

Part 4: Jesus Our Redeemer

Lesson 2: Soteriology – The Doctrine of Salvation

Lesson Summary

Soteriology is the study of salvation, God's gracious plan to rescue sinners through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Rom. 10:9–10). At the cross, Christ bore our penalty as substitute (Isa. 53:5–6; 2 Cor. 5:21), triumphed over sin and death (Col. 2:15), and displayed God's love (Rom. 5:8). Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone—not earned or maintained by works (Eph. 2:8–9; Rom. 11:6). Different theological views wrestle with divine sovereignty and human will: Calvinism emphasizes election, Arminianism stresses human choice, while Free Grace theology affirms that salvation is received at the moment of faith and cannot be lost. The Reformation's cry of **Sola Fide**—faith alone—stands at the core of biblical salvation, with good works as fruit, not the root, of saving faith (Rom. 3:28; James 2:17). Unlike Catholic sacramental theology, which treats sacraments as means of grace, most Protestants regard baptism and communion as ordinances that testify to faith already received. Salvation brings justification, redemption, adoption, and the Spirit's sealing, offering full assurance in God's promises, not in human performance (John 3:16; Eph. 1:13–14).

Key Takeaways

- **Definition:** Soteriology = the study of salvation—how God rescues sinners (Rom. 1:16).
- **Atonement:** Christ bore our sin's penalty, satisfied God's justice, and triumphed over death (Isa. 53:5–6; Col. 2:15).
- **Grace vs. Works:** Salvation is God's gift, not earned or preserved by human effort (Eph. 2:8–9; Rom. 11:6).
- **Sola Fide:** Justification is by faith alone; faith receives Christ's righteousness and produces good works (Rom. 3:28; 2 Cor. 5:21; James 2:17).
- **Views on Salvation:** Calvinism (election), Arminianism (free choice), Free Grace (faith alone, eternal security).
- **Sacraments vs. Ordinances:** Catholic/Orthodox—means of grace; Protestant—symbols of faith already received.
- **Assurance:** Believers are justified, redeemed, adopted, and sealed by the Spirit until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13–14; John 10:28).

Questions & Answers

1. **Q:** What is Soteriology?
A: The theological study of salvation—how God rescues humanity from sin through Christ.
2. **Q:** What did Christ accomplish on the cross?
A: He bore our penalty, satisfied God's justice, defeated sin and death, and displayed God's love (Isa. 53:5–6; Col. 2:15; Rom. 5:8).
3. **Q:** How is salvation received?
A: By grace through faith in Christ alone, not by works (Eph. 2:8–9).

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4. **Q:** What does *Sola Fide* mean?

A: “Faith alone”—we are justified by faith apart from works (Rom. 3:28), though true faith produces good works (James 2:17).

5. **Q:** What are the major theological views on salvation?

A: Calvinism (election), Arminianism (free choice), and Free Grace (faith alone with eternal security).

6. **Q:** Are sacraments necessary for salvation?

A: Catholic/Orthodox views see them as means of grace; Protestants see them as ordinances, not requirements for salvation.

7. **Q:** What assurance does salvation give believers?

A: That they are justified, redeemed, adopted, and sealed by the Spirit, eternally secure in Christ (Eph. 1:13–14; John 3:16).

“Salvation is God’s free gift—received by faith, secured by Christ, and sustained by grace from beginning to end.”