

The Development of Christian Doctrine

Soteriology:

What does it mean to be
saved?

Christianity Today

- 36% of church goers identify themselves as “saved”
- 12% are comfortable saying they are “born again”
- Most are uncertain of what it means to be saved

Within Christianity itself there is much debate, division, diversity, disagreement, and confusion about the doctrine of salvation

Soteriological Issues...

- ✓ Election and predestination
 - ✓ Evidence of salvation
 - ✓ Eternal security
- ✓ Saved from and by what?

Universal Definition of Salvation:

Salvation is the application of the work of Jesus Christ to an individual's life with evidenced consequences

Six Areas of Discussion and Debate on Salvation

1. Time

When is one fully saved?

Time

- Salvation is a single occurrence upon one's confession – We have *been* saved
 - Salvation is a process that happens over time – We are *being* saved

Time

- Salvation is a future event – We will *be* saved
 - What is our part: passive or active?
- Are Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification single events or overlapping processes?

2. Need

From what are we being
saved?

What is the universal human deficiency? This question is at the heart of every major world religion –

Islam: Impurity
and Immorality

Hindu: Suffering
caused by
defilement

Buddhism:
Suffering caused
by greed

Taoism:
Disharmony
with universe

Confucianism:
Self Knowledge

Orthodox Christianity: Sin

1. *Vertical*: Separation from God, therefore salvation is restoration of relationship with Him
2. *Horizontal*: Lack of harmony and equality within society. Salvation is the healing of personal and social relationships

Horizontal Relationships

- Relational Theologies: Small group and personal relationships
- Liberation Theologies: Economic, Oppressive, Class structure

Orthodox Christianity: Sin

3. *Internal*: We are plagued with feelings of guilt, insecurity, and inferiority. Salvation is the eradication of these feelings

3. Transmission

How is salvation obtained?

Transmission

1. *Sacramentalist* – access to grace and salvation is obtained through a physical process, e.g. the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist

Transubstantiation v. Consubstantiation

Trans v. Con-substantiation

Trans

✓ The elements
become the body
and blood

✓ “This is my
body”

Con

✓ The body and
blood are
alongside

✓ “This do is
remembrance”

Trans v. Con-substantiation

- “Sacrament” v. “Ordinance”
- Frequency of Holy Communion
 - “High” v. “Low” Church

Transmission

2. *Moral Action*: Salvation is not possessed or transmitted but created by altering the status of affairs in the world.
3. *Evangelical*: Salvation is appropriated by faith

4. Movement

In what direction does
salvation flow?

Movement

Does salvation move from personal transformation to societal change or does God work by changing society to then change personal lives?

John 21:15-17 v. Exodus 3

Movement

Is the basic human problem a
perverted and corrupt nature or
are we affected by societal evils
that infect us?

Conversion v. Alterations of social
conditions

5. Scope

Who will be saved?

Scope of Salvation

1. *Particularist*: Salvation is based upon individual responses to God's grace. Even though salvation is offered freely and God's desire is for all to be saved (II Peter 3:9) – everyone will not be saved

Scope of Salvation

2. *Universalist*: God's grace and work on Calvary ensures that all humans will be restored to right relationship with Him and none will be lost.

6. Means and Mediator

Is Jesus Christ the *only*
way?

Means of Salvation

To what degree does salvation exist outside of Jesus Christ?

- ✓ Exclusivist: Only in Jesus Christ
- ✓ Inclusivist: Possibility exists outside of Jesus Christ
- ✓ Pluralist: Salvation certainly exists outside of Christianity