What* promise? The promise was that the seed would bless everyone else. *Now* we are at the crux of the matter. If true Christians *are* the seed, we see God’s eventual purpose for them: the blessing of all the nations of the earth, and the resurrecting of all those who have died (just as Abraham expected) so that they, too, could be blessed. Now our chart is harmonious. Those who go to heaven will be part of the great Messiah which will bless those here on earth. (Obadiah 21)

THE CORRECTED GOSPEL ACCORDING TO:	
JUDAISM:	TRUE CHRISTIANITY:
Messiah will bless all on earth through Abraham's seed and will even raise those who have died to enjoy the blessings.	Faithful Christians go to heaven after death AND will be part of the promised Messiah, which will raise and bless all families of the earth. Galatians 4:28

But the chart is harmonious *only* if we retain the “other half of the Gospel”—the part Judaism believes. And that part is, not only will the “seed” be saved, but so will the rest of mankind! The scripture actually is saying that there are *two salvations*. First, the seed (true Christians) are saved; and secondly, they (the seed) save and bless everyone else. Yes, the complete Gospel really is GOOD NEWS! (Romans 11:28-32; I Timothy 4:10)

The New Testament informs us that there will be two kinds of resurrection, one in heaven for the true seed (the “*first resurrection*”), and one on earth for all the rest of mankind. This is the *whole Gospel*. Christendom and Judaism both have been incomplete and wrong in themselves. Each had one half of the Gospel. But now we see that those who will go to heaven in the first resurrection will not go to float on clouds and play harps, but rather to participate with Christ in the rulership of his kingdom which will bless all the families here on earth. Christ's kingdom will have two parts: heavenly and earthly. If this were no so, how could the Lord have taught the disciples to pray, “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done in *earth*”? (Matthew 6:10) Or how could the angels have predicted “Peace on *earth*, good will toward men”? (Luke 2:12-14) Or how would it be a blessing for the meek to “inherit the earth”? (Matthew 5:5)

Paul also mentions these *two salvations* in I Timothy 4:10 where he says, “We trust in the living God who is the Savior of *all men*, speciallyof those that believe.” It is clear that Paul still had in mind the *seed* and *all men* as being the two parts of the Gospel, because he says that salvation is:

1. for all men
- and
2. *speciall*y for those that believe.

The “special” salvation is, of course, the salvation of the “first resurrection” (the heavenly resurrection—Revelation 20:6). It is the salvation of true Christians, those whom God recognizes as His own true Church— “the seed of Abraham.”

Understanding the two salvations, the earthly and the heavenly (or the two parts of the Gospel), answers many questions about certain scriptures. For instance, consider Matthew 11:11: “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the

Kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” This tells us what a great man John the Baptist was. Yet in the same verse we have our Lord’s own words that John will not be a part of the heavenly resurrection! John instead will be a part of all the nations of the earth who will be raised and blessed right here on the earth by “the seed”—the Church raised to heavenly glory. (Hebrews 11:39, 40)

So, in short, the Gospel is the beautiful promise that all men will be raised and be given an opportunity to have a perfect, everlasting life on the earth. The exception to this is those who faithfully serve the Lord during this present life since Jesus’ first advent. They will live in heaven as spirit beings, and their job will be to bless the race of man on earth. The true Gospel is a *combination* of the best basic traditional expectations of both Jews and Christians.

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We began with a list of seven questions that are basic to an understanding of God’s plan. We will now ask the same seven questions, and this time give concise answers.

1. *Why did God create the earth and mankind?*

He created because love is one of His primary attributes, and true love must *give*. Therefore, he formed the earth “to be inhabited” (Isaiah 45:18) by a perfect race of people who will love and serve Him freely, and to whom He will freely give blessings and life. This creation is “not in vain.” (Isaiah 45:17, 18; Psalm 104:5)

2. *What is God doing in the earth today?*

He is doing several things so that His purpose as stated above is being accomplished—so that His word will “not return unto Him void but it shall accomplish that which He pleases, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto He sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11) The Lord is permitting evil to have full sway in the earth so that man will be able fully to see its results. (Ecclesiastes 1:3; 3:10) Therefore, in the Kingdom reign of righteousness, mankind will be able to make a free and intelligent choice between good and evil after having experienced both. But God is doing more. He is choosing “a people for His name” (Acts 15:14), which we will discuss in a coming question.

3. *What is the Gospel?*

As we have just seen, the Gospel is God's good news to man that His original plan has not failed—that man *will* be made alive and receive God's blessings eternally on a perfected earth. This all is to be done by a promised "seed."

4 & 5. *What is the Church?* and *What is the ultimate purpose for the Church?*

The true Church of the Bible is that promised seed just mentioned, and its ultimate purpose is, by God's grace, to participate in God's own work of accomplishing His original design for the earth and its inhabitants. One of the main things that God is doing in the earth today is choosing that Church—one member here, one there. As Acts 15:14 declares, God, having found too few Jews faithful at the first advent to constitute this Church, also is "visiting the Gentiles"—not to bless or save them now, but *to take out* from their midst "a people for His name." This "people for His name" are those who are being called of God and who are faithfully suffering with Christ. The Greek word for "Church" (*ekklesia*) literally means "a calling out." These called-out ones are the true Church. They will receive the first or heavenly resurrection. Then they will be "priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Revelation 20:6) They will reign to bless all the nations of the earth. What a prospect! This is the very reason that James says God is taking a people for His name: that "after this...the residue of men might seek after the Lord." (Acts 15:13-18)

6. *Are all outside the Church forever lost?*

Of course not! The absurdity of this position should now be clear to us all. The whole purpose of the Church is to bless all those who are outside of the Church. God is not dealing with the world in general now. He merely is choosing out from among them those who will become members of the Church. After the Church is completely chosen and she becomes the bride of Christ at his second advent, the "the Spirit (of Christ) and the bride (the Church) say, come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17)

7. *What about the Jew?*

Although Israel (as a nation) has lost the exclusive opportunity of becoming the Church (Romans 11:25), Israel, too, shall be saved (Romans 11:26). It is through the natural seed of Abraham, the Jew, that God promises to give His New Covenant to all mankind. (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Isaiah 60:5) Israel is now

reestablished as a nation. God put her there. She will be the nation from whom the blessings will flow to all the world, for it is written, “Many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths, for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Micah 4:2-4) Likewise it is said, “Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord. Thus, saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.” (Zechariah 8:22, 23)

JUST WHAT DOES “SAVED” MEAN?

The Greek word for “saved” (*sodzo*) is used and translated in several ways:

1. Sometimes “saved” means **healed**: Matthew 9:21, 22 (used 3 times and translated “made whole”); Mark 5:23, 28; James 5:15, etc.
2. Sometimes “saved” means **delivered from a danger**: Matthew 8:25; 14:30; 27:42; Jude 5, etc.
3. Sometimes it means **to maintain**: Matthew 16:25, etc.
4. Sometimes **the opposite of death** is meant: Matthew 24:22; Acts 27:31; James 4:12, etc.
5. Sometimes “saved” is applied to those who become Christians because they are saved from the condemnation pronounced on Adam and his race, and/or from the condemnation of the Jewish Law (Romans 8:1). This “saved,” however, does not mean **ultimate** salvation. It means that a Christian has taken the first step and thereby received justification: Acts 2:40, 47; 11:14; 16:30, 31; Romans 5:9; I Peter 4:18; John 3:18, etc.
6. Sometimes “saved” means the **ultimate, everlasting salvation for the church**: Matthew 10:22; I Timothy 4:16; II Timothy 4:18 (translated “will preserve”); Hebrews 7:25; James 1:21, etc.
7. “Saved” also refers to the **ultimate salvation (everlasting life on earth) for the world** of mankind who in **this life** do not believe: John 3:16, 17; Acts 2:21; Romans 11:26; I Timothy 2:4, etc.

In short, a Christian can receive a tentative salvation—a re-standing with God. If he is faithful to his covenant with God, he will receive everlasting salvation as part of Christ’s body—a resurrection to heaven. On the other hand, the world of mankind in general

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awaits the Millennial Age for its salvation. Faithfulness then will result in everlasting life on a perfected earth. (Matthew 6:10) The secret which so many have missed is in I Timothy 4:10: "God...is the saviour of **ALL MEN**, specially of those that believe." Two salvations:

- (1) a "special" one for believers;
- (2) but also one for those who in this life have not believed.

The Gospel IS good news!

This topic is clearly and Scripturally detailed in the book THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES. Please click on the **Available Literature** Link.