

“God proved His love on the Cross.
When Christ hung, and bled, and died,
it was God saying to the world,
‘I love you.’”
Billy Graham

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Jesus,
OUR SALVATION

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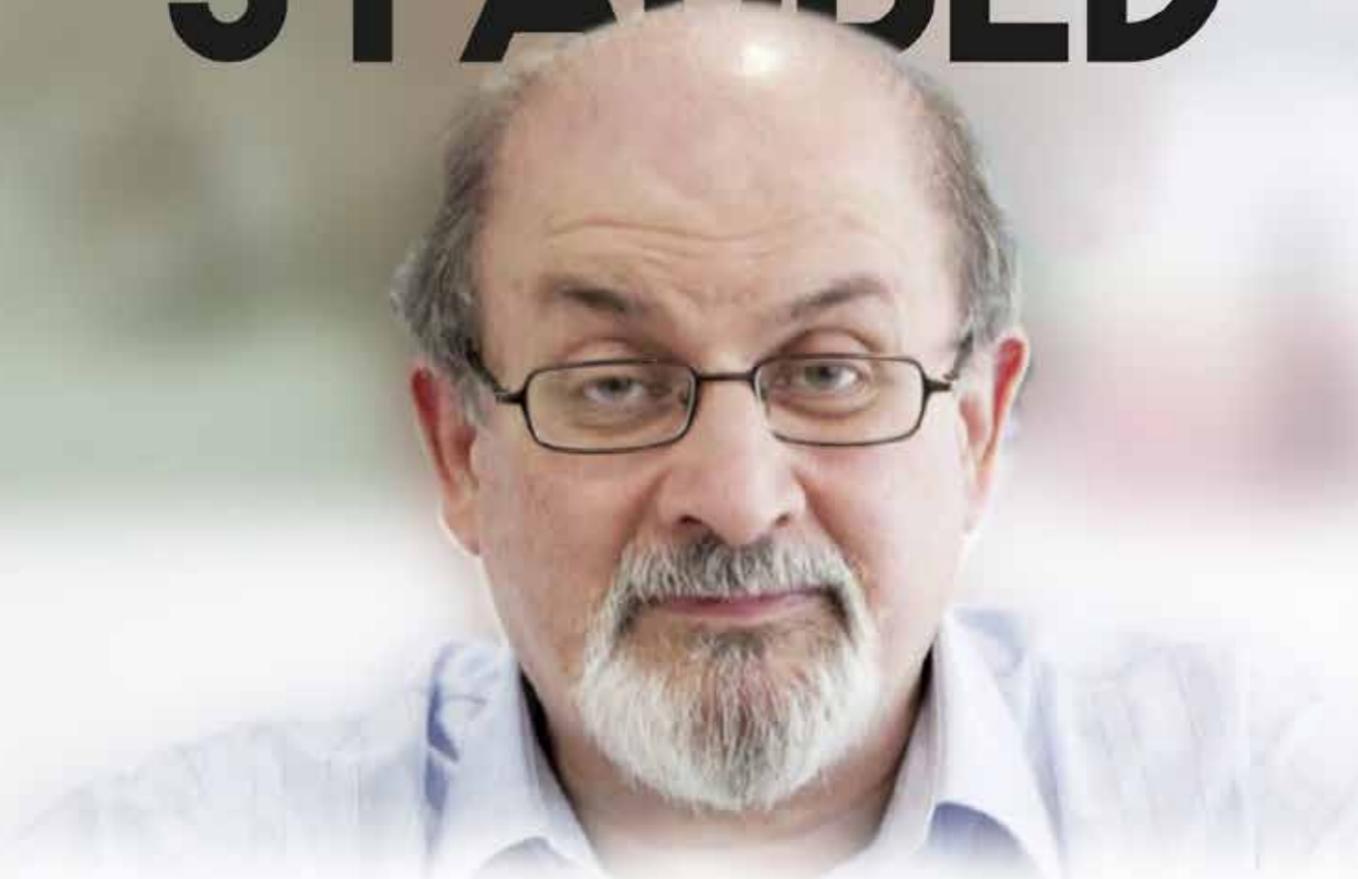
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SALMAN RUSHDIE IS STABBED



Bloodbath and killing seem to be on the rise across the world now and insecurity and fear often grip the minds of people in place of happiness or cheerfulness. This is a recent phenomenon seen everywhere in the world and no region or country is out of its reach and the latest manifestation of this phenomenon could be witnessed in the United States of America, where the world believed fear

could not reign in the hearts of its people. Busting this myth, world-famous writer, Salman Rushdie, was stabbed seriously on the stage of a public event in New York, where he was preparing to deliver a speech. The attacker was identified as Hadi Matar who is aged 24. He reportedly hails from New Jersey and was arrested. An initial sweep of Matar's social media accounts by law enforcement showed him to be sympathetic to Shia extremism.

Salman Rushdie, the Mumbai-born celebrated author who faced Islamist death threats after writing 'The Satanic Verses', was stabbed seriously in an event in New York on Friday. The incident is believed to be the fulfilment of the death threat issued by Iran's spiritual and political leader Ayatollah Khomeini who also offered 3 million dollars reward for anyone who kills him. It may be recalled that since the 1980s, Mr. Rushdie's writing has led to

death threats from Iran. Needlessly, there is widespread celebration in Iran and many Islamic nations about Rushdie's execution attempts as he is a blasphemous person to the Islamic world. It is pertinent to note that Rushdie is not only the one who has paid a heavy price by staying in hiding for years, but several others also having been involved in bringing the book out were

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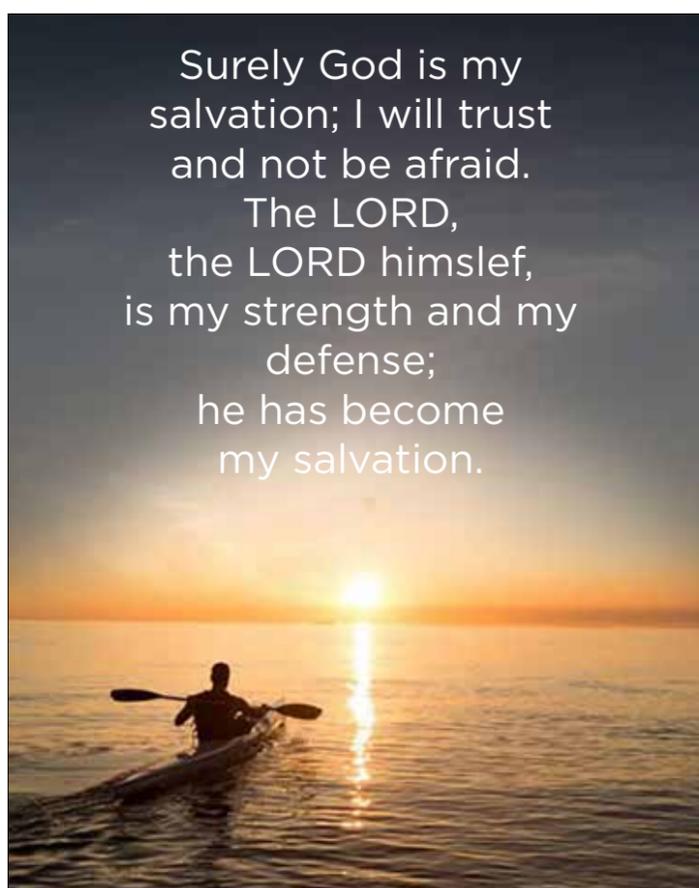
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SEPTEMBER
Baptism in the Spirit

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Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid.
The LORD,
the LORD himself,
is my strength and my defense;
he has become my salvation.

FROM THE
editor



**Salvation:
A Sacrament or Experience**

The twenty-first century Church stands on the shoulders of faithful followers of Christ who paid a heavy price for their beliefs and practices from the very outset of the movement. The Roman government and the Jews vehemently strived to snuff out the movement that commenced with a handful of people out of their own suspicions and insecurities about the group. However, to their disappointment, it rapidly spread to all the continents of the world in a span of a few centuries and grew to become the single largest religion of the world. Genuine followers of Christian faith were not coerced, allured, or conquered; rather they were transformed and became a new creation through the love of Christ. However, in the present context, after two millennia, with the rapid decline of people’s interest in organized religions and especially the Christian faith in the West, it is vital to examine the fundamentals of Christian faith and practice. The next few months’ topics will explore the cardinal components that constitute Christian life and its relevance and significance in today’s world.

The most decisive element of the Christian faith for which the early followers of Christ endured hardship and brutal torture was their confession of faith in Jesus Christ as their saviour. They certainly never heard the historical division between the Catholics and Protestants and within the Protestants the intriguing difference between Calvinism and Arminianism or the disagreement between the Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal on the modern version of debate on ‘grace’ and “finished work of Christ”. For the people who paid the massive cost for this faith, their unwavering conviction about their saviour and destiny opened through Christ was what mattered to them. Salvation as a personal, continual, and influential experience ranked the highest priority in their life.

Sadly, being a Christian today means hundreds of different things to different people with unwarranted gaps, depending on their background. While filling those

“The most decisive element of the Christian faith for which the early followers of Christ endured hardship and brutal torture was their confession of faith in Jesus Christ as their saviour.”

gaps remains an impossible task, it is highly important to reaffirm the meaning and purpose of Christian life in a postmodern world where most of the values and identities have become fluid and made belief have become the norm of the day. The present generation who experiences salvation is responsible for handing over the very core of the truth to the forthcoming generations as it happened in the first few centuries of the Church’s existence. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, was one of the earliest church fathers privileged to have close contact with the apostles. He was a disciple of the apostle John. A local Smyrnaean pagan mob loyal to the Roman government discovered his hiding place. Despite knowing their motives, he treated them like old friends and offered them food and drinks. Even after seeing great virtues in him, they executed the elderly bishop because he did not yield to their appeal to give up his faith. When they insisted on relinquishing his faith, he replied, “Fourscore and six years have I served him, and he has never done me injury; how then can I now blaspheme my King and Saviour?”

Beyond its doctrinal significance, one’s daily experiential relevance of salvation and their response to challenges to faith and life that matter the most. The life of an average Christian living in a ‘safe zone’ of the world may not be in jeopardy. However, they may face numerous challenges that come into sharp conflict with their faith in the salvific work of Jesus on the cross. Moreover, God’s grand scheme of redeeming the world is not intended to confine to an individual’s personal level but rather encompasses the restoration of the whole creation into its original status, along with the human’s transformation into the image of God.



OH! WHAT A GREAT SALVATION!

Salvation is multifaceted and thus can be presented in diverse ways. Some common views include forgiveness of sins, accepting Jesus as saviour and Lord, escaping hell, and going to heaven when we die. Theological understanding also varies as different traditions look at salvation from various vantage points. However, the popular theological view of salvation chiefly revolves around the Pauline themes of justification, sanctification, and glorification. These ideas are essential, but they prove to be minimalist and only partial if taken isolated and detached from the grand narrative of salvation presented in the scripture and early tradition of the church.

To perceive a panoramic and maximal picture of salvation, one needs to arrange these various pieces within the grand story of salvation that begins with the eternal plan of God to create human beings. Having created human beings, the crown jewel of all creation, in his image and likeness, God commanded them to have dominion over all earth. Falling prey to the wrong choice and tactics of the devil, humans lost their fellowship with God and eternal life. The purpose of God in their lives as image bearers and royal priesthood was thwarted. However, we should never forget that sin and corruption came later and dismantled the original identity and vocation of human beings. Our original identity is not as a sinner but as sons and daughters of God, as image bearers, and as a royal priesthood.

Unfortunately, we usually begin our salvation narrative from the fall of humans as if we were originally sinners from the beginning. “You are a sinner; therefore, you need a saviour, and you must repent, or you will perish in hell” is our catchy gospel slogan. Again, this is not erroneous but incomplete if we place them outside the grand narrative. Here, we tend to focus more on the retrospective aspect (what are we saved from) and completely forget the prospective aspect (what are we saved for) of salvation. Conversely, if we allow the story to begin from the creation of human beings as kings and priests over all earth, the consummation of the story will be nothing less than the restoration of human beings and the whole earth where they reign forever. God has only plan A; even while it is interrupted by human sin and the devil’s schemes, he never looks for alternatives but restores it with his might so that he be all in all.

In a nutshell, the all-encompassing idea of salvation must involve God creating human beings as his image bearers, sin entering the world and interposing the purpose of God for a certain time, God’s unconditional love for his creation, the incarnation of Christ, the coming of the Spirit and the consummation (judgement) and restoration of all things in the future. This view offers both personal and cosmic salvation. That is the salvation of

“THE ALL-ENCOMPASSING IDEA OF SALVATION MUST INVOLVE GOD CREATING HUMAN BEINGS AS HIS IMAGE BEARERS, SIN ENTERING THE WORLD AND INTERPOSING THE PURPOSE OF GOD FOR A CERTAIN TIME, GOD’S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE FOR HIS CREATION, THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST, THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT AND THE CONSUMMATION (JUDGEMENT) AND RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS IN THE FUTURE.”

human beings and the restoration of all creation. N. T. Wright says that God wanted to rescue humans so that humans might be his rescuing stewards over creation (Surprised by Hope). The Bible begins with God creating heaven and earth and all that in them and crowning humans as His royal priesthood. The Bible ends on a similar note when John sees a vision of new heavens and earth where God and humans dwell in a close fellowship, and they reign together forever and ever (Rev 22:3-5). Never limit the breadth and depth of salvation! Oh! What great salvation indeed!



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THE GREAT PLAN OF SALVATION

“EVERY PERSON SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH ALONE WILL BE FINALLY RESTORED INTO A PERFECT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD: THE CREATOR, REDEEMER AND RESTORER.”

The term ‘Salvation’ means to be liberated from danger or suffering. From a Biblical perspective, the greatest danger is sin. Salvation is the act of deliverance and triumphs over sin, which is eternal. Romans 3:23 clarifies the necessity of salvation – “For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” Salvation can be defined as God’s gracious plan to save humanity from the eternal punishment of sin through Jesus Christ. It is God’s work from beginning to end, and we have nothing to boast about. The plan of Salvation stands on four significant pillars as revealed in the Bible:

Creation

The salvation story starts with the creation of the universe, as described in Genesis 1-2. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. God saw all that He had made was very good.” God created everything good, and the mind-blowing fact is that He created humans in His image. God placed the first couple, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden and entrusted them with the responsibility to take care of everything. God created humans to have fellowship, who may worship Him and live in harmony. The salvation story had a fabulous start, but as it progressed, a twist occurred.

Fall

Disobedience was the first diversion of the salvation story. The first couple yielded to temptation, enjoyed the fruit from the tree of knowledge and lost the honor and glory they had. Their rebellious

choice detached them from God. His sinful act distorted his perfect image and raised a barrier which accounted for shame instead of honor. This fall resulted in physical and spiritual death (shame). Though man fell, God gave a hint of future hope while talking to the serpent. Genesis 3:15 mentions the one who would crush the head of the serpent and strike his heel. Further, in Genesis 12, God’s promise to Abraham confirmed the future hope through the covenantal blessing. In the rest of the Old Testament, several subplots appear in the salvation story highlighting certain significant characters, their roles, and disputes, with some temporary resolutions. There were prophets and kings who God ordained, but no one could resolve sin, the fundamental issue of man. At regular intervals in the Old Testament, God reiterated the future hope and the good news that was yet to come. Meanwhile, sin grew and turned people’s lives into a disaster which in turn confirmed their need for a Savior.

Redemption

Now the ray of hope comes into action. God the Father sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, into this world to fulfil the promises made to Israel. He took on the nature of a servant and incarnated in human likeness to deal with sin, the greatest problem of man, and delivers him from it. As Apostle John says, “Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” When Christ made the royal declaration of the Kingdom (Mark 1:14-15), he addressed an audience who considered Caesar as the King.

His Jewish audience rejected his message. Consequently, He was sentenced to death on the cross. He took the punishment of death as a penalty for the sins of the entire humanity. The King of all the earth humbled himself by becoming obedient to his Father, willing to endure the pain and shame on our behalf. The sinless man took upon the sins of the entire world and died a substitutionary death on the Cross. Though it appeared to be a victory for his enemies, the death of Christ confirmed the triumph over the powers of darkness and evil. It was a glorious victory over the curse of sin. Galatians 3:13-14 says - “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us so that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus.” Jesus was buried in the tomb, but the story didn’t end there. On the third day, he was raised according to the Scriptures and appeared to many. After appearing to many witnesses, on the fortieth day, Christ the Lord ascended to heaven.

Restoration

Jesus was highly exalted as Lord of heaven and the earth and seated at God’s right hand. According to the Jews, the right hand indicates blessing, authority, and power; in contrast, the left hand represents a curse. After Christ’s ascension, God sent the Holy Spirit, as promised, to regenerate and sanctify those who repent of their sins and accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Christ will return in glory to restore all creation when there are no more tears, death, disease and most importantly, sin. The Lord who wore the crown of

thorns has now been crowned with glory and honor. Revelation 19:16 says – “On his robe, and on his thigh, he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.” When He returns to earth, what Isaiah foretold centuries ago shall come true: “Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear allegiance.” The Scripture portrays a very sparkling picture of the future for those who have received salvation through Jesus Christ. Every person saved by grace through faith alone will be finally restored into a perfect relationship with God: the Creator, Redeemer and Restorer. Though the Kingship of God started with Israel, it shall conclude with all nations and people of all languages irrespective of caste, creed and ethnicity. Ephesians 3:6 says - This mystery is that through the gospel, the Gentiles are heirs with Israel, members of one body. So let us worship God for the salvation He has gifted us freely through his Son, Jesus Christ.



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DEVOTIONAL

Jesus, OUR SALVATION

“Are you saved?” I asked Aby, a friend at school. I was in my early teens, determined to share the gospel with my schoolmates. Moreover, I had picked up this “fail-safe” conversation starter for evangelists from a gospel tract. I will never forget the response I received.

“Saved? From what? I never fell into a well or anything.”

I learned the hard way there is no one-size-fits-all strategy for personal evangelism. Eventually, I managed to share the good news with Aby. But that incident left me thinking about Christian jargon and the nature of the gospel. From what did God rescue us? Our understanding of what God saves us from will shape the “good news” we share with our friends.

Have you paid careful attention to what evangelists promise their audience? What do they claim God will do for those who trust in Jesus? Hidden behind these offers, you will discover their belief about salvation. Many Christians believe God saves people from poverty as if it were the greatest of all evils. They proclaim deliverance from debts, unemployment, from failures in business and education. They promise success and promotion. You might ask, “God provides for our daily needs in answer to prayer, does He not? Does He not deliver debtors from their debts? Will God not give success in education and business? If God is not the one who blesses farmers with rich harvests, who does?” Of course, God answers prayers. But God does not answer every prayer the way we want Him to.

Did God ever say about our Savior, “You shall name Him Jesus because He will deliver His people from poverty and suffering?” The angel of the Lord told Joseph, “[Mary] will give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus.” Yeshu’a – meaning, Yahweh has become our salvation. But why “Jesus?” “... Because He will save His people from their sins.” Sins! That is the “well” from which God saves us. And that’s not all. Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God to Jews who dreamt of a little sovereign kingdom. Devout Jews back then were Zionists for whom “salvation” meant the founding of a Jewish state under a Davidic king (Messiah). Simeon, an elderly Jew, holding baby Jesus, prayed, “Now, ... permit your servant to depart in peace. For my eyes have seen Your salvation.” “Salvation,” to those like Simeon, was deliverance from Rome.

God’s ways are higher than our ways. He fulfilled His covenant with David in a way that Zionists could never even imagine. God did not give the Jews a Messiah who sat on a throne in earthly Jerusalem, ruling over a small kingdom. Instead, God gave them a heavenly Messiah, enthroned at His “right hand,” reigning over heaven and earth. This Messiah offered them true liberty—freedom from slavery to sin, the root cause of their political woes.

Jesus demonstrated his kingship by imparting the Holy Spirit to His disciples on Pentecost. That miraculous outpouring convinced three thousand Jews that God had inaugurated the Messianic reign of Jesus in heaven. That’s why they called him Christ.

Jesus is our salvation. He saves



“Jesus is our salvation. He saves us from our sins. He transfers us from the kingdom of darkness to His eternal heavenly kingdom. This salvation, unlike Zionism, is for all humanity.”

us from our sins. He transfers us from the kingdom of darkness to His eternal heavenly kingdom. This salvation, unlike Zionism, is for all humanity. Isaiah rightly said about Jesus, “All flesh will see the salvation of God.” (Luke 3:6)

God did not guarantee us material success and prosperity. As Christians, we may face poverty, rejection, denial of human rights, persecution, unfair trials and imprisonment, confiscation of property, and even death. But through Christ, our salvation, we are more than conquerors.



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Man's search for salvation can be traced back from the time humanity was doomed to deception and disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. Throughout the world each culture adapted their own practices and rituals to attain moksha, nirvana, or a good afterlife.

In our Indian subcontinent we have a culture that deeply believes in morals, good and evil, death, and the cycle of rebirths. We believe in millions of deities and a plethora of extreme acts of penitence to please the gods or goddesses. Hindutva teaches moksha can be attained only by living a good life, following dharma and this will

break the endless cycle of rebirths a human life is stuck in due to his bad karma or doings. Buddhism also teaches about attaining the path of enlightenment by living a life of good works, as this will earn merits to moksha. Even Egyptians believed in the afterlife and wanted to prepare themselves with the finest gold, food and suits to live comfortably in their new incarnated life.

In today's world we see humans are not much bothered about sin, but reality of death has often driven them to take extreme steps to attain salvation. As a Christian, my heart grieved the death of innocent lives lost due to wrong teaching like black magic, astral projection, and other

satanic influenced activities that today's generation are fanatic about. In this confused world, people are knocking on all the doors to gain mercy from gods like stones, trees, plants, animals, giving alms, going on extreme pilgrimage, dipping in rivers, offering gold and silver to gain forgiveness from sin and to reserve a seat in the afterlife.

But is there an assurance of redemption from Sin, death, and judgement that people are running from? The Bible says in Acts 4:12, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved. We humans have sinned, and our sin has brought a judgement upon us, a seat in Hell. But a loving creator redeemed us from eternal damnation by giving his son as the ransom. For Christ became the sacrifice for our sins (Hebrews 10:12).

Bible teaches us our acts can never earn us eternal life or redemption "all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;" (Isaiah 64:6), nor can we claim to be righteous "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

The salvation this world is searching for was given freely for all humankind on the cross of Calvary. It is the love and mercy of God which has selected us to be part of his family. "For it is by grace you

have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8-9)

We have been called to be his children, saved from the power of sin, death & judgement. Through believing in Christ Jesus that he died on cross for our sins and through him we gain eternal life. "Whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

In days to come, we may see many claiming to be the path of life and givers of salvation. Many will rise to lead many into confusion. May we never forget Jesus' words "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).



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"THE SALVATION THIS WORLD IS SEARCHING FOR WAS GIVEN FREELY FOR ALL HUMANKIND ON THE CROSS OF CALVARY. IT IS THE LOVE AND MERCY OF GOD WHICH HAS SELECTED US TO BE PART OF HIS FAMILY."

The Woman with a Scandalous Past: A Story of Salvation



“THE SAMARITAN WOMAN DID NOT NEED TO ADMIT THE SORDID DETAILS OF HER LIFE OR BEG FOR FORGIVENESS. IT DID NOT MATTER THAT SHE WAS A SAMARITAN OR THAT SHE USED TO WORSHIP ON THE MOUNTAIN AS HER ANCESTORS DID. SHE SIMPLY NEEDED TO “BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS TO BE SAVED.”

The very essence of salvation is based on the fact that for us to be saved we must believe in Jesus, we must acknowledge that He is our Savior, and Salvation is through Him and Him alone. Our salvation doesn't end once we have gone through this process, but rather it calls us to step out of our comfort zone and speak about His goodness and grace to the world. It requires us to act regardless of our circumstances or situation in life. It demands that we wholeheartedly place our trust in God and bloom where we are planted.

The story of the Samaritan woman that Jesus meets in Sychar is a great example of salvation. As He was passing through the town of Samaria near the “plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph” (John 4:5), he stops by Jacob's well and decides to take a small break from his journey. It was then that a Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well. Jesus immediately says to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (John 4:7). The woman is taken back by this request because Jews did not associate with Samaritans and the very request is so preposterous to her that she points it out to Him. It was clear that this woman did not know who she was talking to and so Jesus tells her that if she only knew who she was talking to, she would have asked Him for a drink. The woman still struggles to understand that the conversation between this stranger and her is not about the physical water, but rather about what He is offering her. When she finally asks for the water, Jesus decides to delve into her

personal life. He asks her to come back with her husband. At this point, the Samaritan woman embarrassedly admits that she has no husband. Jesus is not surprised to hear this for he is well aware of her scandalous past. He knows that she has had five husbands and the person she is currently with is also not her husband. Yet, He does not judge her or condemn her. Instead, he talks to her about believing and worshipping the one true God.

The woman at this point has realized that the man she is talking to is no ordinary person. He is not simply a Jew or a prophet or one that seems to know every single detail about her life. When he announces himself as the Messiah, she fully believes him. No questions asked. No additional explanations needed. This unquestioning and unwavering faith based on Jesus's words helps her attain salvation. It is worth noting that the woman did not go through multiple steps or even a process to attain salvation. She did not need to admit the sordid details of her life or beg for forgiveness. It did not matter that she was a Samaritan or that she used to worship on the mountain as her ancestors did. She simply needed to “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and [that she would] be saved (Acts 16:31).

The Samaritan woman's story does not end here. She does not take her newfound salvation and keep it to herself. She is but a new believer and is aware that the people of the town consider her a woman of ill repute. She is aware that her words hold no value and revealing her

story will only bring her more shame. Yet she is determined to not let this hold her back from evangelizing about Jesus to her people. She does what she can to proclaim about the Messiah and bring others to salvation.

For all intents and purposes, the Samaritan woman at the well was certainly not worthy of being in Jesus' presence. Even Jesus' disciples were taken back to see Him talking to her. She has no qualification or even the reputation to be spreading God's word. However, the beauty of this story lies in the fact that as the saying goes, God does not call the qualified, rather he qualifies the called. In the end, the Samaritan woman at the well with a scandalous past was far more effective in converting her people than the disciples were.



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The Free gift

Who doesn't like an unexpected gift, BOGO (Buy one, Get one free), giveaways and free trials? They appear to be very good deals, don't they? The idea of reciprocity makes free giveaways effective. We give back what we receive. For example, if your new neighbour brings you a tray of cookies to welcome you to the neighbourhood, chances are you'll return the favour in some way. The same idea applies to branded giveaways. By giving away a free product to a potential customer, they expect that they would receive a purchase in return, boosting their sales and brand recognition. Today, influencers on Instagram frequently use giveaways to increase the size of their audience. All of them demand something in return.

In the Bible, we read of a free gift that God gave to us—the "Salvation"—without any demand that we return the favor. Some people believe our own 'good works' in some way help to bring about our salvation. As no human is perfect, our good works serve as an imperfect means to a perfect destination. We could never reach the point of perfection because of our shortcomings. Because only God is perfect by nature, all

of the work of salvation must be performed by Him. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2: 8-9).

Gospel focuses on receiving when religion focuses on giving. It is God's work for us, not ours for God. When we try to earn our salvation, we become proud and haughty, judgmental, and self-sufficient. We often begin to see ourselves as god when we reject all that God has done. In short, our salvation is based on what Jesus Christ did, not on our performance.

As a sinner, when worldly sorrow brings death, Godly sorrow gives repentance, which leads to salvation with no regrets. Our part is to accept the gift by believing that Jesus' death and resurrection provides redemption to us by freeing us from the guilt and power of sin.

"GOSPEL FOCUSES ON RECEIVING WHEN RELIGION FOCUSES ON GIVING. IT IS GOD'S WORK FOR US, NOT OURS FOR GOD. WHEN WE TRY TO EARN OUR SALVATION, WE BECOME PROUD AND HAUGHTY, JUDGMENTAL AND SELF-SUFFICIENT. WE OFTEN BEGIN TO SEE OURSELVES AS GOD WHEN WE REJECT ALL THAT GOD HAS DONE. IN SHORT, OUR SALVATION IS BASED ON WHAT JESUS CHRIST DID, NOT ON OUR PERFORMANCE."



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The Real Salvation

Interestingly, there are more agnostics than atheists in this world, and the reason for such great numbers of agnostics could be because of the keen desire of the people to lead a worldly life. It is so because for believers, who constitute a minority, pursuing worldly pleasure is taboo, which is why there are more agnostics in our times than believers. An agnostic's life can be an ideal life to enjoy worldly pleasures to the hilt without feeling the prick of conscience because they do not believe whether God exists or not. While an atheist doesn't believe in God, an agnostic neither believes nor disbelieves in God. Agnostics assert that it is impossible for human beings to know how the universe was created and whether or not divine beings exist. Most people are rather inclined to spend time in the material world rather than in the spiritual world and it does not make sense at all to lead a life based on spirituality because, for them, the material world can be seen and experienced, whereas the spiritual world cannot be seen or the result of an action does not come forth with as in the case of a bulb glows as soon as the switch is pressed on.

Ignorance about the true spiritual world also makes the majority of people cynics and they wittingly or unwittingly belittle the importance of the spiritual world. They seldom know that whatever happens in the physical world is preceded in the spiritual world. The truth is that the spiritual world is real and the physical world is unreal. It must be born in mind that the Bible is the only holy book that promises salvation to all who receive Jesus Christ and it is the Lord Jesus Christ who undoubtedly declares there is surely life after death. In many places in the

Bible, this truth is laid stress on. Matthew 6:19-20 verses say, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal." John 6:47-50 says - "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. Yes, I am the bread of life! Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. Matthew 25:46 - "These people will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life."

Therefore, God has unambiguously declared that there is heaven and hell. There is eternal punishment for the wicked people and eternal life for the righteous people. In spite of this enlightening truth made known to us through Jesus Christ Himself, many are turning a deaf ear to it. Yet, God loved the world and gave His one and only Son so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

"Anyone who yearns to enter the kingdom of heaven must do the will of the heavenly Father and of course; there is no shortcut to heaven."

Sadly, how many of us, who are in a hurry, to mint money, are getting ready to accept Him and do the will of God so that we attain eternal salvation? As a matter of fact, there are people in the spiritual realm, who claim to be holy and have the clairvoyance to discern and decipher things, but these people are leading their life away from the true path of spirituality. Matthew 7:21 clearly says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." Thus, anyone who yearns to enter the kingdom of heaven must do the will of the heavenly Father and of course; there is no shortcut to heaven.



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SLEEP HYGIENE

Sleep is one of the most important things to keep your body healthy. Sleep needs vary from person to person, some do fine with 5 hours of sleep and others need as many as 10 hours per night. Lack of sleep can cause car accidents, relationship troubles, poor job performance, job-related injuries, memory problems, and mood disorders. Sleep disorders also may contribute to heart disease, obesity, and diabetes.

Sleep Hygiene is the term used to describe good sleep habits. There are many medications which are used to treat insomnia, but these tend to be only effective in the short-term.

Some of the Sleep Hygiene Tips are:

1. Get regular sleep habits by going to bed and getting up at the same time every day, even on weekends and days off.
2. Sleep when you feel tired or sleepy, rather than spending too much time awake in bed.
3. Avoid consuming any caffeine (in coffee, tea, cola drinks, chocolate, and some medications), nicotine or alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. These substances act as stimulants and interfere with the ability to fall asleep.
4. Avoid using Bed as a place to watch TV, eat, read, work on your laptop, pay bills, and other things.

5. Avoid taking naps during the day, to make sure that you are tired at bedtime. If you need a nap, make sure it is for short period and before 3pm.

6. Having a hot bath 1-2 hours before bedtime can be useful, as it will raise your body temperature, causing you to feel sleepy as your body temperature drops again.

7. Use a sleep diary which can be a useful way of making sure you have the right facts about your sleep, rather than making assumptions.

8. Regular exercise is a good idea to help with good sleep but try not to do strenuous exercise in the 4 hours before bedtime. Morning walks are a great way to start the day feeling refreshed!

9. Eat right, a healthy, balanced diet will help you to sleep well, a heavy meal soon before bed can also interrupt sleep.

10. Keep daytime routine the same.

If you have problem with insomnia, there is a free app which was developed for veterans called CBTi coach <https://mobile.va.gov/app/cbt-i-coach>, a great program which will train you to develop strategies to improve sleep and help alleviate symptoms of insomnia.



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FROM THE HISTORY

PERPETUA AND FELICITAS IN THE CARTHAGE ARENA

In 202 AD, Christians who refused to sacrifice to Roman gods were considered traitors. Emperor Septimus Severus was cracking down on anti-state elements. As he saw it, the sacrifice was simply a patriotic gesture, not much more than our salute of the flag. But the Christians saw it as a denial of Christ. Among those swept into the emperor's dragnet in Carthage were two young women, Perpetua and Felicitas. The choice before them was clear: sacrifice or die.

For both women, the situation was complicated by motherhood. Felicitas was pregnant and Perpetua had a newborn son. Perpetua's pagan father tried to manipulate her motherly instincts. "Please, Perpetua, think of me, your aging father." But most of all think of your little baby. Because he could not convince the newly-converted 22-year-old to go perform her "duty" he was flogged. A man should have better control of his daughter! Perpetua was baptized while in prison. Felicitas, her slave girl, gave birth there.

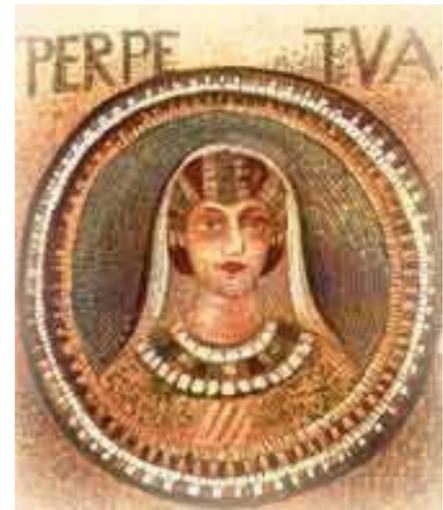
Before her trial, Perpetua received visions from the Lord, reassuring her of His strength and presence. She wrote up her prison experience,

becoming the first Christian authoress on record. She was condemned to die. On this day, March 7, 202, Perpetua and Felicitas left the prison for the arena "joyfully as though they were on their way to heaven." Before a raging crowd, they were thrown to wild beasts.

A mad heifer charged the women and tossed them, but Perpetua rose and helped Felicitas to her feet. She was ready, even eager, to die for the Lord. When she was thrown to the ground, Perpetua's clothing ripped. She modestly covered herself and asked if she could have a hairpin. She fixed her hair to avoid an unkempt appearance that might suggest she was in mourning.

Perpetua even spurred the other martyrs on. "You must all stand fast in the faith and love one another" she called to them. "Do not be weakened by what we have gone through!" When the beasts failed to finish them off, soldiers came to do the job. The soldier who approached Perpetua was trembling so much that she had to guide the sword to her own throat. These two young women, new in faith, were instant heroines among fellow Christians. Joined together, their

Latin names mean "everlasting happiness" which is what they expected to receive.



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Continued from Page 01

SALMAN RUSHDIE IS STABBED

threatened and even some were already killed. Japanese translator Hitoshi Igarashi, who translated 'The Satanic Verses' was found dead at a Tokyo university in July 1991. He was stabbed multiple times and his killer was never found. Italian translator Ettore Capriolo was also stabbed for translating the book in Milan. But the doctors saved him. Two years later in 1993, Norwegian translator William Nygaard was shot dead in Oslo, but he also survived. In recent times, the death sentence against Rushdie was not formally backed by Iran's government and so the author started making public appearances despite fresh death threats from time to time. However,

Khomeini's successor Ayatollah Ali Khomeini made it clear that the fatwa issued against Rushdie was 'irrevocable.'

Nonetheless, widespread condemnation across the world also started pouring in. New York state governor Kathy Hochul said, "Thank you to the swift response of the New York police and first responders following today's attack on author Salman Rushdie. Our thoughts are with Salman and his loved ones following this horrific event. I have directed the state police to further assist however needed in the investigation." Rushdie's condition is reported to be very serious and the medical report says

that one of his eye sights would be lost in case he survives. It is very unfortunate that people are being killed in the name of religion. I believe all religions teach humanity to love and help others who are in need, and even if one utters anything blasphemous against any religion, let him be enlightened and encouraged to come back to know the truth. Instead, executing people for uttering blasphemies really denies their future chances of repentance to come back to the faith.



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TK Nandan, a freelance writer, is presently employed with an Indian Government Organization. Married to Jayasree, who is a nurse by profession, he lives in Kochi with their children. He is a regular contributor of articles to several English dailies in India.

SALVATION

IS FOUND IN NO ONE ELSE

THERE IS NO OTHER NAME UNDER HEAVEN GIVEN TO MEN, BY WHICH WE MUST

BE SAVED

ACTS 4:12

SRI LANKA FACES GRAVE DANGER AS THE CRISIS DRAGS ON



Sri Lanka President Ranil Wickremesinghe warned on Wednesday (Aug 3) the country faces great danger with fuel shortages caused by its unprecedented economic crisis set to continue at least till year end. Sri Lanka was considered a prosperous middle-income country before defaulting for the first time on its foreign debt of US\$51 billion in mid-April. The country has run out of foreign exchange to finance imports with officials estimating the country urgently needs at least US\$4 billion to bring in essential goods and address current shortages. Wickremesinghe has been leading talks with the International Monetary Fund to secure a four-year bailout program. He told parliament the negotiations

were progressing but did not provide a timeline for when a deal would be finalized.

Motorists spend days waiting to buy rationed fuel while the country faces lengthy electricity blackouts. Inflation has crossed 60 per cent. Wickremesinghe thanked India for granting credit lines to import petrol and diesel, but said Colombo must be able to pay with its own foreign exchange earnings and that rationing would continue at least till the end of this year.



Owner reunited with photos lost at sea

A British swimmer has reunited hundreds of family photos with their owner after finding a camera on the seabed in Australia. While swimming in the Balmoral Bay, Sydney in 2015 Mr Rory Fitzgerald spotted a camera and tried to find the owner of its memory card containing 3.5GB of photos. Among the hundreds of photos he found an image of a driver's license and someone wearing a T-shirt for Singapore's 21km Marina Run in 2011. He posted a message on Singapore Marina running group's Facebook page to see if someone could connect him with the owner - Lyndon Lee Lisheng. Mr Lyndon who lost his camera in the sea in Australia had long believed he would never see his photos ever again. He spotted his name on Facebook 5 years later when searching for himself online. He then connected with Mr Fitzgerald who had forgotten about the post until he heard from Lyndon. Mr Lyndon did not want Mr Fitzgerald to send the memory card via post in case it got lost again at the same time he believed it was too many files to send via email. So the pictures were returned to Lyndon when he visited the UK for a friend's wedding. "I travel around the world for swimming events and made many friends around the world" said Fitzgerald and Mr Lyndon now counts as one of those. Fitzgerald says he is looking forward to making a return trip to Singapore.



Taiwan Foreign Minister defends US Speaker Pelosi's brief visit

Taiwan Foreign Minister condemned the large-scale military exercises China conducted around the island since Ms Pelosi's visit. He warned China's territorial aims go further than Taiwan. China sees Taiwan as a breakaway province while Taiwan itself as a distinct self-ruling island. Any hint of recognition by world leaders enrages China. On Friday 8th August, it announced that it had placed sanctions on Ms Pelosi and her family over the visit. The foreign minister said "We want to maintain the status quo in which Taiwan has no jurisdiction over mainland China and the People's republic of China (CCP) has no jurisdiction over Taiwan." The minister was describing the reality that has stood for 73 years. For decades both countries stared across each other across the Taiwan straits neither strong enough to attack each other. But the past 25 years made China rich which invested in a huge war machine. This has resulted in Taiwan needing considerable defensive support from other countries, especially the US.

World News



India withdraws Personal Data Protection Bill

The government of India withdrew the Personal Data Protection Bill on 3rd Aug. The Bill originally introduced in Dec 2019 had proposed restrictions on the use of personal data without explicit consent of its citizens. It also sought to give exemptions to its probe agencies, a move opposed strongly by the Opposition MPs. The withdrawn Bill had proposed the set up of a Data Protection Authority. The government plans to introduce a more comprehensive framework of global standards including digital privacy laws for contemporary and future challenges in the future.



Ukraine grain ship cleared to sail to Lebanon

The first grain ship to leave Ukraine since its war with Russia has been cleared to leave Turkish waters for Lebanon. The Razoni's cargo of 26,000 tons of corn were inspected by a team of officials from Russia, Turkey, Ukraine and the UN. The ship is now bound for the port of Tripoli, Lebanon. Since the war began the naval blockade of Ukraine has affected grain supplies to some of the poorest countries. A further 16 ships are expected to sail from Ukraine in the coming weeks.