

1. **Introduction:** Salvation: “To save” a person means to rescue them from personally threatening danger.
 - What “personally threatening danger” or dangers does every person face, but only God can eliminate the threat? “Mortal death” is one such threat. Everyone dies. No one knows when their death will occur nor is able to avoid it.
 - But there is another even scarier threat. It is God’s holy and inevitable wrath at sin which impacts not only mortal life but also the life to come.
 - The reason for God’s wrath: **Romans 1:18:** **For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.**
 - Ungodliness refers to our relationship with God. Any failure on our part to live according to God’s moral law and for His glory is ungodliness.
 - Unrighteousness refers to our relationships with other people. Any failure in our conduct towards others is unrighteousness.
 - Think about Jesus on the cross when the Father left His human nature and subjected that human nature to the wrath due our sins. Jesus bore the full weight of the Father’s wrath and, in anguish, cried out, *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*
2. **Psalms 86:15 (NKJV):** **But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.**
 - God’s patience delays His wrath. But though God is patient, He is not patient forever and His judgment ultimately comes, both in this life and the life to come.
3. **Scripture examples of God’s wrath:** **In the OT:** (1.) The flood (Gen 6-9) Only 7 people survived. (2.) Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19). (3.) The Assyrian destruction of Israel’s ten tribes (2 Ki 17:1-23). **In the NT:** (1.) Jesus’ anger at the money changers in the Temple (Jn 2:13-16). (2.) God’s wrath during the Tribulation (Rev 6;16-17; 14:9-10; 15:7; 16:1).
4. **The Accountability of Living Creatures:** The accountability to which God holds His living creatures depends on whether they are created “moral” or “nonmoral.”
 - Nonmoral creatures act from instinct and are not under ethical constraints.
 - Moral creatures have intellect, emotions, and decision-making capability. Moral creatures act from knowledge and choice and are accountable.
5. **Moral Creatures Created:** God created two categories of moral creatures (angels and humans). Only God’s moral creatures are capable of sin.
 - **WSC Q.14.** “What is sin?” *“Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.”* God’s moral Law reflects His character. Thus, sin is anything that is not consistent with the character of God. Sin is disobedience to God.

- Angels were created directly by God, created one-by-one as individuals. Angels are incapable of procreation. Angels are non-physical, pure spirit but capable of appearing to humans in what, at least, appears to be human form.
 - God is sovereign over all He created, over both the living and non-living.
 - Humans were created with physical bodies animated by a spiritual soul.
 - God created humans as male and female such that, jointly they are capable of procreation. Except for Adam and Eve, all humans come into existence through human procreation (God's indirect way of creating humans).
 - When created, God's moral creatures (humans and angels) were holy as God is holy, created to live in conformity with His moral nature.
 - Both angels and humans were given the ability to freely choose in accordance with their strongest internal inclination at the instant of choice, either conforming to God's moral nature or not.
 - Some angels used their ability to freely choose to oppose God. They were cast out from the ranks of angels and became demons.
 - As created, the first humans were holy and righteous like their Creator God. They were in perfect conformity with God's moral nature.
 - "When created," Adam and Eve were immortal but mutably so. God made them a lovely, perfect Garden to live in.
 - Since they were holy as God is holy, they lived in the presence of God. He was with them regularly, walking and talking with them in the cool of the evening.
6. **Obedience to God Required:** To remain in their state of holy perfection, there was one requirement - obedience to God. Since their "ability to choose" allowed them to disobey God, they had the freedom (but not the necessity) to be disobedient.
- To test Adam and Eve's faithfulness, they were given a specific "do not" command.
 - God put one fruit-bearing tree in the Garden whose fruit they were forbidden to eat.
 - All other fruit was for their use. There would be consequences if they ate the forbidden fruit. Among them, they would surely die in the day they ate of the fruit.
 - A serpent, a persuasive creature, tempted them to eat the forbidden fruit by telling them that would enable them to be more like God. He also assured them God didn't mean it when He said they would surely die if they ate the fruit.
 - Adam and Eve should have asked the serpent how he defined "die?"
 - God and the serpent were using different definitions. There are 3 categories of death mentioned in Scripture. All 3 involve separation.
 - The categories of death are (1.) Spiritual death (separation of the human spirit from God). (2.) Mortal death (separation of the human soul from the body). (3.) Second death (eternal separation of the human spirit from God).

- The serpent meant, they would not die mortal death (separation of body and soul) in the day they ate the forbidden fruit.
 - God meant, eating the forbidden fruit would cause death to become an integral part of who they were. They would immediately die spiritually (their spirit separated from God), would lose their immortality and their bodies would begin to deteriorate, experiencing changes leading to mortal death which would occur later.
 - Becoming more like God sounded like a good thing. All they needed to do was eat a piece of fruit. Surely God would not punish them for becoming more like Him.
7. **Fall from Perfection:** They decided to eat the fruit to become more like God.
- Their disobedience caused them to immediately die spiritually, become unholy, lose their immortality, and begin the physical decay toward inevitable mortal death.
 - Since they were now unholy, they could no longer live in God's presence, so they were expelled from the Garden. God cursed the earth so gaining their living from the earth became hard work with many possible natural disasters.
 - Adam and Eve's disobedience and its consequences are referred to as "**the fall**," signifying their downward change from an immortal, holy and perfect "as-created nature" to an unholy, mortal, imperfect, and inclined to sin "fallen nature."
 - When they ceased to be holy and perfect as God is holy, they experienced spiritual, physical, psychological, and other changes that were heritable.
 - Their procreated descendants would reap the defects imposed by the fall. They would be born spiritually dead and subject to mental and physical problems.
 - Their disobedience generated an internal inclination to disobey God.
 - That inclination is referred to as the "sin nature." The sin nature is heritable and passes to all their descendants.
 - The sin nature that produces inclinations to disobey God is an ontological change, a change from a holy nature to an unholy nature, a degrading of their nature.
 - Since Adam and Eve's sin, the sin nature everyone inherits, causes everyone to sin and fall short of the glory of God. That means, every person faces the threat of God's wrath in this life and the life to come.
8. **Salvation:** Our Trinitarian God, in an act of grace and mercy to save sinners from God's rightful wrath at their sin, provided a solution to the lack of holiness. The solution is consistent with the requirements of His Law and character.
- Salvation pardons the penalty due sin and transforms the sinner's innermost being to make them "able to not sin." Salvation is directly from God.
9. **What Salvation Must Fix:** Salvation must remedy spiritual and physical defects incurred in the fall. The goal of salvation is to make people holy like God and thus able to live in His presence – no more death or sickness, no more tears, etc.
- Salvation proceeds in steps, always in progress now, but more coming in the future.

- (1.) **Regeneration** - instilling new spiritual life. (2.) **Justification** – declared legally righteous before God based on Jesus’ atoning life and death. (3.) **Sanctification** – the Holy Spirit indwells justified sinners working ontological changes necessary to reduce the sin nature. (4.) **“Glorification”** – sanctification transforms the sin nature but does not eliminate it. It is “glorification” at mortal death (or when Jesus returns) that eliminates the sin nature making it possible to “not sin.”
 - Glorification completes the transformation of a believing sinner into a moral image of Christ, holy and righteous, able to live in God’s presence, with a resurrection body and everlasting life.
10. **The Gospel Offer:** Through the gospel, God’s salvation is offered to all people.
11. **Matthew 2:18-20:** *And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*
- This “great commission” directs and authorizes the disciples to go to all nations to spread the good word about what Jesus’ accomplished on behalf of sinners.
 - Surprisingly, the disciples, having heard Jesus’ admonition, stayed in Jerusalem for most of the next four years. Then persecution forced many to leave that city.
 - In 34 AD, about 4 years after Christ’s ascension, Saul was converted.
 - In 37 AD, about 7 years after the Ascension, Peter had a vision that sent him to Cornelius, a God-fearing Roman centurion. Peter administered baptism and received the Gentile family into Christian fellowship
 - In 48 AD, about 18 years after the Ascension, Paul began his first missionary journey. That was the beginning of sustained, focused evangelism of Gentiles.
12. **The “Right Time”:** Jesus came into the world “at just the right time.” Preparations were complete. One phase of the preparations was preparing conditions so that it was relatively easy to spread the gospel to the Empire from its beginning in Israel.
13. **Providential Preparation for the Spread of the Gospel:** The Roman world’s situation was well-suited for the spread of the gospel. At least 6 conditions contributed to the gospel’s rapid spread.
- (1.) The widespread dispersion of the Jews. (2.) The earliest Christian missionaries were converted Jews. (3.) There were many Synagogues throughout the Empire. (4.) Greek was the default common language understood by most people in the Empire. (5.) Travel was relatively easy and safe. (6.) The Roman Peace.
 - Persecution of Christians by both Jews and Romans contributed to the spread of the gospel as persecuted believers sought safe places to live.