

# GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

## (Overview)

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You may launch the study from this overview, or from the [index](#) or [outline](#). Click on a highlighted module number or sub-module title below to select your choice. If you are new to this study, it is suggested that you examine this overview first.

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The "Plan", as presented, is broken into 5 parts, each supported purely from scripture:

Why must we be saved? Why did God institute a Plan of Salvation?

How are we saved? How was God's Plan designed, revealed, implemented and completed? How *exactly* does it work? How do we know that the Plan is valid and available to us?

Who can be saved? To whom does the Plan apply? Who is excluded?

What happens after we are saved? What does God then call us to do? What should we *desire* to do? What enables us to fulfill God's call? What causes us to be concerned with this?

When can we become unsaved? When is our salvation secure; when can we lose it?

The overview below is laid out exactly as the "Plan" documents themselves. In place of the scriptural support supplied in those files, this overview provides a brief treatment of each topic heading. Self-explanatory headings are merely listed in place.

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### **Why must we be saved?**

This section contains the bad news - very bad news. This is the logical and theological beginning, but we don't necessarily have to start here. However, we absolutely must include these truths if we want the teaching to be complete and effective - pure; uncorrupted. We'll look at this need further when we examine the section on true repentance.

1) *All* have sinned; *all* are sinners; we are all born with a sin nature; this is due to the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden.

#### Sinners all

Fundamental; accepted and agreed upon by virtually all; but misunderstood and viewed from a slanted perspective ("Oh, I know I'm not perfect"; "Everybody makes mistakes"; "God understands that we're going to sin once in a while"; "I know it's not right but everybody has to have a little fun sometimes"; etc.)

#### The sin nature

Because the presence and power of our sin nature is misunderstood and underestimated, it wreaks much more havoc in our lives than it should. Though 1Jn 4:4 is certainly true, we are destined for trouble when we don't recognize and appreciate the danger of the enemy within.

### Due to the fall

Some folks argue with God's right to include us with Adam. Since God has provided for us to be included instead with Christ, that protest is moot and its true basis is unmasked - sinful disobedience and rebellion against God; disrespect for and the despising of His provision.

### God's view

If we would just allow ourselves to accept and appreciate God's view of sin - instead of attempting to force our view of it on God - we would stop playing with fire. We toy with danger because we minimize the risk in our minds due to a false and mitigated view of sin.

- 2) God is *perfectly* pure and holy; He *cannot* co-exist with evil or sin.

### His holiness and perfection

We must properly appreciate the absolute and awesome perfection of God's holiness - and the despicable wretchedness of man's sinfulness (as above). If (merely to illustrate) someone could appear before God at the judgment and honestly claim to have committed only 1 sin, a little white lie when he was 12 years old, would God allow him into heaven? Not if he hadn't been saved in the same manner as every other justified, heaven-bound sinner - having availed himself of the atoning blood of Christ (that white lie needs to be atoned for). God wouldn't grant entrance, because He *couldn't* - not without violating His integrity and justice, thereby disqualifying Himself as God! This isn't a measure of God's meanness or some delight He takes in wielding the power of His wrath - it is the result of the unfathomable magnitude of His holiness set against a true reflection of the utterly abominable nature of sin!

### His separation from sin, sinners and evil

God will not meet us "half-way" or on any other terms of our own making or choosing. Yet, we should be extremely *grateful* that God will not compromise Himself or His perfect justice.

- 3) God will and *must* judge (punish) sin. His perfect justice *must* be satisfied (propitiated).

Sometimes folks can be dragged kicking and screaming to finally accept 1 and 2 above. But when they get here, it's like mixing 2 chemicals in science lab which shouldn't be mixed. Sinful man knows that if he accepts this truth, he has just sealed his eternal death warrant - and he's right! This "Why?" section presents bleakness and hopelessness - very bad news! If God's plan ended here and did not transcend human reasoning, there would be no hope!

### Judgment of sin and evil is assured

God's Word leaves no doubt that His warning of individual judgment is real and certain.

### Suffering; torment; anguish!

Many folks speak of partying with their friends in Hell. God's Word says it will be no party!

### Eternal!

There will be no respite - ever! Fear alone ought to drive folks to repentance - yet it doesn't.

## **How are we saved?**

We now move on to a huge sigh of relief after the frightening truths of the previous section. Item 4 gushes forth the good news - the remedy to the hopeless dilemma which items 1-3 reveal. Items 5-7 then provide the necessary qualifications and explanations. Without these any version of the good news is an invention of man - useless, corrupted, and illegitimate; pursued and trusted in vain. Item 8 describes the profound and awesome result of the work of true salvation in the lives of men - by God's sovereign choice and under His sovereign control.

4) God designed, revealed, implemented and *completed* a plan providing salvation for *all* who believe. He has given us proof by raising Jesus from the dead.

God's plan and design

It's God's plan - He designed it - perfectly!

The revelation

Prior to its implementation, God was continually revealing His plan in various ways.

The implementation

The plan's implementation and significance are recorded and explained in scripture.

The completeness

The scripture record leaves no doubt that the plan has been thoroughly finalized - to its Author's complete satisfaction! No portion has been left undone - no detail overlooked.

For *all* who believe

God's plan holds out hope, and completely avails all who truly believe and trust (true faith).

➤ **THE PROOF: THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS**

This subsection presents the historical fact of the resurrection as proof that God's plan has accomplished what He has promised in His Word. God's acceptance of the sacrifice of Christ for His intended purpose is made known to the world through the resurrection of Jesus - which happened just as God in His Word, and Jesus Himself predicted.

The warnings/predictions/claims of Jesus

Jesus repeatedly warned of and predicted His persecution and death - and claimed He would be resurrected on the third day.

The historical record; witnessed proof

The historical record has not and cannot ever come under any serious challenge. It is the most written about event in history - the witnesses are bold and unimpeachable.

Belated recognition/realization/understanding

Monumentally profound, the significance of the resurrection wasn't immediately grasped.

The immediate dissemination of the event and its significance

One compelling validation of the truth of this event is that the news was immediately disseminated by those who witnessed it - eventually at the risk of their very lives!

Presented as proof

Scripture itself points to the resurrection as proof of various other promises of God.

If it's all a big lie

If the resurrection is a lie, we are hopelessly doomed.

The attempted cover-up

Those who attempted to cover up the truth knew it was true.

The "million dollar" questions - The "million dollar" answer

These are the questions everyone must consider - and there is only 1 right answer!

5) Salvation requires true repentance - caused by godly sorrow due to conviction of sin. We *must* turn to God! The road to salvation *must* pass through repentance, and true repentance *will absolutely and always* lead to salvation. Ultimately, we are faced with a decision.

Item 5 addresses the fundamental problem with today's "easy-believism:" Folks are walking in the false security of a salvation they don't actually possess. They aren't being confronted with the fullness of truth that they are sinners and their sin must be dealt with. The modern-day "gospel" lacks a primary salvation ingredient which the prophets - up to John the Baptist, and then Christ himself, the apostles and all true teachers since - were careful to include: "Repent!" Our culture will not abide admonishment and rebuke, and today's churches - having more and more adopted the ways of the world - don't want to hear it either. Today's shepherds (and all believers) must issue the call just as the prophets, apostles and Jesus did. Repentance is at the core of the message of reconciliation which God has committed to us (2Co 5:18-20). "Receive and believe" is a gospel of Satan. Jam 2:19 says so.

#### The call to repentance

Scripture is replete with this imperative - from the Old Testament to the New.

#### Granted and provided by God

We cannot produce or muster this up ourselves - we rely upon God (as always; in all things).

#### Conviction of sin

Until we come under true conviction of what sin is - and the reality of our own sinfulness - we are blind to our need of a Savior. We remain lost, dead in our sins.

#### Turning to God; away from sin, evil and wickedness

There is no middle ground; no workable compromise; no negotiating. We're either in or out.

#### Godly sorrow

True conviction will cause a godly sorrow - the heart-rending type of Acts 2:37.

#### True repentance

Godly sorrow will bring us to true repentance.

#### The road to salvation

True repentance leads to true salvation.

#### We face a decision; it's a choice of our will

God's Word lays it all out quite clearly and thoroughly. Will we accept or reject His offer?

#### The sad epilogue

The banquet feast has been readied - but the invitees are full of excuses and are opting out.

6) There is only *one* plan of salvation; only *one* way to be saved; through One only. We must meet *God's* terms - not our own, nor the myriad inventions of men. There is no provision for "sympathy" for "sincerely" following false doctrine.

#### One plan/one way

God's plan is the *only* plan; the *only* way - man has continually invented useless alternatives.

#### Through One only

The path to the Father must pass through Jesus. He alone is the Gate - there is no other.

#### God's terms

God is supremely sovereign. He calls the shots - not us. We don't have a right to "our say."

- **GOD HOLDS US RESPONSIBLE** to discern and hold to the truth, providing ample warning in His Word. “Do not judge” has become widely misunderstood and misapplied, even by (misguided) Christians. We are *commanded* to test (judge); it is our *responsibility!*

This subsection shows us from scripture that we are without excuse - God has provided in His Word all that we need to meet our responsibility to know and hold to the truth.

Do not judge?

We are *commanded* to test (judge); it is our *responsibility*

Warnings to watch out for false prophets and deceivers

Warnings to guard against false teaching

Warnings regarding those who cause divisions

Warnings to avoid evil and the evil schemes of men and Satan

Seek Truth; *obtain* knowledge, understanding, wisdom and discernment

Scripture commands and exhorts us to *seek, get, obtain, find* - we must exert an effort.

Warnings to stick to the truth

No excuse

How to recognize legitimate teaching/teachers

Sure judgment of false teachers/deceivers

Able/not able to understand (discern)

Scripture reveals just how and why we are or are not able to understand.

Applying discernment

Discernment is unavailing if not properly applied.

Examples to follow/the example to set

We are given scriptural models to follow - and we are called to be models for others.

- 7) Salvation is by grace *alone*, through faith *alone*, in Christ *alone*; not by works (good deeds), observance of any man-made traditions, rituals, laws or religious rules, or through family lineage. It is a gift from God, to be freely received.

By grace

Through faith

In Christ

Not by works

Not by the Law

Not through tradition or religious ritual

Not through family line

A gift

How sad that such a profound gift should be rejected - and, because of man's pride, sometimes it is rejected *precisely because it is free!* It's free because it's *priceless* - not because it's *cheap*; because the Giver loves us - not because He wants to placate us! Many more would embrace it if they could but earn it or pay for it somehow - and then boast of it!

The purpose and function of the law

A proper understanding of the Law is necessary to appreciate why true salvation stands apart from law. Salvation sprinkled with law and/or works is man-made - and useless.

8) God *chooses*, in His sovereignty, to see us as righteous because the perfect sacrifice of our sinless substitute, Jesus, satisfies (propitiates) God's justice regarding sin (see #3 under "Why"). God's perfect holiness and justice are preserved in forgiving us because His decision is based on the finished work of *Christ* - it is *not* dependent on anything of *us*. Christ has paid our debt *in full*. He *alone* is worthy and able to do so. We are justified *in Christ*; it is *not* a righteousness in *us* or of *us*. And God's choice is *permanent and eternal!* It is much more than a "pardon."

God can and will, and has the right to do whatever He pleases

God is supremely sovereign - and the salvation of men is the result of His sovereign will.

God's sovereign choice in redemption; justification; salvation

God's Plan is His sovereign choice - He wasn't prompted or obligated to it by anything in us.

Jesus - payment for sin

Jesus alone is worthy

God's justice satisfied (propitiated)

Our righteousness vs. the righteousness of God

Man's efforts throughout history to invent a "religion" acceptable to God are merely attempts to replace God's perfect righteousness with that of sinful man. This is silly and futile.

Permanent; eternal

## **Who can be saved?**

9) God desires that *everyone* be saved.

God's desire

God's provision

No favoritism

10) Salvation is provided for *sinner*s. We are saved *while still sinners*; when we are *spiritually dead, enemies of God*. Spiritual life is provided by God alone; according to His grace and mercy, because of His great love for us.

Sinners; enemies; wicked

Once lost, now found; once separated, now included in Christ

Spiritually dead; made alive by His grace, because of His love and mercy

11) Salvation involves an intimate, *personal* relationship with God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. God grants us the right to be called, and to *actually be*, His *children!* Jesus is not ashamed to call us *brothers!* The Holy Spirit makes His home *in us!*

God's view of us; His intentions

We are the masterpiece of God's creation, created in His image to share in His holiness!

God, our loving Father; we, God's dearly loved children!

It is awesome beyond comprehension that the Almighty Creator enjoys being our Father ...

The family of God; Jesus our brother!

... and Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers ...

The Holy Spirit; at home *in us!*

... and the Holy Spirit makes His home in us!

The Culmination

For us - in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit - are perfect love, grace and fellowship. Amazing!

## What happens after we are saved?

12) Once saved (born-again; justified; regenerated), we are responsible to live in consistent obedience to God's Word through the gift of faith we have received. What we once were, and what we have now become in Christ, must and will be in sharp contrast. Though we will struggle and encounter suffering, it should not seem to be a burden. We will be motivated to please God when we have a proper appreciation and gratitude for what He has done for us and what awaits us (see Dt 8).

Another fallout of "easy-believism" philosophy is that salvation becomes an end unto itself, thereby exposing it as no salvation at all. If salvation is true in an individual, it must be evidenced in scriptural ways. Submitting to God's Word, obeying its teaching, being willing to apply it to our lives, joyfully making necessary adjustments are "natural" to the saved.

### Before and after

Especially for those who come to the Lord as adults, there will be a clear demarcation.

### New associations (commands regarding unbelievers *and* believers)

Our circle of "friends" and our choices regarding social activities will be radically altered.

### New treasure

What matters to us most; what we consider valuable; what we seek will be totally different.

### Obedience to God's Word and His commands

There is no escaping the Word's clear and ample exhortations - we must walk in obedience. If we're truly saved, we won't be looking for an escape - we will delight in pleasing God.

### The ultimate and perfect example

Jesus' obedience is humanly unfathomable - yet, without His perfect example we'd be lost.

### Appreciation and gratitude for what God has done

If we profess salvation, our lives should consistently exude appropriate gratefulness to God.

## ➤ **EXPECT SUFFERING; FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST**

Sometimes Christians complain about suffering for the gospel, as if this is unexpected. The Word warns us to prepare for it - and the early believers considered it a privilege.

13) When saved, we begin the process of sanctification (being perfected, made holy, conformed to the image of Christ). God does the work; we must believe, be willing and cooperate. God enables this by in-dwelling us with the Holy Spirit, who leads, strengthens and equips us. We are called to unity, and we grow to desire and appreciate this more and more.

### Sanctification: God's will; our goal

God does/has done/will do the work; we choose to conform to His will

According to, and by His power

God's provision of His in-dwelling Holy Spirit

## ➤ **THE CALL TO UNITY; MEMBERS OF ONE BODY - IN AND OF CHRIST**

Partakers of the one (and only) Living Bread

Many parts, many members; one body

Absence of divisions

Like-mindedness; common doctrine and purpose; unity in Christ

14) Only those born again are able to understand (discern) spiritual truth. God calls us to mature in knowledge, understanding, wisdom and application (see, especially, the book of Proverbs). This comes through church fellowship, prayer, Bible study and “time with God.” But we must avoid the distraction of mysteries or knowledge beyond our comprehension.

Able/not able to understand (discern)

Scripture reveals just how and why we are or are not able to understand.

Contrasting viewpoints and responses

In Christ, the way we view things is completely different than the world’s view. We must realize and prepare for this, especially as we attempt to share the Truth with others.

Seek Truth; obtain knowledge, understanding, wisdom and discernment

Scripture commands and exhorts us to *seek, get, obtain, find* - we must exert an effort.

Growing in knowledge of and love for God; its purpose

God has a plan and purpose for our increasing knowledge and love of Him. Within the church, it works to establish and maintain health and vitality. Outside, we witness to the lost.

Exhortation to application

Lack of application can be evidence of lack of salvation - or a trap leading to difficulties and lost blessings for true believers. We must *do* something with the knowledge God provides.

Our responsibility

A summary of what scripture calls us to; our role in God’s overall program.

➤ **CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP; ITS NEED AND PURPOSE**

Mutual encouragement

Mutual edification

Mutual concern and compassion

Mutual love

To seek, develop, maintain and conduct ourselves in like-mindedness and unity; with common purpose

Strength in numbers

In remembrance of Jesus and what He has done for us

As Christians, we *HAVE* fellowship with one another

➤ **PRAYER**

Pray always and persistently

Pray for everyone

Pray with *purpose*

Pray with *confidence*



- **When is prayer “heard?”**

Accompanied by confession/repentance/humility and acknowledging God’s goodness/provision/care/power

By the godly; God’s obedient servants; those who delight in Him; who fear, honor, revere and submit to Him; who seek God and His will

Scriptural guidelines and models; God’s criteria and His promises

God’s view of prayer as revealed in scripture. Some positive models to learn from; how He sees those who pray - their hearts and attitudes, their specific and types of requests. The criteria by which God evaluates prayer; His promised response.

When it’s time to get up and get going!

Sometimes we’d rather pray than do - or we don’t realize we’ve fallen into this error.

By the godless/sinners/disobedient/rebellious/stubborn

“Saying prayers” isn’t praying. God only hears the appropriate prayers of His children.

For those who do not honor God

God says “don’t bother - I won’t listen.”

- **KNOWING GOD’S WORD**

The worthiness of God’s Word

Studying, teaching, spreading the Word; passing it down and along

- In the Old Testament

- In the New Testament

The purpose and benefit of applying His Word

Using the Word as our guide for life and practice

Seek Truth; *obtain* knowledge, understanding, wisdom and discernment

Scripture commands and exhorts us to *seek, get, obtain, find* - we must exert an effort.

Walking with God; yearning for God and His Word

Warnings/dangers of time away from/“without” God and His Word

- **GOD’S TRANSCENDENT KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM**

Secrets and mysteries beyond human understanding

We must accept the fact that there are divine truths beyond the reach of the human mind.

Hidden knowledge and wisdom

In the past, God purposefully and strategically hid some knowledge from man. He did this to unfold wisdom according to His divine timing - and to hide it from some for reasons of judgment and sovereignty. However, in Christ His revelation is now complete.

God knows all things

Revelation, according to God’s purpose, plan and timing

The wisdom and knowledge of God transcend human comprehension

15 Having believed and trusted God for salvation, we accept Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord and Master. This new relationship will be evidenced in our lives by godly character, genuine love for our brothers/sisters in Christ, and works of service (good deeds). God's glory and honor will be our primary concern. As His servants, our lives will bear good fruit and attract others to Him. As others respond, we are responsible to nurture them in the Lord.

Savior *plus*, or no Savior at all

He is *Lord*; Lord of *all*; *OUR* Lord!

He is *Master*, we are His servants

We *belong* to Him

Called to godliness

The admonitions of scripture to conduct ourselves in a godly fashion are explicit.

God's gracious and complete provision for godliness

God enables us to fulfill His mandates.

Loving our brothers and sisters in Christ

Very familiar and easily agreed upon - but not so easily done or seen as the priority it is.

Good works and good doing

Though we are saved apart from works, we are called to evidence our faith through works.

God's provision and equipping for good works

Again, God provides us with everything we need to do what He asks of us.

No action/wrong action

The negative side from scripture.

Right action

The positive side.

Right thinking

Right action will flow from right thinking.

All for the glory and honor of God

Proper focus is the key.

Be able to exhort as Paul did

We should live exemplary lives, that our exhortations of others would be authoritative.

Bearing good fruit

If the Holy Spirit is having His way in us, His presence will be evidenced by the fruit we bear.

Pointing/reconciling others to God

We are emphatically called to this - and it ought to be our greatest privilege and joy.

Aftercare

After we've introduced a lost one to the Savior, we have much responsibility and work to do.

Final exhortations

## **When can we become unsaved?**

Is "once saved, always saved" a doctrine of Satan? Is it really possible that salvation is guaranteed for a true believer; that nothing can cause it to be lost? The teaching which answers these questions is often conceded to be "controversial," about which Christians can "agree to disagree." This should not be! Click [here](#) for a thorough treatment of the issue of eternal security contained in a separate writing posted on this site.