

Salvation – An Alternative View

Introduction

Most Christians believe that man is by nature sinful – following the rebellion/fall of Adam and Eve. According to traditional teachings, this condition can be remedied only by accepting Jesus Christ as a personal savior and his sacrifice on the cross as payment for our sins. This is said to reconcile us to God and cleanse us from all sin. The Bible, in the New Testament, indeed contains the teaching that man is saved by the death and blood of Jesus. While churches also usually teach that those who in this life have not accepted Jesus as their savior will eternally suffer in an ever-burning hell, the Scriptures are not quite as explicit – though they do speak about judgment.

Besides numerous passages speaking about being saved by the vicarious atonement of Jesus – his shedding of blood and dying on a Roman cross, there is also another thread or “gospel” running through the New Testament. It emphasises more of *what Jesus taught and exhorted his followers to do*, than what he did for them through his sacrificial death. Many passages speak about the Holy Spirit as the agent of transformation and creating the “new heart” predicted by Old Testament prophets. Jesus spoke about “New Birth” as a means of salvation and condition for entering the Kingdom of God. Other passages speak about Love of God shed abroad to our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We are to follow the leading of the Spirit in order to be saved. God is more than happy to give us the Holy Spirit, but our effort and cooperation are also needed in working out our own salvation.

It is a well-established fact (though not accepted by all Christians) that the Bible is not a book wherein every word is inspired by God. It is not a book of science or history as such. It also combines multiple threads of thought from various ancient sources. It has gone through a complex process of document selection, compilation, editing and reediting, as well as translating – all this long after the time of Jesus and the original apostles. There is no doubt that the Bible is an inspired book which has changed countless lives over the span of its existence, and that it contains the essential message of salvation. However, it is not free from errors, interpolations, extrapolations, and biases of its contributors, editors, and translators who were all influenced by the time and culture they lived in.

Several years ago, I was led to another revelation – not as well known, but, I believe, worth considering. It is a collection of inspired/mediated writings received by an American medium, James Padgett, about one hundred years ago, during WWI. It is important to realize that all inspired knowledge is mediated knowledge – it comes from a higher source beyond us through a human spiritual teacher (who in that process functions as a medium) to be passed onto others.

In this brief comparative presentation, I am mostly drawing on information from two sources: the four volumes of *True Gospel Revealed Anew by Jesus* (TGRABJ) published by the Foundation Church of the New Birth, and the Bible. As to the traditional view, I am drawing specifically on *Thirteen Lessons on Grace* by Jack Cottrell. To keep it simple, and just presenting a thumbnail overview, I am omitting supporting references for each statement.

Readers are encouraged to consider what is presented and come to their own conclusions. Further and more detailed information on the alternative interpretation is available from the freely downloadable books and booklets at <https://universal-spirituality.net/about/free-publications/>

Comparing the Traditional View of Salvation with an Alternative View

Steps in the Process	Traditional View	Alternative View
God and Man		
Nature of God	God is a God of love and a God of wrath – both compassionate and angry and jealous. He is both merciful and just, and His demands for justice must be met.	God is loving, compassionate and merciful, but also just. He Himself does not punish sinners, but has created and set in motion laws that bring penalties for sin. Sinners reap what they sow.
Nature of Man	Man is sinful and depraved. No one is righteous and can save themselves or become fully right with God by themselves. God has provided a way to salvation.	Man was created perfect, but through rejecting God's offer of His Love and nature became sinful and progressively more depraved. There are two ways out of the depravity.
Man's Indebtedness to God	God is the sovereign Creator of all that exists, including humanity. He gave us life and provides us with a beautiful planet, food to eat, means to build shelters and other things for our use and comfort. As His creatures, we owe God a debt of submission and obedience, as well as a debt of gratitude.	The punishment for sin is the result or effect of breaking God's laws – not paying a personal debt to God. It may be hell for a long period of time, but it is not eternal. Each sinner is subject to the Law of Compensation and the penalty is proportional to the sins committed. As the penalty is paid, the sinner progresses from the darkness of hell to spheres of increasing light. This law is transcended by the Law of Love for those who desire and receive God's Divine Love in their souls. The Divine Love imparted by the Holy Spirit cleanses a person from sin and eventually the Law of Compensation has nothing to act on.
	As sinners, humans owe to God the debt of eternal punishment. God's holiness demands it. Sinners are obligated to pay the penalty for sin, which is eternity in hell. But God has also provided a way out. Once redeemed by Christ's blood, this penalty is paid in full by Jesus' death on the cross, and the sinner is no longer under condemnation. He/she is then indebted to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, to love and serve fellow humans, and to disseminate the gospel of grace to the unsaved. The motive for this is no longer obligation, but rather love and gratefulness.	
Man and Sin		
Sin	Sin is breaking of God's law or getting out of harmony with God's law and will.	Sin separates us from God, and the law of cause and effect comes into force, exacting its penalty – if not in this life, definitely in the next. Despite this, we are still God's beloved children, whom He created and loves unconditionally. We may end up in hell for a time, but eventually all sinners will reach either the original perfection of the first humans or immortality in the Celestial realm.
	Sin places us into a disastrous relationship to God and His law. We become guilty and fall under the law's penalty and condemnation. We exchange God's favour for His wrath, and if we continue this path, we'll be condemned to hell forever.	

Effects of Sin	<p>It is important to recognize and acknowledge sin and our need for help with it. Otherwise, one will see no need for salvation. Apart from guilt and a wrong relationship with God, sin makes us sick at the soul level – our spiritual nature becomes weak and corrupted. Sin becomes our nature, but we are not totally depraved or born that way. Sin makes us spiritually blind and dead to the things of God. Once one has yielded to temptation and committed the first sin, a vicious cycle is set up – more sins follow increasing the state of sinfulness. This is what happened once the first parents disobeyed God. Sin originates from a corrupted heart.</p>	
Sinfulness and Its Remedy	<p>Human sinfulness cannot be overcome by man alone. Salvation comes only by accepting Christ's death on the cross as a payment for one's sins to be justified before God. The person then receives the Holy Spirit which provides guidance and works inner transformation.</p>	<p>Our soul had been created sinless, but through the process of incarnation, it took on sins of the ancestors. These formed encrustations over the pure soul. Through its environment and childhood programming, the soul also picks up much negativity and inclination to sin.</p> <p>Man has two ways to overcome sins. The natural love path is one of purification through striving to eliminate sinfulness that is of man's making over generations to reach his original state of purity and perfection. This is a long and arduous path made easier with God's help.</p> <p>The Divine Love path is a way of soul transformation through God-given Love and nature that leads to the new heart and new birth, and ultimately salvation and immortality in the Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit imparts God's Love when sought. In most cases, both states of sinlessness will only be reached in the next life.</p>
Purpose of Law	<p>The purpose of law is to define and reveal sin and to regulate human conduct. This applies to both God's law and human law. Some Old Testament laws are no longer binding on Christians because they are under a different dispensation.</p>	
The Way of Law	<p>This is the way of obedience, and avoiding and overcoming sin by one's own strength. It is also the way of cause and effect – breaking the law exacts penalties.</p> <p>No one is able to keep the law fully – one broken law nullifies all the laws kept. So no one can be saved by observing the law, and as such will go to hell and experience everlasting torment and suffering.</p>	<p>Sinners will reap the penalties for their sins both in this life and the next, but will not be consigned to everlasting torment in hell. They may suffer greatly for a long time, but will eventually reach their original perfection and find happiness in the Paradise of the Perfect Man.</p>
God and Sin	<p>God is both just and justifier because his nature embraces both justice and love. His justice requires Him to punish sin, which is the transgression of His law -- the expression of His nature. Sin therefore contradicts God and can be seen as assaulting God. When God's nature is violated, this must be punished for God to be true to Himself. God's justice kindles the flame of His wrath</p>	<p>God unconditionally loves all His children even though they are sinful. He doesn't condone sin in any form, but doesn't personally punish nor vent His wrath on sinners. However, sins are not left unpunished as He has instituted the law of cause and effect which provides recompense for earthly sins both in this world and the next. God also created a higher law of Love which under the right</p>

	<p>which consumes sin. The fury of His justice must be poured out on every sinner. Yet God is also love and doesn't want all sinners to perish. Therefore, He must pronounce them righteous so that His wrath does not consume them. The answer to this dilemma is in God's eternal plan to let His only begotten son die on the cross.</p>	<p>conditions transcends the law of cause and effect as the Love transforms the sinner's heart and cleanses their soul. All humans will eventually overcome their sinful condition and reach the original perfection of soul. This will happen through either purification – overcoming by largely their own effort the evil in their souls; or through soul transformation into divine substance and nature by the Divine Love imparted by the Holy Spirit. The latter is the “easy yoke” that Jesus talked about – the former way is hard and arduous.</p>
<p>Solution to Sin – Salvation</p>		
<p>Jesus' Part in Salvation</p>	<p>Jesus died for us as propitiation – an offering that turns away wrath. He satisfied God's righteous, judicial demands for justice by accepting upon himself all the wrath and punishment which sin justly deserves. He bore the penalty for our sins. Because of this, God can forgive our sins and justify us, and be just at the same time. We are still guilty, but through faith, the blood of Christ covers the sin and absorbs the guilt, so the sinner becomes as though they had never sinned. There is no more condemnation, but a reconciliation has occurred. We are now at peace with God, in contrast to the fact that as sinners we were enemies of God. There are two steps in the reconciliation: God's enmity and hatred toward us as sinners must be removed, which occurs by the propitiating death of Christ. By diverting His wrath wholly upon Jesus, God cleared away every obstacle to peace and reconciliation from His side. The second step is our acceptance of what God has done for us and putting away our enmity toward God. In this way we receive the already-accomplished reconciliation as our own.</p>	<p>Jesus brought the gospel of salvation and immortality and lived it. He spoke of the new birth, or birth from above, as a condition for seeing and entering the Kingdom of God. The new birth occurs through soul transformation from divine image into divine substance by the Divine Love imparted by the Holy Spirit. This makes a human a new creature and when born again, an immortal divine angel and a redeemed child of God. God hates sin for the harm it is causing, but does not hate sinners. They are all his created children and He loves them and has compassion on them. Justice will occur through the Law of Compensation whereby each sinner will need to pay the full penalty of their sins – which may involve great suffering, but not eternal torment. The Divine Love path, which Jesus taught, involves accepting God's gift of Divine Love and cultivating it so that one's soul becomes transformed into divine substance. Divine nature is acquired and thereby sin is eliminated. This path leads to eventual at-onement with God and immortality in the Celestial Kingdom of God.</p>
<p>Grace</p>	<p>This is an undeserved gift that God bestows on those who seek him, repent of their sins, desire God's salvation after realizing their powerlessness, and choose to follow God's Way. It is not based on their works or any goodness or other merit, so that no one can boast.</p>	
<p>The Way of Grace</p>	<p>Jesus Christ, though perfect and sinless, suffered the full penalty of the law in our place by his death on the cross so that we, the lawbreakers, don't have to pay the penalty of our sins. Christ took our sins and we receive his righteousness. We are no longer under condemnation and become heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.</p>	<p>Jesus brought the gospel of grace, announcing that God's gift of Divine Love was again available to mankind after the first humans rejected it and chose their own way (tree of knowledge of good and evil). This gift of grace is available to all for the asking, and will</p>

		transform the recipient into a new creature with a new heart and divine nature. This is the new birth which is the key to salvation.
Justification	It means being pronounced “not guilty” – God regards us as free from sin and forgiven. He remits the punishment due to our sins and takes the guilt away. What enables God to hold back His wrath from us and withhold the curse of the law is that Jesus paid the full penalty for our sins. When he died on the cross, he was suffering in his body and spirit the eternal punishment due to every sinner. Justification occurs when we put our faith in his blood as payment for our sins. Faith is the means, but baptism is the occasion when justification occurs.	Justification occurs in one of two ways. Firstly, purification of soul by deciding to live a righteous life and working to the best of one’s ability toward that end through one’s efforts and with God’s help. Alternatively, an easier way is through soul transformation by God’s Divine Love imparted by the Holy Spirit. With the Divine Love comes divine nature, new heart, new birth, immortality, becoming new creature, and inheriting a place in God’ Celestial Kingdom. Both ways ultimately lead to a sinless state where penalties for sin cease. Forgiveness occurs every time we ask God for it.
How Does Justification Occur	We are justified now and continue in the state of forgiveness as long as we maintain the justifying faith in Christ. Being justified does not mean being sinless. It means that we are under no condemnation.	True justification only occurs on the Divine Love path as one ceases to resist the Holy Spirit, and thus stops committing the unpardonable sin. One embarks on the way to at-onement with God. They are then “in Christ” and under no condemnation. The Law of Compensation (cause and effect) is transcended by the higher Law of Love.
Faith	It consists of belief (assent) and trust leading to commitment. The former is of the mind or intellect, the latter of the heart / soul. It involves submitting to a person – a heartfelt surrender and committing to Jesus and his way. It involves trust in being justified by Jesus’ shed blood and death on the cross and his blood covering our sins in an ongoing way. It means relying on Christ’s finished work for salvation rather than daily law-keeping.	Faith is more than belief and comes from the soul. It is vital, but is not of and by itself the person’s righteousness. Their sins will not be covered by their faith in Jesus’ name. The only way to salvation is by praying for God’s Divine Love and having faith that they are receiving it and that their hearts / souls are being cleansed through transformation into God’s substance, which is the new birth and makes them true and redeemed children of God. Faith increases as one prays for and receives more Divine Love.
The Salvation Process	The salvation process involves a new life enabled by a new heart and new nature. This occurs through the gift of the Holy Spirit imparting God’s Divine Love. There is no more room for sin – we have died to sin, though we’ll still sin, but without wanting to. The Bible symbolically refers to this radical change as resurrection to a new life, regeneration, renewal, new creation, rebirth, circumcision of the heart, and walk in the Spirit. Progressively, the person’s outlook, thoughts, desires, motives, values, habits and behavior change as they are becoming more and more in harmony with God’s will and holiness.	
Role of Baptism	Baptism is the key to and the time of receiving the Holy Spirit and the new birth, as well as the resurrection and all the radical changes described above under The Salvation Process. Our old self is buried in baptism and we are raised to newness of life.	Baptism is symbolic of the burial of the sinful self and resurrection to a new life, but the water or the ceremony of and by itself cannot bring any change. Of most importance are the inner changes of repentance, faith, and desire to embark on the path to salvation, which is a process as the Divine Love imparted by the Holy Spirit

		transforms one's heart and soul into divine substance. The new birth occurs when the transformation is complete.
Role of the Holy Spirit	The Holy Spirit is given to us to dwell in us and it frees us from the power of sin and helps us to return to a state of spiritual health and purity. We are no longer under sin's control and are free to grow spiritually and produce the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit gives us victory over our sinful nature and is the source of the spiritual energy and moral power we need to be able to obey God's Law.	The Holy Spirit imparts to us Divine Love, which is divine essence and nature. The Divine Love enters our soul transforming it from divine image into divine substance, so that we are becoming more and more at-one with God and manifest the fruit of the Spirit. As we pray for and grow in the Divine Love, we'll be sinning less and less.
God's Plan for All People		
Does God Have Favorites?	All people are God's children and He wants to show mercy to and save all – if they choose to accept His way to salvation and fulfill the conditions.	
Israel's Role in God's Plan	If God has no favorites, why was Israel His chosen people? They were chosen for a temporary special purpose – to provide a nation as the means of the Saviour's entry into the world. They were the descendants of Abraham, to whom God gave a special promise of a descendant in whom all nations would be blessed. This was Jesus, who came out of the tribe of Judah – which descended from Abraham's grandson Jacob, later renamed Israel, and great-grandson Judah. After a time in the Promised Land, the twelve tribes of Israel first became a kingdom, then divided into two kingdoms – Israel (ten tribes) and Judah (two tribes). Eventually, both kingdoms ended up in captivity and exile because of sin. After 70 years of exile in Babylon, under the Persian King Cyrus, who defeated Babylon, those from the kingdom of Judah, who wanted to, were allowed to return to Palestine, to restore Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Many years later, this was the temple that Jesus was brought to as a baby by his parents, and as an adult visited on various occasions. Israel as a nation received special revelations in the form of laws, covenants and prophecies which pointed to spiritual realities that would come with the promised Saviour.	
New Israel – the Church	Israel as the original twelve tribes was never again reunited as a nation. (The modern state of Israel is just a small remnant, and many Jews are living scattered around the world.) Spiritually the ancient chosen people of God were replaced by the church – consisting of members from all nations – both Jews and Gentiles. They are under the new covenant of grace following the path to salvation. They are called to proclaim the saving gospel that Jesus preached. All who are open to the gospel of grace – the gospel of the kingdom of God – and act on it, are able to embark on the path to God's Kingdom. They become a part of the new spiritual nation comprising people of all countries, races, genders and cultures – all becoming one in Christ and one with God.	
Our Part in Salvation by Grace		
Our Responsibility	Being on the path to salvation, we are no longer slaves to sin, but become servants of God and of righteousness. However, we are not able to resist all temptation and are like babies learning to walk in the new way and growing in maturity and holiness. This process is called sanctification. God works in us to will and to work for His good pleasure. We are being empowered to do God's will. Our own strength is not enough. We must pray to God for help to resist temptation and to grow in grace – to walk in and being led by the Spirit / Divine Love imparted by the Spirit. Our lives and behavior toward others should reflect the same love, grace and mercy that God extended to us and that Jesus expressed in the beatitudes.	

Need for Growth and Change	While we are no longer slaves to the law and without hope of salvation, the law defines sin and shows us areas where we need to change. We are also to grow in spiritual knowledge. In addition, our attitudes, desires and preferences must change from sinful and self-centered to unselfish and God-honoring. We are to cease being motivated by fear and greed, but instead be motivated by love. Jesus' teaching in the beatitudes should be our guide as we develop meekness, humility, mercy, and purity of heart. The "fruit of the spirit" should also be apparent in our lives – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
Service and Good Works	Under grace, obedience to God's laws becomes less out of fear, striving or obligation and more out of love. The motives cease to be fear of punishment or desire for reward. Rather they become service and good works out of gratitude and love, both to God and neighbour.
Mercy in Action	<p>Mercy includes compassion for the suffering, charity for the needy, and clemency to criminals. It is concern for the needs of others. To be merciful means to be moved by misery. With the state of the world, there is a constant opportunity to show mercy. There are both physical and spiritual miseries. Spiritual misery is the most serious and must be the church's and its members' primary concern. Helping sinners to experience the mercy of God is our ultimate goal and the best expression of our own mercy for them.</p> <p>Mercy includes forgiveness without wishing retaliation. It is the opposite to holding grudges or wanting to get even. Forgiveness is vital for our own well-being and to receive forgiveness. Unforgiveness goes against the basic message of Christianity. With God's grace and mercy toward us, how can we not forgive those who wrong us? Mercy goes beyond justice.</p> <p>To practice mercy to those who have wronged us – especially in serious ways – we need God's help and empowerment through His Love imparted by the Holy Spirit working in our hearts.</p>
Love in Action	<p>Love does no harm to one's neighbor. The negative commandments show us how to avoid harming another person. Harm includes causing someone to stumble and sin against their conscience – even if the action is not in itself sinful. The law of liberty is superseded by the law of love if our action would lead a weaker person to sin by defiling their conscience.</p> <p>Love helps others grow. It edifies, encourages, assists, teaches and helps with better understanding.</p> <p>Love puts others on equal level as self – loving one's neighbor as oneself. It may involve putting others above oneself in certain situations.</p> <p>The "new" commandment that Jesus gave to his disciples was to love one another as he loved them. He loved them with God's Divine Love in his soul, which is the highest love and is unconditional.</p>
Desire to Change	Like little children desiring to grow up, we need to desire to change from the weakness and frustrations of spiritual infancy to the strength and joy of accomplishment that come with spiritual maturity. We will not live perfect and sinless lives, but the key is desire to do better and better as we are empowered on our path to salvation.
Earthly Rewards of Salvation by Grace	
Freedom	Those on the path to salvation become "free from the law" which means free from the ultimate penalty of the law or condemnation as the law of cause and effect is transcended by a higher law. They are not free to break the law, and if they do, the law of cause and effect still operates on the earth.
Family of God	Under grace, we are all family of God and brothers and sisters of Christ. We are true and redeemed (rather than just created) children of God characterized by brotherly love – loving each other as Jesus loved us with Divine Love. This includes works of service, such as physical assistance, mutual support, encouragement, prayers, teaching, counselling, exhortation and helping to carry each other's burdens.

"Fruit of the Spirit"	As a result of the Holy Spirit working in one's life and being partakers of the divine love and nature, one will experience love, joy, peace, godly wisdom, and receive help that will make life on earth easier.			
Assurance and the Final Outcome of Salvation by Grace				
Assurance of Salvation	<p>God invites us to accept salvation, but doesn't override man's free will if humans don't wish to accept God's offer. While sinners are not totally depraved as some believe, they cannot reach salvation by their own efforts. Certain feelings or experiences, such as tongue speaking, are not a guarantee of salvation. Personal goodness and doing good works are not assurance of salvation. The above will not give us assurance, but leave us in uncertainty and doubt. Our salvation rests in God, His promises and His grace, for God is faithful.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="495 491 2143 815"> <tr> <td data-bbox="495 491 1319 815"> <p>God's promises are objectified and fulfilled in three events: Christ died for our sins, which is the ultimate proof that God loves us. Jesus was resurrected and as a result we are promised life – being raised from spiritual death in baptism, and awaiting bodily resurrection at Christ's second coming. We have come under Christ's blood and the resulting justification in baptism, where we have met God and received all that He has promised regarding salvation.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1323 491 2143 815"> <p>God's promises and salvation are objectified in the receiving of His Love through the Holy Spirit. This is God's own nature and essence which works to transform our soul from divine image into divine substance. Nothing can separate us from God's Love and once we have acquired even a small amount of His Love, we will never lose it. Stopping to progress will lead to stagnation and delay reaching the goal of our salvation. God's Love in our souls guarantees immortality, the new birth and reaching at-onement with God, which is salvation.</p> </td> </tr> </table>		<p>God's promises are objectified and fulfilled in three events: Christ died for our sins, which is the ultimate proof that God loves us. Jesus was resurrected and as a result we are promised life – being raised from spiritual death in baptism, and awaiting bodily resurrection at Christ's second coming. We have come under Christ's blood and the resulting justification in baptism, where we have met God and received all that He has promised regarding salvation.</p>	<p>God's promises and salvation are objectified in the receiving of His Love through the Holy Spirit. This is God's own nature and essence which works to transform our soul from divine image into divine substance. Nothing can separate us from God's Love and once we have acquired even a small amount of His Love, we will never lose it. Stopping to progress will lead to stagnation and delay reaching the goal of our salvation. God's Love in our souls guarantees immortality, the new birth and reaching at-onement with God, which is salvation.</p>
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Can Salvation Be Lost?	<p>A believer will be saved only if he continues in his faith. "Once saved, always saved" is not a correct teaching. The key to assurance is that while we are sinners, we are justified by faith, not by works of the law, but we need to continue to "walk in the spirit". One can "fall away" and forfeit salvation.</p>	<p>The road to salvation is through the Divine Love in our souls, and once this occurs to even a small degree, salvation can never be lost, only delayed.</p>		
End of Salvation	<p>Going to Heaven.</p>	<p>Entering the Celestial Kingdom of God as divine angel. It is a place of glory, immortality, unlimited growth in Love, happiness, knowledge, and opportunities for service.</p>		
Destiny of the Unsaved	<p>They will end up in eternal torment in an ever-burning hell.</p>	<p>They may start in "hell" – a dark place of intense suffering – depending on their life and soul state at death, but they can/will progress into lighter realms as their souls are purified. Ultimately, upon reaching the original perfection of soul, they will end in Paradise – a place of happiness, but with no guaranteed immortality and with only limited opportunities for further growth. When salvation through transformation by the Divine Love is no longer available, they will remain in a state of "second death" – without the possibility of salvation and receiving immortality.</p>		

