

Eternal Life & Salvation in the New Testament

I. Receiving Eternal Life in the Gospel of John

- A. **John 1:12-13** (RSV) But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; {13} who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
- B. **John 3:14-17** (RSV) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, {15} that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." {16} For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. {17} For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.
- C. **John 5:24** (RSV) Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.
- D. **John 6:47** (RSV) Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.
- E. **John 11:25-27** (RSV) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, {26} and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" {27} She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world."
- F. **John 20:30-31** (RSV) Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; {31} but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

II. Two Essential Beliefs for Salvation

1. Jesus is the Christ

In the New Testament, *Christ*, is the Greek word for the Hebrew word *Messiah* (as it is translated into English). Webster's Unabridged Dictionary defines *Messiah* as: "[Heb. anointed.] Christ, the anointed; the Savior of the world." Throughout the Bible then, the hope of the coming Messiah and his arrival in the person of Jesus was for the purpose of saving people in the world--saving people from sin, from death, from Satan, and from their own corrupt flesh (self-life). Even Jesus' name means: *Savior; Deliverer*

- i. **John 4:25-26** (RSV) The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things." {26} Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

- ii. **Mark 14:55–62** (LEB) {55} Now the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, and they did not find it. {56} For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony was not consistent. {57} And some stood up and began to give false testimony against him, saying, {58} “We heard him saying, ‘I will destroy this temple made by hands, and within three days I will build another not made by hands.’” {59} And their testimony was not even consistent about this. {60} And the high priest stood up in the midst of them and asked Jesus, saying, “Do you not reply anything? What are these people testifying against you?” {61} But he was silent and did not reply anything. Again the high priest asked him and said to him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” {62} And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.”
- iii. **2 Corinthians 5:21** (NIV) God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2. Jesus is the Son of God

The title, *Son of God*, refers to His deity--that Jesus is God. In the mystery of the Trinity--that God is three persons in One Essence, Father, Son and Holy Spirit--Jesus is clearly shown to be God throughout the New Testament.

- a. **John 14:6-9** (RSV) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. {7} If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him." {8} Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied." {9} Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"
- i. **Jesus is the Creator**
 - a. **John 1:1-4** (RSV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} He was in the beginning with God; {3} all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. {4} In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
 - b. **Colossians 1:15-17** (RSV) He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; {16} for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities -- all things were created through him and for him. {17} He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

ii. Jesus is God

- a. **Exodus 3:9–15** (LEB) {9} And now, look, the cry of distress of the Israelites has come to me, and also I see the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. {10} And now come, and I will send you to Pharaoh, and you must bring my people, the Israelites, out from Egypt.” {11} But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Israelites out from Egypt?” {12} And he said, “Because I am with you, and this will be the sign for you that I myself have sent you: When you bring the people out from Egypt, you will serve God on this mountain.” {13} But Moses said to God, “Look, if I go to the Israelites and I say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is his name?’ then what shall I say to them?” {14} And God said to Moses, “I am that I am.” And he said, “So you must say to the Israelites, ‘I am sent me to you.’” {15} And God said again to Moses, “So you must say to the Israelites, ‘Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and this is my remembrance from generation to generation.’”

(The following verses are quoted and/or adapted from the New American Standard Bible 95 Update.)

- 1) **John 4:26** Jesus said[^] to her, "I am the one who is speaking to you."
- 2) **John 6:20** But He said[^] to them, "I am; do not be afraid."
- 3) **John 6:35** Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."
- 4) **John 6:48** "I am the bread of life."
- 5) **John 8:12** Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."
- 6) **John 8:18** "I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me."
- 7) **John 8:24** 'Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins."
- 8) **John 8:28** So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me."
- 9) **John 8:58** Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."
- 10) **John 10:7** So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep."
- 11) **John 10:9** "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."

- 12) **John 10:11** "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
- 13) **John 10:14** "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me,
- 14) **John 11:25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,
- 15) **John 13:19** "From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am.
- 16) **John 14:6** Jesus said[^] to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.
- 17) **John 15:1** "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.
- 18) **John 15:5** "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.
- 19) **John 18:5-6** They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said[^] to them, "I am." And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. {6} So when He said to them, "I am," they drew back and fell to the ground.
- 20) **John 18:8** Jesus answered, "I told you that I am; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,"

III. The Gospel of Mark

A. The Rich, Young Ruler Interrupts Jesus on a Journey

1. **Mark 10:17-27** (RSV) And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, **what must I do to inherit eternal life?**" {18} And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. {19} You know the commandments: 'Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" {20} And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth." {21} And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." {22} At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. {23} And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" {24} And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, **how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!**" {25} It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." {26} And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "**Then who can be saved?**" {27} Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

An Explanation of a Camel through the Eye of a Needle:

"The manifest impossibility of this feat which so scandalised the disciples has worried biblical interpreters ever since. One attempt to 'improve' the saying (see Textual Note 25) is the reading *kamilon* (κάμιλον - *rope*) for *kamēlon* (κάμηλον - *camel*) found in a few minuscules and translated in the Georgian version, though the sort of ship's hawser apparently denoted by this very rare and late word is no more likely than a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Another modification, repeated by preachers until it has popularly acquired the status of an established datum, is the suggestion popularised in the nineteenth century²⁷ that 'the eye of the needle' was a term for a small gate within the large double gate in the city wall, through which pedestrians could enter without opening the large gates as would be necessary for a camel train. The resultant image of a camel stripped of its load and bending its knees and neck to get through the pedestrian gate offers rich homiletical possibilities, but sadly it remains an unsupported guess. 'There is not the slightest shred of evidence for this identification. This door has not in any language been called the needle's eye, and is not so called today.'²⁸ But worse than the lack of evidence for this conjecture is its effect in actually undermining the point of the proverb. That which Jesus presented as ludicrously impossible is turned into a remote possibility: the rich person, given sufficient unloading and humility, might just possibly be able to squeeze in. That was not what Jesus' proverb meant, and it was not how the disciples understood it (v. 26)."¹

25. The substitution of *kamilon* (κάμιλον - *rope*) for *kamēlon* (κάμηλον - *camel*) in a few minuscules is an obvious attempt to 'improve' Jesus' bizarre comparison.

²⁷ Lagrange cites this view as early as the fifteenth century (Poloner), while Gundry traces it back to Theophylact in the eleventh, and Schweizer to an unnamed commentator in the ninth.

²⁸ G. N. Scherer, writing in the nineteenth century, quoted by K. E. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, 166; Bailey's own lengthy Middle Eastern experience and study of Eastern commentaries confirms Scherer's observation.

¹ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2002), 405.

B. Jesus Returns to His Journey Going up to Jerusalem to do the Impossible

1. **Mark 10:32-34** (RSV) And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, {33} saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; {34} and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise."

IV. The Acts of the Apostles

A. Salvation in Jesus

1. **Acts 2:21** (RSV) "And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

B. Salvation by Grace

1. **Acts 15:4-11** (RSV) When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. {5} But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up, and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses." {6} The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. {7} And after there had been much debate, Peter rose and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. {8} And God who knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; {9} and he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith. {10} Now therefore why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? {11} But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

C. The Call to Believe

1. **Acts 10:42-43** (RSV) And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that he is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead. {43} To him all the prophets bear witness that every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."
2. **Acts 16:23-31** (RSV) And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. {24} Having received this charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. {25} But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, {26} and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and every one's fetters were unfastened. {27} When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. {28} But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." {29} And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, {30} and brought them out and said, "Men, what must I do to be saved?" {31} And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

V. The Epistle to the Romans

A. The Roman Road

1. **Romans 3:9-12** (RSV) What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all; for I have already charged that all men, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, {10} as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; {11} no one understands, no one seeks for God. {12} All have turned aside, together they have gone wrong; no one does good, not even one."
2. **Romans 3:21-24** (RSV) But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, {22} the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; {23} since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, {24} they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus,
3. **Romans 6:23** (RSV) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
4. **Romans 5:8** (RSV) But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.
5. **Romans 10:9** (RSV) Because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

VI. The Epistle to the Ephesians

A. By Grace through Faith

Grace is more than just an idea or an attitude of God's heart; *grace* is the *undeserved, unmerited kind power and action of God to forgive, save and change a broken and sinful life*. Also, the word *faith* in the original language of the New Testament is from the same root as the verb *to believe*. Therefore, the word *faith* can be translated as *belief* in what Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8 below: "For by grace you have been saved through *belief*." Essentially, then the message is the same: believe!

1. **Ephesians 2:1-9** (RSV) And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins {2} in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. {3} Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. {4} But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, {5} even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), {6} and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, {7} that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. {8} For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God-- {9} not because of works, lest any man should boast.

VII. The Epistle of First John

A. Assurance of Eternal Life

1. **1 John 5:11-13** (RSV) And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. {12} He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life. {13} I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

VIII. The Revelation of John

A. Opening the Door

1. **Revelation 3:20** (RSV) Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

IX. The Thief on the Cross

A. Both Robbers begin by Reviling Jesus

1. **Matthew 27:38-44** (RSV) Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. {39} And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads {40} and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." {41} So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, {42} "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. {43} He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him; for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" {44} And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

B. But one Robber has a Change of Mind and simply asks, "Remember Me"

1. **Luke 23:39-43** (RSV) One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" {40} But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? {41} And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." {42} And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." {43} And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."