

# **Jesus Christ: The Only Way of Salvation**

(The Theological Coherence of Christian Particularism)

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## ***I. INTRODUCTORY ISSUES***

### **A. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE**

1. There is only one way of Salvation. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)
2. Religious pluralism is false and incoherent.
3. The means to accomplish and apply salvation depends on the definition of salvation.

### **B. COMMON OBJECTIONS**

1. Arrogant-unwarranted pride and self-importance
2. Unfair-People who have never heard
3. It doesn't make sense to me or I'm offended!

### **C. DEFINITIONS & WORLDVIEW**

1. Pantheism
2. Polytheism
3. Dualism
4. Atheism
5. Non-Christian Monotheism
6. Christian Trinitarian Monotheism

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### **III. THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT FOR PARTICULARISM**

#### **A. PURPOSE OF LIFE**

1. Trinitarian Example
  - a. John 1:1-3; Acts 5:3-4; I Tim. 2:5
2. Ontological & Functional Image of God
  - a. Gen 1:26; 9:6

#### **B. THE BEGINNING-PARADISE**

1. The Covenant of Paradise
2. Obedience is key-Keep the Law
  - a. Be holy, for I am holy (Lev. 11:44 cf. I Pet. 1:16)

#### **C. THE FALL**

1. Sin-Transgression of the Law (1 John 3:4)
  - a. Rom 6:23 – Wages of Sin is death
  - b. Gen 3-
  - c. Eph 2:1--
2. The Absolute Necessity of Divine Justice
  - a. Ex 34:7
  - b. Hab. 1:13
  - c. Ps 5:4
  - d. 2 Tim 4:8 - Righteous Judge
3. The Result of Sin
  - a. Guilt (Jas. 2:10)
  - b. Alienation (Col. 1:21)
  - c. Corruption (Jer. 17:9)

#### **D. THE COMMON ERROR: SALVATION BY WORKS**

1. Salvation by works is found in every non-Christian religion.
2. Every Cult of Christianity and every World Religion rejects the concept of salvation by grace alone.
3. Supererogatory Acts & the Law

- a. A supererogatory act is an action one performs that is above the normal requirements and merits remuneration.
- b. Arguably, there are no meritorious supererogatory acts in a law based community.
- c. One must obey all the law all the time to maintain a relationship with the community.
- d. One cannot offer his keeping of the law to satisfy the debt incurred from breaking the law.
  - (1) Example #1: When one runs a red light, one may not offer to the court the green lights through which one passed as satisfaction for running the red light.
  - (2) Example #2: A murderer may not offer to the court his “merit” allegedly accrued for allowing other people in the community to live.
- e. Biblically, law breaking brings wrath (Rom. 4:15) and by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified (Romans 3:20).
- f. If righteousness can come through the Law, Christ died needlessly (Gal. 2:21)

## IV. THE GOOD NEWS

### A. REAL SALVATION: ONE WAY

1. Necessity of Grace –Eph 2:8-10
2. The Necessity of a God-Man to Redeem Mankind
3. The Goal is Forgiveness and Reconciliation – Mt 26:28; Lk 24:47; Acts 10:43

### B. THE WORK OF CHRIST ACCOMPLISHED FOR SALVATION

#### 1. *Substitution for Sinners*

- a. **Definition:** “Christ suffered God’s punishment of sin in the place of sinners.”
- b. **Support**

##### (1) Direct biblical statements affirming substitution

- (a) **Isa. 53:6, 10**—The LORD laid our iniquity on him.
- (b) **Mt. 20:28**—Christ gave his life a ransom for many
- (c) **Rom. 5:8**—While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- (d) **2 Cor. 5:21**— God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- (e) **1 Pet. 2:24**—He bore our sins in his body on the tree.
- (f) **1 Pet. 3:18**—Christ died once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God.

##### (2) The Significance of Greek Prepositions Involved

- (a) Note the ambiguity in the English preposition “for.”
- (b) **Anti** (ἀντί)—clearly and consistently means “in place of” or “instead of.”
  - i. See e.g., Mt. 2:22; 5:38.
  - ii. Therefore, when it is used in connection with Christ’s death (Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6), it teaches that Christ died as a substitutionary sacrifice for man’s sin.
- (c) **Huper** (ὕπερ)—Sometimes means *in place of*
  - i. See e.g., Jn. 11:50; Rom. 5:6-8; 2 Cor. 5:15, 21; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:18).
  - ii. Sometimes this preposition can mean *for the benefit of*.
  - iii. See Philemon 13 for non-atonement substitutionary usage.

**(3) The Old Testament Sacrificial System also Demonstrated Substitution.**

- (a) Lev. 1:4—The offerer laid his hand upon the head of the sacrificial animal to indicate the transfer of his sins to the offering.
- (b) Lev. 16:15-19—The goat that was slain pictured the substitutionary offering for sin.
- (c) Lev. 16:20-22—The sins of the people were confessed over the live goat, and he was sent into the wilderness to indicate that sins atoned for by the dead goat were borne away.

**c. The Results of Substitution**

**(1) *It is a substituted punishment. Hence, we are no longer liable to punishment.***

- (a) It is important to make a distinction between *chastisement* and *punishment*.
  - i. *Chastisement* has the personal betterment of the offender in view. (See, e.g., Heb. 12:5-11.)
  - ii. *Punishment*, on the other hand, is a consequence meted out to satisfy justice (Rom. 13:4).
- (b) God's law threatens punishment for our disobedience. But now the threatenings of the law have been met because Christ bore our punishment for us.
- (c) The practical result: God does not punish us for our sins.
  - i. Rom. 8:1—No *condemnation* for those in Christ Jesus.
  - ii. 1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:10—The penalty of sins for all men were borne in the person of Christ.

**(2) *The Righteousness of Christ is Imputed to the Believers Rom. 3:22-26; 2 Cor. 5:21.***

**2. Propitiation to God**

**a. Definition**

In biblical usage propitiation means that the sacrifice of Christ has satisfied God's wrath against sin (Rom. 1:18; Eph. 2:3; 5:6) due to the demands of His holy character (1 Jn. 2:2). See also Rom. 1:18; Eph. 2:3; 5:6; 1 Jn. 2:2.

**b. Relation to OT sacrifices**

- (1) OT sacrifices did not in themselves propitiate God.
- (2) The OT sacrifices did typify and point forward to the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

**c. Greek Words Used:**

- (1) *Hilasmos* (1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10)—Propitiation
- (2) *Hilaskomai* (Lk. 18:13; Heb. 2:17)—To propitiate
- (3) *Hilasterion* (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:5)—Propitiatory

d. **Other Words Used to Describe This Provision:**

(1) **Atonement**

- (a) The word “atonement” (Heb. *kippur*) is found only in Rom. 5:11 (KJV) in NT where it is translated from *katallage*, which is better rendered “reconciliation.”
- (b) The word “atonement” is “theologically flabby” because it is imprecise. That is, it merely indicates that God and man have patched up their differences but fails to specify how this occurs. (See the following discussion on “reconciliation,” on page 8.)

(2) **Satisfaction**

This word comes from the Latin (*satisfactio*) and is fundamentally equivalent to “propitiation.” It means that Christ satisfied the wrath of God.

e. **Results of Propitiation**

- (1) Through Christ’s work of propitiation, God has been propitiated or satisfied that the full penalty for sin has been paid (Isa. 53:10-11; Jn. 19:30).
- (2) God can now righteously:
  - (a) Forgive the believer’s sin
  - (b) Count the believer righteous

3. **Redemption from Sin**

a. **Definition**

Redemption involves the payment of a price to release a person from bondage.

See Col. 1:12-14 and cf. Jn. 8:34 with v. 36.

b. **Terminology**

Three different Greek terms are used to express more fully the significance of the doctrine of redemption.

- (1) *Agorazo* (Matt. 13:44; 1 Cor. 6:20; 2 Pet. 2:1)—“To pay the ransom price.”
  - (a) The means (Rev. 5:9)—God has purchased us by the blood of Christ.
  - (b) The purpose (1 Cor. 6:20)—That believers might glorify God in their bodies.
- (2) *Exagorazo* (Gal. 3:13)—“To remove from the market place.”
- (3) *Lutron* (Matt. 20:28)—“To effect a full release.”

Cf. John 8:36. The full price for sin has been paid by the Savior so that the believer is accepted in Christ and freed from the penalty of sin (Rom. 3:24-26; Eph. 1:6-7).

- (a) The means (Rom. 3:24 [*apolutrosis*]; 1 Tim. 2:6 [*antilutron*]; Heb. 9:12 [*lutrosis*]; 1 Pet. 1:18-19 [*lutroo*])—The substitutionary death of Christ.

- (b) The purpose (Tit. 2:14 [*lutroo*])—To purify and possess a people zealous of good deeds.
- c. **Summary:** “Thus, the doctrine of redemption means that because of the shedding of the blood of Christ, believers have been purchased, removed from bondage, and liberated.”

#### 4. *Reconciliation for Man*

##### a. *Definition*

- (1) Reconciliation in an *objective* sense means that through His death, Christ has changed man’s alienation from God so that he can now be saved.
- (2) Reconciliation in a *subjective* sense means that the believer in Christ has been changed from enmity against God to friendship and fellowship with God.

##### b. *Terminology*

- (1) *Katalasso* (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-20 cf. 1 Cor. 7:11)—To change or reconcile.
- (2) *Katallage* (Rom. 5:11)—Reconciliation.
- (3) *Apokatalasso* (Col. 1:20)—To reconcile completely or “to bring back to a former state of harmony.”

##### c. *Operation*

- (1) Means of provision (Rom. 5:10-11; 2 Cor. 5:18,19; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20, 22)—Through the blood of Christ’s cross.
- (2) Means of appropriation (Rom. 3-4; 5:1,17)—By faith.

##### d. *The Object of Reconciliation*

- (1) Man is reconciled to God rather than God being reconciled to man.

The Scriptures never speak of God being reconciled to man but always of man being reconciled to God. God never reconciles Himself to man since this would require the middle voice which does not occur in connection with reconciliation. God does reconcile man to Himself as seen in the active voice which does occur frequently with reconciliation. Also, man is spoken of as being reconciled to God, and this principle is seen in the passive voice with God as the agent acting upon and in behalf of man. Man is also spoken of as having “received the reconciliation” (Rom. 5:11).

- (2) God has been propitiated through Christ’s death rather than reconciled because of any enmity on His part, since God cannot sin (Jas. 1:13).

Man has made himself an enemy towards God rather than God making Himself an enemy towards man. God’s holy and righteous character has been offended by man’s sin, and God needs to be propitiated or satisfied that the penalty of man’s sin has been paid for so that He can righteously reconcile man to Himself. God, not man, requires propitiation, and man, not God, requires reconciliation.

##### e. *The Purpose of Reconciliation*



- (1) *Immediate purpose* (Col. 1:20 cf. Eph. 2:16-17)—To reconcile man to God and thereby establish peace in place of enmity.
- (2) *Ultimate purpose* (Col. 1:22)—"In order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach."

### **C. RECEIVING THE WORK OF CHRIST: FAITH ALONE**

1. Repentance – Mark 1:15
2. Confession - Mark 1: 5; 1 John 1:9
3. Faith Alone Saves -Elements
  - a. Faith in the person and work of Christ for salvation is presented as the sole condition for salvation more than 200 times in the N.T.  
  
—See Jn. 1:12; Acts 16:31
  - b. Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 4-5; Tit. 3:4-7—Faith correlates with the biblical teaching that salvation is the free and gracious gift of God.
  - c. Jas. 2:24, 19 cf. Jn. 2:23-25—Mere mental belief or intellectual assent is distinct from the biblical concept of genuine saving faith.

### **D. RESULTS OF SALVATION**

1. *Regeneration* – John 3:3; Titus 3:5
2. *Justification* – Rom 3: 30, 4:4; 5:1; Gal 2:16
3. *Adoption* – John 1:12; Eph. 1:5

### **E. CONCLUSION**

1. Only the offended party can forgive sin and reconcile with the transgressor by electing to bear the harm caused by sin and not hold it against the sinner.
2. When the sinner genuinely repents, confesses and believes the offer of forgiveness, the two may walk together in righteous harmony.
3. Since there is only one true God, there is only one way to reconcile with God.

