

The Way of Salvation and Peace

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ABSTRACT

Without any gainsaying, the entire world is now witnessing and passing through periods of wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, conflicts, violence, divers evils, lack of peace, etc. as declared by the Holy Bible in Matthew 24:6-14. We hear, we see, and read about terrible happenings occurring in different parts of the world today, such as mass killing of innocent souls, the tense situations between Israel and Palestine (Hamas), war between Russia and Ukraine, ISIS terrorizing the world, the Boko Haram terrorist group cum the herders in Nigeria, among several others. Salvation of humanity as well as peace is by and through the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ through His finished work on the cross of calvary. The paper looks into some of the challenges facing the contemporary world and the way towards achieving peace and salvation.

KEYWORDS: *Salvation, peace, wars and rumors of wars, conflicts, terrorism*

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Salvation history is God's plan to save mankind from sin and lift the human family to the glory of heaven, as shown in Figure 1. This plan unfolds through Abraham, Moses and David, and came to fulfillment through Our Lord Jesus Christ. This then continues through the work of the church until Jesus comes again. The four stages of salvation history are: from creation, the law, and patriarchs and prophets, to the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and then to the work of the Holy Spirit in the Apostles and Church, which will continue until the end of the age. A very simple outline of salvation history is: (1) God as the Creator, and all that He created were good, (2) the fall of man which established the nature of the problem, and (3) the redemption work of God, a solution to the fall of mankind – John 3:14-21, for as God told Moses to make a serpent of bronze, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life [2]. Salvation is a three-phase sequence of justification, sanctification, and glorification.

The seven doctrines/elements of salvation are: forgiveness, justification, reconciliation, redemption,

sanctification, newness of life, and adoption. A sinner is said to occupy a sevenfold position before God i.e. as a debtor, a condemned criminal, an enemy, a slave, defiled and unholy, dead, and a poor stranger.

The six steps to salvation are:

- Hear the gospel – Romans 10:17, John 8:32
- Believe the Gospel – Hebrews 11:6, John 20:31
- Repent of past sins – Luke 13: 3, Acts 17:30
- Confess your faith in Jesus Christ – Romans 10:10, Matthew 10:32
- Be baptized – Galatians 3:27, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38
- Be faithful unto death – Revelation 2:10

THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM

In the Christendom, baptism is a basic or fundamental step in accepting Christ into one's life. As put forward by Apostle Paul in Galatians 3:27: "For many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." The word baptism is from the Greek word (baptize), which means, "to immerse." Baptism is a ceremony in which a Christian is immersed in water before the church to publicly symbolize their belief in Christ, showing that you are a follower of Jesus

Christ. The water is a symbol of sin being washed away. It shows that we are buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4). The four types of baptism are: immersion, submersion, aspersion, and affusion. Jesus said in Mark 16:16: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he that does not believe will be condemned."

WAY TO SALVATION

What then is salvation? Salvation is the great work of God in which He forgives sin and gives eternal life to a believing sinner as a free gift of His grace – Jonah 2: 9; Ephesians 2: 8-9. All people need new life since we are born spiritually dead and separated from God, these alienates man from God, making people totally depraved and unable to please God by the good deeds they may achieve (Romans 5: 12; Ephesians 2: 1-3; Isaiah 64 :6; Jeremiah 17: 9; Mark 7: 20-23).

Let us consider the following Bible passages:

"He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." - (Psalms 68: 20)

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men," - Titus 2:11.

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" – Hebrews 2:3.

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." - Hebrews 5:9

We can therefore see from the few passages, that the free gift of salvation to man comes from God through His only Son Jesus Christ. This free gift of salvation must not be neglected or ignored by man as the consequences would be very grave. The utter depravity of human nature, the necessity for repentance and regeneration and the eternal doom of the finally impenitent. By nature, the natural man is wicked, which made God to declare in the Book of Genesis 6: 5-7: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have made from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." In addition to this, in the Book of Jeremiah 17: 9, it was declared

that, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? It is only God that can discern the heart of man. From the heart of man proceed all kinds of evils e.g. striving, murder, evil concupiscence, inordinate affection, fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication – as stated by Paul the Apostle in Colossians 3:5-8, as all of these breed wars and lack of peace, as shown in Figures 2 and 3, and hence the need to mortify the members of our body.

This therefore calls for man to urgently come unto God, seek God's face for mercy and for him to make a U-turn away from all sins alienating him from God in order to ensure his salvation by the finished work of Christ on the cross, because he (Jesus Christ) has paid the ultimate price for us via the shedding of his blood, death, and resurrection. Salvation is assured only in Christ Jesus, for there is no other name by which we can be saved, as shown in Figure 4.

THE WAY OF PEACE

Christian religion: The Book of Isaiah 9: 6, states that: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Jesus Christ is the only way to inner and world/global peace, joy, peace from grief so on, as shown in Figures 5 and 6. "The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace." – Isaiah 59: 8. Peace has eluded the world and individuals because they have gone their individual ways. God's own peace from His Son Jesus is not as that of the world – John 14: 27. The three types of peace are:

- Spiritual peace – peace with God.
- Relational peace – peace with others.
- Emotional peace – peace within ourselves.

James Allen in his Book "The way of peace" discussed on the following seven issues [3]:

1. The power of meditation.
2. The two masters, Self and Truth.
3. The acquirement of spiritual power.
4. The realization of selfless love.
5. Entering into the infinite.
6. Saints, sages, and saviors: The Law of Service.
7. The realization of perfect peace.

Islamic religion: Nazir Ahmad Zargar said that: the gist of the message of Islam is in two fold, i.e.

1. Surrendering to the Divine Will which means giving due regard and reverence to the

commandments of Allah i.e. acting upon them with utmost sincerity, and

2. Showing utmost compassion, love and affection towards Allah's creation.

These two aspects can be summed up into one – LOVE – of God, for He is our Creator and of the creation, for all things belong to the same God. He submits that a true Muslim believer must love the rest of the creation, which is expressed when he meets others and greets them with peace (salam), wishing good to them all. This explains the fact that peace can prevail when people love each other, and that peace is essential in Islam [4].

Hinduism: Hinduism is the oldest and the third largest of the world's major religions, after Christianity and Islam, with 900 million adherents. Hinduism is also known as "Sanatana dharma," which means "immemorial way of right living." About 80% of the Indian population regard themselves as Hindu. Hinduism has monotheistic (one God) as well as polytheistic (many Gods) elements: the one Ultimate Reality or Supreme Being (Brahman) also exists simultaneously in the deities of the Creator (Brahma), the Sustainer (Vishnu) and the Destroyer (Shiva). The sacred writings, the Four Vedas, are considered to be divine in origin and the direct transmission of God's word, not delivered through a prophet. A Hindu seeks personal purification on the path to self realization through one of four or any combination of the four paths which are [5]:

1. Ritualistic worship, chanting of prayers, devotional surrender to a higher ideal (the Deity representing the qualities).
2. Through service.
3. Through yoga and meditation.
4. Through inquiry (know thyself).

Many believe that war is unavoidable when all attempts at peacemaking have failed; some believe war is never right. Hindu perspectives on war and peace are based on the principles of non-violence and duty. The two viewpoints in Hinduism are: the Bhagavad Gita teachings, and the principle of "ahimsa" depicted as "pacifist" that refuse to battle in a war [5].

Buddhism: Buddhism has an intimate association with the concept of peace. In its long history we hardly find any evidence of violence, killings or religious hatred. Buddhism is not just a religion of the past or a mere faith as many have thought, but it is a time-tested scientific religion and philosophy which, in the context of the present world-situation, is more relevant today than ever before for establishing world peace [6]. Buddha's teaching is said to be based on

overcoming evil which has helped humanity in achieving peace. The noble mission of the Buddha helped not only India but also South-eastern and Far-eastern countries to create conditions for justice, political and socio-economic stability, fraternity, peace and social harmony [7]. Buddhist scripture condemns violence in every form. "Ahimsa" a term meaning "not to injure", is a primary virtue in Buddhism [8]. Historically, violence has also been used or as a form of exceptions to commit violence for various reasons, and as it is found in other religious traditions [9-11].

CONCLUSION

Salvation is the state of being saved or protected from harm or a dire situation. However, in religion or theology, salvation generally refers to the deliverance of the soul from sin and its consequences. The incarnation and the death of Jesus Christ formed the climax of a divine plan for humanity's salvation. This plan was conceived by God before the creation of the world, achieved at the cross, and would be completed at the last judgement, when the second coming of Christ would mark the catastrophic end of the world and the creation of a new world. For the Christians, salvation and peace is only possible through our belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who offered himself as the once-for-all sacrifice that atoned for the sin of humanity.

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Figure 1 Salvation.

Source: https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=8568a6baa21243e5&sxsrf=ADLYWIIw5rqfBZJS0Urs3uJqTXX23zO6lA:1728720497928&q=images+on+the+way+of+salvation+and+peace+by+wikipedia&udm=2&fbs=AEQNm0A-2qeMemLzzt_2BVemHLFNuCSl5jMwuDXSDytcTb5xODqo_tJpGmaSU4pQVEbQQTDWnMPSk8wZNRhz5PGHQwbe9VGOsTvTC6PzQFjR3A55McI87gzvGpjAGq9Nm2Y19Am3ZfXn3nnrjEbsyiaT

Ayx5OlH9kfyofUfrh41ii7MJR49ai3l&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwirmMfZsYiJAxWPVqQEHQ-RBFgQtKgLegQIDxAB&biw=1366&bih=580&dp r=1#vhid=0mMSpH96OZCHLM&vssid=mosaic



Figure 2 Peace.

Source: https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=8568a6baa21243e5&sxsrf=ADLYWIIw5rqfBZJS0Urs3uJqTXX23zO6lA:1728720497928&q=images+on+the+way+of+salvation+and+peace+by+wikipedia&udm=2&fbs=AEQNm0A-2qeMemLzzt_2BVemHLFNuCSl5jMwuDXSDytcTb5xODqo_tJpGmaSU4pQVEbQQTDWnMPSk8wZNRhz5PGHQwbe9VGOsTvTC6PzQFjR3A55McI87gzvGpjAGq9Nm2Y19Am3ZfXn3nnrjEbsyiaT



Figure 3 War and peace.

Source: https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=7d18109a394306ad&sxsrf=ADLYWIIrK1DsIX3h8Q9KB PpHLd3MmA5Rrg:1728721151480&q=images+on+the+way+of+salvation+and+peace+by+wikipedia&udm=2&fbs=AEQNm0A2qeMemLzzt_2BVemHLFNuCSI5jMwuDXSDytcTb5xODqo_tJpGmaSU4pQVEbQ QTDWnMPSk8wZNRhz5PGHQwbe9VGOsTvTC6PzQFjR3A55McI87gzvGpjAGq9Nm2Y19Am3ZfXn3n nrjEbsyiaTAyx5OIH9kfyofUfrh41ii7MJR49ai3I&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwinhZmRtliJAXWucaQEHEwbFiM QtKgLegQIDxAB&cshid=1728721159646957&biw=1366&bih=580&dpr=1#vhid=z4dm8KxGWYxdvM&vssid=mosaic



Figure 4. Sary: Mormon plan of salvation diagram (English)

Source: https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=8568a6baa21243e5&sxsrf=ADLYWIIw5rqfBZJS0Urs3uJ qTXX23zO6lA:1728720497928&q=images+on+the+way+of+salvation+and+peace+by+wikipedia&udm=2 &fbs=AEQNm0A2qeMemLzzt_2BVemHLFNuCSI5jMwuDXSDytcTb5xODqo_tJpGmaSU4pQVEbQQTD WnMPSk8wZNRhz5PGHQwbe9VGOsTvTC6PzQFjR3A55McI87gzvGpjAGq9Nm2Y19Am3ZfXn3nnrjEb syiaTAyx5OIH9kfyofUfrh41ii7MJR49ai3I&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwirmMfZsYiJAXWPVqQEHQ- RBFgQtKgLegQIDxAB&biw=1366&bih=580&dpr=1#vhid=ZC0795yWsUdzCM&vssid=mosaic



Figure 5. Christianity and violence.

Source: https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=7d18109a394306ad&sxsrf=ADLYWIIrK1DsIX3h8Q9KB PpHLd3MmA5Rrg:1728721151480&q=images+on+the+way+of+salvation+and+peace+by+wikipedia&udm=2&fbs=AEQNm0A-2qeMemLzzt_2BVemHLFNuCSl5jMwuDXSDytcTb5xODqo_tJpGmaSU4pQVEbQQTDWnMPSk8wZNRhz5PGHQwbe9VGOsTvTC6PzQFjR3A55McI87gzvGpjAGq9Nm2Y19Am3ZfXn3nnrjEbsyiaTAyx5OIH9kfyofUfrh41ii7MJR49ai3I&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwinhZmRtIiJAXWucaQEHewbFiMQtKgLegQIDxAB&cshid=1728721159646957&biw=1366&bih=580&dpr=1#vhid=jwMttzXW4jN0UM&vssid=mosaic



Figure 6. Religion and peacebuilding.

Source: https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=7d18109a394306ad&sxsrf=ADLYWIIrK1DsIX3h8Q9KB PpHLd3MmA5Rrg:1728721151480&q=images+on+the+way+of+salvation+and+peace+by+wikipedia&udm=2&fbs=AEQNm0A2qeMemLzzt_2BVemHLFNuCSl5jMwuDXSDytcTb5xODqo_tJpGmaSU4pQVEbQQTDWnMPSk8wZNRhz5PGHQwbe9VGOsTvTC6PzQFjR3A55McI87gzvGpjAGq9Nm2Y19Am3ZfXn3nnrjEbsyiaTAyx5OIH9kfyofUfrh41ii7MJR49ai3I&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwinhZmRtIiJAXWucaQEHewbFiMQtKgLegQIDxAB&cshid=1728721159646957&biw=1366&bih=580&dpr=1#vhid=yE7c1rGfCqCupM&vssid=mosaic