

Salvation

I believe . . .

- Every person dies, owing to universal death brought about by sin, and is in need of salvation to bring him to relationship with God (Isa 64:6; Rom 3:9-12, 6:23). Redemption depends totally on God (Eph 2:8-9).
- Salvation is available on the basis of the blood or death of Christ on the cross, the sacrifice or “propitiation” of one man’s perfect life for all (Rom 3:25-26; 1 Jn 2:2). On the cross, Jesus demonstrated his love for all, his obedience to the Father’s will, purchased the freedom of those in bondage to sin (“penal substitution”), appeased the wrath of God (“vicarious atonement”), and brought the sinner into fellowship with God by removing that which caused alienation (Rev 5:9; Phil 3:9; Tit 2:14; Rom 1:18, 3:25-26; 2 Cor 5:18-21). His death was for the sins of humanity (Rom 3:25); his resurrection shows his power over death (1 Cor 15; Phil 3:10), the insurance for our regeneration (1 Pet 1:3; Eph 2:5-6), the guarantee for our justification (Rom 4:25), and the model for our resurrection bodies (1 Cor 6:14, ch. 15; 2 Cor 4:14).
- Jesus Christ’s death was for the whole world (Jn 3:16; 1 Tim 2:6). However, the gift of salvation is only applied to those who believe in what God has done in Christ (Rom 10:9-10; Acts 16:31). Faith in Christ is more than mere intellectual assent. The sinner completely trusts God for redemption. The person often seeks pardon and forgiveness of sins, which involves a turning away from sin (“repentance;” 2 Cor 7:10). Jesus is the only savior of humans (Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12, 5:31).
- In “unlimited atonement,” the belief that Jesus atoned for the whole world in his sacrifice (Jn 1:29, 3:16, 6:51; 2 Cor 5:19; 1 Jn 2:2; 1 Tim 2:6; Heb 2:9). Limited atonement or, better, “particular atonement” says Jesus died for those who would believe since God and Jesus appear to know who would be saved (Jn 17:6). The difference has led to one of the major differences between Arminians (who say God’s purpose is to save all people, but human rebellion frustrates this purpose) and Calvinists (who say God’s purpose is to save those whom he has chosen). Both viewpoints believe (1) not all will be saved, (2) a free offer can and should be made to every person ever born, and (3) Christ’s death has infinite merit and is sufficient to pay for the penalty for all or a few. Scripture does not make this a major test of orthodoxy and seems to support both election and human free will.
- The hope of believers is the preserving grace of God who protects and seals our salvation (Eph 1:7, 13). No true believer can lose his gift of

salvation because God himself perseveres (Jn 10:28-29; Col 3:3; 2 Tim 1:12).

- Security of the believer ensures the completion of God's promises for our salvation, but we are urged to examine our lives (2 Cor 13:5) and to cultivate growth in Christ, to put off the "old" and put on the "new" (Eph 4:22-24 and Col 3:5-17; 1 Jn 3:19).
- The believer is a new person in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). He or she is "justified" in Christ (a legal standing) and then undergoes "sanctification," the process of the Holy Spirit, with the cooperation of the person, gradually developing the individual into conformity with Christ (2 Cor 3:18). As a new person, the believer is no longer enslaved to sin as a lifestyle (Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:9-10; Rom 6:6). Unfortunately, the struggle with sin continues (Rom 7; 1 Jn 1:8), but in a theological sense we possess a new position in Christ and victory in him and do not need to enslave ourselves to sin (Rom 6; 1 Jn 5:4).

Additional notes:

- Theologians organize salvation into a specific order called in Latin, *ordo salutis*, or the order of salvation. The complete list includes
 - (1) election (God's knowledge or choice of people to be saved),
 - (2) proclamation (hearing the message of the gospel),
 - (3) regeneration (being born again),
 - (4) conversion (faith and repentance),
 - (5) justification (right legal standing),
 - (6) adoption (membership in God's family),
 - (7) sanctification (right conduct of life or holy living or growing into our legal standing),
 - (8) perseverance (remaining faithful),
 - (9) death (going to be with the Lord),
 - (10) glorification (receiving a resurrection body).
- Other terms discussed involve predestination, foreknowledge, reprobation, double-predestination, condemnation.
- Cf. Acts 13:48; Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:4-6, 13; Rev 13:7-8. I believe both election and freewill meet in the mind of God.