# Salvation in Christianity

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**Salvation in Christianity**, or **deliverance**, is the saving of the [soul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soul#Christianity) from [sin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_views_on_sin) and its consequences.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-1)

Variant views on [salvation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation) are among the main fault lines dividing the various [Christian denominations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_denominations), being a point of disagreement between [Eastern Orthodoxy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodoxy), [Roman Catholicism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism) and [Protestantism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestantism), as well as within Protestantism, notably in the [Calvinist–Arminian debate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Calvinist%E2%80%93Arminian_debate). The fault lines include conflicting definitions of [depravity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Total_depravity), [predestination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predestination#Christianity), [atonement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atonement_in_Christianity), and most pointedly, [justification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justification_%28theology%29).

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## Summary[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=1)]

According to Christian belief, salvation from [sin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_views_on_sin) in general and [original sin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Original_sin) in particular is made possible by the life, death, and [resurrection of Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrection_of_Jesus), which in the context of salvation is referred to as the "[atonement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atonement_in_Christianity)".[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-CDOS-2) Christian [soteriology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soteriology) ranges from [exclusive salvation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exclusive_salvation)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-3):p.123 to [universal reconciliation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_reconciliation)[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-4) concepts. While some of the differences are as widespread as Christianity itself, the overwhelming majority agrees that Christian salvation is made possible by the work of Jesus Christ, the [Son of God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_God), dying on the cross.

At the heart of Christian faith is the reality and hope of salvation in Jesus Christ. Christian faith is faith in the God of salvation revealed in Jesus of Nazareth. The Christian tradition has always equated this salvation with the transcendent, eschatological fulfillment of human existence in a life freed from sin, finitude, and mortality and united with the triune God. This is perhaps *the* non-negotiable item of Christian faith. What has been a matter of debate is the relation between salvation and our activities in the world.

— Anselm Kyongsuk Min[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Min-5):p.79

## Paradigms of salvation[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=2)]

*See also:*[*Jesus as Saviour*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_as_Saviour)

Different [theories of atonement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atonement_in_Christianity) have been proposed for how Christian salvation can be understood. Over the centuries, Christians have held different ideas about how Jesus saved people, and different views still exist within different [Christian denominations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_denominations). The main paradigms of salvation that have been proposed are:[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-6)

### Moral transformation**[**[**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=3)**]**

*Main article:*[*Moral influence theory of atonement*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_influence_theory_of_atonement)

The [moral transformation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_influence_theory_of_atonement) view was the predominant understanding of salvation among [Christians during the first three centuries AD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_Christianity),[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-7)[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-8)[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-9)[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-10)[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-11) and continues to be held by some denominations such as the Eastern Orthodox today. In this view, Jesus saved people from sinfulness through his life and teachings, thus transforming their character to become righteous. This salvation is seen as undeserved, since God graciously sent Jesus to save people when they were unrighteous and did not in any way deserve such a favour. In the moral transformation paradigm, a person is saved from sinfulness by faithfully following the teachings of Jesus, and the example he set of how to live. Consequently, a person becomes righteous in God's sight, and can expect a positive [final judgment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_judgment) by God. Perfection is not required, and mistakes are forgiven after [repentance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Repentance). In this view, [Jesus' crucifixion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifixion_of_Jesus) is understood primarily as a [martyrdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrdom).[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-12)

The moral transformation view has been criticised and rejected by many [Protestant Christians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestantism), for a variety of reasons. Critics believe that the moral transformation view conflicts with various biblical passages (particularly ones by Paul regarding 'faith' and 'works'), underestimates the seriousness of sin and denies the [atoning value](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atonement_in_Christianity) of Jesus' death.[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

### Christus Victor**[**[**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=4)**]**

In the [*Christus Victor*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christus_Victor) view, people needed salvation from the powers of evil. Jesus achieved salvation for people by defeating the powers of evil, particularly [Satan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satan). This view has been dated in writings of the [Church Fathers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_Fathers) up to the 4th centuries AD, although it remained popular for several centuries. Several perspectives on this idea existed, which can be roughly divided into conquest of Satan and rescue from Satan's power. In the conquest of Satan version, writers such as [Eusebius of Caesarea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eusebius_of_Caesarea) depicted Jesus defeating Satan in a great spiritual battle that occurred between his death and resurrection.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-13) By winning this battle, Jesus overthrew Satan and saved people from his dominion. The Christus Victor view is not widely held in the West.[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

### Ransom from Satan**[**[**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=5)**]**

The [ransom theory of atonement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ransom_theory_of_atonement) entails the idea that [Satan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satan) had power over sinful [souls](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soul) in the [afterlife](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afterlife), but that Christ rescued people from his power. Often, the death of Christ plays an important role in this rescue. The view appears to have arisen during the 3rd century,[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-14) in the writings of [Origen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origen) and other theologians. In one version of the idea, Satan attempted to take Jesus' soul after he had died, but in doing so over-extended his authority, as Jesus had never sinned. As a consequence, Satan lost his authority completely, and all humanity gained freedom. In another version, God entered into a deal with Satan, offering to trade Jesus' soul in exchange for the souls of all people, but after the trade, [God raised Jesus from the dead](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrection_of_Jesus) and left Satan with nothing. Other versions held that Jesus' [divinity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divinity)was masked by his human form, so Satan tried to take Jesus’ soul without realizing that his divinity would destroy Satan's power. Another idea is that Jesus came to teach how not to sin and Satan, in anger with this, tried to take his soul. The ransom theory is not widely held in the West.

### Satisfaction**[**[**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=6)**]**

In the 11th century, [Anselm of Canterbury](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anselm_of_Canterbury) rejected the ransom view, and proposed the [satisfaction theory of atonement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satisfaction_theory_of_atonement). He depicted God as a [feudal lord](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feudalism), whose honour had been offended by the sins of humankind. In this view, people needed salvation from the [divine punishment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_retribution) that these offences would bring, since nothing they could do could repay the honour debt. Anselm held that Christ had infinitely honoured God through his life and death and that Christ could repay what humanity owed God, thus satisfying the offence to God's honour and doing away with the need for punishment. When Anselm proposed the satisfaction view, it was immediately criticised by [Peter Abelard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Abelard).

### Penal substitution and faith**[**[**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=7)**]**



A 'Jesus Saves' [neon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neon) cross sign outside of a Protestant church in [New York City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City).

In the 16th century, the [Protestant Reformers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Reformation) reinterpreted Anselm's satisfaction theory of salvation within a legal paradigm. In the legal system, offences required punishment, and no satisfaction could be given to avert this need. They proposed a theory known as [penal substitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penal_substitution), in which Christ takes the penalty of people's sin as their substitute, thus saving people from [God's wrath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_retribution) against sin. Penal substitution thus presents Jesus saving people from the divine punishment of their past wrongdoings. However, this salvation is not presented as automatic. Rather, a person must have [faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faith_in_Christianity) in order to receive this free gift of salvation. In the penal substitution view, salvation is not dependent upon human effort or deeds.

The penal substitution paradigm of salvation is widely held among Protestants, who often consider it central to Christianity. However, it has also been widely critiqued.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-15)[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-16)[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-17)[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-18) Advocates of the [New Perspective on Paul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Perspective_on_Paul) also argue that many New Testament books by [Paul the Apostle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_Apostle) used to support the theory of penal substitution should be interpreted differently.

## Catholicism[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=8)]

*See also:*[*Catholic Church*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church)

A crucial difference between the [Catholic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_theology) and [Calvinist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformed_theology) understanding of salvation is that, unlike Calvinism, Catholicism believes that, after the [Fall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall_of_Man), humanity did not become totally corrupt (as per "[total depravity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Total_depravity)", which precludes man from any merit in salvation), but was only "wounded by sin," and "stands in need of salvation from God", nevertheless, "it is human nature so fallen, stripped of the grace that clothed it, injured in its own natural powers and subjected to the dominion of death, that is transmitted to all men..."[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-19)

Divine help comes in Christ through the law that guides and the grace that sustains, by which souls work out their "own salvation with fear and trembling."[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-20) That divine help, that [grace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace_%28Christianity%29), is a favour, a free and undeserved gift from God which helps us to respond to his invitation to enter relationship.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-21)

Catholics profess belief that [Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ) alone is the Saviour of the human race. Christ is [God incarnate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incarnation_%28Christianity%29), bringing about [redemption](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redemption_%28theology%29) from sin, for "…all salvation comes through Christ."[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-22)

"…she (the Church) proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ 'the way, the truth, and the life' (John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself."[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-23)

In Catholicism, justification is granted by God via the act ([*ex opere operato*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ex_opere_operato)) of [baptism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptism) firstly,[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-24) by which the subject is formally justified and made holy by his own personal justice and holiness (*causa formalis*),[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-25) instead of appropriated plainly by a living faith as under [*sola fide*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sola_fide), and normally from the [sacrament of reconciliation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacrament_of_Reconciliation_%28Catholic_Church%29)after if a [mortal sin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mortal_sin) is committed. Christ can work apart and before the sacrament of baptism, as desire for eventual baptism is grace enough to be saved, since God is not tied to work by means of his instituted sacraments.[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-26) Nevertheless, Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful members of his Church: above all for those who, since Baptism, have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace and wounded ecclesial communion. It is to them that the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification. The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as "the second plank [of salvation] after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace." This is not the only way for sins to be forgiven, as in some cases these can also be forgiven by confessing to God alone. This is why the Catholic Church teaches that Christians outside of the Church can be saved, since in many cases other Christian denominations do not possess the priesthood instituted from Jesus Christ and thus lack access to the "binding and loosing" that priests of the New Covenant practice through the sacrament.[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-27) A mortal sin makes [justification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justification_%28theology%29) lost even if faith (intellectual assent) is still present. The Catholic Church declared in the ecumenical [Council of Trent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Trent)that, "If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone,[114] meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema." in canon 9 of session VI.[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-28) It also said in the VII session in canon IV, "If any one saith, that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary unto salvation, but superfluous; and that, without them, or without the desire thereof, men obtain of God, through faith alone, the grace of justification;-though all (the sacraments) are not indeed necessary for every individual; let him be anathema (excommunicated)."[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-29)

### Salvation of non-Catholics**[**[**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=9)**]**

Main article: [Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extra_Ecclesiam_nulla_salus)

In Catholicism, Christ provides the Church with "'the fullness of the means of salvation' which he has willed: correct and complete confession of the Christian faith, full sacramental life, and ordained ministry in apostolic succession."[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-30) Although the Catholic Church upholds the doctrine of [*extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extra_Ecclesiam_nulla_salus) (outside the Church there is no salvation) this does not mean that all the [elect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elect) were in visible communion of the Catholic Church during their life, for "Jesus, the Son of God, freely suffered death for us in complete and free submission to the will of God, his Father. By his death he has conquered death, and so opened the possibility of salvation to all men."[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-31)

As regards Protestants in particular, in [Vatican II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Vatican_Council) and subsequent teaching it is stated,

"The Church recognizes that in many ways she is linked with those who, being baptized, are honored with the name of Christian, though they do not profess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve unity of communion with the successor of Peter. (Cf. Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15-16 and 26)

For there are many who honor Sacred Scripture, taking it as a norm of belief and a pattern of life, and who show a sincere zeal. They lovingly believe in God the Father Almighty and in Christ, the Son of God and Saviour. (Cf. Jn. 16:13) They are consecrated by baptism, in which they are united with Christ. They also recognize and accept other sacraments within their own Churches or ecclesiastical [Protestant] communities...They also share with us in prayer and other spiritual benefits. Likewise we can say that in some real way they are joined with us in the Holy Spirit, for to them too He gives His gifts and graces whereby He is operative among them with His sanctifying power. Some indeed He has strengthened to the extent of the shedding of their blood..."[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Lumen_Gentium_14-32)

"...men who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect. ...it remains true that all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are members of Christ's body, and have a right to be called Christian, and so are correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church...For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Church...." "It is right and salutary to recognize the riches of Christ and virtuous works in the lives of others who are bearing witness to Christ, sometimes even to the shedding of their blood. For God is always wonderful in His works and worthy of all praise.”[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-33)

Catholicism teaches that Protestantism is a part of Christianity, the only true "faith" (Catholicism regards all non-Christian religions as "beliefs" since they are not based on God's revelation in history, Dominus Iesus p. 7),[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-vatican.va-34) nevertheless, individual Protestants aware of the fact that Christ established the Catholic Church, but fail to join its membership, "cannot be saved" since they are living in open contempt towards God's known truth.[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Lumen_Gentium_14-32)

Concerning [Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews) and [Muslims](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslims), the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, [*Lumen gentium*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lumen_gentium), states:

"In the first place we must recall the people [the Jews] to whom the testament and the promises were given and from whom Christ was born according to the flesh. On account of their fathers this people remains most dear to God, for God does not repent of the gifts He makes nor of the calls He issues. But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place amongst these there are the Muslims, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind."[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Lumen_Gentium_14-32)

Paragraph 16 of *Lumen gentium* takes a step further and declares:

"Nor is God far distant from those who in shadows and images seek the unknown God, for it is He who gives to all men life and breath and all things, and as Saviour wills that all men be saved. Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel"[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Lumen_Gentium_14-32)

However, Judaism and Islam cannot be seen by the Church to be satisfactory in themselves. Catholics must call all people to the Christian faith, since it is Christ who must save them in the end. As noted above, whatever truth is found in Judaism and Islam is used as a "preparation for the Gospel." The Christian faith cannot be merely looked at "human wisdom, a pseudo-science of well-being", for "all are called to it and destined for it" since it contains the full truth (Redemptoris Missio p. 11).[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-35) *Lumen gentium* goes on to state:

In explicit terms He Himself (Jesus Christ) affirmed the necessity of faith and baptism and thereby affirmed also the necessity of the Church, for through baptism as through a door men enter the Church. Whosoever, therefore, knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by Christ, would refuse to enter or to remain in it, could not be saved.[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Lumen_Gentium_14-32)

The Catholic Church holds to the possibility of non-Christians being saved from [hell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_views_on_hell). As [Pope John Paul II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_Paul_II) stated in his [encyclical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encyclical) [*Redemptoris Missio*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redemptoris_Missio),

"The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the Church. Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all. But it is clear that today, as in the past, many people do not have an opportunity to come to know or accept the Gospel revelation or to enter the Church. The social and cultural conditions in which they live do not permit this, and frequently they have been brought up in other religious traditions. For such people salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation. This grace comes from Christ; it is the result of his Sacrifice and is communicated by the Holy Spirit. It enables each person to attain salvation through his or her free cooperation."[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-36)

The number of non-Christians saved is known to God alone and must come through Christ's atonement for the sins of the world—an atonement which is specifically called "mysterious" (above, Dominus Iesus p. 21).[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-vatican.va-34) Nevertheless, Catholics have been exhorted in numerous recent papal encyclicals to not forget the mission ad gentes (to the non-Christians), as the evangelization of the non-Christian world remains central to the Church's mission because of Jesus's great impetus: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."(Mark 16:16, Dominus Iesus p. 21-22 [[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-vatican.va-34)). Those who fail to preach the exclusivity of Christianity as the fullness of God's revelation and the only means to be saved, are teaching against the doctrine of Christ and the Church (Dominus Iesus p. 5-9).[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-vatican.va-34)

### Saint Anselm**[**[**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=10)**]**

Shortly after 1100, [Anselm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anselm_of_Canterbury), appointed as archbishop of Canterbury, wrote a classic treatise about atonement. In it he puts forward the "satisfaction theory" of the atonement in salvation. Man's offense of rebellion against God is one that demands a payment or satisfaction. Fallen man is incapable of making adequate satisfaction. Nevertheless, such is God's love that God will not simply abandon us (at least not all of us) to the consequences of our sins. Anselm wrote, "This debt was so great that, while none but man must solve the debt, none but God was able to do it; so that he who does it must be both God and man." The suffering of Christ, the God-man who is God's only son, pays off what human beings owe to God's honor, and we are thereby reconciled to God. So God took human nature upon himself so that a perfect man might make perfect satisfaction and so restore the human race. His foundational work is seen later in Calvinism and Arminianism.[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Placher-37)

## Eastern Christianity[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=11)]

*See also:*[*Eastern Christianity*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Christianity)

Eastern Christianity was much less influenced by the theological writings of [Augustine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo). It asks different questions, and it generally views salvation less in forensic terms (e.g. pardon from punishment), more in therapeutic terms (healing from sickness, injury etc.). It views salvation more along the lines of [divinization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divinization_%28Christian%29) or [*theosis*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theosis_%28Eastern_Orthodox_theology%29), a seeking to become holy or draw closer to God by being united to him in will and operation as an extension of God in the world, a traditional concept taught in the [Orthodox Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Church), the [Oriental Orthodox Churches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_Orthodoxy), and the [Eastern Catholic Churches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Catholic_Churches). It also stresses teaching about [forgiveness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forgiveness).

*The Longer Catechism of the Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Church*, known also as *The Catechism of St. Philaret*,[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-38) includes the questions and answers:

155. To save men from what did (the Son of God) come upon earth? From sin, the curse, and death.

208. How does the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross deliver us from sin, the curse, and death? That we may the more readily believe this mystery, the Word of God teaches us of it, so much as we may be able to receive, by the comparison of Jesus Christ with Adam. Adam is by nature the head of all humanity, which is one with him by natural descent from him. Jesus Christ, in whom the Godhead is united with manhood, graciously made himself the new almighty Head of men, whom he unites to himself through faith. Therefore, as in Adam we had fallen under sin, the curse, and death, so we are delivered from sin, the curse, and death in Jesus Christ. His voluntary suffering and death on the cross for us, being of infinite value and merit, as the death of one sinless, God and man in one person, is both a perfect satisfaction to the justice of God, which had condemned us for sin to death, and a fund of infinite merit, which has obtained him the right, without prejudice to justice, to give us sinners pardon of our sins, and grace to have victory over sin and death.

[Orthodox theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Christian_theology) teaches [prevenient grace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prevenient_grace), meaning that God makes the first movement toward man, and that salvation is impossible from our own will alone. However, man is endowed with [free will](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_will), and an individual can either accept or reject the grace of God. Thus an individual must cooperate with God's grace to be saved, and he can claim no credit of his own, as any progress he makes is possible only by the grace of God.

The Orthodox Church further teaches that a person abides in Christ and makes his salvation sure not only by works of love, but also by his patient suffering of various griefs, illnesses, misfortunes and failures ([Luke 16:19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+16%3A19&version=NRSV)-31, [Mark 8:31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+8%3A31&version=NRSV)-38, [Romans 6:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+6%3A3&version=NRSV)-11, [Hebrews 12:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+12%3A1&version=NRSV)-3, [Galatians 6:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+6%3A14&version=NRSV)).[[39]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-39)

## Protestantism[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=12)]

*See also:*[*Five solae*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_solae)

The Protestant Christian perspective on salvation is that no one can merit the grace of God by performing [rituals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rituals), [good works](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_works), [asceticism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asceticism) or [meditation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meditation), because grace is the result of God's initiative without any regard whatsoever to the one initiating the works. Broadly speaking, [Protestants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestants) hold to the [five *solae*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_solae) of the [Reformation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Reformation), which declare that salvation is attained by [*grace alone*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace_alone) in [*Christ alone*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_alone) through [*faith alone*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faith_alone) for the [*Glory of God alone*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soli_Deo_gloria) as told in [*Scripture alone*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scripture_alone).

Some Protestants, such as [Lutherans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutherans) and the [Reformed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformed), understand this to mean that God saves solely by grace and that works follow as a necessary consequence of saving grace. Others, such as [Methodists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Methodists) (and other Arminians), believe that salvation is by faith alone but that salvation can be forfeited if it is not accompanied by continued faith and the works that naturally follow from it. Most Protestants believe that salvation is achieved through God's grace alone, and once salvation is secured in the person, good works will be a result of this, allowing good works to often operate as a signifier for salvation. A minority rigidly believe that salvation is accomplished by [faith alone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sola_fide) without any reference to works whatsoever, including the works that may follow salvation (see [Free Grace theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_Grace_theology)).

[Karl Barth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Barth) notes a range of alternative themes: *forensic* (we are guilty of a crime, and Christ takes the punishment), *financial* (we are indebted to God, and Christ pays our debt) and *cultic* (Christ makes a sacrifice on our behalf). For various cultural reasons, the oldest themes (honor and sacrifice) prove to have more depth than the more modern ones (payment of a debt, punishment for a crime). But in all these alternatives, the understanding of atonement has the same structure. Human beings owe something to God that we cannot pay. Christ pays it on our behalf. Thus God remains both perfectly just (insisting on a penalty) and perfectly loving (paying the penalty himself). A great many Christians would define such a substitutionary view of the atonement as simply part of what orthodox Christians believe.[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Placher-37)

According to Christian [Frank Stagg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Stagg_%28theologian%29), salvation is rooted in the grace of God. "For bankrupt sinners with no ground of their own upon which to stand, with nothing of their own upon which to stand, with nothing of their own to hold up to God for [one's] reward, it is their only hope, but it is their sufficient hope."[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Stagg-40):80

"Debates about how Christ saves us have tended to divide Protestants into conservatives who defended some form of substitutionary atonement theory and liberals who were more apt to accept a kind of moral influence theory. Both those approaches were about 900 years old. Recently, new accounts of Christ's salvific work have been introduced or reintroduced, and the debates have generally grown angrier, at least from the liberal side. Those who defended substitutionary atonement were always ready to dismiss their opponents as heretics; now some of their opponents complain that a focus on substitutionary atonement leads to violence against women and to child abuse."

— William C. Placher[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Placher-37)

### Lutheranism**[**[**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=13)**]**

*Main article:*[*Lutheranism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutheranism)

Lutherans believe that God has [justified all sinners](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unlimited_atonement), that is, he has declared them "[not guilty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justification_%28theology%29)" for the sake of Christ. Lutheran churches believe that this is the central message in the [Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) upon which the very existence of the churches depends. In Lutheranism, it is a message relevant to people of all races and social levels, of all times and places, for "the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men" (Romans 5:18). All need forgiveness of sins before God, and Scripture proclaims that all have been justified, for "the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men" (Romans 5:18). [[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-41)

Lutheranism teaches that individuals receive this free gift of forgiveness and salvation not on the basis of their own works, but only through faith ([*Sola fide*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sola_fide)):[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-42)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **“** | For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.(Ephesians 2:8,9) | **”** |

Saving faith is the knowledge of,[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-43) acceptance of,[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-44) and trust[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-45) in the promise of the Gospel.[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Engelder-46) Even faith itself is seen as a gift of God, created in the hearts of Christians[[47]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-47) by the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word[[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-48) and Baptism.[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-49) Faith is seen as an instrument that receives the gift of salvation, not something that causes salvation.[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-50) Thus, Lutherans reject the "[decision theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decision_theology)" which is common among modern [evangelicals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelicalism).[[51]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-51)

### Calvinism**[**[**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=14)**]**

*Main article:*[*Calvinism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvinism)

Calvinists believe in the [predestination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predestination_in_Calvinism) of the elect before the foundation of the world. All of the elect necessarily [persevere in faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perseverance_of_the_saints) because God keeps them from falling away. Calvinists understand the doctrines of salvation to include the [five points of Calvinism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvinism#Five_points_of_Calvinism), typically arranged in English to form the [acrostic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acrostic) "TULIP".[[52]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-52)

* "[Total depravity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Total_depravity):" This doctrine, also called "total inability," asserts that as a consequence of the [fall of man into sin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall_of_Man), every person born into the world is enslaved to the service of [sin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sin). People are not by nature inclined to love God with their whole heart, mind, or strength, but rather all are inclined to serve their own interests over those of their neighbor and to reject the rule of God. Thus, all people by their own faculties are morally unable to choose to follow God and be saved because they are unwilling to do so out of the necessity of their own natures. (The term "total" in this context refers to sin affecting every part of a person, not that every person is as evil as possible.)[[53]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-53) This doctrine is derived from [Augustine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine)'s explanation of [Original Sin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Original_Sin).
* "[Unconditional election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unconditional_election):" This doctrine asserts that God has chosen from [eternity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eternity) those whom he will bring to himself not based on foreseen virtue, merit, or faith in those people; rather, it is unconditionally grounded in God's mercy alone. God has chosen from [eternity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eternity) to extend mercy to those he has chosen and to withhold mercy from those not chosen. Those chosen receive salvation through Christ alone. [Those not chosen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reprobation) receive the just wrath that is warranted for their sins against God[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-54)
* "[Limited atonement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limited_atonement):" Also called "particular redemption" or "definite atonement", this doctrine asserts that Jesus's [substitutionary atonement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Substitutionary_atonement) was definite and certain in its purpose and in what it accomplished. This implies that only the sins of [the elect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_elect) were [atoned](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penal_substitution) for by Jesus's death. Calvinists do not believe, however, that the atonement is limited in its value or power, but rather that the atonement is limited in the sense that it is designed for some and not all. Hence, Calvinists hold that the atonement is sufficient for all and efficient for the elect.[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-55) The doctrine is driven by the Calvinistic concept of the sovereignty of God in salvation and their understanding of the nature of the atonement.
* "[Irresistible grace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irresistible_grace):" This doctrine, also called "efficacious grace", asserts that the saving grace of God is effectually applied to those whom he has determined to save (that is, [the elect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_elect)) and, in God's timing, overcomes their resistance to obeying the call of the gospel, bringing them to a saving faith. This means that when God sovereignly purposes to save someone, that individual certainly will be saved. The doctrine holds that this purposeful influence of God's [Holy Spirit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Spirit) cannot be resisted, but that the Holy Spirit, "graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ."[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-56)
* "[Perseverance of the saints](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perseverance_of_the_saints):" Perseverance (or preservation) of the [saints](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saints) (the word "saints" is used to refer to all who are set apart by God, and not of those who are exceptionally [holy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy), [canonized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canonization), or in [heaven](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaven)). The doctrine asserts that since God is sovereign and his will cannot be frustrated by humans or anything else, those whom God has called into communion with himself will continue in faith until the end. Those who apparently fall away either never had true faith to begin with or will return.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-57)

### Arminianism**[**[**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=15)**]**

*Main article:*[*Arminianism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arminianism)

Arminianism is a school of soteriological thought within Protestant Christianity, held by Christian denominations such as the [Methodist Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Methodist_Church). It is based on the theological ideas of the Dutch Reformed theologian [Jacobus Arminius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacobus_Arminius) (1560–1609). Like Calvinists, [Arminians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arminians) agree that all people are born sinful and are in need of salvation. Classical Arminians emphasize that God's free grace (or [prevenient grace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prevenient_grace)) enables humans to freely respond to or to reject the salvation offered through Christ. Classical Arminians believe that a person's saving relationship with Christ is conditional upon faith, and thus, a person can sever their saving relationship with Christ through persistent unbelief. Arminians hold the following beliefs:

* [Depravity is total](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Total_depravity): Arminius states "In this [fallen] state, the free will of man towards the true good is not only wounded, infirm, bent, and weakened; but it is also imprisoned, destroyed, and lost. And its powers are not only debilitated and useless unless they be assisted by grace, but it has no powers whatever except such as are excited by Divine grace."[[58]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-58)
* [Atonement is intended for all](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unlimited_atonement): Jesus's death was for all people, Jesus draws all people to himself, and all people have opportunity for salvation through faith.[[59]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-59)
* [Jesus's death satisfies God's justice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satisfaction_theory_of_atonement): The penalty for the sins of the elect is paid in full through Jesus's work on the cross. Thus Christ's atonement is intended for all, but requires faith to be effected. Arminius states that "Justification, when used for the act of a Judge, is either purely the imputation of righteousness through mercy… or that man is justified before God… according to the rigor of justice without any forgiveness."[[60]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-60) Stephen Ashby clarifies: "Arminius allowed for only two possible ways in which the sinner might be justified: (1) by our absolute and perfect adherence to the law, or (2) purely by God's imputation of Christ's righteousness."[[61]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-61)
* [Grace is resistible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prevenient_grace): God takes initiative in the salvation process and his grace comes to all people. This grace (often called prevenient or pre-regenerating grace) acts on all people to convince them of the Gospel, draw them strongly towards salvation, and enable the possibility of sincere faith. Picirilli states that "indeed this grace is so close to regeneration that it inevitably leads to regeneration unless finally resisted." [[62]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-62) The offer of salvation through grace does not act irresistibly in a purely cause-effect, deterministic method but rather in an influence-and-response fashion that can be both freely accepted and freely denied.[[63]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-63)
* Man has free will to respond or resist: Free will is limited by God's sovereignty, but God's sovereignty allows all men the choice to accept the Gospel of Jesus through faith, simultaneously allowing all men to resist.
* [Election is conditional](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conditional_election): Arminius defined election as "the decree of God by which, of Himself, from eternity, He decreed to justify in Christ, believers, and to accept them unto eternal life."[[64]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Arminius_III:311-64) God alone determines who will be saved and his determination is that all who believe Jesus through faith will be justified. According to Arminius, "God regards no one in Christ unless they are engrafted in him by faith."[[64]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Arminius_III:311-64)
* God predestines the elect to a glorious future: Predestination is not the predetermination of who will believe, but rather the predetermination of the believer's future inheritance. The elect are therefore predestined to sonship through adoption, glorification, and eternal life.[[65]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-65)
* [Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imputed_righteousness): Justification is sola fide. When individuals repent and believe in Christ (saving faith), they are regenerated and brought into union with Christ, whereby the death and righteousness of Christ are imputed to them for their justification before God.[[66]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-66)
* [Eternal security is also conditional](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conditional_Preservation_of_the_Saints): All believers have full assurance of salvation with the condition that they remain in Christ. Salvation is conditioned on faith, therefore perseverance is also conditioned.[[67]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-67) Apostasy (turning from Christ) is only committed through a deliberate, willful rejection of Jesus and renunciation of saving faith. Such apostasy is irremediable.[[68]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-68)

The [Five Articles of Remonstrance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_Articles_of_Remonstrance) that Arminius's followers formulated in 1610 state the above beliefs regarding (I) conditional election, (II) unlimited atonement, (III) total depravity, (IV) total depravity and resistible grace, and (V) possibility of apostasy. Note, however, that the fifth article did not completely deny perseverance of the saints; Arminius, himself, said that "I never taught that a true believer can… fall away from the faith… yet I will not conceal, that there are passages of Scripture which seem to me to wear this aspect; and those answers to them which I have been permitted to see, are not of such as kind as to approve themselves on all points to my understanding."[[69]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-69) Further, the text of the Articles of Remonstrance says that no believer can be plucked from Christ's hand, and the matter of falling away, "loss of salvation" required further study before it could be taught with any certainty.

### Universalism**[**[**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=16)**]**

*Main article:*[*Christian Universalism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Universalism)

*See also:*[*Universal reconciliation*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_reconciliation)

Christian Universalists agree with both Calvinists and Arminians that everyone is born in sin and in need of salvation. They also believe that one is saved by Jesus Christ. However, they emphasize that judgment in hell upon sinners is of limited duration, and that God uses judgment to bring sinners to repentance.[[70]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-70)

### Churches of Christ**[**[**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=17)**]**

*See also:*[*Churches of Christ*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churches_of_Christ)

Western [Churches of Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churches_of_Christ) are strongly anti-Calvinist in their understanding of salvation, and generally present conversion as "obedience to the proclaimed facts of the gospel rather than as the result of an emotional, Spirit-initiated conversion."[[71]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Encyclopedia_of_the_Stone-Campbell_Movement:_Churches_of_Christ-71)

Some churches of Christ hold the view that humans of accountable age are lost because of their sins.[[72]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Rhodes_2005-72) These lost souls can be redeemed because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, offered himself as the atoning sacrifice.[[72]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Rhodes_2005-72) Children too young to understand right from wrong, and make a conscious choice between the two, are believed to be innocent of sin.[[72]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Rhodes_2005-72)[[73]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Perfect_Stranger-73) The age when this occurs is generally believed to be around 13.[[73]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Perfect_Stranger-73)

Some Churches of Christ, which don't identify as a denomination, teach that the process of salvation involves the following steps:[[74]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Who_Are_the_churches_of_Christ-74)

1. One must be taught biblically and listen expositoraly
2. One must believe or have faith
3. One must repent of one's sins, which means turning from one's former lifestyle and choosing God's ways
4. One must confess belief that Jesus is the Son of God and Saviour
5. One must be baptized for the remission of sins
6. One must remain faithful until death on Earth

While other Churches of Christ which identify as a denomination do not hold this view.[[75]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-75)

Beginning in the 1960s, many preachers began placing more emphasis on the role of grace in salvation, instead of focusing exclusively implementing all of the New Testament commands and examples.[[76]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Hughes_and_Roberts,_2001-76) This was not an entirely new approach, as others had actively "affirmed a theology of free and unmerited grace," but it did represent a change of emphasis with grace becoming "a theme that would increasingly define this tradition."[[76]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Hughes_and_Roberts,_2001-76)

Because of the belief that baptism is a necessary part of salvation, some Baptists hold that the Churches of Christ endorse the doctrine of [baptismal regeneration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptismal_regeneration).[[77]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Foster-77)However, members of the Churches of Christ reject this, arguing that since faith and repentance are necessary, and that the cleansing of sins is by the blood of Christ through the grace of God, baptism is not an inherently redeeming ritual.[[77]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Foster-77)[[78]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Understanding_Four_Views_on_Baptism-78)[[79]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Encyclopedia_of_the_Stone-Campbell_Movement:_Regeneration-79) One author describes the relationship between faith and baptism this way, "*Faith* is the *reason why* a person is a child of God; *baptism* is the *time at which* one is incorporated into Christ and so becomes a child of God" (italics are in the source).[[80]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Ferguson_1996-80) Baptism is understood as a confessional expression of faith and repentance,[[80]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Ferguson_1996-80) rather than a "work" that earns salvation.[[80]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-Ferguson_1996-80)

### Comparison**[**[**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=18)**]**

Protestant beliefs about salvation.[[81]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-81) This table summarizes the classical views of three [Protestant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant) [beliefs about salvation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_soteriology#Distinct_schools).[[82]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-82)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Topic** | [**Calvinism**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvinism) | [**Lutheranism**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutheranism) | [**Arminianism**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arminianism) |
| **Human will** | [Total depravity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Total_depravity):[[83]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-WELS-Compare-83) Humanity possesses "free will",[[84]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-84) but it is in bondage to sin,[[85]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-85) until it is "transformed".[[86]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-86) | [Total depravity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Total_depravity):[[83]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-WELS-Compare-83) Humanity possesses free will in regard to "goods and possessions", but is sinful by nature and unable to contribute to its own salvation. [[87]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-87)[[88]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-88)[[89]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-89) | Humanity possesses freedom from necessity, but not "freedom from sin” unless enabled by "[prevenient grace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prevenient_grace)".[[90]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-90) |
| **Election** | [Unconditional election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unconditional_election). | [Unconditional election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predestination#Lutheranism).[[83]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-WELS-Compare-83)[[91]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-91) | [Conditional election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conditional_election) in view of foreseen faith or unbelief.[[92]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-92) |
| **Justification and atonement** | [Justification by faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justification_by_faith) alone. Various views regarding the extent of the atonement.[[93]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-93) | [Justification for all men](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unlimited_atonement),[[94]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-WELS-ROM-94) completed at Christ's death and effective through [faith alone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sola_fide).[[95]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-WELS-TWB-95)[[96]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-WELS-Justification-96)[[97]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-WELS-UnivJus-97)[[98]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-98) | Justification made [possible for all](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atonement_%28unlimited_view%29#The_doctrine) through Christ's death, but only completed upon [choosing faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regeneration_%28theology%29#Arminian) in Jesus.[[99]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-99) |
| **Conversion** | [Monergistic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monergism),[[100]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-100) through the means of grace, [irresistible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irresistible_grace). | [Monergistic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monergism),[[101]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-WELS-Diehl-101)[[102]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-102) through the [means of grace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Means_of_grace), [resistible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irresistible_grace#Lutheran).[[103]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-WELS-TULIP-103) | [Synergistic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synergism_%28theology%29), resistible due to the common grace of free will.[[104]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-104) |
| **Perseverance and apostasy** | [Perseverance of the saints](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perseverance_of_the_saints): the eternally elect in Christ will certainly persevere in faith.[[105]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-105) | Falling away is possible,[[106]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-WELS-OSAS-106) but God gives gospel [assurance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assurance_%28theology%29#Lutheranism).[[107]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-WELS-Pers-107)[[108]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-108) | [Preservation is conditional](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conditional_preservation_of_the_saints)upon continued faith in Christ; with the possibility of a final [apostasy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostasy_in_Christianity).[[109]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-109) |

## The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=19)]

*See also:*[*Plan of salvation (Latter Day Saints)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plan_of_salvation_%28Latter_Day_Saints%29)

[The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints) (LDS Church) defines the term salvation based on the teachings of their prophet [Joseph Smith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Smith), as recorded in the [Doctrine and Covenants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctrine_and_Covenants) and summarized in the [Articles of Faith (Latter Day Saints)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Articles_of_Faith_%28Latter_Day_Saints%29) number four.

"We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost."[[110]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-110)

The general Christian belief that salvation means returning to the presence of God and Jesus is similar to the way the word is used in the [Book of Mormon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Mormon), wherein the prophet [Amulek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amulek) teaches that through the "great and last sacrifice" of the Son of God, "he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; ... to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance. And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice".[[111]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_note-111)

There are two kinds of salvation, conditional and unconditional. Unconditional salvation is similar to what is believed by other Christians in that the atonement of Jesus Christ redeems all mankind from the chains of death and they are resurrected to their perfect frames. They will also be redeemed from the powers of Satan, except those [sons of perdition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_perdition_%28Mormonism%29) of vile wickedness and those who have been enemies to God, in which they will be returned to their master. All others will receive a [degree of glory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Degrees_of_glory) set apart for their just metes. Conditional salvation of the righteous comes by grace coupled with strict obedience to Gospel principles in which those who have upheld the highest standards and committed to the [covenants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_%28Latter_Day_Saints%29) and [ordinances](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ordinance_%28Latter_Day_Saints%29) of God will inherit the [highest heaven](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celestial_kingdom). Full salvation is attained by virtue of knowledge, truth, righteousness, and following true principles.

## See also[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=20)]

* [Christology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christology)
* [Ecclesiology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesiology)
* [Eternal life (Christianity)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eternal_life_%28Christianity%29)
* [Redeemer (Christianity)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redeemer_%28Christianity%29)

## References[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Salvation_in_Christianity&action=edit&section=21)]

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	7. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-7) A. J. Wallace, R. D. Rusk, *Moral Transformation: The Original Christian Paradigm of Salvation* (New Zealand: Bridgehead, 2011), pp 249-271.
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	9. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-9) Robert S. Franks, [*A history of the doctrine of the work of Christ in its ecclesiastical development*](https://archive.org/stream/historyofdoctrin01franuoft) vol. 1 (London: Hodder and Stoughton), p. 14: 'The above point of view of the Apostolic Fathers may be generally described as a Christian moralism.'.
	10. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-10) [Michael Green](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Green_%28theologian%29), *The Empty Cross of Jesus* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 2004; first published 1984), pp. 64-5: 'The simplest and most obvious understanding of the cross is to see it as the supreme example. ... This is a favourite theme in the early Fathers, as H.E.W. Turner showed in *The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption*. ... It can scarcely be denied that much of the second century understanding of the cross was frankly exemplarist.'
	11. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-11) [J. F. Bethune-Baker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Bethune-Baker), [*An introduction to the early history of Christian doctrine to the time of the Council of Chalcedon*](https://archive.org/stream/anintroductionto00bethuoft) (London: Methuen & Co, 1903), pp. 351-2 : 'From this review of the teaching of the Church it will be seen that... in the earliest centuries... the main thought is that man is reconciled to God by the Atonement, not God to man. The change, that is, which it effects is a change in man rather than a change in God. It is God's unchangeable love for mankind that prompts the Atonement itself, is the cause of it, and ultimately determines the method by which it is effected.'
	12. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-12) For a recent defence of the moral transformation view, see A. J. Wallace, R. D. Rusk, *Moral Transformation: The Original Christian Paradigm of Salvation* (New Zealand: Bridgehead, 2011).
	13. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-13) Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel*, 9.7.
	14. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-14) H. E. W. Turner, The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption: A Study of the Development of Doctrine During the First Five Centuries (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publish-ers, 2004), p. 54.
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	37. ^ [Jump up to:***a***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-Placher_37-0) [***b***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-Placher_37-1) [***c***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-Placher_37-2) [Placher, William C.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Placher%2C_William_C.) "How does Jesus save? Christian Century, 00095281, 6/2/2009, Vol. 126, Issue 11
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	40. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-Stagg_40-0) [Stagg, Frank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Stagg_%28theologian%29). *New Testament Theology.* Broadman Press, 1962. [ISBN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number_%28identifier%29) [0-8054-1613-7](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/0-8054-1613-7)
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	42. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-42) Keller, Brian R., [*Believe it or not: You Are Forgiven Through Christ!*](http://www.wlsessays.net/bitstream/handle/123456789/2460/JUSTIFICATION.2013.Keller%20final%20PDF.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y), p4, "The forgiveness of sins is proclaimed in the gospel as a ready and complete blessing, won by Christ Jesus. Yet, no one receives the benefits of this gospel message without faith. By faith, the individual receives the forgiveness of sins and eternal life."
	43. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-43) [John 17:3](http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/?osis=niv:John.17:3%E2%80%9317:3), [Luke 1:77](http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/?osis=niv:Luke.1:77%E2%80%931:77),[Galatians 4:9](http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/?osis=niv:Galatians.4:9%E2%80%934:9), [Philippians 3:8](http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/?osis=niv:Philippians.3:8%E2%80%933:8), and [1 Timothy 2:4](http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/?osis=niv:1_Timothy.2:4%E2%80%932:4) refer to faith in terms of knowledge.
	44. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-44) [John 5:46](http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/?osis=niv:John.5:46%E2%80%935:46) refers to acceptance of the truth of Christ's teaching, while [John 3:36](http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/?osis=niv:John.3:36%E2%80%933:36) notes the rejection of his teaching.
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	48. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-48) [John 17:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2017:20;&version=31;), [Rom. 10:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rom.%2010:17;&version=47;), Engelder, T.E.W., [Popular Symbolics](https://archive.org/details/MN41551ucmf_1). St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934, p.101 Part XXV. "The Church", paragraph 141.
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	51. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-51) [WELS Topical Q&A: Decision Theology](https://wels.net/faq/decision-theology/), [Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisconsin_Evangelical_Lutheran_Synod)
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	54. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-54) [*"Westminster Confession of Faith"*](http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/).
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	59. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-59) Arminius I:316
	60. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-60) Arminius III:454
	61. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-61) Ashby *Four Views*, 140
	62. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-62) Picirilli, Robert *Grace, Faith, Free Will: Contrasting Views of Salvation: Calvinism and Arminianism* (Nashville: Randall House Publications, 2002), 154ff
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	67. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-67) Picirilli *Grace, Faith, Free Will* 203
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	69. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-69) Arminius *Writings*, I:254
	70. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-70) [*"Merciful Truth"*](http://www.mercifultruth.com/)*. Retrieved 14 Feb 2009*.
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	84. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-84) John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, III.23.2.
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	86. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-86) John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, III.3.6.
	87. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-87) [WELS Topical Q&A: WELS vs Assembly of God](https://web.archive.org/web/20140714213942/http%3A/arkiv.lbk.cc/faq/site.pl%401518cutopic_topicid257cuitem_itemid7092.htm): "[P]eople by nature are dead in their tranbsgressions (*sic*) and sin and therefore have no ability to decide of Christ (Ephesians 2:1, 5). We do not choose Christ, rather he chose us (John 15:16) We believe that human beings are purely passive in conversion."
	88. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-88) [Augsburg Confessional, Article XVIII, Of Free Will](http://bookofconcord.org/augsburgconfession.php#article18.1), saying: "(M)an's will has some liberty to choose civil righteousness, and to work things subject to reason. But it has no power, without the Holy Ghost, to work the righteousness of God, that is, spiritual righteousness; since the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14); but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Ghost is received through the Word."
	89. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-89) Henry Cole, trans, *Martin Luther on the Bondage of the Will* (London, T. Bensley, 1823), 66. The controversial term *liberum arbitrium* was translated "free-will" by Cole. However [Ernest Gordon Rupp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernest_Gordon_Rupp) and Philip Saville Watson, *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation* (Westminister, 1969) chose "free choice" as their translation.
	90. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-90) Keith D. Stanglin and Thomas H. McCall, *Jacob Arminius: Theologian of Grace*(Oxford University, 2012), 157-158.
	91. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-91) [*The Book of Concord*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Book_of_Concord)*: The Confessions of the Lutheran Church*, XI. Election. "Predestination" means "God's ordination to salvation".
	92. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-92) Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (InterVarsity Press, 2009), 63. “Arminians accepts divine election, [but] they believe it is conditional."
	93. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-93) *The Westminster Confession*, III:6, says that only the "elect" are "effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved." However in his *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition* (Baker, 2012), 45, Richard A. Muller observes that "a sizeable body of literature has interpreted Calvin as teaching "limited atonement", but "an equally sizeable body . . . [interprets] Calvin as teaching "unlimited atonement".
	94. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-WELS-ROM_94-0) [*"Justification / Salvation"*](https://web.archive.org/web/20090927073134/http%3A/www.wels.net/cgi-bin/site.pl?1518&cuTopic_topicID=45&cuItem_itemID=2954). WELS Topical Q&A. [*Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisconsin_Evangelical_Lutheran_Synod). Archived from [*the original*](http://www.wels.net/cgi-bin/site.pl?1518&cuTopic_topicID=45&cuItem_itemID=2954) on 27 September 2009*. Retrieved 29 January2015*. [*Romans 3:23-24*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rm3:23-24&version=NIV), [*5:9*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rm5:9&version=NIV), [*18*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rm5:18&version=NIV) are other passages that lead us to say that it is most appropriate and accurate to say that universal justification is a finished fact. God has forgiven the sins of the whole world whether people believe it or not. He has done more than "made forgiveness possible." All this is for the sake of the perfect substitutionary work of Jesus Christ.
	95. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-WELS-TWB_95-0) [*"IV. Justification by Grace through Faith"*](http://www.wels.net/what-we-believe/statements-beliefs/this-we-believe/justification). This We Believe. [*Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisconsin_Evangelical_Lutheran_Synod)*. Retrieved 5 February 2015*. We believe that God has justified all sinners, that is, he has declared them righteous for the sake of Christ. This is the central message of Scripture upon which the very existence of the church depends. It is a message relevant to people of all times and places, of all races and social levels, for "the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men" ([*Romans 5:18*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rm5:18&version=NIV)). All need forgiveness of sins before God, and Scripture proclaims that all have been justified, for "the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men" ([*Romans 5:18*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rm5:18&version=NIV)). We believe that individuals receive this free gift of forgiveness not on the basis of their own works, but only through faith ([*Ephesians 2:8–9*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=eph2:8-9&version=NIV)). ... On the other hand, although Jesus died for all, Scripture says that "whoever does not believe will be condemned" ([*Mark 16:16*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mk16:16&version=NIV)). Unbelievers forfeit the forgiveness won for them by Christ ([*John 8:24*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=jn8:24&version=NIV)).
	96. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-WELS-Justification_96-0) Becker, Siegbert W. [*"Objective Justification"*](http://www.wlsessays.net/files/BeckerJustification.pdf) (PDF). [*Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisconsin_Lutheran_Seminary). p. 1*. Retrieved 26 January 2015*.
	97. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-WELS-UnivJus_97-0) [*"Universal Justification"*](https://web.archive.org/web/20090927133257/https%3A/www.wels.net/cgi-bin/site.pl?1518&cuTopic_topicID=45&cuItem_itemID=16624). WELS Topical Q&A. [*Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisconsin_Evangelical_Lutheran_Synod). Archived from [*the original*](https://www.wels.net/cgi-bin/site.pl?1518&cuTopic_topicID=45&cuItem_itemID=16624) on 27 September 2009*. Retrieved 5 February2015*. Christ paid for all our sins. God the Father has therefore forgiven them. But to benefit from this verdict we need to hear about it and trust in it. If I deposit money in the bank for you, to benefit from it you need to hear about it and use it. Christ has paid for your sins, but to benefit from it you need to hear about it and believe in it. We need to have faith but we should not think of faith as our contribution. It is a gift of God which the Holy Spirit works in us.
	98. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-98) *Augsburg Confession*, Article V, Of Justification. People "cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. ..."
	99. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-99) "Faith is a condition of justification". Keith D. Stanglin and Thomas H. McCall, *Jacob Arminius: Theologian of Grace* (Oxford University, 2012), 136.
	100. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-100) Paul ChulHong Kang, *Justification: The Imputation of Christ's Righteousness from Reformation Theology to the American Great Awakening and the Korean Revivals* ([Peter Lang](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Lang_%28publisher%29), 2006), 70, note 171. Calvin generally defends Augustine’s "monergistic view".
	101. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-WELS-Diehl_101-0) Diehl, Walter A. [*"The Age of Accountability"*](https://www.wels.net/cgi-bin/site.pl?1518&cuTopic_topicID=58&cuItem_itemID=11345). Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary*. Retrieved 10 February 2015*. In full accord with Scripture the Lutheran Confessions teach monergism. "In this manner, too, the Holy Scriptures ascribe conversion, faith in Christ, regeneration, renewal and all the belongs to their efficacious beginning and completion, not to the human powers of the natural free will, neither entirely, nor half, nor in any, even the least or most inconsiderable part, but in solidum, that is, entirely, solely, to the divine working and the Holy Ghost" (Trigl. 891, [*F.C., Sol. Decl., II, 25*](http://bookofconcord.org/sd-freewill.php#para25)).
	102. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-102) <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Monergism>
	103. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-WELS-TULIP_103-0) [*"Calvinism and Lutheranism Compared"*](https://web.archive.org/web/20090927073128/http%3A/www.wels.net/cgi-bin/site.pl?1518&cuTopic_topicID=10&cuItem_itemID=15094). WELS Topical Q&A. [*Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisconsin_Evangelical_Lutheran_Synod). Archived from [*the original*](http://www.wels.net/cgi-bin/site.pl?1518&cuTopic_topicID=10&cuItem_itemID=15094) on 7 February 2009*. Retrieved 9 February 2015*.
	104. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-104) Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (InterVarsity Press, 2009), 18. "Arminian synergism" refers to "evangelical synergism, which affirms the prevenience of grace."
	105. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-105) *The*[*Westminster Confession of Faith*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westminster_Confession_of_Faith), Ch XVII, "Of the Perseverance of the Saints".
	106. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-WELS-OSAS_106-0) [*"Once saved always saved"*](https://web.archive.org/web/20090927165641/https%3A/www.wels.net/cgi-bin/site.pl?1518&cuTopic_topicID=10&cuItem_itemID=9372). WELS Topical Q&A. [*Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisconsin_Evangelical_Lutheran_Synod). Archived from [*the original*](https://www.wels.net/cgi-bin/site.pl?1518&cuTopic_topicID=10&cuItem_itemID=9372) on 27 September 2009*. Retrieved 7 February 2015*. People can fall from faith. The Bible warns, "If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall" (! Corinthians 10:12). Some among the Galatians had believed for a while, but had fallen into soul-destroying error. Paul warned them, "You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace" (Galatians 5:4). In his explanation of the parable of the sower, Jesus says, "Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in time of testing they fall away" (Luke 8:13). According to Jesus a person can believe for a while and then fall away. While they believed they possessed eternal salvation, but when they fell from faith they lost God's gracious gift.
	107. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-WELS-Pers_107-0) [*"Perseverence of the Saints (Once Saved Always Saved)"*](https://web.archive.org/web/20090927073121/http%3A/www.wels.net/cgi-bin/site.pl?1518&cuTopic_topicID=10&cuItem_itemID=17945). WELS Topical Q&A. [*Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisconsin_Evangelical_Lutheran_Synod). Archived from [*the original*](http://www.wels.net/cgi-bin/site.pl?1518&cuTopic_topicID=10&cuItem_itemID=17945) on 27 September 2009*. Retrieved 7 February 2015*. We cannot contribute one speck to our salvation, but by our own arrogance or carelessness we can throw it away. Therefore, Scripture urges us repeatedly to fight the good fight of faith ([*Ephesians 6*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=eph6&version=NIV) and [*2 Timothy 4*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2tim4&version=NIV) for example). My sins threaten and weaken my faith, but the Spirit through the gospel in word and sacraments strengthens and preserves my faith. That’s why Lutherans typically speak of God’s preservation of faith and not the perseverance of the saints. The key is not our perseverance but the Spirit’s preservation.
	108. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-108) Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Crossway, 1997), 437-438.
	109. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-109) “Many Arminians deny the doctrine of the *perseverance of the saints*." Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Crossway, 1997), 35.
	110. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-110) [*LDS Church*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints) (2006), [*"The Articles of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints"*](http://scriptures.lds.org/en/a_of_f/1/), [*The Pearl of Great Price*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pearl_of_Great_Price_%28Latter_Day_Saints%29) (online ed.)
	111. [**Jump up^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity#cite_ref-111) [*"Alma 34:14-16"*](http://scriptures.lds.org/en/alma/34/14-16#14).

# 福音派神学

 编辑

本词条缺少**名片图**，补充相关内容使词条更完整，还能快速升级，赶紧来编辑吧！

福音派神学（Evangelical Theology），“福音派”一词源于希腊文“euangelion”，意为“可喜的信息”，“使人欢欣的好消息”。[基督教](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%9F%BA%E7%9D%A3%E6%95%99)用该词指[耶稣](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%80%B6%E7%A8%A3)为人降生、受难、复活，而人藉着相信耶稣得以与[上帝](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%8A%E5%B8%9D)和好，获得拯救的美好信息。“福音派人士”的原初意义也就是相信并传扬耶稣福音的人。

**中文名**

福音派神学

**外文名**

Evangelical Theology

**起    源**

源于希腊文Evangelical Theology

**解    释**

意为“可喜的信息”

**发展历史**

历史上曾经将新教称为“福音派”，在此意义上传统的欧洲[新教](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%96%B0%E6%95%99)[神学](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E7%A5%9E%E5%AD%A6)也被称为“福音派神学”。但现代意义上的“福音派”是对二次大战以后随着福音派运动而出现的一批[基督徒](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%9F%BA%E7%9D%A3%E5%BE%92)的统称。他们强调尊奉基督教基本教义，同时热衷于宣教，注重个人信仰体验。他们所倡导的神学即“福音派神学”。其特征是：坚持传统教义，强调上帝是有位格的独一神，拥有无限主权；视《[圣经](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%9C%A3%E7%BB%8F)》为上帝启示之庄严默示的记录，毫无错谬，为引导信仰与生活的最高权威，但承认《圣经》具有时代和历史的特征，因此不完全排斥圣经评断学；相信人有原罪，需要拯救；主张耶稣的受死是代替人类担当罪的刑罚，以满足上帝公义的要求；强调耶稣身体复活，人在末世也将经历同样的身体复活，并接受审判和最终的得救或沉沦之结局；强调信徒“重生”的体验，主张重生者立时在上帝面前被称义，且将得到上帝的保守；重视宣道工作，同时认为圣洁也是见证基督的整个过程的一个不可缺少的部分，因为生活和话语是福音信息中两个不可分的要素。同时重视社会服务，称之为“传扬福音的预备工作”，认为就带领人进入上帝之国的目标而言它正如讲道一样重要。主要倡导者为葛培理、卡奈尔（Edward J.Carnell）等。随着福音派运动在全世界范围内的不断推进，福音派神学的影响也正日益扩大。 [1]

# 為甚麼要讀點神學？

讓我從自己的某一次經歷說起。

因在公立大學修讀宗教研究，有機會旁聽其他學系的科目。一天，我到哲學系旁聽某一科目。在當中一堂，記不起授課老師在堂上說起甚麼，他突然問全班同學：**「你們當中誰是基督教徒？」**班上有幾位同學，包括我，舉手示意。接着他問：「基督教的核心信息是甚麼？」

班房靜了一陣子，想是沒舉手的同學與幾位舉手的同學一樣，在思索如何回答這個難以用三言兩語應對的問題。班上沉默了一會，我嘗試將之打破，好讓課堂繼續進行，於是簡單地回答：「是愛神愛人吧？」授課老師聽後失望地說：「愛神愛人？！這麼低層次！個個宗教都講愛啦！這麼說，你是把基督宗教降格呀！」另一位同學說：**「是救贖。」**那老師應道：「對！是救贖！基督宗教的核心信息是救贖嘛！」

「那麼，救贖是一回怎樣的事情？人為甚麼需要救贖？」這問題再次令全班靜默。那老師進一步問，期望同學回答到他內心的答案：「救贖假設了甚麼？」我心想，這哲學教授似乎不滿足一些簡單和表面的答案；我也猜想，他也應該對神學有點認識？於是，我再次回答：「救贖是假設了人生在世就落入困境中；救贖的意思是為人類存在世上的困境給予拯救。」

豈料這答案再次令教授失望。「你不用給出如此一個沙特式存在主義的回答呀！基督教的救贖假設了甚麼？救贖假設了人有原罪嘛！救贖是甚麼意思呀？就是人可以上天堂、天國嘛！人可以擺脫原罪，重獲新生囉！」

下筆這篇，我依然無法忘記那天縈繞我心的那種困擾感覺。那困擾的感覺，

不是由於我答不中那教授的問題因而覺得尷尬或慚愧；那困擾的感覺，壓根兒是一種困惑（puzzlement）——也不論這教授沒分清他口中的、神學裏的天堂（Heaven）和天國（Kingdom of God）的概念，從他所說，我困惑的是，從思潮的歷史發展看，哲學與神學本有千絲萬縷的關係，但為甚麼這教授可以對神學有以上片面、偏頗，甚至扭曲的印象或看法？

後來我想，那教授所說，很可能代表了不少讀哲學的朋友對宗教或神學的想法。我沒有意思貶低哲學學者的學識，但那教授所說，令我覺得有必要指出神學和基督宗教其實有更廣闊和深刻的關注，以及更豐富和貼近時代的應對資源。我沒可能，也沒能力代表神學或基督宗教表達一個整體的看法。事實上，不同神學家就有不同，甚或予盾的神學說法——**但正因如此，我們有必要認識神學，以擺脫我們對神學或基督宗教可能有的某種單一、刻板或扭曲的印象。**神學和基督宗教是否只關心人的原罪？基督宗教的核心信息是否只談人類的救贖？（註一） 拯救是否只在說人能否上天堂？這篇文章不欲直接回答這些問題，卻希望刺激讀者，再次思考這些問題。

**我們對神學似乎停留在了一個片面的理解之上，或許就像《創造亞當》所呈現的那樣，亞當和父神的接觸僅僅是指尖的短暫碰撞。（資料圖片）**

**生態與基督宗教的含混關係**

如果認為被救贖的對象只有人類，潛藏其背後的很可能是一種人類中心主義（anthropocentricism）。弔詭的是，這種人類中心主義正是導致其他非人類生命要被拯救的元兇。今天，仍有不少人引用學者Lynn White的說法，指猶太基督宗教（Judeo-Christian）是造成現代世界生態危機的罪魁禍首，原因是它強調人類擁有神的形象，於是給予人類支配大自然的正當化理由。大自然的利益因而被人類罔顧，甚至遭他們肆意剝削。（註二）

Lynn White的說法有一定根據，但肯定不代表猶太基督宗教歷來看待大自然的想法。學者Paul Santmire把西方基督宗教的生態神學劃分為兩個主題：「靈性主題」（spiritual motif）與「生態主題」（ecological motif）。「靈性主題」視大自然為人類心靈跟神契合的中介；好像攀山會被視為一級級步向與神契合的過程。（註三） 對聖經有一點認識的讀者，或會立刻聯想到一個形象化的例子，就是摩西攀登西奈山，迎見當時以色列的神耶和華。（註四）這裏，大自然被視作助人靈性一步步超越（transcend）的中介。

至於「生態主題」則強調造化奇妙的大自然，能助人形象化地了解神的偉大和性情。聖經的《詩篇》104篇這樣說：「那裏有海，又大又廣；海裏有無數的活物，大小活物都有。那裏有船隻往來航行，有你所造的大魚，在海裡嬉戲。這些活物都仰望你，仰望你按時賜給牠們食物。你賜給牠們，牠們就拾取；你張開你的手，牠們就飽享美物。你向牠們掩面，牠們就驚慌；你收回牠們的氣息，牠們就死亡，歸回塵土。你發出你的靈，萬物就被造成；你也使地面更換一新。願耶和華的榮耀存到永遠；願耶和華喜悅他自己所作的。他注視大地，地就震動；他觸摸群山，山就冒煙。」（註五）

以上Paul Santmire的劃分，顯示生態危機不能簡單地歸咎猶太基督宗教——無論是「靈性主題」或是「生態主題」，都不存在人類支配、統管，進而破壞和糟蹋大自然的意味、成份。基督宗教與生態的關係是含混的（ambiguous）；我們難以簡單地視它為生態危機的罪魁，甚至應考慮把它看為應對危機的豐富資源。

人類中心主義既被很多人視為現代生態危機的一大禍根，一些現代神學家如蒂利希（Paul Tillich），就嘗試作出一些神學「診斷」——生態危機不是源於甚麼宗教傳統，卻是壓根兒因全人類所共同擁有的罪性所致。大自然與人類同樣要被拯救，而神學和基督信仰應提供一個可能的「藥方」。（註六） 這文章不打算討論近代生態神學的發展，只希望指出，基督宗教從沒有把被拯救的對象囿限於人類；把被拯救的對象說成只有人類，不是基督宗教的整體看法，而只是人類中心主義。

**我們還可以如何談論神？想起怵目驚心的屠殺，望見頹垣敗瓦的家園，人如何能相信一個全善全能的神存在？（VCG圖片）**

**反因困難解決不了而更加相信**

萬事萬物等待得到終極拯救的看法，必然伴隨一連串有關神正論（theodicy）的問題。諸如為甚麼神容讓災難繼續存在世上、為甚麼全善全能的神不除去每個生命身上的痛苦等，一直是既陳舊古老卻又歷久常新的問題。然而，神學和宗教信仰的可貴，往往不在於它們解決我們頭腦中的疑難（question），而在於它們擁抱和嘗試應對我們生命或生活中的困難（problem）——這樣說，不表示神學或宗教信仰無須經過思考甚或迷信，而是要強調，它們皆不能脫離日常生活或現實環境來理解或接受。如果我們能多從一個存在／實存（existential）的角度看一些神學家或宗教信仰的想法，或許，我們能稍微領略神學或宗教信仰的珍貴。

二戰結束後，很多歐洲神學家都在思考一個問題：**我們還可以如何談論神？想起怵目驚心的屠殺，望見頹垣敗瓦的家園，人如何能相信一個全善全能的神存在？**

但神學家莫特曼（Jürgen Moltmann）觀察到，很多受難者發出的不是像「如神真的存在，為甚麼祂容許眼前的一切發生？（Why does God permit this?）」等問題，而是「我的神，你在哪裏？！（My God, where are you?）」的呼喊。（註七） 而對莫特曼等一眾二戰後的德國神學家來說，叫他們苦苦掙扎的是該如何面對自己民族有如此一段醜陋和泯滅人性的歷史。他們不如受難者般發出呼喊「神，你在哪裏？」而是聽到外來的呼喊：「亞當，你在哪裏？」以及「該隱，你的弟弟亞伯在哪裏？」（註八）

對聖經有認識的讀者知道，亞當吃了禁果、該隱殺死自己的弟弟亞伯，兩人同樣犯了罪、行了惡。莫特曼的意思是，面對眼前的世界，要處理的不是只去解答頭腦中的疑難，而是要為實存的困難找出辦法，神學的任務更應如此，他們一眾戰後的德國神學家責無旁貸，須直接回應以上對他們的呼喊。

對莫特曼來說，耶穌被釘在十字架的重要之處，在於讓受難者明白神與他們一同受難、共渡痛苦，為他們繼續活下去提供一點力量和希望。而信仰之真實（authenticity），也在於人如何活出信仰，與受難者同行；一些受難者因苦難難題而放棄信仰，但莫特曼認為，正因為苦難，所以人不能輕易放棄信仰——任何類似「上帝已死」的宣稱，是為希特拉和納粹黨「加冕」，即宣告他們的惡行在死後還能「獲勝」（註九）； 堅持信仰，卻是在表達信徒和神皆沒有忘記被壓逼、被殺害的生命。

莫特曼的說法，其弔詭之處在於說出人非但可以不因疑難解決不了而放棄信仰（相信，這是不少人的經歷），反而是因困難解決不了，所以更加堅持信仰——信仰在這裏不是在解答頭腦的疑難，而是在擁抱實存的困難，嘗試提供解救的辦法。

我在這篇文章沒有甚麼「宣教」的意思。我只希望表達，**我們都活在一個不完美、破碎的世界裏。神學與宗教信仰，其實一直永無間斷地與世界互動、彼此詮釋**；神學與宗教信仰從來沒有脫離人實存的處境並在當中的問題；也正因如此，神學與宗教信仰是一個豐富和重要的資源寶庫，要求我們好好地、認真地在當中發掘、認識，以令我們，令其他生命，令這個世界變得更加美好。

神學和宗教信仰的珍貴，或許，就是能讓我們在這個不完美與破碎的世界中看見、體會到片段的（fragmentary）真、善、美。

**附註：**

（註一）「救贖」（redemption）有付上贖價，把人救出的意思；被救者處於被動的狀態。然而，這只是基督宗教中眾多「拯救」概念（salvations）之一。文章以下部分，我會用上意思較為概括、既有「被救」意思亦有「自救」成分的「拯救」一詞。

（註二） Lynn White, Jr., “The Histoical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis”, in Science 155, no. 3767 (March 10, 1967), 1203-7. 留意的是Lynn White在發表這篇文章後修正和釐清了他的看法，見Lynn White, Jr., “Continuing the Conversation”, in Western Man and Environmental Ethics, ed. by Ian G. Barbour (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1973), 58.

（註三） H. Paul Santmire, The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 18-21.

（註四） 見聖經《出埃及記》24章15至18節。

（註五） 聖經《詩篇》（新譯本）104篇25-32節。

（註六） 更多有關蒂利希神學中的生態關注，可參Lai Pan-Chiu, "Paul Tillich and Ecological Theology", in The Journal Of Religion 79, no. 2, 1999, 233-249. ; Chan Ka-Fu, "A Process Ecological Theology of Paul Tillich with Special Reference of Doctrine of Creation-eschatology." Theology & Life 32, 2009, 23-41.

（註七） Jürgen Moltmann, God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 172-173.

（註八） 分別來自聖經《創世記》3章9節和4章9節。

（註九） Jürgen Moltmann, God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 176.

# 150　对待宗教神学理论的原则

1．宗教神学理论是真理的假冒品、伪装货，都是似是而非的道理，使人定规神、抵挡神；

2．宗教神学理论并非出于圣灵开启光照，而是出于人的观念想象、逻辑推理，是骗子的谎言；

3．宗教神学理论不是真理，不能拯救人，人越追求神学知识越狂妄自大而否认真理抵挡神；

4．宗教神学理论是极具迷惑力的毫无真理实际的空洞理论，必须用真理揭露反驳、批倒批臭。

相关神话如下：

“历时多少世纪，人都是这样相信着一位人的头脑观念中想象出来的，也是人自己制造出来的、人从未见过的三位一体的神。多年来，也有许多属灵伟人解释过‘三位一体的神’的‘真意’，但就解释的来说，他们位格不同的、三而一的神也是模棱两可，解释不透，对于‘神’的‘结构’人都感到莫明其妙。没有一个大人物能解释透，多数都是在道理上通得过，在文字上通得过，但就其内涵之意没有一个人能理解得完全透亮……其实，我告诉你们，‘三而一的神’在全宇上下根本不存在，神没有父，也没有子，更没有父、子共同使用的工具——圣灵这一学说，这都是根本不存在的世上最大的谬理！但这谬理也有‘来源’，并不是没有根据的，因为你们人的‘脑袋’也并不简单，你们的构思也不无道理，而是相当恰当、巧妙，甚至让任何一个撒但都攻不破，只可惜都是根本不存在的谬理！你们根本没看见事实的真面目，你们只是在推理、在想象，而后编成一整套故事来骗取人的信任，来垄断那些最傻的没头脑、没理智的人，让他们相信你们的伟大、著名的‘专家学说’，这是真理吗？这是人该领受的生命之道吗？都是胡说！没有一句恰当的言语！多少年来，‘神’就让你们这样分割着，甚至你们一代一代越分越细，以至于公开把一位神分成三位神。到现在，人根本没法再重新把神合在一起，因为你们把神分得太细了！若不是我及早地作这工作，说不定你们要猖狂到何时呢！这样分下去，神还能是你们的神吗？你们还会认识神吗？你们还会认祖归宗吗？

…………

在人的说法中有许多矛盾的地方，当然这都是人的观念，若不追究你们都认为是对的，岂不知类似三位一体的神这说法不都是人的观念吗？人没有完全认识透的，都有掺杂，人的意思太多了，这说明受造之物根本解释不了神作的工作，人的头脑太多了，都是出于逻辑、出于思维，与真理相抵触。”

摘自《话在肉身显现·三位一体的神存在吗？》

“看各宗各派的首领，他们都是狂妄自是，解释圣经都是断章取义，凭自己的想象，都是靠恩赐与知识来作工的，如果他啥也说不出来，那些人能跟他吗？他毕竟是有些知识，会讲点道理，或者会笼络人，会用些手段，就把人带到他跟前了，把人都欺骗了……”

摘自《座谈纪要·追求真理才是真信神》

“在彼得和保罗的身上你们就可以明显地看见，彼得是一个最注重实际的人，从他所经历的事上就可看出，他的经历是结合那些以往失败之人的教训，吸取历代以来圣徒的长处，从这点就可看见，彼得经历的是何等的实际，都让人能摸得着够得上，并且是人能达到的。保罗却不同了，他所谈的都是渺茫的看不见的，如：上三层天、登宝座、公义冠冕。他注重地位、教训人、摆资格、注重圣灵感动等等这些外表的东西。他所追求的都不现实，有很多都是空想，从这里就可以看出，一切超然的，如圣灵怎么感动、人享受到什么快乐、到三层天或平时操练享受到一个地步、看神的话享受到一个地步，这些都不现实。”

摘自《话在肉身显现·对“实际”当如何认识》

“有一天你把那些宗教人士的难处都解决了，将他的谬理都驳回去了，就证明你对这步工作也完全定准、没有一点疑惑了。你如果驳不倒他们的谬理，他们会诬陷你、毁谤你，这不是蒙羞的事吗？”

摘自《话在肉身显现·将神定规在“观念”中的人怎能获得神的“启示”呢？》

参考人的交通：

“宗教道理根本就不是真理，丝毫也不能代替神的话。宗教道理是人的产物，完全是似是而非的迷惑人的东西，宗教道理越多，越能迷惑人、坑害人，结果也坑害自己，这也是导致宗教界抵挡神、定罪神作工的一方面原因。”

摘自《座谈纪要·对各地教会问题的答复》

“那些宗教领袖，尤其是神学博士，他们为什么成为将基督重钉十字架的罪魁祸首了呢？就是因为他们的宗教知识太多了、圣经知识太多了。他们并不是真正地明白圣经、明白神的话，而是用人的思想、用人的思维来解释圣经里的话，解释圣经里的事，他们所产生的这些神学理论，不是出于圣灵的开启光照，全是凭着人的思维、理解、判断产生的。所以，宗教界的神学观点都是抵挡神的观点，都是与真理不相合的，因为不是出于圣灵开启光照，而是出于人的思维。有人说‘那两种观点差得不是太多呀’，差得不是太多这叫啥？应验了一句俗话‘差之毫厘，谬之千里’，是不是这么回事呀？你看有一些弟兄姊妹，到宗教里听完道之后，又回到神家一听神家的交通，他说‘差不多呀，都是讲让人学好、让人顺服神、让人实行真理，都差不多，没听出啥区别来’。这是怎么回事呀？说明人不明白真理，把听着对的话都说成差不多，这是没有分辨。如果人真明白一些真理就会分辨了，不明白真理的人不会分辨。”

摘自《讲道交通（三）·怎样认识人的观念与论断》

“你看外邦人研究什么理论，他光从字句上研究，从道理上研究、推敲得结论，看完一篇神的话之后，尤其是念神学的人、牧师，那些学者、研究神学的人，他们专门从理论上研究，他们都不是从实际经历当中来寻求真理、寻求对神的真实认识，他们都是从理论上研究，最后得出什么什么结论。你们说他们得出的结论是实际还是道理呀？是道理吧。因为这结论是他们专门从书本上研究出来的，不是靠他们自己经历得出的，他们是研究、推敲，从这个事这么推敲，从那个事这么推敲。从书本字面上研究得出的结论，从圣经所记载的事上研究得出个什么结论，产生一种理论，这叫神学理论，那个里面没有经历的认识，没有圣灵的开启。圣灵开启你更深的认识是超过字面的，是字面的语言没法表达的，那必须是在你进入经历以后寻求真理的时候圣灵才开启光照你。圣灵开启光照你的都是最实际的东西、最真实的东西，是从圣经这本书当中怎么研究也得不到的东西。所以今天神让咱们经历神的话。咱们在经历神话当中，如果获得了圣灵开启，对神话就能产生真实的认识，这个真实的认识，是你从神话字面上怎么研究也研究不出来的，这是人的思维达不到的，你怎么想象也想象不出来这个真理，所以经过圣灵带领、开启光照得出的真理，是人没法从书本上研究知道的，这是对神的实际的认识。现在我们就是在经历神话、经历神的作工，所以最终我们就能达到对神有真实的认识。那些宗教学者、宗教专家，他们永远也不会真实认识神，他们怎么下功夫研究也没有用，最终神还要定他们的罪，说：你们这些作恶的人，我从来就不认识你们，你们离开我去吧。他们就这样被淘汰了。他们走的路是什么路啊？他们走的不是经历神话获得圣灵开启的路，他们信神是凭着自己的头脑在研究、想象、推敲，最后产生出一种理论，这种理论是荒唐、不实际的，被神定为谬论，所以神不承认他们是认识神的人，他们都是最荒唐、最谬妄的人。”

摘自《讲道交通（一）·问题解答》

“宗教牧师、神学博士他们讲的到底是不是实际？有没有真理？‘没有。’那他们讲那些理论从哪儿来的？他们写了那么多的书，摞起来也有山高了，那些话、那些道理从哪儿来的？他们看完了圣经，凭人的头脑思维来解释圣经的话，再加上人的想象、判断、推理，得出了种种的结论，这是不是人的思维、想象的产物啊？这是人的思维、想象的产物，绝对不是经历出来的，更不是圣灵的开启光照。那有人说：‘那是不是从撒但那儿来的呢？’这里面也有从撒但来的，有些东西那就是带着对神的试探、论断、定规，把己意强加给神，这是撒但性情的产物。你为啥随意定规神？你为什么把你自己的意思强加给神？明明不是那么回事，你没看见实际，你非要那么说，就凭着你的想象说，把人看不见的神的事、不了解的神的事，凭自己的想象、猜测，再用逻辑归纳、推理，得出种种结论，强加给神，说是他对神的认识，说是圣灵开启光照的。那你们说，这种作法是不是亵渎神的表现？他们这样作工作，还事奉神，这是不是抵挡神的表现？如果是抵挡神的表现，他们的生命性情有变化吗？没有。因为他们里面有对神的论断、有对神的定规、有对神的强加，有些说法太武断，牵强附会，所以，他们的作工是严重地违背了神的心意，完全是出于人的败坏与撒但性情。所以他们那些鬼话多数都是谬论，都是不合实际的说法，有些话代表撒但、代表天使长对神的亵渎。”

摘自《讲道交通（五）·怎样追求真理进入实际》

“难道人的知识就能成就神的工作吗？难道人的圣经知识、神学知识就能拯救人吗？难道人的知识能代表真理吗？人的知识丝毫不能代表真理，人的圣经知识、神学知识都是谬妄的知识，丝毫代替不了真理，神学知识、圣经知识与真理那是格格不入。今天我们从神的话中看见了，神的话都是真理，所有的圣经知识、神学知识与神所发表的真理都是格格不入的。明白圣经知识越多，明白神学知识越多，越是抵挡神，越是定罪神，这点看清了吧。到底什么是真理呀？神学知识里有真理吗？圣经知识里有真理吗？这些都不是真理。圣经知识和圣经里神的话是两码事，不能相提并论。圣经知识是人写出来的，是按着人的思维总结出来的，圣经里面神的话那是真理，但圣经知识不是神的话，记住啦！……人有神学知识、圣经知识，为什么他们能抵挡神，能论断神，能够成为敌基督，这是什么原因哪？知识太多了只能败坏人，只能使人狂妄自大，只能使人更加疯狂地抵挡神。尤其是圣经知识、神学知识太多的人抵挡神更厉害。……人能否抵挡神不在乎人信神多少年，我们看看犹太教那些上层人物，祭司长、文士、教法师，像保罗那一类的人，还有法利赛人，他们都是多少辈信耶和华的人，他们的圣经知识那是最丰富的，他们研究圣经研究了一两千年，最后都成了抵挡神的罪魁，都成了神道成肉身的仇敌。这就是圣经知识、神学知识造就出来的一批一批的敌基督。有人说：‘钻研圣经对不对呀？研究神学到底对不对呀？’这话怎么解释啊？研究圣经、研究神学，那不是认识神的途径，认识神是靠经历圣灵作工达到的，光研究圣经、研究神学，只能使人越来越背叛神，越来离真理越远，认识神的道路只有靠经历神作工，只有靠经历圣灵作工才能达到果效。你研究神学能获得圣灵作工吗？你研究圣经知识能获得圣灵作工吗？如果不能，你那个研究有什么用啊？”

摘自《讲道交通（二）·神的作工与人的作工的区别》

“你们说念神学追求知识能不能达到认识神哪？不但不能使人达到认识神，反而会使人离神越来越远，越来越抵挡神。知识，包括神学知识，都是和真理正相敌对的，所以越是注重神学知识的人，他们抵挡神越厉害，最后都成了基督的仇敌。今天我们接受基督的作工，接受基督的拯救，对神开始有了一些认识，能把世界看透，能把知识看透，能把神学理论看透，并且能背叛撒但，这就是开始进入蒙拯救的正轨了。如果人真明白真理了，对撒但的哲学、撒但的知识、撒但的谬论、撒但的法则都会分辨，都能看透，都会解剖，都能弃绝、背叛，这样的人就达到完全蒙神拯救了。现在我们达到这个地步没有啊？如果让你解剖一个撒但哲学，你能不能用真理把它彻底批倒、批臭？如果从世界的书架上随便拿出一本书，你能不能发现那里面违背真理的谬论在什么地方？如果从宗教里随便拿出一本书，你就能看清它的谬论，还能发现它的错误之处在哪、违背真理的地方在哪、跟哪些真理不合，你如果能达到这个程度你就明白真理了，你就有真理了。如果你接触一个信神的人，不管他是什么人物，是牧师也好，博士也好，他说出一句话来，你一听就知道他所说的话谬在啥地方，错在啥地方，违背什么真理，这才能证明你真明白真理了。你们现在没有达到这个身量，说明你们还没有真理，没有真理的后果那就是你还能被撒但迷惑，你还能受人的迷惑，你还能跟随假牧人、跟随假先知。如果宗教里的人给你一本书，你一看这书挺好，都是让人学好的，都没错，这就证明你没有分辨、没有真理；什么时候你能把各种各样的宗教谬论，把凡是抵挡神的人类和抵挡神的宗教界的一切谬论都能驳倒，都能解剖，都能彻底批臭，那就行了，证明你真有身量了，你能做神的见证人了。”

摘自《讲道交通（四）·只有认识神才能达到真实的顺服神》

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