

Salvation and Atonement in the Bible

Torah

Gen. 3:1-5 – What went wrong? Disobedience? Deception? Distrust? Alienation?

Gen. 4:9 – sacrifice leads to murder; was Abel the first human sacrifice?

Gen. 8:20-22 – Why did God respond the way He did to Noah's offerings? (cf. 9:4-6)

Gen. 13:2-4 – Abram builds altars wherever he goes.

Gen. 22 – Did God want child sacrifice? See handout.

Exod. 10:9 – Moses tells Pharaoh repeatedly that Yahweh has called His people to worship Him or to sacrifice to Him. Here he states that the Israelites have “a festival to celebrate.”

Exod. 12 – That festival actually takes place within the land of Egypt: Passover

Exod. 20:22-26 – Instructions for building an altar for sacrifices

Exod. 23:14-19 – Instructions for the annual festivals

Exod. 24:3-8 – Note who offered the sacrifices; Moses sprinkles the blood of the covenant

Exod. 24:9-11 – Who supplied the food for the covenantal meal?

Exod. 25-31 – Instructions for the building of the sanctuary

Exod. 32:3-6 – This is the third time sacrifices are mentioned as offered.

Exod. 32:25-29 – The Levites ordain themselves for the priesthood by slaying their fellow Israelites

Exod. 33:12-34:8, 29-35 – Do those who can see God's glory need sacrifices? Note that God is “One who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin.” Forgiveness is not merely an act, but an essential aspect of God's character and ways.

Exod. 35-40 – The construction of the sanctuary

Lev. 1-7 contains instructions for several different offerings—

1) burnt offering (atonement for general (unintentional) sins; voluntary worship) in Lev. 1; 6:8-13; 8:18-21; 16:24;

2) grain offering (for a pleasing odor to the Lord: for voluntary worship; recognition of God's goodness and provisions; devotion to God) in Lev. 2; 6:14-23.

3) offerings of well-being (food offering: 3:11; voluntary worship, thanksgiving and fellowship with a communal meal) in Lev. 3; 7:11-34.

4) sin offerings (mandatory atonement for specific unintentional sin, confession of sin; forgiveness of sin; cleansing from defilement) in Lev. 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30; 8:14-17; 16:3-22. This sacrifice is the only one involving blood manipulations in the sanctuary.

5) guilt offering (mandatory atonement of unintentional sin requiring restitution; cleansing from defilement; make restitution; pay 20% more) in Lev 5:14-6:7; 7:1-6. This sacrifice does not have instructions for blood manipulations in the sanctuary.

Lev. 1:4 – The word for atonement is *kipper* (here: *lekapper*). Scholars have wrestled with this word: is it built on the Arabic root *kfr* – “to cover” or is it related to the D form of the Akkadian cognate *kuppuru* – “to wipe away, rub off” (hence by extended meaning, “to cleanse”)?

-Most scholars lean toward the latter and view the atonement either as propitiatory or expiatory.

-A careful study shows that *kipper* does not, in Leviticus, refer to “propitiation.” Two examples of where *kpr* does mean “to propitiate” are: 1) Gen. 32:20/21 where Jacob sends multiple gifts to his brother Esau, with the thought: “Maybe I can wipe (the anger) off his face with the gift that goes before my face so that afterward, I may see his face and perhaps he will lift up my face”; and 2) Prov. 16:14: “The king’s wrath is a messenger of death, and the wise person will wipe it off.” In both cases, the Piel form of the verb is used, just as it is in Leviticus. However, in Leviticus, neither God nor divine anger is ever the direct object of the verb *kpr*, whereas it clearly does in the two examples cited. For the verb to mean “appease,” it seems that some reference should be made to God or His anger. No such object is found in its usages in Leviticus; rather, the expression here (1:4) is: “to make atonement on his behalf.”

-Yitzhaq Feder, *Blood Expiation in Hittite and Biblical Ritual: Origins, Context, and Meaning*, has carefully analyzed the concept of atonement in Hittite and Israelite traditions. Going further, he has explored what happened to these concepts in the LXX and Vulgate translations. What follows are excerpts and recapitulations of his work:

-“As argued above, the roots of the Hittite and biblical notions of expiation can be found in the context of bloodguilt and retribution. Whereas the earliest phase of this belief seems to relate to the belief that the blood of the murdered person, bearing his vital spirit, screams out for vengeance from the gods, the later conception described in both the Hittite and biblical evidence depicts ‘bloodguilt’ as a stain that activates a mechanical process of retribution. This mechanical notion was describe above as representing a transition from the idea of ‘propitiating’ (the blood, the victim’s kin, the gods) to ‘expiating’ (the guilt).” (252-253)

- “Whereas expressions with [*kipper*] in the sense of propitiation are generally characterized by the lack of the direct object (e.g., 2 Sam 21:3) or a term for anger as the direct object (e.g., Gen 32:21; Prov 16:14), its use in the sense of expiation feature

blood or sin as the direct object. As a result, the focus was transferred from appeasing the offended parties to addressing the wrong committed and removing guilt. . . . The latter use of [*kipper*] (translated as 'expiate') implies a mechanical dynamic of retribution in which sin automatically yields adverse consequences unless some restitutory act is performed." (253)

- "Interestingly, the strategy employed by the Bible in adapting the usages of [*kipper*] served as a model for its Greek translators. Throughout the LXX, the Hebrew term is translated consistently by derivatives of *hilaskomai* ('propitiate,' 'appease'), particularly the intensive form *exilaskomai*. These terms were already used in ancient Greek before the Septuagint in the sense of propitiating an angry deity. However, as recognized by numerous scholars, the LXX departs from earlier usage. . . . In order to translate [*kipper*], the Greek translators used an unconventional syntax for the term whose conventional sense was 'propitiate,' yielding the sense 'expiate.' Surprisingly, nearly all scholars have failed to recognize that a similar semantic transition from propitiation to expiation had already taken place in the Hebrew [*kipper*]." (253-255)

- He notes that "in several ways, the Latin translation of the Bible provides the antecedents to the later English translations and the theological ideas associated with it." The Latin language provides us with the origin of "propitiate" in *prōpitiō*, and the origin of "expiate" in *ex-piō*. But the Latin Vulgate usually uses *ex-piō* for *kipper* or *חִטָּה*, where the situation involves purifying people or whatever has to do with holy things, but when approaching contexts where there is a failure of relationship between human beings and God, the Vulgate approaches language of appeasement. "This distinction, apparently influenced by early Christian theology, served as a model for later translations." (255)

- He goes on to point out the reticence of English translators to use "expiate" and similar terms, instead using personalized language such as "reconciliation" or "atonement." However, in the twentieth century some translators began to use "expiate" and "expiation" "for only a handful of occurrences [of *kipper*—all of which seem to depict an automatic process of satisfying guilt." "These observations are by no means trivial. They show that at least some modern English translators have preserved the tradition of the Vulgate, whereby the terminology of 'expiation' was reserved for an automatic process of satisfying guilt, to be distinguished from the notions of 'atonement' and 'forgiveness,' which pertain to a personalized conception of the relations between humans and God." (256)

- "In its original form, the blood rite seems to reflect a self-contained dynamic—an automatic process to remove transgression and avoid its consequences. In contrast, the Vulgate shows a tendency to interpret cultic [*kipper*] formulas within the framework of personalized religion. According to this conception, ritual efficacy depends on the ability of the petitioner to sway the will of God." (257)

- In his summary, he makes similar statements: "Accordingly, the semantic transition of [*kp''r*] derivatives corresponds to a more fundamental conceptual transition from the notion of *propitiation* to that of *expiation*. Whereas [sic] the former consists of placating the anger of the offended party, the latter pertains to undoing the ill effects of the wrong committed. The latter depiction seems to involve a more mechanistic,

depersonalized conception in which bloodguilt automatically brings retribution unless it is properly addressed by the perpetrator and community.” (266)

Lev. 1:5 – MT: “He shall slay . . .”; LXX: “They shall slay . . .” What difference does it make who slays the animal? Whether the sinner slays the animal or “they” do, it is not the priest who explicitly does this, since in the next line, the priests are specified as taking the blood and dash it against the altar.

Lev. 1:15 – in the case of a sacrificial bird, the priest did both the wringing off the head and the draining of its blood—probably because of the practicality of containing the bird while killing it.

Lev. 4 – The sin offering required blood manipulation by the priest, who brought the blood into the first compartment of the sanctuary and sprinkled it seven times before the Lord in front of the curtain separating the compartment from the Most Holy Place. Only the Hittites, outside of Israel, did blood manipulations with their sacrifices. This is therefore fairly unique to the Hebrew Bible, leading to the question, “Why did God make so much of the use of blood?”

Lev. 17:11 – The blood is the life; life is in the blood; God has given it to us for atonement. Why did God choose blood to symbolize this?

Partial Summary

Two points need clarification before we proceed further. 1) In Exodus 34:6, 7, we saw that God is a forgiving God. Forgiveness is part of His character, indicated by the participle-form: “One who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin.” For this reason, God’s forgiveness cannot be bought, earned, gained by appeasement, or any other means. It is freely given in response to expressed desires for it. 2) In Leviticus 17:11, where eating the blood is prohibited, God states: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement.” (NRSV) Note that God gives the means (blood) for making atonement. This is very suggestive, typologically, of the fact that God ultimately gives His own blood for atonement. Therefore, it is God who effects atonement, not us. Appeasement is, for that reason, not possible. Of course, John Stott claims that God appeased Himself in Christ, but psychologically I find his statement untenable.

Salvation and Sacrifices in the Rest of the Hebrew Bible

Joshua 1:1-9 – Is the coming of Israel into the Promised Land a type of our salvation? (Cf. Hebrews 4)

Judges 2:11-21 – What were the judges God raised up really doing? What does this suggest about how Israel saw salvation?

1 Samuel 15:22-23 – obedience is better than sacrifice

Job 1 – Job offers burnt offerings for his children

Job 42 – Job’s three friends must bring offerings and have Job pray for them

Numerous psalms speak of salvation. Here are a few: Psalm 36, 38, 54, 59, 73, 107.

Psalm 50:8-15 – Not food? Not blood?

Psalm 51:16-17, 19 – Broken heart instead of sacrifices?

Isaiah 1:10-20 – God does not take delight in animal blood.

Isaiah 4:2-6 – Is this description about salvation? Or is it about something else?

Isaiah 6:1-7 – What does salvation have to do with holiness?

Isaiah 9:1-7 – This passage is a famous messianic prophecy of Jesus. What does it predict He will do and what does that tell us about salvation and atonement?

Isaiah 11:1-10 – This is another messianic prophecy. What does it portray—salvation or the new earth?

Isaiah 25:1-12 – Is this chapter about salvation or just about the new earth? Cf. 29:17-21; 32:6-10.

Isaiah 33:10-16 – What “saves” God’s people when the fire devours?

Isaiah 35:1-10 – Another portrayal of “new earth”? Or is there more?

Isaiah 40:1-11 – What does God’s plan for salvation (restoration) include?

Isaiah 41:8-13 – Is it salvation for God to deliver us from fear and those who bring fear?

Isaiah 42:1-9 – Is this a prophetic description of Jesus’ ministry? Does He save us only by His death or does He also save us by His life on earth?

Isaiah 43:1-7 – What is salvation comprised of in these verses?

Isaiah 43:25-28 – What is going on in these verses?

Isaiah 44:21-28 – What is salvation in this passage? God saves His people from what?

Isaiah 47:1-15 – What does redemption mean in this context?

Isaiah 48:17-22 – What does redemption mean here?

Isaiah 49:1-26 – Who is the servant here? And what was he to do?

Isaiah 50:1-52:12 – Scan these chapters looking for verbs, nouns, and images of salvation. What do you learn about salvation from these verbs and images? Is vindication a form of salvation?

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 – This is a messianic prophecy about the atonement. We will work through this chapter carefully in light of this (see below).

Isaiah 54:4-17 – Note the different elements of salvation in these verses.

Isaiah 55:1-13 – What metaphors does v. 1 use and how does it use them? Why are the wicked to return to the Lord? In what way are God's thoughts not like ours?

Isaiah 56:1-8 – How is God's salvation or deliverance "revealed" in these verses? How is the Sabbath central to this salvation?

Isaiah 57:14-21 – Why must we be contrite? Who are the wicked in v. 21?

Isaiah 59:9-20 – Note especially vv. 15-19? Why salvation and vengeance in the same breath?

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 – Verses 1-2 form a messianic prophecy that Jesus uses to identify Himself. What part of this does Jesus quote (Luke 4:16-19)? What part of the prophecy did Jesus leave out? Why? What does it mean to be clothed in garments of salvation and a robe of righteousness (v. 10)? Note the context.

Isaiah 62:10-12 – What is salvation in these verses?

Isaiah 63:1-6 – How does redemption involve wrath? Cf. Isa. 64:5-7.

Isaiah 63:7-9 – What should we make of the contrast between these verses and the previous six?

Jeremiah 3:11-14 – Why must Judah acknowledge its guilt to receive God's mercy?

Jeremiah 6:20 – Your burnt offerings are not acceptable.

Jeremiah 7:21-26 – God did not command them about burnt offerings and sacrifices on the day He brought them out of Egypt.

Jeremiah 7:16-20, 30-32 – Problem of idolatry and child sacrifices

Jeremiah 9:23-24 – What are we to boast about? Is this necessary for salvation?

Jeremiah 30:12-17 – What metaphor does Jeremiah use extensively here? What does it tell us about salvation?

Jeremiah 31:10-14 – What does God redeem His people from? What does this passage illustrate about salvation?

Jeremiah 31:18-20 – What metaphor is used here to illustrate salvation?

Jeremiah 31:31-34 – The New Testament makes use of the new covenant that involved both salvation and atonement (cf. Jesus' referring to His blood of the covenant in Matt. 26:28). What does knowing God have to do with this covenant? What does it mean to "know the Lord"?

Ezekiel 3:16-21 – What is salvation here?

Ezekiel 11:17-21 – Is this salvation, part of salvation, or the result of salvation?

Ezekiel 18:1-32 – What principles are discussed here that undergird atonement and salvation? Cf. 33:10-20.

Ezekiel 20:25-31 – What is the difference between a human father sacrificing his son and God sacrificing His Son? Cf. Ezek. 23:36-39.

Ezekiel 34:1-31 – How does the metaphor of shepherd and sheep help us understand salvation and atonement? Cf. 1 Peter 5:1-6.

Ezekiel 36:24-31 – Is this salvation?

Hosea 2:14-23 – What metaphors are employed here? Do they have anything to do with salvation? If so, what?

Hosea 6:6 – God desires a knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

Hosea 11:1-9 – Is salvation based on resolving an inner conflict in God's heart? Explain.

Joel 1:13-16; 2:1-3, 12-27 – How does Joel describe salvation? What is it salvation from?

Amos 5:21-24 – Justice, not sacrifice

Jonah – One could say that the problem with the prophet Jonah was that he wanted sacrifice (of the Ninevites) but God didn't. The sailors offered a sacrifice, but the Ninevites fasted and repented.

Micah 6:1-8 – What does the Lord require of you?

Micah 7:18-20 – Does salvation reflect the One who saves? In other words, does the method by which God saves reflect His character?

Habakkuk 1:2-14; 2:1-3 – What is Habakkuk's complain and how does God answer?

Habakkuk 3:17-19 – Note the context of Habakkuk's struggle with God in chapter 1. What leads him to end on this note?

Zechariah 9:9-10 – What is salvation here?

Important Texts on Atonement Themes

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 – Compare with the LXX and work through the servant song verse-by-verse

Generally the concept of "salvation" in the Old Testament is one of "deliverance" from oppression, fear, one's enemies, trials, illnesses, et cetera. Scarcely a passage can be found that suggests that God delivers people from Himself. Since we understand divine wrath in the Bible as God sadly giving people up to the consequences of their sinful choices, this view of salvation is entirely consistent with divine wrath and "punishment."

On the other hand, few passages speak of God rescuing His people from their sins. In terms of sin, the stress seems to be on repentance (turning back or around or returning), atonement, and forgiveness.

Appeasement

Appeasement is not a strong biblical theme at all. In order to see it there, one must assume that it exists, deferring to its presence in the ancient world of western Asia.

-It is not present in the Psalms, where one would expect to find it if the concept were alive and well. The closest one comes to it is the plea that God turn away His wrath. This

suggests that the Israelites saw God's anger as something of which He was in control; nothing controlled it (assuaged it from the outside).

-There is nothing in Leviticus that directly or specifically states that atonement is appeasement. One can assume that the word *kipper* is elliptical for appeasement, but that is not necessary, especially given the fact that it never has God as its object.

-There are constructions that would seem to suggest appeasement or assuagement of divine anger such as the expression, "to soften the face" (of God). But a close look at how these phrases are used does not permit the concept of appeasement. Most often they are rightly translated as "to implore."

-One passage suggests the concept of appeasement: Numbers 25:10-13 (NRSV): "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the Israelites by manifesting such zeal among them on my behalf that in my jealousy I did not consume the Israelites. Therefore say, 'I hereby grant him my covenant of peace. It shall be for him and for his descendants after him a covenant of perpetual priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the Israelites.'" The construction of the Hebrew wording is helpful: God states that Phinehas has turned back [cause to turn around; from the same root for repentance] his wrath *from upon* the Israelites and that he has made atonement *upon the Israelites*. God's wrath is said to be *on* the Israelites and the atonement is said also to be *on* the Israelites. Using our method of interpretation where one passage provides the key to many other perplexing passages, we can suggest that this fits nicely with the view that God's wrath is allowing people to suffer the consequences of their choices. By putting a strong stop to the defiant sinning that Israel was doing at Baal-Peor, Phinehas averted the disaster the Israelites were bringing on themselves.

Salvation and Atonement in the New Testament

Preface to the Gospels: Some believe that Jesus did not teach fully the plan of salvation and that we must turn to the Apostle Paul to find a fuller explanation. But Jesus is the Savior; He is God; and He did teach about salvation. It seems, then, that as God, Jesus stands above Paul and His teachings about salvation must be taken in and believed. So an overriding question to begin with is: what are Jesus' favorite metaphors in Matthew for salvation? What does He state we are saved from?

Matt. 1:21 – Jesus came to save His people from their sins
-the Greek word *sozo* also means "to heal"

Matt. 3:15 – He came to fulfill all righteousness
-cf. the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 5-7
-cf. Matt. 5:17

Matt. 9:2-8 – Jesus heals a man by forgiving his sins: Jesus illustrated the gospel by healing

people. Most people in His day believed that any sickness was the result of divine anger and thus punishment. By ever seeking healing and restoration, Jesus overturned this belief (cf. 10:1, 5-15; cf. 11:4-6). This is further dealt with in

-9:12, 13 – a sick person must feel their need to be whole

-9:16, 17 – new wine requires new wineskins

-9:22, 29 – trust makes a person whole, whether spiritual or physically

Matt. 10:26-42 – Who should we fear? It's what we do with Jesus that determines our destiny.

Matt. 12:22-32 – What is the sin that cannot be forgiven?

Matt. 12:33-37 – How is it that the fruit is so important? And why are we justified or condemned by our words?

Matt. 13:10-23 – Note that, in the parable of the sower, Jesus points to “understanding” as the means of “healing.”

Matt. 13:24-30, 31-32, 33, 44-52 – How many different metaphors does Jesus use to describe the kingdom? How many of them are from divine constructs (creation/nature, family, Sabbath) and how many of them are from humanly invented constructs (economics, kingship, law)?

Matt. 15:10-20 – What does this suggest about salvation? What are we saved from? A legal problem?

Matt. 18:-1-4, 10-14 – Who can Jesus save? Which of the above metaphors for salvation appeal to the humble? Which appeal to the prideful?

Matt. 18:23-35 – Are we lost because we do not forgive our spiritual siblings from the heart? How? Why?

Matt. 19:16-29 – If salvation was accomplished at the cross, how can we be lost if we do not give everything up for Jesus? Does the knowledge that Jesus procured our pardon at the cross motivate us to do that? What does?

Matt. 20:1-16 – Salvation is not about works but God's generosity.

Matt. 21:28-32 – Why do sinners go into the kingdom before the righteous?

Matt. 22:1-14 – What kept the people in this parable from the king's supper? What does the wedding robe symbolize? Christ's righteousness? What does that mean? Is there anything in the parable that would tell us?

Matt. 24:36-44 – What is required to be ready for the coming of the Son of man? If salvation is merely a gift, why do we need such preparation and watchfulness?

Matt. 24:45-51 – What is the way to be lost here?

Matt. 25:1-15 – What metaphor does the parable of the ten virgins rest on? What is the crux of salvation in this parable?

Matt. 25:14-30 – What is the way to be lost here? Is this parable teaching salvation by works? See vv. 24-27.

Matt. 25:31-45 – What is the way to be saved here? Is this parable teaching salvation by works?

Matt. 26:6-13 – What does this short story have to do with salvation in Jesus' understanding?

Matt. 26:26-29 – What is the blood of the covenant poured out for the forgiveness of sins? How does Jesus' blood poured out give us forgiveness?

Matt. 26:36-43 – What does Jesus say about death here? What can we learn from this?

Matt. 26-27 – Where are the places that Jesus' blood is mentioned? See 26:27, 28; 27:4, 24, 25, (26, 29, 31).

Matt. 27:46 – What do Jesus' words here tell us about the kind of death He died?

Postscript: So what are Jesus' favorite metaphors for salvation? Did it strike you that toward the end of His life, Jesus spends more time talking about how to be lost than how to be saved? Why would this be? Do we have to work harder to be saved or to be lost? If Jesus is about to lose the Jewish nation, why did they choose to be lost? Did you find the reasons?

Mark 1:21-2:12 – Here are a number of healings; what do these tell us about salvation?

Mark 2:13-17 – Is salvation/atonement an act primarily for God's sake or for our benefit? Who is it that needs saving?

Mark 2:18-23 – What are the new wineskins? What is the new wine?

Mark 2:27-28 – Is what Jesus says about Himself and the Sabbath applicable to all of God's laws? To every measure He has taken with humanity? To salvation and atonement? In other words, does God do anything that is not specifically for our benefit?

Mark 3:1-6 – What does this suggest about the plan of salvation?

Mark 3:19-30 – Who is the strong man? How can he be tied up?

Mark 4:30-32 – Is trust a legal concept? (cf. Mark 5:34; 9:23)

Mark 8:34-38 – How does losing our lives save us? Note vv. 31-33. Is Jesus here suggesting that we all have to be crucified in order to be saved?

Mark 10:17-31 – Why does Jesus say it is hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom?

Mark 14:34 – What does this say about the nature of Jesus' death? What caused such intense grief?

Luke 1:46-55 – Note vv. 59-55. What did Jesus come to do? How does this relate to our salvation? Compare this with Zechariah's prayer in vv. 68-79.

Luke 2:10-14 – What is the message the angels brought to the shepherds?

Luke 4:18-19 – What did Jesus come to do? Why didn't Isaiah say that He came to die?

Luke 13:22-30 – Why is the door to eternal life narrow?

Luke 14:15-24 – What does this parable of the Great Dinner tell us about the plan of salvation?

Luke 15:1-32 – Jesus tells three parables of things or people "found." What do each of these parables tell us about the nature of the plan of salvation?

Luke 16:1-13 – What does the parable of the dishonest manager tell us about the plan of salvation?

Luke 16:19-31 – What does the parable of the rich man and Lazarus tell us about salvation. Is it salvation from hell? Explain.

Luke 19:1-9 – What does the story of Zacchaeus tell us about who can be saved?

Luke 19:11-27 – What does the parable of the ten talents/pounds tell us about salvation?

Luke 22:39-46 – How intense was Jesus' mental anguish? What does this suggest about the nature of His death and what caused it? What does this, in turn, suggest about the atonement?

Luke 23:32-34 – What does Jesus' words suggest about divine forgiveness? Did Jesus need to pray the Father to forgive because He had not yet appeased His anger so He could forgive?

Luke 23:46 – What do Jesus' final words before His death in Luke tell us about salvation?

John 1:1-5, 10-14-18 – What does this tell us about the plan of salvation? Why do you think John sees it so differently from the other three gospel writers? Does this mean that we can expect only 25% of people to grasp what John says?

John 2:29-34 – How much of Jesus' mission did John the Baptist grasp?

John 1:35-51 – If Jesus primarily came to die for our sins, why did He have disciples? Why did the disciples choose to follow Him?

Let's pause here and look at a handout dealing with aspects of the Gospel of John (The Meaning of Jesus' Blood).

John 2:1-12 – Why did Jesus do His first miracle at a social occasion to supply people already filled with drink more wine? Why didn't He say, "Listen, we need a little self-control here!"? Why didn't He refuse on the basis that His first miracle should be more in keeping with the plan of salvation? Is it possible that Jesus came to save us in every aspect? Not just our souls, but our minds, our bodies, our spirit? Do Seventh-day Adventists have anything to say on this subject?

John 2:13-25 – What is "cleansing the temple" symbolic of in terms of salvation? What did the

John 3:1-15 – Are we to be born again or born from above (the Greek can be either way)? What does this birth mean? Is it something we are to "acquire," "gain," or "achieve"? Or is it something we are to experience? How do we "get" that experience? Is this "birth" a legal kind of experience or some other kind?

John 3:16-21 – What is the judgment? Is it God's decision about us or our decision about God? If it is God's decision about us, what does that suggest about salvation? If it is our decision about God what does this suggest about salvation?

John 4:7-30 – How did Jesus convey salvation to the Samaritan woman? What metaphors did He use? What did those metaphors mean?

John 5:19-29 – How does Jesus describe salvation and eternal life here? How does Jesus judge us? See vv. 30-47. Jesus' statement about judging seems to contradict His words in John 3:16-21. How would you resolve this? How should we decide with statement guides us to interpret the other statement? Cf. John 12:44-50.

John 6:22-64 – Glancing through this long passage, what is eternal life here? Note the terms: "work for the food that endures to eternal life," "this is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he has sent," "I am the bread of life," "unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, you have no life in you," "it is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless." Note also vv. 37-39.

John 8:1-11 – Why did Jesus not have the woman stoned? What does this suggest about atonement? Is salvation a legal matter?

John 8:12-20 – Who judges? What is Jesus really saying here? Is God judge or witness? What is the difference?

John 8:31-38 – What is salvation here? What metaphor does Jesus use?

John 9 – (entire chapter) – What metaphor does Jesus use here? How does this fit with the verses read in John 1 and 3?

John 10:1-18 – How does Jesus contrast Himself to His enemies? What are they like? What is He like? Note especially v. 10. If, as verse 18 says, no one takes Jesus' life from Him, what does this suggest about the atonement? Jesus states that He lays it down of His own accord, and that He has the *power* to lay it down, and the *power* to take it up again. What kind of power is He talking about?

John 10:25-30 – Is it easy to be lost?

John 11:25-26 – What enables a person to rise again forever?

John 12:27-32 – What do these verses suggest about the atonement? How will God glorify His name? By merely saying so? Why could some not understand the voice of God? What does this suggest about “judgment” and “salvation”? How is the judgment of the world enacted with the ruler of the world is driven out? Who all does Jesus draw to Himself when He is lifted up?

John 13:1-20 – If Jesus washed His disciples' feet (including Judas's) *as God*, what does this suggest about His injunction for us to wash one another's feet? If God's universe is flat in service, what does this imply for the nature of salvation?

John 14:5-14 - Why is it so important to know that if we've seen Jesus, we have seen the Father. If it is primarily a legal transaction at the cross that enables us to be saved, why did Jesus need to come to reveal the Father at all?

John 15:1-17 – Do we need to abide in Christ (like a branch to a vine) to be saved? (v. 6) Which is more important—to be saved or to glorify our Father who is in heaven? What does Jesus command us to do? What does this have to do with our salvation (see 1 John 3:14)? Jesus returns to the vine metaphor at the end of this passage, but He inserts the comment that He will no longer call us His servants but His friends. What does this shift of metaphor have to do with the vine metaphor? What does this shift have to do with salvation? [Hint: If we believe that Jesus came to save us from *sin*, not from divine anger, then would not salvation take place at every level of sin from which He rescues us? So that we might be saved from being God's enemies to becoming His humble, trusting servants, but on another level, we might be saved from the lie that God delights in making us His slaves and in getting our slavish obedience, so

that we become His friends, sharing His heart and wanting to do what is right because we see that it is right.]

John 16:25-27 – What does this passage suggest about whom or what we are saved from?

John 17:3-4, 17-25 – What is eternal life? Is it possible to know God in a legal way? Or is knowing God something fully experiential? What does it mean for God to sanctify us in His truth (His Word is truth)? Cf. John 18:37. Why does Jesus want His followers to be one? Who does it glorify and why? How does it show the world that the Father loves us as He loves Jesus? What does that really mean?

John 19:31-37 – What is the significance of Jesus dying before crucifixion could kill Him? What is the significance of the two streams coming from His side—blood and water?

John 20:17 – What are the significance of the words, “my Father and your Father,” “my God and your God”?

John 20:22-23 – What did Jesus mean—that His body has power to forgive sins?

Acts 2:22-41 – What is the central message here about the atonement? Does Peter tell us why Jesus had to die?

Acts 3:12-26 – What is the central message here in terms of atonement? Do we have any clues here about why Jesus had to die? Note that in both passages, Peter indicts the Jews for killing Jesus and pleads with them to repent.

Acts 4:8-12 – What/Who is central to Peter in the plan of salvation? Salvation can be found only in Jesus (v. 12). What does this mean? How are we saved through Jesus’ *name*? (cf. vv. 10, 17, 18, 20).

Acts 5:30-32 – Unpack this abbreviated statement about salvation. Why does Peter stress so much (cf. above) that the Jewish leaders killed Jesus? Why didn’t he emphasize, instead, that Jesus died to save us from our sins?

Acts 6-7 – What is the gist of Stephen’s sermon before the council? Does it have anything to do with the atonement?

Acts 8:26-38 – What was the “good news about Jesus” that Philip explained (via Isaiah 53) to the Ethiopian eunuch?

Acts 9:1-19 – How did Jesus convert Saul/Paul? (cf. Acts 26:1-23)

Acts 9:19b-22 – Who/What did Saul proclaim? (cf. 9:26-28)

Acts 10:34-43 – What is the gospel according to Peter here?

Acts 13:13-41 – How does Paul describe the gospel here?

Acts 16:25-34 – What is salvation in a nutshell for Paul?

Acts 17:1-4 – Why was it so important to early Christians to prove that Jesus was the Messiah? (cf. Acts 19:8-10)

Romans 1:1-6 – What is the good news about? Why does Paul call himself a “slave of Jesus Christ”? Does the truth/the good news set us free (John 8:32)?

Romans 1:16-17 – What do these verses mean? What is the content of the gospel? Is it God’s good news (possessive)? Good news from God (source)? Good news about God (subjective)? What is God’s righteousness?

Romans 1:18-32 – What is God’s wrath here? What does it have to do with the good news? Is it parallel to “the righteousness of God”?

Romans 1:1-11 – What is Paul trying to establish here? What does judging do to those who do it?

Romans 2:3-9 – What is wrath here and how does it function? Is it something God does to us or is it something we do to ourselves?

Romans 2:12-16 – Who all can be saved? How can the Gentiles who have never heard of the Law, nor Jesus be saved if “there is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12; cf. Acts 2:21; 10:43; Rom. 10:13; John 1:12)

Romans 2:17-29 – What is Paul saying here in terms of salvation?

Romans 3:1-8 – What is Paul suggesting here by stating that God is judged? What word do you have in your versions in v. 5 for righteousness/justice?

Romans 3:9-20 – What is the connection between all being under sin and not being able to be righteous by doing what the law says?

Romans 3:21-26 – What is revealed by the death of Jesus—God’s righteousness or God’s justice? Why did Jesus have to die according to these verses? When was God ever charged with being unrighteous/unjust? What does it mean—“he passed over former sins”?

Romans 3:27-31 – If keeping the law doesn't save us, how do Christians establish the law through faith?

Romans 4:1-8 – What does it mean that God credits our faith as our righteousness? Is this an economic bargain? Or does the truth go far beyond the economic metaphor Paul uses? Note: in Hebrew, the word "reckon" in Genesis 15:6 also means to value as in valuing something as equal to something else. Why does Paul say that faith is valued as righteousness (v. 5)?

Romans 4:13-22 – Explain vv. 15 and 16. How does the Law bring about wrath [note that Paul does not say, "God's wrath"]? How does the Law bringing about wrath explain why "the inheritance comes through faith, so that it will be on the basis of God's grace"?

Romans 4:23-25 – What does verse 25 say and how does it tie in with Paul's description of divine wrath in Romans 1? What does it mean that "he was raised for our justification"?

Romans 5:1-5 – Read the first verse in several different versions (NKJV, NRSV, NIV, NET, CEB). What does it mean to be "justified by faith"? Does it mean to be "declared righteous through faith" (NET), "put right with God through faith" (GNT), or "made righteous through his faithfulness" (CEB)? How can translators get so many different meanings from the same phrase? What did the word justify (Latin) really mean originally? Acquitted? How can we be acquitted by faith?

Romans 5:6-11 – Christ died for us while we were His enemies. So how does this save us from God's wrath? Or is the word "God's" in the original Greek sentence (see NKJV)? How does the blood of Jesus save us from wrath?

Romans 5:12-19 – How does this really work—just as judgment came through one man's sin so through one Man's righteous act, a free gift, justification came?

Romans 5:20-21 – What does it mean that "the law came into increase the trespass"? In the Greek NT, "law" is without an article, meaning not, "the Law" but "law" as a principle. The verb does not mean "came" but rather has the nuance of a clandestine intruder who "sneaks in." Did Paul understand what archaeology has comparatively recently revealed—that law as a legal convention was invented by the Mesopotamians long before Moses? The legal constructs of the Babylonians did increase sinning, because the whole system of law was a system of *enforcement* that increased rebellion, rather than engendering an internal relationship with God of love and trust that led to obedience from the heart.

Romans 6:1-4 – If the gospel is primarily legal and Jesus died primarily a legal, penal death, what is there to keep us from continuing to sin? If the problem of sin is God's wrath, and Jesus' death paid the penalty for sin and satisfied or appeased divine anger, what enables us to stop sinning—fear of divine anger unassuaged? What does it mean to be baptized into Jesus' death? Cf. Romans 3:21-26.

Romans 6:5-11 – What does it mean for our old self to be crucified with Him? Does this have anything to do with repentance (cf. Rom. 2:4)?

Romans 6:12-14 – How does being under grace lead to sin not having dominion over us, whereas being under law does lead to sin having dominion over us? Is it because under law God is angry and will kill us, but we are under grace because Jesus satisfied His anger? What does it mean that we have been brought from death to life? Be sure to read on!

Romans 6:15-19 – What does it mean to be slaves of sin or slaves of righteousness? Note v. 19.

Romans 6:20-23 – Note where Paul lands with his reasoning. Becoming slaves of righteousness means being set free from being slaves of sin. What is the end of sin—destruction at the hands of an angry God? Or simply, death? Note the contrast between the “wages of sin” and the “gift of God.” Does this mean we have to earn eternal death while we need to accept the gift of eternal life? And what does it mean to accept it? If the end of sin is death, then what causes that death?

Romans 7:7-12 – What relationship does sin have to the law? How is the law holy, just, and good?

Romans 7:13 – What caused Paul’s death?

Romans 7:14-25 – what is the way out of the trap Paul finds himself in? See 8:1-13.

Romans 8:14-17 - What does the Spirit lead us to do? What does our adoption mean?

Romans 8:26-39 – What saves us, according to these verses?

Romans 10:4-17 – Why is righteousness by faith?

Romans 12:1-21 – Are the admonitions in this chapter part of our salvation? How does it fit in?

Romans 13:1-14 – And these?

Romans 14:1-23 – And also these?

1 Corinthians 1:18-25 – Does the cross make sense to the world? Why not? To whom in the world does it not make sense?

1 Corinthians 1:26-30 – Who saves us?

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 – What does love have to do with our salvation?

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 – Are we saved or are we being saved? See 2 Cor. 2:16; 6:2. What does it mean: Christ died for our sins? See also Gal. 1:4

1 Corinthians 15:12-14 – What does Christ's resurrection have to do with our salvation? (See vv. 54-56)

2 Corinthians 3:4-18 – What role does the law of Sinai play in the atonement and in our salvation?

2 Corinthians 4:2-6 – What is the gospel (good news) about?

2 Corinthians 5:14-21 – Why does Paul use here the term "reconciliation" instead of "propitiation" to describe salvation?* Who has to be reconciled? What does verse 21 suggest?

Galatians 2:16-21 – When Paul says that we are not "made righteous" or "justified" by works of the law, what is he talking about?* Is he really talking only about justification? See especially v. 21 and 3:3-5.

Galatians 3:6-14 – How is our faith in God considered our righteousness? What is faith and how do we "get" it? Why is no one made righteous by the Law? What does it mean that "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us"?

Galatians 3:19-29 – What role does the Law play in the death of Jesus (cf. Rom. 5:20)? What does it mean that "the Law became our custodian until Christ came"? cf. 4:1-7

Galatians 4:21-31 – What does Paul's allegory imply about the life of faith? Is that life a legal reality or an experiential reality or both? If it is a legal reality, than why would there need to be a legal means to set us free from legal bondage? Is faith a legal term?

Galatians 5:13-15 – Isn't Paul calling us to keep the law here?

Galatians 5:16-25 – Is Paul saying here that only the Spirit can lead us to keep the Law, not attempting to do it ourselves or what? Why has he shifted from justification to sanctification—or has he? If there is no law against the fruit of the Spirit, then is the fruit of the Spirit legal or does it belong to a different sphere? And can one get non-legal fruit from a legal tree?

Galatians 6:12-15 – This is the heart of Paul's thrust in this letter. Note how he uses the cross of Christ.

Ephesians 1:4-8 – What is salvation in these verses? What metaphors does Paul use? Did God invent those metaphors or did human beings?

Ephesians 1:9-14 – What are the “all things”? See vv. 20-22. Is our salvation the only reason Jesus lived here and died? What metaphors does Paul use here? Who invented them?

Ephesians 2:1-7 – Here Paul gives a “before” and “after” picture of salvation. What are we saved from?

Ephesians 2:8-10 – How are we saved? Is it by grace or by faith?* Is it because of faith or because of His faithfulness (CEB)?* What are we saved *for*?

Ephesians 2:14-18 – What is Paul talking about here? What did Christ cancel in His flesh (v. 15)?* Who is reconciled to whom here? See the verses 11-13 above. See also Col. 2:13-15.

Ephesians 3:14-19 – Why is it so important to know God and the fullness of His love? Is this any part of our salvation? Is it a requirement in addition to faith or in addition to grace?

Ephesians 4:7-16 – How does Paul use the term grace here? Is this wholly different from how he uses it when speaking of our salvation? Does grace end with justification or is it also just as fully needed for sanctification?

Ephesians 4:17-32 – Is sanctification needed for salvation or do we only need forgiveness or justification? How do we achieve sanctification? (Cf. 2 Cor. 3:17, 18)

Ephesians 5:1, 2 – Does this also shed light on the *how* of sanctification? What does it mean that Christ was a “sweet-smelling” sacrifice to God—or was He a sacrifice to God or a sacrifice for us, to bring us back to God and that is why His offering of Himself smelled sweet?

Ephesians 5:3-33 – The rest of this chapter continues the theme of sanctification. Why is this so important?

Ephesians 6:1-9 – The theme of sanctification continued.

Ephesians 6:10-18 – Do these verses provide another window on the *how* of sanctification?

Philippians 2:1-11 – Do these verses have anything to do with salvation?

Philippians 2:12, 13 – What does it mean to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”?

Philippians 3:7-11 – What is of most importance to Paul? What does this suggest about salvation?

Colossians 1:9-14 – What all is involved in our salvation?

Colossians 1:15-22 – What all is reconciled by means of the blood of Jesus on the cross?

Colossians 1:25-27 – What is God's secret plan? Is this salvation?

Colossians 3:1-15 – Is dying with Christ part of being saved from sin? Is salvation from sin implied in Paul's list?

1 Thessalonians 5:9, 11 – What is God's intention for us?

1 Timothy 1:8-10 – What is the purpose of the law?

1 Timothy 2:11-15 – What is "salvation" in verse 15? What does the use of the word "saved" tell us about its range of meanings?

2 Timothy 1:9-10 – Is Paul's statement a complete one about salvation?

2 Timothy 3:3-7 – What about this statement?

Hebrews 1:1-3 – Note that God has spoken through His Son who is "the reflection of His glory and the imprint of His very being." He also performed cleansing for sin. What do these two elements have to do with each other?

Hebrews 2:9 – Why is Jesus crowned with glory and honor? What does it mean: "he might taste death for everyone"?

Hebrews 2:10 – How was Jesus made perfect through suffering? Wasn't He sinless? See 4:15; 5:7-10.

Hebrews 2:14-15 – How did Jesus' death destroy the one who has the power of death (the devil) and set us free from the fear of death?

Hebrews 2:17-18 – What are these verses saying?

Hebrews 4:8-11 – What is the Sabbath rest we are to enter into?

Hebrews 6:1-3 – Can we spend too much time on the basics of salvation?

Hebrews 6:4-8 – Does this mean that backsliders can't be forgiven?

Hebrews 7:1-10 – The author of Hebrews uses Melchizedek as a type of Christ

Hebrews 7:11-14 – This sets the stage for vv. 15, 16.

Hebrews 7:15-19 – What does it mean: “not through a legal requirement” and “the law made nothing perfect”?

Hebrews 7:20-28 – Is the oath God makes a legal entity? Is the author of Hebrews using it in a legal sense?

Hebrews 8:1-13 – How would you describe the old covenant? How would you describe the new covenant? What are the differences between the old and new covenants?

Hebrews 9:1-22 – How does Jesus’ blood effect the new covenant we just read (see ch. 8)? Why is it true that everything is purified with blood and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness for sin? What does the new covenant say about forgiveness of sin?

Hebrews 9:23-28 – What did Jesus do by His sacrifice?

Hebrews 10:1-10 – What does “the law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming, not the real things themselves” (CEB) suggest about the nature of the sacrificial and sanctuary systems of the Old Testament? What are sacrifices a reminder of? Why doesn’t God take pleasure in sacrifices and offerings?

Hebrews 10:11-18 – How did Jesus’ death take away sin or deal with sin so that forgiveness is possible? And why couldn’t the blood of bulls and goats do this?

Hebrews 10:19-39 – Does the blood of Jesus effect a change in God or a change in us?

Hebrews 11:1-3 – What is faith? *Hypostasis* is the Greek word in the phrase, “faith is the *hypostasis* of things hoped for.” It means most basically, “substance.” What do the versions have? The term has been found associated with title deeds, which are the “substance” of one’s ownership of property. But they are also the guarantee of that property ownership. The translation I prefer is “confidence” (Kubo).

What does faith have to do with salvation? Cf. Eph. 2:5-8.

Heb. 11:4 – Why was Abel’s sacrifice greater or more acceptable to God than Cain’s?

Heb. 11:5 – How could Enoch go to heaven before Jesus died?

Heb. 11:6 – Why is it impossible to please God without faith?

Heb. 11:7 – How did Noah become “an heir to the righteousness that is in accordance with faith.

Heb. 11:8-16 – What do verses 13-16 tell us about salvation?

Heb. 11:17-28 – Is faith only for “getting saved” or is it the way of the Christian life?

Heb. 11:29-40 – Look at the list of faith heroes: Rahab the Canaanite harlot of Jericho, Gideon who had have a double sign to have faith, Barak who scorned Deborah in distrust, Samson who did not trust God enough to obey Him very well, Jephthah who offered his daughter as a burnt offering, David who murdered Uriah after getting his wife pregnant.

Heb. 12:1-2 – What are we to do in trust?

Heb. 12:3-13 – What is the goal of salvation? Why do we need discipline to reach it?

Heb. 12:18-24 – Why have we moved from Mt. Sinai to Mount Zion? What does this shift suggest about salvation? How does Jesus’ blood speak better than Abel’s?

Heb. 12:25-29 – How will God shake the earth and the heavens? (Cf. Matt. 24) How does knowing that God is a consuming fire bring us to appropriate reverence and awe? Do we need to be afraid of that? Why is God a consuming fire when the angels walk in that fire and are not consumed?

Heb 13:1-21 – Once again an epistle ends with exhortation on how to live the Christian life. This is what Hebrews counsels to move toward and beyond “getting saved” (6:1-3). What is this so important? If salvation is a legal operation effected by a penal substitutionary sacrifice in which God kills His Son, why be so concerned about getting rid of sin—as Hebrews is? On the other hand, if salvation is a spiritual and moral work of God on us and this is made possible by Jesus’ death that showed that it is sin that destroys sinners, not God, than would not His death make it important, even necessary to seek the divine remedy for the sin that is and will destroy us unless we allow God to save us from it?

James 1:2-4 – James begins with where the Christians are—undergoing persecutions for Jesus and trials of many kinds. He wants them to know that trials endured produce maturity. Why this emphasis in Hebrews and here in James on “perfection”? Most of the book deals with practical issues for living the life of Christ.

James 1:19-27 – What do these verses have to do with salvation?

James 2:1-13 – How does Jesus’ death and His saving grace lead us to do what James counsels here?

James 2:14-26 – Why does James spend so much time on works in light of Paul’s rejection of works for salvation? Is he contradicting Paul? What does “faith without works is dead” really mean?

James 3:13-18 – What does James’ statement regarding wisdom have to do with salvation?

James 4:1-10 – Why does James stress humility so much?

1 Peter 1:3-9 – What images or aspects of salvation are present here?

1 Peter 1:10-12 – If salvation is merely a gift of eternal life for sinners, what would angels find so interesting that they would long to look into it? If salvation is just a transaction or debt paid, what issues could there be for angels to study?

1 Peter 1:13-16 – Here Peter, like Paul and James, reminds his hearers of right conduct. Is this separate from salvation? (Hint: continue reading) cf. 1:17-25 below and 2:11-12.

1 Peter 1:17-25 – What images or aspects of salvation are present here? How did the blood of Jesus ransom us?

1 Peter 2:1-3 – Here, like James and the author of Hebrews, Peter speaks of becoming mature. What does it mean to “grow into salvation”? Isn’t salvation something that happened at the cross and we accept it as a free gift?

1 Peter 2:18-25; 3:8-18 – Note the context into which Peter talks about Jesus’ death. Did Jesus die only to atone for our sins, or did He also die as an example of how we are to suffer for His sake, even unto death? What does Peter mean by 4:1-2? Cf. 4:12-19.

2 Peter 1:3-11 – Once again Peter discusses what we’ve come to call “sanctification.” Compare Peter’s ladder (vv. 5-7) with the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23).

1 John 1:1-4 – How real was Jesus to John?

1 John 1:5-10 – What do these verses have to do with salvation?

1 John 2:1-2 – What does it mean that Jesus atoned for the sins of the whole world?

1 John 2:7-17 – What does loving our brothers and sisters in the faith have to do with salvation?

1 John 2:29-3:3 – What does it mean to be children of God?

1 John 3:4-10 – Is John here describing perfection? What does he mean? (Hint: in the Greek the present tense has the sense of something ongoing.)

1 John 3:11-24 – Why is love so important? What does it have to do with salvation? How do we know we have “passed from death to life”?

1 John 4:7-21 – Why is the birth from above so important to John? Is it central to salvation? Why or why not? What does that birth lead us to do? What does love lead us to do? Does John make a big distinction between “justification” and “sanctification” here?

1 John 5:1-5 – Is this the “how-to” of sanctification?

1 John 5:6-12 – Why is the concept of “testimony” so important to John? What is eternal life in this passage? Cf. vv. 18-20.

Jude 17-23 – What is a scoffer? What do scoffers do? What are we to do in mercy?

Revelation 1:1-3 – Is this a revelation of Jesus Christ, period? Or is it a revelation by Jesus Christ about things to take place beyond John’s day? If the latter, what does prophecy have to do with atonement and salvation, if anything?

Rev. 1:4-8 – Who is the “one who is and who was and who is to come”? What does “firstborn of the dead” mean? How did Jesus save us from our sins by His blood? Why will those who nailed Jesus to the cross be raised to see Him come? (See Mark 15:29-32)

Rev. 1:12-20 – What does this picture of Jesus have to do with salvation? To what place does the imagery and symbolism belong?

Rev. 2:1-7 – What does losing one’s first love mean for their salvation?

Rev. 2:8-11 – What does conquering when persecuted have to do with salvation (v. 11b)?

Rev. 2:12-17 – Does holding false teachings deprive us from eternal life?

Rev. 2:18-29 – The language of this passage refers (in Old Testament rhetoric) to idolatry? Can worshiping idols make us unsaved?

Rev. 3:1-6 – What is the problem with Sardis? What were they doing that would lead to God blotting their name out of the book of life?

Rev. 3:7-13 – What is Philadelphia doing that is commendable? Does this have anything to do with our salvation? Suppose they didn’t do it? Would they then be lost?

Rev. 3:14-22 – What is the problem of Laodicea? What is the solution? What does that solution—buy of Christ gold purified by fire, white robes for clothing, and eyesalve—mean? What does Jesus really want from us and what does that have to do with “buying” these products? What does this message, especially v. 20, have to do with salvation?

Rev. 4:1-11 – What does this chapter have to do with salvation? What does the opening stanza of the seven-stanza hymn of Revelation tell us about God? What does it imply to say, “You are worthy, our Lord and God...”? What about God as Creator makes Him worthy? Is it just that He has given us existence? What does it mean—“by your will they existed and were created”? Does Revelation anywhere suggest that God is worthy because He destroys? (Cf. 16:5-7)

Rev. 5:1-14 – More stanzas of the hymn are sung in this chapter. Why would extolling God and the Lamb as “worthy” serve as the beginning lines of apocalyptic praise? What makes the Lamb worthy? Why does John see Him as the Lamb instead of as the Lion of the tribe of Judah? What does it mean that it is the Lamb who conquers? How did He conquer? How does the means of His conquering affect interpretation of terms like “ransom,” “kingdom and priests,” and “reign”? How did the Lamb ransom us by His blood?

Rev. 7:1-8 – What is ‘the seal of the living God’? See 14:1-5 Is it the same as having the Father’s name on their foreheads? The Sabbath can be viewed as a kind of seal of the law, which is a transcript of God’s character. What does the Sabbath have to do with having the Father’s name in the forehead? To sharpen this, what is the counterpart (opposite) to the seal in the book of Revelation? See 13:16-18.

Rev. 7:9-17 – Who does salvation belong to? In other words, we do not/cannot save ourselves. How does one wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb?

Rev. 12:7-12 – What does salvation involve?

Rev. 14:6-12 – What do the three angels’ messages have to do with salvation?

Rev. 14:14-20 – What does the reaping symbolize? What does it mean?

Rev. 19:1-16 – What is this passage describing? What is salvation from here? What does the symbolism of the Rider on the white horse represent?

Rev. 21:1-22:5 – What is salvation here—or is this the result of salvation? Why does Revelation spend so much space describing the New Jerusalem?