

The Doctrine of Salvation

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Preface

The following publication is a summary of the teachings of Pastor Joseph Sugrue and Pastor John Farley at Grace Bible Church in Somerset Massachusetts during the fall and winter months of 2006. Pastors Joe and John were given the privilege by Pastor Robert R. McLaughlin to teach these doctrines from behind his pulpit in a Basics class that was taught every Tuesday evening over the course of several years. Both Pastor Sugrue and Pastor Farley were ordained by Pastor McLaughlin in August of 2004 and are forever grateful and indebted to Pastor McLaughlin for his dedication to teaching the word of God for over 30 years and his patience in training up pastors so that they may join him in spreading the good news of Jesus Christ and His word to the world.

Pastor Farley now faithfully teaches Bible doctrine at Lighthouse Bible Church in Deerfield Beach, Florida [www.lbible.org]. Pastor Sugrue now faithfully teaches Bible doctrine at Grace and Truth Ministries in Salem, Oregon [www.cgtruth.org].

I have dedicated this book, which will be the first of many, to my pastor and mentor Robert McLaughlin as well as my friend and fellow trainee Pastor John Farley. Both of

these fine men of God have been instrumental in my personal growth in the grace and knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ.

My hope is that anyone who has not personally believed in Jesus Christ as their Savior would take the time to read this publication and consider who the person of Christ really is. My hope is also that anyone who has believed in Christ, but does not feel that they know Him or His work at the cross would also take the time to read this offering of life and deliverance. My added hope is that everyone who professes to believe and know the King of kings and Lord of lords would become masters of this subject so they may represent Him fully, boldly, and accurately as ambassadors in this world that is often dark even though the Light has come into it; always being ready to give a reason for the hope that is within you.

Pastor Joseph Sugrue

Introduction: Saved from what?

John 3:17-18

"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

The word "salvation" means to be delivered, and generally we use it to mean being delivered from something that we would like to avoid. A drowning man is saved by a lifeguard and is therefore delivered from death. An almost bankrupt company receives investments and is therefore delivered from bankruptcy. Anyone that is delivered from these calamities will naturally rejoice. But there is something far more terrible than death or the poor-house that every person should want to avoid, and that is a second death.

How could there be two deaths? Physical death is separation of the soul from the body. What many people fail to acknowledge or ignore, just like we want to ignore most impending doom, is that the soul can die after it separates from the body. This death is really not an end, but banishment from the presence of God forever. The second death is an eternal existence in the absence of all that God is. God is light, the second death is darkness. God is happiness, the second death is misery. God is blessing, the second death is constant craving. This is something that every person should and even demand to avoid and it can be avoided, without work, merit, or money. Just like the lifeguard saves the drowning man and the investor saves the failing company, so someone outside of ourselves must save us from this terrible death, and that someone is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The question of why we are in this predicament can only be answered by going back to our beginning. Many people know the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and most think it is just a story or fable, when in fact it is our beginning. I would ask you not to leave this text because you don't believe in the first three chapters of Genesis. The fact of the matter is that we had to start somewhere and in that start us, or they, said no to God and sinned. In Genesis we have a perfect man and woman in a perfect environment speaking each day to a perfect God. One prohibition is given which is not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and sure enough the woman eats and then gives to her husband and he eats. Why the Tree in the first place? God gives us each a free will to choose for or against Him. If that were not true and we were just robots who could not choose against Him, then there would be no possibility of a relationship with Him. And so, in sin, Adam and his wife find themselves naked.

What's wrong with being naked? There's no one else around to see them. However, their nakedness is really in their soul. They were once perfect and as such had nothing to hide. We hide our flaws and failures from one another because we often don't want to be seen as weak. Can you imagine the step down from perfection to sinner? The impact on these two would have been unimaginable by any of us who have never been perfect. So, in falling from perfection they had something to hide and their attempt to hide it came in the form of fig leaf pajamas. But that didn't do the trick since when God returns to the Garden after their fall they hide from Him in fear. Once they lose their little game of hide and seek, after all the One who is "it" has omniscience, they are given an opportunity to fess up. "Who told you that you were naked?" asked the Lord. This becomes an important part of our history. Do they admit that no one told them this but that they were responsible for discovering it for themselves through sin, i.e. disobeying God? The fact is that if the third party in the Garden, the serpent who is Satan, had told them they were naked while they were still perfect, they wouldn't have cared since they had nothing to hide. But the fig leaves make that point moot. This is an opportunity for them to confess to God their failure and choice to be independent from Him for the first time.

But they take the low road. They don't take responsibility for their choice. The man blames both the woman and God and the woman blames the serpent. And so this is our not so glorious start in history – sinners who blame others for their mistakes. The Bible claims that all people have been born in the likeness of Adam. We are all born in sin and therefore we are born into this world in separation from God with no hope of reconciling that relationship that our parents once had. If this remains the status quo then every person must die the second death, separation of the soul from God forever.

One doesn't have to live very long in order to see the devastating effects of our fall in sin and separation from God on every corner of the world. People ask, "How can there be a God with all the evil that is in the world?" as if God had caused it. All God's creatures have a free will. We all make our own choices. Our minds are not computer chips that cannot be overwritten. We chose to steal from our neighbor, cheat the system for profit, murder, lie, and hate. To blame God for these things is going back to our basest beginning. "God the woman you gave me, she made me eat." The better question would

be, “Why doesn’t God stop it?” That’s a very good question and it gets to the heart of why this book was written.

Chapter 1: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

Going back to the account of Eden in Genesis chapter 3, the Lord removed the fig leaf clothes that they had fashioned for themselves and made for them clothes from animal skins. The Lord therefore killed an innocent animal in order to provide covering for their nakedness. This was done after the Lord had prophesized concerning the future coming of the Savior.

Gen 3:15
And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel."

The woman’s seed (singular) is none other than Jesus Christ who would come into the world thousands of years later. This is the one who would be foretold to be the lamb slain for the sins of the whole world. This is exactly what the animal skins were to represent to Adam and Eve, and they were to pass this knowledge down to all their progeny. One title for the Lord Jesus Christ is that He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. The death of the Lamb would one day cover all the sin of all mankind.

So why aren’t all men saved or delivered from the second death? The simple answer is that they say no to the offer. Remember, we all have a free will and if anyone says no to God’s offer of salvation then they are saying yes to their position that is separate from God. If you reject God’s offer He must honor your decision. God is very clear in His word as to the means of attaining this so great salvation. It is to believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, period. Nothing can be added to this. No baptism, no repentance, no penance, no amount of giving, no nothing can be added to the finished work of Christ on the Cross. When the work was done, He said, “It is finished.” One either believes in Christ alone for salvation alone or he rejects it. There can be no middle ground.

Many people conclude that it can’t be that easy. What they forget is that the easy part is only on their side, man’s side of the cross, and what they fail to see or even understand is the extremely difficult part, which is God’s side of the cross.

Propitiation is a technical theological term for satisfying the justice of God concerning the fall of man. Justice must necessarily condemn a criminal whose guilt is not in

question. This is certainly true of the entire human race. We fell and we are all born condemned. Before you scream unfair, or disagree, hear the action of God in response to man's condemnation.

God the Son became a man through the virgin birth so that He would be born without sin. He was true humanity just like any of us, but without inherent sin and therefore was not born condemned. He grew up like any Jewish boy in the Galilee region. He learned the Mosaic Law and the scrolls of the writings and the prophets and He soon came to understand before the age of 12 that He was the One spoken of by the prophets. He was the Savior, the Messiah, and the One that every animal sacrifice represented. He did not begin His public ministry until the age of 30 and that ministry only lasted three and a half years. His ministry would culminate in the greatest display of love the universe has ever seen or ever will see. Once condemned by the Sanhedrin and sentenced by Pilate after the crowd shouted over and over, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," it was time for the Lord to pick up His cross and carry it to Cavalry. In the hours leading up to this He was severely beaten by the Sanhedrin, scourged by the Romans with a cat-o-nine tails, mocked by the soldiers with a crown of thorns dug into His head, and after all this physical abuse He didn't even look human anymore. He knew it would be like this, as He read the prophecy often:

Isa 52:14

Just as many were astonished at you, *My people*,
So His appearance was marred more than any man,
And His form more than the sons of men.

Through all this and without the opportunity for sleep the night before the Lord picked up that cross and headed for His destiny; Golgotha, the Place of the Skull. It was here that Jesus and two hardened criminals would face execution by Roman cross. This is certainly one of the most gruesome types of death that ever entered into the thinking of mankind. The wood was rugged and full of splinters and spikes; therefore it would pull and tug at the scourged skin. The nails were driven right at the base of the wrist. With this technique the Romans took advantage of a very strong ligament so that the body could be held up, avoided arteries that if punctured would have led the person to bleed to death, and crashing that spike through the median nerve, the biggest nerve in the hand, would give the sensation that a cattle prod was constantly in your wrist causing a repetitive electrical shock in the hand and running down the arm. The Romans had been doing this for hundreds of years and were masters at delivering pain without causing much blood loss so that the victim would remain on the cross in excruciating pain for some time. They used the same technique when nailing the feet. Driving the spike through the first and second metatarsal bones would avoid the artery and the spike would crash through the plantar nerves causing the same electrical shock sensation. Added to all of this, the victim was naked the entire time on the cross in order to increase his humiliation.

While hanging on the cross it isn't difficult to inhale, but in order to exhale the victim would have to pull himself up against the spikes with his hands and push against the spikes with his feet. This movement sent a feeling like bolts of lightning through the nerves in the hands and feet. While hanging it wouldn't take long for the shoulders to dislocate, making pulling up even more painful. In addition to this, every time the victim pulled up the rugged wood tore at his lacerated back. To inhale he would release and back down he went. Up and down, up and down, were the only way a person on the cross could continue to breathe, and each necessary breath meant lightning bolts and more splinters and tearing in the back. Every word that the Lord said on the cross could only be uttered when He pulled Himself up in order to exhale. The first words He spoke reveal His attitude through all of His physical suffering.

Luke 23:34

But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.

What you may not know is that up to this point, Jesus on the cross hasn't covered one sin. In fact, He was on the cross for 6 hours, but not one sin was paid for during the first three hours. The Gospels tell us that He was on the cross from 9am to 3pm and from noon to 3pm the whole area turned to darkness and the sins of the world began to be judged upon Him.

Matt 27:45-46

Now from the sixth hour [Jewish day starts at 6am so this means noontime] darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour [3pm]. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? "that is," My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? "

During these three hours of darkness the only person who was ever innocent of sin was judged for the sins of the whole world – every sin of every person. The Sanhedrin didn't put Him on the cross, nor did the Romans, but He laid down His own life so that our condemnation could be turned into salvation. The Lord took the second death upon Himself so that we would never have to pay this debt. We owed a debt we could not pay and He paid a debt He did not owe. Jesus Christ never became a sinner, but He did become a payment for sin and a substitute for the sentence that we all were guilty of. It was the only way it could be done. God's justice had to be satisfied. How does a perfect God reconcile imperfect, fallen creatures? It is through a perfect substitute who bears the payment on behalf of the fallen and in a perfect condition that satisfies the Justice of the Perfect One.

So why are not all men saved? It's not for lack of work on God's part! God became a man and humbled Himself on a cross to free every man from the slavery of condemnation. Did God leave any sin unpaid, or any part of this so great deliverance for us to do? The answer is no. When the final sin was paid for He said:

John 19:30

When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.

Is it that God only wants to save some and reject others, in other words, does He play favorites? The answer to that is also no!

1 Tim 2:3-4

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The only reason why any person is not saved from the second death is that they have said no to the work of Christ on the cross, which means they say no to Him. They reject the fact that Jesus Christ is the only qualified Savior and that He has accomplished that salvation on the cross. They do not believe in Him. Many believe that He existed and that He was a prophet and a great Rabbi, but these are some of the things He's done and not who He is. He is the Messiah, the promised One, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, the Lion of Judah, the Savior of the world. Salvation or deliverance from the second death is as easy as believing in Him.

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:18

"He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 5:24

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

John 11:25-26

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this? "

Acts 16:31

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household."

Eph 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is*

the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

So why is it so easy for us? It is because it was so hard for Him. We can describe the physical suffering and get a small glimpse of the physical pain, but no words can describe the pain of Jesus being separated from His Father in spiritual death. I believe that God gave us a picture of the physical suffering our Lord went through so that we might understand the weight of His sacrifice and from that we must conclude that it was agony a million times greater to be judged for the sins of the world. God paid the ultimate price so that our fall could be turned back to our relationship with Him without barriers. Jesus Christ has reconciled us, all of us. Believe in Him and be saved!

Chapter 2: Redemption

Ps 111:9

*He has sent redemption to His people;
He has ordained His covenant forever;
Holy and awesome is His name.*

Redemption is the saving work of Christ on the cross by which He purchases our freedom or salvation. As already noted, we were born into this world as sinners, spiritually dead, and separate from God. What is difficult to see on the surface or with a passing glance is the genius of God in this situation. Since we didn't condemn ourselves by our own first sin, but were born condemned by inherent sin, then there is no way that we can save ourselves; God must save us in grace. Grace means that God does all the work in payment for sin. As creatures, we have nothing to offer towards the payment of sin, nothing!

I find it amazing that one of the hardest things for members of the human race to do is to admit that they cannot do something. They'll admit that they cannot hit a baseball out of Fenway Park or that they cannot run a four minute mile, but when they cannot perform a more common task their pride would be too hurt to unveil their hopelessness. I think this is the main problem with people who reject Christ as Savior. In order to admit you need a Savior you also must necessarily admit that you cannot save yourself. And this deliverance is not 50/50 or 70/30, in that Christ does some of the delivering and you do the rest. That is religion and legalism. Christ said, "It is finished," when our deliverance was completed, we cannot add to it even 0.0001%. So deliverance from the second death is 100/0. Christ does all the work and you believe it by faith. Don't think for a moment you get any credit for believing. Faith gives no merit to the one who has faith. The merit in faith always goes to the object of faith. If you believe the sun will rise tomorrow the merit goes to the laws of gravity and nuclear fusion, not you.

Redemption means to purchase and that is exactly what Christ came to earth to do. The price was extremely high, but He paid it none the less. One way to think of it is in terms of slavery. In ancient Rome, where slavery was legal, if a wealthy Roman desired to buy a slave he would go to a slave market. Price depended on the health, age, strength, beauty, and gender of the slave. Bargaining might take place and when a price was agreed upon that slave was now the property of his or her new owner. I'm not agreeing with the practice, I am only illustrating the point. Imagine that every human born into this world were born into a slave market of sin. Born condemned, in inherent sin, separate from God, and spiritually bankrupt. We would each have nothing with which to purchase our freedom. We would be hopeless and helpless. Imagine then that a wealthy man comes along, but not wealthy in gold or silver. He is wealthy in spirit. He is with God and in fact is God. He has no sin and is spiritually the richest man ever and by His own choice He purchases the entire slave market of sin – every member of the human race.

1 John 2:2

and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world.*

Christ purchased every person by paying every ransom on the cross. This begs the same question as before, “Then why isn't everyone saved?” The answer again is choice. If the door of the slave market of sin is unlocked and wide open, I still have to choose to accept Christ's payment and walk out. If I say no to Him and reject the ransom paid, I choose to remain in the slave market. I may still have hope that I can get myself out some other way, or that there is another buyer, but the problem with that lies in the facts. You cannot get yourself out and no one else besides Christ has the ransom amount. Is there another God-Man (Jesus Christ is undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever) born of a virgin so that He is minus inherent sin, who has remained sinless, and was willing to take the payment of sin upon Himself? Examine all the religions of the world and all the new-age movements. Do any of them offer deliverance from our fallen state through the work of a perfect Savior without cost, work, penance, making promises, making changes, etc. on your part? Or do all of them ask something of you? Do they want you to be moral, provide service, quit bad habits, repent of past sins, make overt promises, or in some way or another, clean up your life? And if you do somehow pull any of that off, then, maybe, they tell you, God *might* provide you with salvation and heaven. These falsehoods are from people who think they have some of the ransom price and even a portion of them think they actually have the entire ransom price.

The fact is that no one has any portion of the ransom price that Christ hung on a rugged Roman cross to pay.

Eph 1:7-8

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us.

Col 1:13-14

For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The ransom price was the blood of Christ, which is a phrase used in the scripture to represent His spiritual death. While Christ did bleed during His beatings, scourging, when the crown of thorns was pressed onto His head, and from the spikes in His hands and feet, He did not bleed to death. When the ransom was finally paid in full He said, "It is finished," meaning He was still alive. Because of the Sabbath the Roman soldiers, out of respect for the Jewish law, proceeded to break the legs of those hanging on the crosses. This practice, which was often performed by soldiers during crucifixion, would produce death in minutes since the victim would no longer be able to push himself up to exhale and so he would suffocate to death. When the soldiers approached the base of Christ's cross they realized He was already dead. The Romans were experts at killing and a battle hardened soldier would be able to conclude quickly that a person was in fact dead. So Christ's legs were not broken. This fact was prophesied hundreds of years earlier.

Ps 34:20
He keeps all his bones;
Not one of them is broken.

Yet, to be sure of death one of the soldiers pierced the side of the Lord with his spear. This practice was used to ensure that the victim was dead. Again the soldier would have been well trained to do this correctly as he thrust his spear through the rib cage and into the thoracic cavity and tearing into the heart. The apostle John was an eye witness to this as he was the only disciple at the cross. It is important to note that he recorded what he witnessed so that there is no doubt that Christ was dead, and had been dead for at least 30 minutes before the soldier pierced His side. How do we know that? The blood in Christ's chest cavity had already coagulated so that when it poured out it looked like blood and water. This was also prophesied of Christ as John writes in his gospel.

John 19:32-37
The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN." And again another Scripture says, "THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED."

Zech 12:10
And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.

The point being made is that the phrase, “blood of Christ,” does not refer to the literal blood of Christ as some have held to. The payment for sin was complete before Christ died physically. It is not His physical death that saves you. It is His spiritual death that earned our so great salvation. While the sins of the world were being poured out on His sinless, perfect person, He was separated from God the Father who judged Him on your behalf. When that was finished Christ said it was finished and then He gave up His spirit and breathed His last. Almost all of His literal blood would be poured out about 30 minutes later. So the price is the blood of Christ, but His literal blood has no redeeming value. His willingness to take your sin upon Himself and be judged for it has redeeming value. If anyone believes in Him, he is redeemed and his sins are forgiven forever.

Col 1:13-14

For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Redemption is a fantastic word for Christ purchasing our freedom and paying for all sin, past, present, and future. Anyone can experience that freedom through faith in Him. It's that easy because the price has been fully paid and to you and me it is the greatest of gifts. There is no outstanding debt.

Rom 3:21-24

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Chapter 3: Propitiation

Isa 53:11

*As a result of the anguish of His soul,
He will see it and be satisfied;
By His knowledge the Righteous One,
My Servant, will justify the many,
As He will bear their iniquities.*

I used to take karate classes with my older brothers. Our instructor, or sensei, was pretty tough. Most of the time we would be told that we had to do a certain number of push-ups, or a certain number of kicks or squats and although it was physically challenging you

could mentally count down and actually would feel a burst of energy when you knew it was almost over. However, sometimes he would have us run or do kicking drills without telling us how far or how many. I always dreaded this because of the mental challenge. Sometimes we would stay in a squat and he would put bricks on our thighs. If you stood up or if you didn't keep your squat low enough the bricks would crash onto the wooden floor, maybe even on your toes. The most terrible part of it was that he would not tell you how long he wanted you to squat for; 5 mins, 10 mins, 20? It played terrible tricks on the mind since you knew at any moment one word from him would end it all. He would say, "We will do this until I am satisfied." The problem was that no one knew when he was satisfied. It changed all the time. I mention this childhood memory because the word propitiation means to be satisfied. As it is related to the cross, the spiritual sacrifice of Christ on the cross satisfied the justice of the Father over all sin. You see, you don't have to wait for the time for God to say, "I'm satisfied, you can stop now." God is satisfied with judgment over sin and so now the door is open for you to believe in Christ as your Savior and you don't have to wait. God is satisfied with you now!

By definition propitiation is a theological word for the Father being completely satisfied with the work of the Son on the cross. Redemption is the sin-ward side of the cross. Propitiation is the God-ward side of the cross in that God the Father was satisfied with the sacrifice of Christ. God has integrity and He cannot just overlook the sin of man. He can't brush it under the rug so to speak, and forget about the sin issue. Sin had to be dealt with and God dealt with it Himself, apart from His fallen creatures. The spiritual death of Christ on the cross satisfied the demands of a holy God – that the sins of the entire world, past, present, and future, be judged. Therefore God is completely satisfied with Christ's work and therefore completely satisfied with you. Everyone has an opportunity to believe in Christ as their Savior or to reject this deliverance.

Because God is propitiated concerning you, all you have to do is believe. There is nothing else for us to do. A great evil has been done in this world under the banner of religion in teaching people that God is not satisfied and therefore there is work to be done on their part to get God to the point of satisfaction. This is a lie and it is evil. Because of this lie people hide from God. They don't want to go to a church to hear about God because they have been taught to believe that all God wants from them is some form or works or penance that will satisfy Him, and they soberly conclude that they cannot live up to anything that would satisfy deity. In this light (really darkness) God looks like a tyrant. He is often portrayed as a petty despot having all the power and looking for His little puny creatures to show Him some personal changes that will please Him. There is only one thing that an unbeliever in Christ can do to please God and that is to just believe.

Heb 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

God has been satisfied by Christ on your behalf and so He is satisfied with you. There is nothing to add to it. There is no such thing as God being "somewhat" satisfied; either He

is or He isn't. Those three hours on the cross satisfied God completely. The one who has believed in Christ as their Savior should always rest in this. For no matter what may happen in life or no matter how many people may not be fully satisfied with him, he can always rest in the fact that God is 100% satisfied with him, and that's all that really matters. Now that God is satisfied He is not only free to save anyone who believes but also to bless anyone who believes. Another false rumor about God is that He's stingy. People honestly believe that He holds everything and really doesn't want to share it with anyone except the most pious. This is another flat out lie. God desires to bless every one of His creatures. Those who do not enjoy these blessings are just the ones who say no to them. God desires all mankind to be saved and to learn all His wisdom, without cost.

1 Tim 2:3-4

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

God also longs to bless His children.

Isa 30:18

Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you,
And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you.
For the LORD is a God of justice;
How blessed are all those who long for Him.

Therefore we conclude that God is not stingy, but desires to bless. Because He is satisfied with Christ's work, when we believe in Christ He is able to give to us His greatest blessing, which is His very righteousness. At the moment of salvation we are imputed with the perfect righteousness of God, which makes us righteous forever. Now, we still make dumb decisions, we still sin and we still don't behave righteously all the time, but that is because we still possess a free will. Yet, no matter how many bad decisions we ever make, we can never lose the righteousness of God that was given to us as a free gift from a satisfied God.

2 Cor 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Phil 3:9

and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,

Rom 3:22

even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

Is the wrath of God real? Yes it is. However, God's wrath is turned away forever from

anyone who believes in Christ. When we think of wrath we think of anger and that is not the way to look at it when considering God. While it is true that God uses the word wrath to describe certain dealings that He has with members of the human race, these dealings do not occur because He is angry. The Justice of God must be satisfied since He cannot just over-look sin. If a member of the human race says no to God's so great salvation then God's wrath is turned toward him, not in anger, but in judgment. If a person is unwilling to accept the judgment that was poured out upon Christ then he is in essence saying that he is willing to take the judgment himself, and God honors his choice. The wrath of God is the second death, which as we have seen is something that must be avoided at all cost. That's why this book has been written. This book is my appeal to anyone who wishes to read it to avoid this judgment by believing in the Son.

John 3:36

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Wrath in terms of judgment was poured upon Christ on the cross so that anyone who believes will avoid it. The wrath of God was headed towards you and Jesus Christ stepped in front and absorbed the blow. However, to those who refuse to believe, God's wrath must be poured out on them because they have refused the work of Christ. God hates sin and can have nothing to do with sin and those who have rejected Christ remain in their sins. It is wrong to assume that God is appeased despite the choice of man. Jesus Christ did not appease the wrath of an angry God, rather He satisfied the justice of a holy and loving God. Therefore, there exists a real judgment for those who say no to the judgment that fell on sin through Jesus Christ.

Rom 1:18

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Col 3:6

For it is because of these things [idolatry of various kinds] that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,

There are many churches that don't want to teach this unpleasant but real truth. So they gloss over it, allegorize it, or just avoid it, but this must not be. The good news is that the wrath of God has been poured out on Christ so that whosoever believes in Him shall never perish, but have eternal life. The perishing is real to those who say no to this gracious offer.

Isa 53:4-6

Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.

But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.

All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all
To fall on Him.

Then comes the incredible statement in verse 10, one of the most astounding and perplexing passages in all of Scripture:

Isa 53:10

But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.

Why would God the Father take pleasure in crushing Jesus Christ? This seems so unnatural, but that is only because we often don't pause our busy lives long enough to consider its implications. By crushing Christ, God would be propitiated/satisfied with all creatures so that anyone who believed would be given eternal life as well as the very righteousness of God. This is an unprecedented act of love and grace, and in fact, rather than being a defeat for God, it was God's greatest hour and our Lord's greatest victory. He is the one who propitiated the Father. He is the one who redeemed mankind. He is the unique God-Man, the celebrity of the universe. He is the great I AM. If you were the only one that needed to be saved He would have went through it all just for you. Through His work of propitiation He is able to bring many sons to glory; living forever and ever in the perfect paradise of heaven where there are no more tears, no more pain, no more crying, no more sorrow; nothing but sublime eternal bliss. To Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, to Him be the glory forever and ever, Amen!

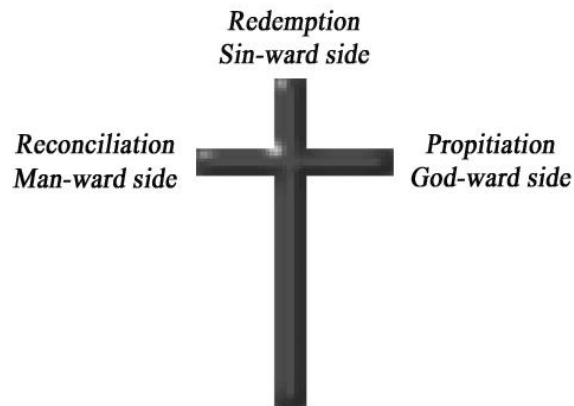
Propitiation was a private matter between Jesus Christ and the Father. We had no part in it. Because of what was accomplished God is satisfied. Therefore, we don't have to believe in Christ for God to be propitiated, rather it is propitiation that gives us the opportunity to believe in Christ. If God were not satisfied with the offering of Christ, then believing in Him would have no merit whatsoever. Every Old Testament animal sacrifice was revealing this future truth. But when the cross was a reality on Golgotha many years ago, the blood of Christ took the place of tens of thousands of bulls and lambs. Due to this reality God no longer looks upon sin. He is now free to look upon faith.

Chapter 4: Reconciliation

Rom 5:11

And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

The cross is always center in any learning about salvation. Looking properly at these presented doctrines, God is satisfied with the work on the cross, sin is paid for at the cross, and man is reconciled at the cross. Therefore in like fashion, propitiation is the God-ward side of the cross, redemption is the sin-ward side of the cross, and reconciliation is the man-ward side of the cross. Technically the word reconciliation means a downward change. Man is fallen and God is perfect, so which one do you think made a downward change so that the relationship between God and man could be regained? Man has constantly tried to climb up to God with all kinds of crazy schemes. The Tower of Babel is a fine example of man working together in order to climb to the heavens. Little did they know at the time that there weren't enough bricks on the earth to even make a slight dent in that distance. Mankind cannot reconcile himself to God. God must reconcile man.



Going back to our definition of downward change, Jesus Christ who was and is forever perfect deity made a downward change and became a man so that He might reconcile man to God. He never lost or gave away His deity. Since deity is omnipresent it begs the question, "Where would He put it?" Jesus Christ as a man, born of a virgin, set aside the use of His deity while on the earth and as such, the God-Man, He becomes the perfect Mediator between God and man.

So, reconciliation means a complete change. No greater change has ever been made than

God becoming a man. And as a man He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to a plan of action given to Him by the Father. Obedience to that plan meant a crescendo of suffering to the point of death, but not just any death, death on a cross in the agony of spiritual death.

2 Cor 5:18-21

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us [He made a drastic downward change on behalf of us] to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling [changing Himself on behalf of the world] the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation [telling the world that Christ changed for us]. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Through His change and His obedience to the work needed at the cross another great change occurred. The barrier that existed between God and man was broken down. We who were spiritually dead and God who is spiritually alive existed on either side of a wall or barrier that no man could ascend. Therefore, God in His great love became true humanity and through His cross He took a sledge hammer to that wall and left it destroyed. There is not one stone upon another and there exists no longer, a barrier between man and God. So we ask the question yet again, "Why aren't all men saved?" Some refuse to walk across that barrier through faith in Christ to the God-ward side where God is completely satisfied. They, through their own free will, chose to ignore the demolition work of Christ and ignore God's open invitation to come over to His side and instead they search for some other so-called fulfillment. However, no matter how many may reject the invitation, the fact that the barrier is down is a constant reality.

Eph 2:14-16

For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall [the wall between God and fallen man], by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two [Jew and Gentile] into one new man [for the church age person who believes], thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

Col 1:18-20

He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

In the first passage above, peace is a synonym for reconciliation. By tearing down the wall Christ has made peace between God and man. Enmity is abolished. It is somewhat sad to think that the wall is no longer there and man is fully reconciled that some continue to refuse a relationship with God through Christ by believing on Him. Sad indeed, that eternity is so close and so numerous are those that say no thank you.

Rom 5:10

For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the [or by means of] death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved [delivered] by His life.

Since we have been reconciled to God by His doing there is nothing we can do, think or say to cancel God's work of reconciliation. The wall is down and God is waiting for you to simply say, "Yes" to His invitation. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

Chapter 5: Justification

Rom 5:18

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

So far, we have seen how the blood of Christ paid the price for the sins of the world, ransoming all from the slave market of sin. The blood of Christ cancelled the debt we owed, wiping out the penalty and guilt of sin (Redemption). The blood of Christ completely satisfied the righteousness and justice of God with respect to all outstanding issues related to sin (Propitiation). The blood of Christ ended the enmity man had against God, restoring the human race to a status of peace with God (Reconciliation). Together these truths make up the negative aspects of our status as people born in sin and the way in which God delivered us from them – the cross of Christ. What if you do believe in Him? As one might expect in justice, if the entire aspect of the negative has been cancelled then something positive may result and as it turns out, that is true with God.

Everyone who believes in Christ is given many gifts at the moment he believes. In the subject matter of this book we will just focus on one gift, the very righteousness of God. Imputation is the act of crediting something to someone's account. At salvation, every believer is imputed with the righteousness of God. This doesn't mean that you'll always act in righteousness because you won't. Remember that pesky free will. As long as you're alive you can still choose against God's commands. But faith in Christ is a one shot decision that cannot be taken back. You may say that you don't want to believe anymore or that you don't believe anymore, but that does not change the fact that at one moment of time you did believe. At that moment God gave you some amazing stuff. The righteousness of God imputed to the believer at salvation is the only true righteousness in

the eyes of God. You will not see it right away and in fact you may never see it if you don't grow up spiritually within God's plan for your life, but that doesn't annul the fact that God always sees it. His righteousness in you is continually before His eyes. If you learn enough of God's word you will begin to see yourself through His eyes.

Now, because God sees His righteousness in you, He pronounces you justified. Justification is a judicial act of vindication. Justification is a judicial act of God whereby He recognizes His righteousness in us. This means that a believer is never guilty before God. This act of justification is eternal because God the Father is the eternal judge and as Sovereign, no one can overrule His judgment. If I pronounced you justified it wouldn't be worth the wind in my lungs, but when God does so, it's an irrevocable contract.

This truth sticks in the craw of a lot of people, even Christians. There is a certain portion of the population that want everyone to pay for wrong doing, and not just in the courts if it's criminal, but in the court of heaven with the Father holding his tremendous gavel and slamming it down with the crack of a sonic boom while screaming "Guilty!" Often people have this sentiment for others but love to claim grace when it comes to their own failures. So be it, these types will always be around, but their erroneous opinions don't change the facts. If a believer does wrong, sins, or commits a criminal act they will suffer. There is no question that we reap what we sow; even when we're not caught by another, we will always reap the harvest of minor or major wrong doing. If a believer commits a criminal act and gets caught he must stand before the judicial system and get what's coming to him. In fact, God has set up such systems of authority so that man will not cast himself into chaos. However, in the doctrine of justification we're looking only through the eyes of God. If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, God sees His righteousness in you and you are justified. You can still make all kinds of bad decisions and live every minute after your salvation in self-induced misery as a stubborn pack mule constantly resisting God's word and plan, but you will never lose your salvation.

Rom 3:22-24

even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

No one can earn justification. It is a gift by His grace through the work of Christ that forgave the sins of mankind; redemption. Why is it so hard for a person to simply take what God has done? Why is it that so many walk around on this earth focusing on sin and minding their neighbor's business wondering whose getting away with something? Why is it that so many cannot forgive when they are wronged and simultaneously affirm that they know the forgiveness of God for all of their own sins? It is because arrogance is a sickness in the human race that has infected us all. Could it be from the terminal arrogance of man that he is afraid if he receives God's so great salvation by faith that his enemy may also be saved by that same grace? Is it that he's so independent that he must do all saving by himself, with his own intellect and merits? To be sure there are a lot of

questions, but there is only one gospel of grace that offers salvation freely to whosoever will believe in Jesus Christ.

Rom 3:25-26

whom [Jesus Christ] God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed [sins committed before the cross historically]; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

There have been many lies floating around concerning justification before God. They seem to touch down on different parts of the world at different times in human history and there is something that they all share in common, which is that man can in some way justify himself. What makes each of these lies different is in the way man justifies himself, like good works, sinlessness, keeping the Mosaic Law, keeping the Ten Commandments, performing certain rituals, joining a church, etc. What all of those who believe such nonsense fail to recognize is that the work of Christ on the cross was finished with the result that nothing can be added to it, and so a man can only be justified by faith.

Luk 16:14-15

Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

Gal 2:16

nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

The understanding of justification by faith has certain ramifications in the believer's life, and the first is a dent in the armor of his arrogance. If I'm justified by God simply through my faith in Christ then I have nothing to boast about. I'm not justified because I was good or better than someone else, or because I kept the Law of Moses from the Old Testament, but only through faith apart from works. Therefore, boasting or competing with others is removed through understanding of this important doctrine. If all of us who are justified are such because God gave it to us as a gift then where is any legitimate boasting? It is removed.

Rom 3:27-28

Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

Why is anyone justified by God? When that person believed in Christ the righteousness of God was imputed to him and in that moment God the Father pronounced him justified for eternity.

Gal 3:6

Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Rom 5:19

For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

It is very significant that 3 days after the cross Jesus Christ rose from the dead. His resurrection is a guarantee of the believer's justification and his own resurrection after physical death. Because the believer is righteous he will spend forever with God in righteousness. Remember, all the work was done on God's side of the cross and it was very difficult, therefore it is a gift to you and easy for you through faith to say yes to this great invitation.

Rom 4:25

He was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

Chapter 6: Yes

Luke 22:70

And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am."

"Yes" is such a small word that has profound meaning when it is true. A man asks a woman to marry him and minus duress or unplaced lust for companionship or money she in earnest says "yes" because she loves him, this changes both their lives forever. The Lord asks every member of the human race to marry Him. He asked Israel as a nation and in the church He asks each one individually. Anyone who says "yes" from faith in the truth of the Gospel experiences a change in his life forever. The decision to believe in Christ is the greatest decision that anyone can make, and for that simple and small word spoken inaudibly to the Savior, a position is changed from enemy of God to son of God through justification. It is difficult to find the words that do justice to this truth. Any believer knows and feels the change wrought by the love of God and he confidently looks to his future destiny in eternity where not a tear can drip from his perfect resurrected eyes, but to find the language to express this change clearly to an unbeliever is likely impossible. The only way that an unbeliever can see is to have the scales dropped from his eyes through his own personal faith in Jesus the Savior, who is the source of this indescribable gift?

The night before His death our Lord was forced through six unfair trials and to many of

the questions asked of Him, He remained silent, but there was a question in particular to which the Lord said “yes.” When our Lord was whisked away in the midnight hour before His cross, He was brought to the house of Annas and Caiaphus. These were illegal trials, which broke the Mosaic Law as they were conducted at night. The hour of the trial wasn’t the only illegal aspect. The Lord was given no legal counsel and the proceedings didn’t open with a charge, but rather with questions concerning what He taught in His ministry. The Lord answered these questions with another, wondering why they would ask Him this now, when they could have heard Him speak in the temple all the past week as well as years before. The arrogant bloated priests had only one motivation, to kill Jesus. Therefore, they searched for witness to some crime worthy of that sentence. Many came forward, yet none would agree until finally two witnesses recounted that Jesus had said that He would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. “What say you to these accusations?” asked the high priest. And the Lord looked at His accuser calmly and confidently and said nothing. How the calm eyes and loving face of Jesus must have angered the arrogant priest. Even if this wasn’t some poetic way of teaching another truth, which it was, the Lord said He would put it back up again, so what is the power behind this accusation? Knowing this, the high priest returns to his high chair (pun intended) and pulls out his trump card; the one he’d had up his sleeve all along if things didn’t go his way. “Are you the Christ, the Son of God?”

Can the Lord be silent to this question? The answer is a resounding no! To feign from this question might be construed into a withdrawal of His incredible claim. And also, the Son of Man cannot be silent when asked who He is. When asked to be an earthly king to Israel, He silently fled, for that is not what He was to be in the first advent. When asked for a sign by the religious crowd He said no, for He didn’t come to earth to make miracles for those who wouldn’t believe, nor would He do them in Nazareth for He knew that a prophet is without honor amongst His home town. But when asked if He is the Christos (the Greek word for “the anointed one, Messiah, or Christ), He must answer, all the while knowing that His answer would mean certain condemnation and death. So the Lord, confidently knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, said, “Yes, I am.”

With the judgment looming in His near future by the evil men around Him the Lord in perfect faith knows that in the end He will be the final judge of all. They are given the power by the Father to take His earthly life, but He in the end will wipe their spiritual life out of the book of life, and so He immediately states, “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven.” The pompous high priest in typical hypocritical fashion tore his clothes, abandoned all courtroom procedure, if there had been any, and invited the whole assembly to begin beating and spitting on our Lord. It would have been better for them to be born without arms then to use them in such an evil way. It should be wondered if they will have any spit in their mouths when they stand before the One they crucified at the Great White Throne judgment.

This “yes” from our Lord makes our “yes” to His invitation have real significance. Through His yes and ours we will never be alone again. Whether we are blessed by right

man/woman or not, or blessed with dear friends or not, we will always have a husband who has the capacity to love infinitely more than any flesh and blood. It is written that the Lord loved His disciples to the end and even loved Judas the betrayer to the end. If you have believed in the Lord you find yourself in the company of the former. We will be loved by our Lord, but in reality there is no end. Only now do we have the opportunity and privilege to exploit that love while our Lover is zillions of light years away. Without faith in the Gospel, as attempt has been made to reveal in this book, at some moment during your sojourning on this Earth, salvation cannot be accomplished. When face to face with Him after this physical life, either for judgment or reception as His bride, faith will no longer be necessary for we will see Him just as He is. The justified will be just as He is while the condemned will be separated from Him forever.

There is no time to lose. Today is the day of salvation! Don't put it off till another time or a more convenient time, which may never come. Consider these words today and consider Him, who when asked if He was the Christ said, "Yes! I am."

2 Cor 6:2

for He says,

"AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU,

AND ON THE DAY OF salvation I HELPED YOU";

behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF salvation"