

Salvation

Gift of Grace



Basic Beliefs //
GOSPEL SERIES

Salvation

Gift of Grace



Booklets in the Gospel Series

Our Basic Beliefs: An Introductory Brochure
Holy Bible: Word of God
Jesus Christ: Lord and Savior
Salvation: Gift of Grace
Baptism: Cleansing of Sins
Footwashing: Having a Part with the Lord
Holy Spirit: Helper and Counselor
Holy Communion: Remembrance of the Lord
Sabbath Day: Holy Day of Rest
Church: Body of Christ
Coming of Christ: Judgment Day

TRUE JESUS CHURCH

Department of Literary Ministry

21217 Bloomfield Avenue

Lakewood, CA 90715, USA

EMAIL contact@tjc.org

PHONE +1 (657) 206-6077

WEB www.tjc.org

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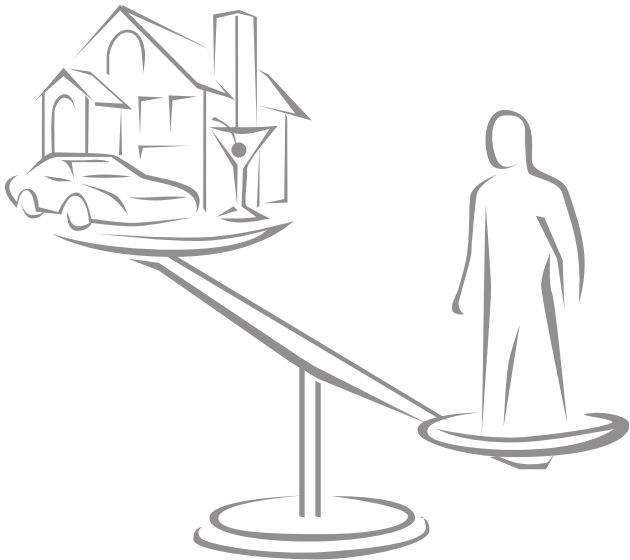
The Need for Salvation	2
The Work of Christ.....	7
What Must I Do to Be Saved	10
The Effects of Salvation.....	14
Salvation for Today.....	20

If you would like to learn more about the Bible after reading this booklet, additional free literature is available. Please see the contact information on the opposite page.

THE NEED FOR SALVATION

Jesus said, “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26).

You may have many ambitions and goals, or you may already be a millionaire. However, none of your possessions or accomplishments can be as important as your life. Salvation is a matter of life and death—not just this life but the life to come. It should be your greatest concern because salvation will deliver you out of evil and eternal death. We would like to share with you something that is more important than anything in the whole world.



Sin Came into the World

To protect the well-being of His creation, God established laws for us to obey. However, God also created man with the freedom to make choices. He wanted human beings to obey Him out of freewill rather than compulsion. We can choose to either obey God or sin against Him.

Adam and Eve, the first human beings God created, chose to listen to Satan, the tempter. They disobeyed God's specific command and so sin entered the world. Since then, man has fallen into a state of alienation from God. Although man was created to be like God, because of disobedience, he no longer has God's eternal life in him.



Sinful Nature

As a result of the sin of Adam, the entire human race has been sold as a slave to sin. Everyone born after Adam lives in sin, under the rule of Satan.

Paul explained the frustration of battling against the sinful nature in each of us: “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice” (Romans 7:18–19).

Even with the best intentions to obey God, we still sin against God because we are under the powerful control of sin.

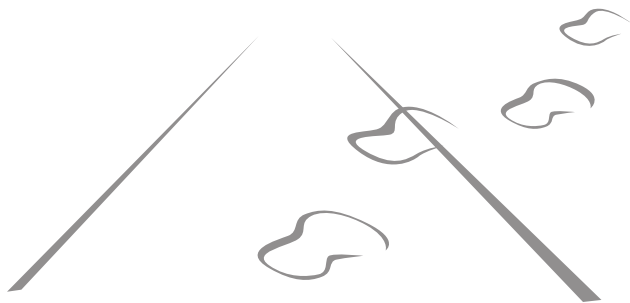


Transgressions

However, we cannot blame our sinful nature for our transgressions, because we, like Adam, often make a conscious choice to disobey God. Our actions show that we are sinners as much as Adam was a sinner.

A sinner may not be a criminal. In fact, most sinners are law-abiding citizens. Crimes are committed against people, but sins are committed against God. When we transgress against God's law, or go beyond its boundary, we have sinned. According to God's law, if we do not worship God our Creator and do not love Him and serve Him with all our hearts, we have sinned. If we hate someone, we have sinned. If we look at a woman lustfully, we have sinned. If we do not love others as ourselves, we have sinned.* The list goes on.

Could anyone, then, declare themselves as sinless? As the Bible says, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Our transgressions prove that we are sinners from birth.



* See Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28; 22:37-39.

Consequences of Sin

Sinners have no peace or joy. They are condemned with a curse of death from God. We all have to die a physical death and face God's judgment. The fact that no one has ever managed to escape death shows that everyone is a sinner.

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12).

We have no hope, except the fearful expectation of the eternal punishment of our souls in hell, where "Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48). This punishment is called the spiritual death or second death.

Because of our sinful nature, it is not possible for us to be rewarded eternal life through our deeds. Without God's salvation, we, and every single person who has ever lived, are spiritually dead in sin. No amount of charitable works or acts of obedience can save us from our dreadful destiny. The only solution to saving our souls from eternal punishment is God's salvation grace.



THE WORK OF CHRIST

Incarnation

Out of love for His children, God promised us salvation grace. However, if God were to simply overlook all our sins and grant us entry into heaven, He would be denying His inherent truth and justice. God's law condemns sinners to death.

To deliver mankind out of sin, God had to look for someone who fulfilled all of God's commandments and had never sinned. Only a sinless person could mediate for the sins of the world. However, no one born of Adam is perfectly sinless because the whole world lies under the power of sin. "For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin" (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

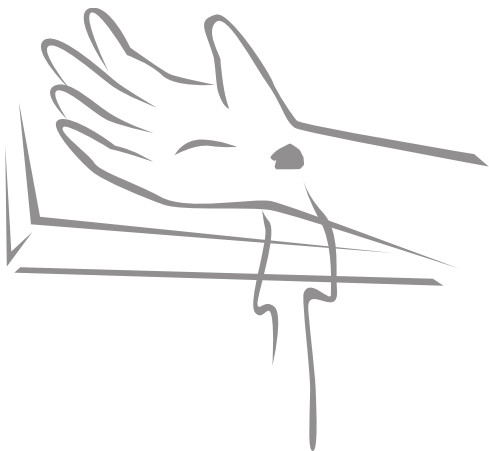
Therefore, God Himself had to become man to fulfill the righteous requirement on behalf of humanity. This man is Jesus, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin.

As a human being, Jesus was also tempted by the devil, but He was without sin (Hebrews 4:15). He was subject to weakness, but He overcame temptation. Through Adam, we were all sinners, but through Jesus Christ, we can now be free from condemnation.

Redemption

Whoever sins against God must pay a penalty for his sins. In Old Testament times, according to God's law, a priest had to offer an animal as a sacrifice to God and sprinkle the blood of the animal on the altar. The animal would bear the transgressions of the sinner. However, the blood of animals cannot take away sins. The ritual served only to foreshadow the true sacrificial Lamb—Jesus Christ. Jesus is "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He is the perfect sacrifice that bears all our sins. Jesus, who represents humanity, had to lay down His own life as a ransom.

Jesus Christ redeemed us with His own blood, which was shed on the cross. Those who believe in Christ are saved from the control of Satan and become God's treasured possessions.



Exaltation

Jesus rose from the grave, victorious over death, and exalted to the highest.

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9–11).

Through the death and resurrection of Christ, we have been granted the promise of eternal life.

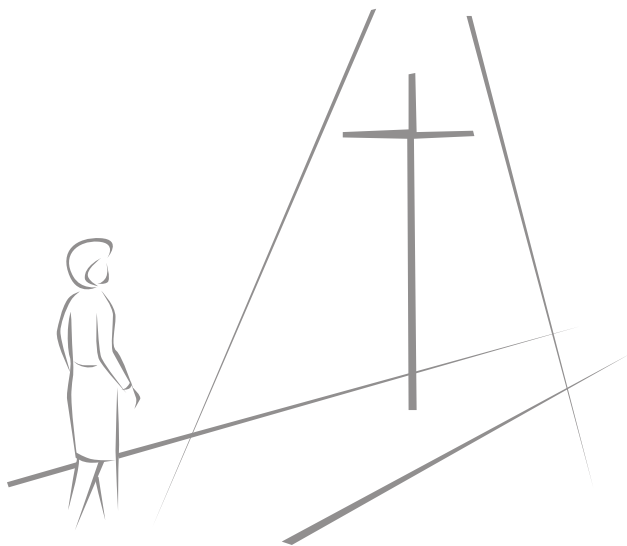
Today, Jesus continues the work of salvation: He washes away our sins when we receive baptism in His name; He cleanses us when we ask Him for forgiveness; He also pours out His Holy Spirit to help us to obey God and overcome temptations. One day He will come again to bring us into the heavenly home He has prepared.

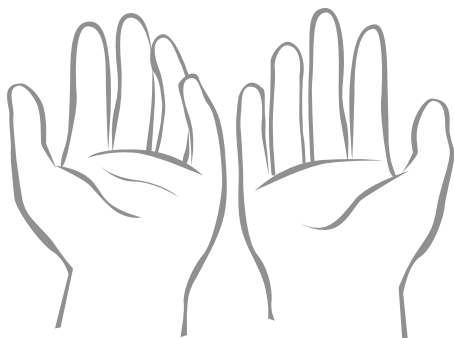


WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

Our salvation is by grace through faith. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). We cannot work our way to heaven through good deeds; only through our faith in Jesus Christ alone can we receive the gift of salvation.

While it is God alone who saves us by His grace, we need to respond to God's calling through faith in order to be saved. This response of faith is expressed through belief, confession, repentance, and obedience.





Believe and Confess

“...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the way to receive salvation. Faith is more than mental consent. It means complete acceptance, trust, and dedication of ourselves to Christ. Faith must also persist throughout our lives. If we make a life-long commitment to the Savior, He will save us according to His promise.

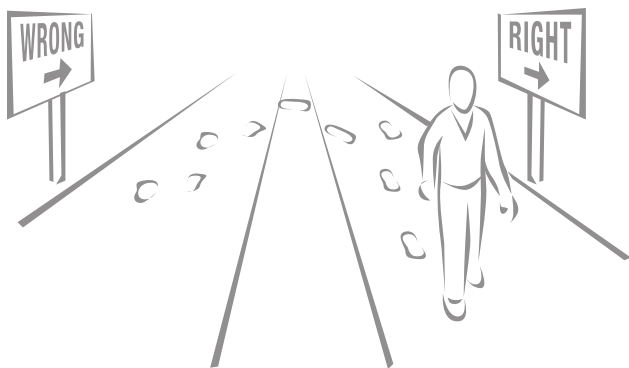
Not only do we need to believe and confess that Jesus is our Savior, we must also believe that the Bible, which is a testament of Christ, is true. Furthermore, we need to believe in His true church, the body of Christ, because Christ has sent the church to preach the gospel of salvation and administer the necessary sacraments for salvation.*

* For a more detailed explanation, please read the booklets in the series titled *Holy Bible* and *Church*.

Repent and Obey

Repentance means turning back to God. It is a necessary act of faith. A repentant sinner must leave his sinful life and determine to obey God's word. He must walk by the Holy Spirit and aim towards leading a life of purity and love.

Obedience is the practice of faith. Without it, confession of the Lord's name would be a hollow statement. Although obedience by itself is not the basis of salvation, through it, we demonstrate our faith in the Lord. The Lord Jesus said to a young man who asked how to receive eternal life, "if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17).



Receive the Sacraments

Faith in the Lord also means accepting the sacraments. The sacraments, which are baptism, footwashing, and Holy Communion, are specific commands from our Lord that are necessary for salvation. Christ washes our sins away in baptism; He offers us a part with Him through footwashing; and He gives us His life through the Holy Communion.

The use of physical actions or elements for the salvation of the soul cannot be rationally explained. However, they are required according to the Lord's own word. If we have not received the sacraments, or have not done so in the manner taught in the Bible, we need to receive them in accordance with God's word in order to be saved.*



* For a more detailed explanation, please read the booklets in the series titled *Baptism, Footwashing, and Holy Communion*.

THE EFFECTS OF SALVATION

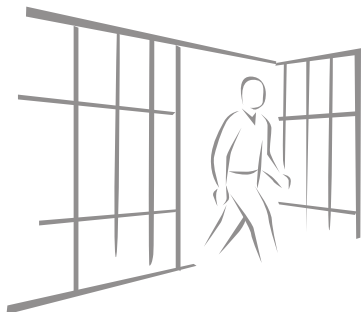
Justification

Through the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are justified. To “justify” means to declare someone righteous, or to acquit. Its meaning is opposite that of “condemn.”

We are sinners who deserve to be condemned. However, if we are baptized into Christ through faith, Christ’s righteousness becomes ours, and we become justified freely based on the merit of Christ’s saving work. “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Romans 5:9). We are spared from the condemnation of God’s law.

When we fail and sin on our Christian path of life, Christ is there to speak on our behalf. “If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins...” (1 John 2:1–2 NIV).

Thanks be to God for the continuing mediation of Christ!



Reconciliation

Sinners live in constant guilt and fear because as lawbreakers they are under God's wrath. However, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Mediator, we may now come before God with confidence.

"And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight" (Colossians 1:21-22).

Having reconciled us to Himself, God pours out His love, peace, joy, and comfort into our lives.

Those who have peace with God also live at peace with others. They can love others instead of hating them; they can forgive others instead of retaliating against them. In the church, believers from different ethnic and social backgrounds can unite as one body through the blood of Christ. The reconciliation of Christ makes peace and harmony a reality.



Regeneration

Regeneration means being born again, or receiving a new life. This new life is eternal for those who believe in the Lord Jesus. It is also a transformation of ourselves. Once we are baptized, we put away our old lives and live a new existence holy unto God. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Regeneration has been made possible through the gospel of salvation. “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:23 NIV). God, through Christ and His promise, gives His life to us, the believers.

Regeneration is accomplished through the baptism of water and the Holy Spirit. The Lord told Nicodemus, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Through baptism, God raises us from spiritual death. He gives us His Holy Spirit, creating a new being within us, so that we who have been baptized may live a renewed life—a life pleasing to the Lord.



Adoption

While we were in sin, we were strangers to God's household. However, through our belief in Christ, God adopts us as His children and makes us a part of His household, the church. "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

Not only does God forgive us, He calls us His own. He also gives us the Holy Spirit as evidence of His adoption, for "the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16).

As children of the heavenly Father, we may receive grace, peace, and a place in His kingdom. We are entitled to a heavenly inheritance, which is given to all who put their faith in Christ. When Christ comes again, God will also transform our bodies into spiritual ones like the glorious body of the resurrected Christ.



Sanctification

God sanctifies believers by setting them apart to conform to His perfect nature. God calls believers out of darkness into light through the blood of Christ and gives them a new identity as citizens of heaven. He frees them from a sinful and meaningless lifestyle, enabling them to become the light of this world through their good deeds.

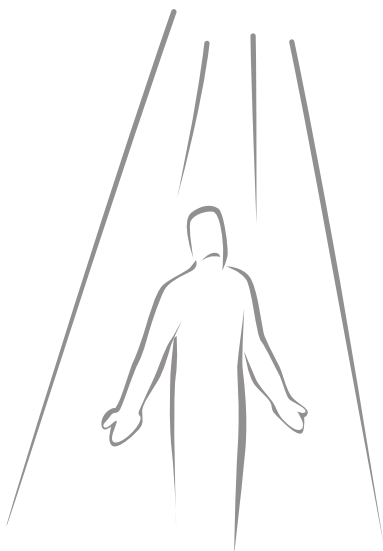
In addition to giving us a new identity, by His grace God continues to purify us with His word and His Holy Spirit throughout our lives. “God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:13). If we are always careful to examine our thoughts, speech, conduct, and goals so that they are in accordance with God’s word and seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit, God will keep us blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:16–23).



Glorification

Through God's power, we will receive glory at the coming of Christ. "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

When our lowly bodies become like the glorious body of Christ, salvation will be fully realized. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself" (Philippians 3:20–21).



SALVATION FOR TODAY

Salvation is not only an important subject, it is also an urgent issue. While taking your time to decide may seem harmless, waiting just means remaining under God's wrath and condemnation. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Do not wait until you complete your degree, finish enjoying life, or retire from your career. Time is not in your hands. What if today is your last day? God has given you today; so you are accountable for your decision today.

Call on the Lord Jesus now, come into His church, and determine to walk in the way of salvation. God is ready to accept you. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8).



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