

A collection of thoughts on salvation

God is the same, yesterday, today, and tomorrow... or He is unchanged in purpose and focus since the beginning of the universe and will be unchanged through eternity. The Bible is God's word, it is God breathed. All of it, old and new testament, is important to our understanding of God and His plan for the world and us.

In the beginning Adam and Eve were deceived by Satan in the Garden of Eden. The deception was a lie, a play on words mixed with some half-truths. Satan is also unchanging in his pursuit of, and the destruction of man. He knows that being close to the truth makes his lies believable.

While Satan is unchanging in his pursuit of us, he also learns from his mistakes and changes his attack upon us.

What did Satan learn from his attack on Job?

He learned that if you take away from man all his blessings, joy, happiness, possessions and health and he has nowhere else to turn, he will turn to God. Even today, do we pray more in good times or bad?

Satan, the master of disguise, deception, lies and illusions learned from Job that to win a man's soul all he has to do is give him a lifetime of easy going, the illusion of blessings, possessions with the attached lie that possessions bring happiness, the illusion of immortality through good health until it too late, even the illusion of salvation with half-truths. Remember, Satan used misquoted and incomplete scripture to tempt Jesus in the wilderness. We should expect him to try the same thing on us.

Man could not comprehend becoming like God; he could not comprehend death or dying. Man demonstrated his one great weakness, his unwillingness to obey or to be obedient.

From that first sin to the last one as Jesus returns and the earth is swept away man's path is littered with disobedience.

Lot's wife looked back. She died.

Moses struck the rock instead of touching it. He was not allowed into the Promised Land.

Achan took a little gold and silver when everyone was told to take nothing. He and his family were killed for their disobedience.

King Saul made sacrifices to God when he was told to wait. God's answer, I prefer obedience to sacrifice. Saul lost his kingship.

An example of obedience that worked.

Naaman went to Elisha for treatment of his leprosy. Elisha said (through his servant) "go and dip yourself seven times in the Jordan River" At first Naaman was upset that Elisha did not speak to him personally, and that he was offered such a ridiculous treatment for his leprosy, and that he would select the Jordan when there were better rivers. Naaman's servant suggested he had nothing to lose but his leprosy if he obeyed. Naaman went to the Jordan and immersed himself in the water. Nothing happened for six immersions. On the seventh, as he was coming up out of the water his leprosy was gone.

The number seven is the number of God. It means completeness. To go beyond things of the world (the number six represents the world) and to reach for the perfection that can only exist with God.

Complete obedience. God's way is the only way. Our way will never be God's way because we cannot go beyond six and therefore we will always fall short unless we are completely obedient to God.

Satan cannot remove the Truth from the world but he can bury it under a pile of lies so that only those who seek diligently can find it. It is Satan's goal that the seeker will preserve at least one little lie along with their newfound truth.

Is there one Creator God?

Is Jesus the Son of God?

We must remember that our doubts come from the half-truths and near truths that Satan inundates us with in an effort to discredit God.

Carbon dating is man's only premise to argue the age of the universe. There is overwhelming evidence to support the Earth's age being literally and accurately recorded in the Bible. One small lie mixed in with a thousand truths is sufficient to mislead man away from his Creator and God.

Matthew 6

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹⁰ Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Will heaven contain only the poor in spirit and the persecuted? These are Jesus own words, they are scripture and they are true. Taken out of context they are not the whole truth.

Matthew 5

¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

²⁰ I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.

²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?'

²³ Then I will declare to them solemnly, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers.'

²⁴ "Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.

This is what I understand from verses 19-24

I need to know all the New Testament commands so that I will neither break them nor teach someone else to break them.

I need to know the scriptures

I need to know Jesus' teachings

I need to know the Apostles' teachings

I need to go beyond knowing the law, I must practice the spirit of the law, I must demonstrate Jesus' love.

21: Acknowledging God will get you to the Gate, following Christ will get you through the Gate.

We must DO the will of God to enter heaven.

22: There will be great spiritual leaders in the world who will give beautiful sermons and do many great things but God will examine their motives and see that they did not do these things in humble obedience to Him. They will declare a message that is almost true (a lie) and deceive many and gain many followers by doing so. 23: Christ will reject them and call them evildoers.

(See also evildoer reference on page 8)

23: Listen and Act

Matthew 22

- ¹ Jesus again in reply spoke to them in parables, saying,
² “The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.
³ He dispatched his servants to summon the invited guests to the feast, but they refused to come.
⁴ A second time he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those invited: “Behold, I have prepared my banquet, my calves and fattened cattle are killed, and everything is ready; come to the feast.”’
⁵ Some ignored the invitation and went away, one to his farm, another to his business.
⁶ The rest laid hold of his servants, mistreated them, and killed them.
⁷ The king was enraged and sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.
⁸ Then he said to his servants, ‘The feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy to come.
⁹ Go out, therefore, into the main roads and invite to the feast whomever you find.’
¹⁰ The servants went out into the streets and gathered all they found, bad and good alike, and the hall was filled with guests.
¹¹ But when the king came in to meet the guests he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment.
¹² He said to him, ‘My friend, how is it that you came in here without a wedding garment?’ But he was reduced to silence.
¹³ Then the king said to his attendants, ‘Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.’

Matthew 22 1-13 is Jesus own words, a parable, concerning God, heaven, and those who will be there. The King (God) sent his servant (prophets and Son, Jesus) to invite a chosen people to a great wedding celebration, the wedding of His Son and Jesus’ bride (the church).

Those first invited, rejected the invitation, and some eventually killed the servant.

The King then extends the invitation to everyone.

The King still expects a certain respect from this new crowd so when some of the invited do not clothe themselves properly they are kicked out. (See Galatians 3 on page 8 for clothing ref)

Matthew 28

- ¹⁸ Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Two keys to salvation are here. All that Jesus says is key to our salvation. Jesus also delegated some authority to the Apostles when He said that “anything you bind on earth will be bound in heaven”. ALL the instructions found in all the letters of the New Testament are key to our salvation.

Matthew 28

- ¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

This “Great Commission” is a command in Jesus own words.

- 1. Make everyone a student of Jesus*
- 2. Baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*
- 3. Teach them to observe all Jesus has commanded.*

Romans 6

- ¹ What then shall we say? Shall we persist in sin that grace may abound? Of course not!
² How can we who died to sin yet live in it?
³ Or are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

⁴ We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.

⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin.

⁷ For a dead person has been absolved from sin.

⁸ If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.

⁹ We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

¹⁰ As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God.

¹¹ Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as (being) dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus

Paul gives a clear picture of connection between Jesus, sin, death, and eternal life.

Baptism is to be immersed in Jesus (3)

Baptism is our death, burial, and resurrection (4-6)

Baptism is the death of our sinful self (6) to begin eternal life in Jesus (11)

Ephesians 4

¹ I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received,

² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love,

³ striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace:

⁴ one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call;

⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all

There is simplicity in Paul's letter to the Ephesian Christians. One body, one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father.

The obvious differences in beliefs in the world are just that, Obvious. Subtlety is where Satan does his best work once again dealing in areas that are "mostly" true.

There are more bodies than there are degrees in a circle; some are total opposites while others are separated by only one degree of difference.

A spirit of legalism and law binds some, while others practice a total lack of any law whatsoever.

Some say that faith is all that is needed others say that faith is the beginning.

People have taken "one baptism" (the word means immersed or to be completely washed) and changed it so that now churches sprinkle, pour, use rose pedals, do it to babies, do it to caskets containing a dead person that would not do it when they were alive. Its done to join a specific church (not be become a part of the body of Christ) and finally it has been deemed to be unnecessary. Some have gone so far as to declare it blasphemy to be baptized because then a person is declaring that there is an action or work that is connected to salvation.

If Jesus stands at the door and knocks.. is answering the door work?

If Jesus says to seek and you shall find, is seeking work?

If a man has ears let him hear, is not listening work?

Confess Me before man and I will confess you before my Father in Heaven, is not confessing work?

A person needs only to be misled in one aspect of God's plan for them, Satan knows this so he can let you see God's entire plan and then he just needs to keep you from being completely obedient. He can even fill your life with the illusion of blessing for a lifetime if that means he keeps your soul for eternity.

I Cor 15

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be firm, steadfast, ***always fully devoted to the work of the Lord***, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Work is not for nothing! Christians must be fully devoted to the Lord's work.

Colossians 2

¹² You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

¹³ And even when you were dead (in) transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he brought you to life along with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions;

¹⁴ obliterating the bond against us, with its legal claims, which was opposed to us, he also removed it from our midst, nailing it to the cross;

¹⁵ despoiling the principalities and the powers, he made a public spectacle of them, leading them away in triumph by it.

The symbolic death, burial and resurrection of baptism, done for the right reason – to be buried with Him, forgives our sins, obliterates Satan's grip and claim to our soul.

I Peter 3

²¹ This prefigured baptism, which saves you now. It is not a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him

Peter told Christians that it was baptism that saves them. He compares it to the flood where obedience on Noah's part saved him and his family while washing the world free of sin.

Is the Bible God's word? Does it contradict itself?

Mark 16

¹⁵ He said to them, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.

¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned

Mark says that believing combined with baptism brings about salvation. To give an opinion by reading between the lines I would say that baptism without belief in Christ is just a bath, this may apply to infants and dead people and for baptism for any reason other than those specified in God's word. By the same token, belief without the obedience of baptism falls short of salvation too.

Acts 2

³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "What are we to do, my brothers?"

³⁸ Peter (said) to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit.

³⁹ For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call."

⁴⁰ He testified with many other arguments, and was exhorting them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day.

37: First they heard the Gospel message; Something in the message made them realize they needed to DO something.

38: Repent (do) turn away from sin, turn to Jesus

be baptized – in the name of Jesus Christ (there is no other name by which a person can be saved)
What do these actions cause to happen?
Forgiveness of sin
Gift of the Holy Spirit

Jesus told his apostles, what you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, when Peter spoke those words they became a command that all who seek eternal life must obey.

Acts 8

³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth and, beginning with this scripture passage, he proclaimed Jesus to him.
³⁶ As they traveled along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, there is water. What is to prevent my being baptized?”

³⁸ Then he ordered the chariot to stop, and Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and he baptized him

We have an event here that God went out of His way to include in the Bible. These men were traveling in a chariot with no water in sight as Philip was teaching, yet in the course of the instruction the Ethiopian concluded that salvation and water baptism are connected. When he saw water along the road he wanted to take advantage of it immediately.

Why didn't he merely say the “sinner's prayer” and hold off on baptism to a more convenient time?

Acts 9

¹⁷ So Ananias went and entered the house; laying his hands on him, he said, “Saul, my brother, the Lord has sent me, Jesus who appeared to you on the way by which you came, that you may regain your sight and be filled with the holy Spirit.”

¹⁸ Immediately things like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. He got up and was baptized,
¹⁹ and when he had eaten, he recovered his strength. He stayed some days with the disciples in Damascus,
²⁰ and he began at once to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

Paul was one of God's chosen, why was baptism his first action upon regaining his sight?

Acts 10

⁴⁷ “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit even as we have?”

⁴⁸ He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ

This scripture indicates that having the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit does not save you. These gentiles still needed to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and Peter ordered it done.

Acts 16

¹⁴ One of them, a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, from the city of Thyatira, a worshiper of God, listened, and the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what Paul was saying.

¹⁵ After she and her household had been baptized, she offered us an invitation, “If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my home,” and she prevailed on us.

Lydia listened – opened her heart – paid attention
Her response – she and her household were baptized.

¹⁶ As we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl with an oracular spirit, who used to bring a large profit to her owners through her fortune-telling.

¹⁷ She began to follow Paul and us, shouting, “These people are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.”

¹⁸ She did this for many days. Paul became annoyed, turned, and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” Then it came out at that moment

Even demons believe in God. They too will proclaim that Jesus is Lord, and then they will be cast into Hell.

Acts 16

³⁰ Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

³¹ And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your household will be saved.”

³² So they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to everyone in his house.

³³ He took them in at that hour of the night and bathed their wounds; then he and all his family were baptized at once.

³⁴ He brought them up into his house and provided a meal and with his household rejoiced at having come to faith in God

Every example of conversion and salvation includes reference to immediate baptism. Why do you suppose that is?

Acts 18

⁸ Crispus, the synagogue official, came to believe in the Lord along with his entire household, and many of the Corinthians who heard believed and were baptized.

Acts 19

² “We have never even heard that there is a holy Spirit.”

³ He said, “How were you baptized?” They replied, “With the baptism of John.”

⁴ Paul then said, “John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.”

⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus

If you were baptized at some time in your past but you don't remember why, what should you do? Your eternal life could hang in the balance, should you wait until the judgment to see?

These people, when they heard the whole Gospel message, did not hesitate to be baptized in the name of Jesus.

We must rely on God's grace and mercy for those who have died without the full knowledge of the Gospel message. Even in Paul's day there would have been those who responded to John's preaching but then never heard Jesus and the Gospel that followed. It is an individual's obligation to be obedient to the Gospel that is available to him or her. We are obligated to seek and find the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. We dishonor our ancestors when we reject what we know to be true because they were unaware of the whole truth, as you have come to know it. Ask yourself, “What would my ancestors have done?”

Acts 22

¹² “A certain Ananias, a devout observer of the law, and highly spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,

¹³ came to me and stood there and said, ‘Saul, my brother, regain your sight.’ And at that very moment I regained my sight and saw him.

¹⁴ Then he said, ‘The God of our ancestors designated you to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear the sound of his voice;

¹⁵ for you will be his witness before all to what you have seen and heard.

¹⁶ Now, why delay? Get up and have yourself baptized and your sins washed away, calling upon his name.’

Another account of Paul’s conversion includes the purpose of his baptism (sins washed away).

I Corinthians 12

¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit

Galatians 3

²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ

It appears that without baptism we are not a part of the body of Christ nor are we clothed with Christ. Is this perhaps the garment that God wanted everyone to wear to His Son’s wedding?

Can sin and righteousness coexist in one body?

I Peter 3

¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears turned to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against evildoers”

Remove sin from your life and clothe yourself in righteousness (Christ) then your prayers to God will be heard.

Matthew 10

³² Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father.

Romans 10

⁹ for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Matthew 16

¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

¹⁶ Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷ Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.

¹⁸ And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.

¹⁹ I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Matthew 10, 16 and Romans 10 (verses above) clearly indicate another factor to consider as we seek to be obedient to the will of God for our salvation. Is our salvation a personal decision between God and us or are we supposed to tell everyone who we believe Jesus is?

I want Christ to acknowledge me before His Father so I will proclaim to everyone in word and deed that I believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

The foundation of the church is this confession made by Peter. It is this message that the church must also proclaim.

I John 5

¹⁶ If you see a Christian brother or sister sinning in a way that does not lead to death, you should pray, and God will give that person life. But there is a sin that leads to death, and I am not saying you should pray for those who commit it. ¹⁷ Every wrong is sin, but not all sin leads to death.

A Christian can sin in such a way as to lose their salvation.

Romans 10

¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him.

¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

¹⁴ But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach?

Romans 10:13 is a quote from Joel 2:32 which is an end-time prophecy that could be referring to a second chance offered to the nation of Israel and the Jews.

A person really needs to read all of Romans in context. Watch for quote marks and cross-references because Paul was writing this letter to convince Jews to accept Christ and therefore he quoted lots of scripture from the Old Testament prophecies to validate Christ as Lord and Savior.

Paul is saying that Joel points to the One who can save and in verse 14 he says before you can call upon Him for salvation, first you must know Him. You have to hear the Gospel message!

If you read both Joel and Romans together you might even see where Paul is telling the Jews that even if they call upon the name of the Lord on judgment day, if they don't know who the Lord (Jesus) is, then how can they be saved.

I pray that all who read this collection of scripture and thought will accept it with the spirit in which it was compiled. I am a sinner who is seeking and putting into action the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in my life. I put my hope and confidence for my salvation in the Grace of God, knowing that I could never earn salvation but will strive daily to be obedient to His word and focus my life upon the One who died for me.

I am glad that I am a servant and messenger, and not the Judge. I am glad that God is Judge and that Jesus will be speaking on my behalf.

As messenger my only desire is to share the message contained within God's word without altering its content or intent in any way. When it comes to eternal salvation, I would prefer to error three steps inside of Heaven's Gate rather than one step short.