

## What is the Purpose of our Salvation?

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Finish this sentence for me. God saved us primarily so that we...(what?) Surely, Christ's saving grace accomplishes many things for a believer, both in this present life and certainly for the life to come. But what is the primary reason for Christ's atoning death for us? I would naturally say that we might have eternal life. However, someone recently told me that God does not save people primarily so that they can go to heaven, but rather so they can tell others about Christ. How should we solve this disagreement?

My biggest source of aggravation with modern Christianity is that there is so much opinionating and so little actual Bible study. My opinion is totally worthless if I can't base it squarely on a correct interpretation of Scripture. This means I must comprehensively compare spiritual with spiritual, and always keep a spirit of right division in mind. Will I be wrong at times? Of course, but at least I have honestly sought God's word on a topic and am not depending on the vain contemplations of man. Having stated that, let's gather as much as we can on this question of the reason for our salvation and honestly see where the Holy Spirit leads us. I researched this topic by looking up every verse I could find in the New Testament that deals with salvation, indexing and saving any that had to do with the reason for salvation. The result of this study becomes clear almost immediately as we examine the passages.

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The word life occurs 44 times in John alone. John 20:31 explains the reason for writing the book of John, that in believing you might have life through His name.

(John 20:31 KJV) "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and **that believing ye might have life through his name.**"

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(John 3:15-16 KJV) "**That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. {16} For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**"

(John 3:36 KJV) "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

(John 4:14 KJV) "**But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.**"

(John 4:36 KJV) "**And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.**"

(John 5:24-29 KJV) "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. {25} Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. {26} For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; {27} And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. {28} Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, {29} And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.**"

(John 5:39-40 KJV) "**Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. {40} And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.**"

(John 6:27 KJV) "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

(John 6:33 KJV) "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

(John 6:35 KJV) "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

(John 6:40 KJV) "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

(John 6:47-51 KJV) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. {48} I am that bread of life. {49} Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. {50} This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. {51} I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

(John 6:53-58 KJV) "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. {54} Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. {55} For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. {56} He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. {57} As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. {58} This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

(John 6:63 KJV) "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and they are life."

(John 6:68-69 KJV) "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. {69} And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

(John 8:12 KJV) "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

(John 10:10-11 KJV) "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. {11} I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

(John 10:28 KJV) "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand."

(John 11:25-26 KJV) "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: {26} And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

(John 12:50 KJV) "And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."

(John 14:6 KJV) "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

(John 17:2-3 KJV) "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. {3} And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

(Acts 11:18 KJV) "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

(Acts 13:46 KJV) "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

(Rom 2:6-8 KJV) "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: {7} To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: {8} But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,"

(Rom 5:9-10 KJV) "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

(Rom 5:17-18 KJV) "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) {18} Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

(Rom 5:21 KJV) "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

(Rom 6:4-6 KJV) "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. {5} For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: {6} Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

(Rom 6:22-23 KJV) "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. {23} For the wages of sin *is* death; but the **gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**"

(Rom 8:10 KJV) "And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness."

(Rom 11:14-15 KJV) "If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my flesh, and might save some of them. {15} For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving of *them be, but life from the dead?*"

(2 Cor 5:4-5 KJV) "For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. {5} Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."

(Gal 2:20 KJV) "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

(Gal 6:8 KJV) "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

(Col 3:3-4 KJV) "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. {4} When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

(Heb 5:8-9 KJV) "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; {9} And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;"

(2 Tim 1:1 KJV) "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,"

(2 Tim 1:8-10 KJV) "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; *{9}* Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, *{10}* But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

(2 Tim 2:10-12 KJV) "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. *{11}* It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: *{12}* If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:"

(Here, salvation is again intimately connected with eternal life and glory. But also, notice that though eternal life is a free gift, reigning with Him is contingent on suffering with Him. Hence, it is an added reward.)

(Titus 3:5-7 KJV) "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; *{6}* Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; *{7}* That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

(James 5:20 KJV) "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

(1 John 1:1-2 KJV) "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; *{2}* (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)"

(1 John 2:25 KJV) "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."

(1 John 3:8 KJV) "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this **purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.**" (What are the works of the devil, but sin and death?)

(1 John 3:14-16 KJV) "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. *{15}* Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. *{16}* Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren."

(1 John 5:11-13 KJV) "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. *{12}* He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. *{13}* These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

(1 John 5:20 KJV) "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

(Rev 2:10 KJV) "**Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.**" (Life is the free gift; the crown of life the reward for faithful service)

(Rev 21:6 KJV) "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

## **If there is no eternal life, where do we stand?**

If indeed, the hope of heaven and eternal life is not the main reason for our salvation, then what is there to tell others about? Where would we stand? I think Paul addressed this subject directly.

(1 Cor 15:16-23 KJV) "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: {17} And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. {18} Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. {19} **If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.** {20} But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. {21} For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. {22} For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. {23} But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

(1 Cor 15:32 KJV) "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, **if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.**"

## **The goal of eternal life**

Hopefully, the word has spoken for itself. The main purpose of salvation is eternal life. Within that, what then is the purpose of eternal life? Christ answers that in that sacred prayer of John 17.

(John 17:3 KJV) "**And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**" In the original Greek, the word "that" is "hina" which means "in order that, or with the object of." This important preposition is also used in the two previous verses with the same meaning, and later in John 17:23.

(John 17:1-3 KJV) "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, **Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, in order that thy Son also may glorify thee: {2} As thou hast given him power over all flesh, in order that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. {3} And this is life eternal, in order that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**"

Therefore, the purpose of salvation is eternal life, and at least one main purpose of eternal life is so that we might take all eternity to better know the one true God and His wondrous Son, Jesus Christ. It is such a point of grace that we can start this mighty task of knowing God in this present frail and sin-marred life. What a truth that a Christian's greatest need in this life is to know God, and that this very goal is carried on to all eternity!

(Rom 11:33 KJV) "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

(Eph 3:17-19 KJV) "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, {18} May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; {19} And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

Knowledge of God as a goal of ages to come is a theme that also occurs elsewhere.

(Isa 11:9 KJV) "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

(Hab 2:14 KJV) "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

(Jer 31:34 KJV) "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Another purpose of eternal life is also addressed in this sacred passage in John. Christ prays that all believers can be *one* with God as the Son is *one* with the Father. Perfect unity with God as the great goal of the ages is also expressed in 1 Corinthians 15. Complete identification with Christ and eternal unity with God must be magnificent beyond our wildest dreams. Surely, this is paradise restored!

(John 17:22-24 KJV) "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, in order that they may be made perfect in one; and in order that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.<sup>{23}</sup> I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. <sup>{24}</sup> Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

(1 Cor 15:24,28 KJV) "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power...And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

### **What then is our hope?**

If the purpose of salvation is eternal life, then you would expect the Scriptures to also confirm this as our greatest hope. Indeed, this is the case.

(Acts 24:15 KJV) "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

(Rom 8:20-25 KJV) "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, <sup>{21}</sup> Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. <sup>{22}</sup> For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. <sup>{23}</sup> And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. <sup>{24}</sup> For we are saved by **hope**: but **hope** that is seen is not **hope**: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet **hope** for? <sup>{25}</sup> But if we **hope** for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

(These verses clearly state that our hope is for unseen things that are yet to come, as the following verse enunciates.)

(1 Cor 2:9 KJV) "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

(2 Cor 1:7 KJV) "And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation."

(Col 1:5 KJV) "For the **hope which is laid up for you in heaven**, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;"

(Col 1:23 KJV) "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the **hope of the gospel**, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;"

(Col 1:27 KJV) "To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"

(1 Th 1:3 KJV) "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of **hope** in our Lord

Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;"

(1 Th 2:19 KJV) "For what *is* our **hope**, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

(1 Th 4:13-14 KJV) "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. {14} For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, **even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.**"

(1 Th 5:8 KJV) "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."

(2 Th 2:16 KJV) "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation and good **hope** through grace,"

(Titus 1:1-2 KJV) "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; {2} **In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;**"

(Titus 2:13 KJV) "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"

(Titus 3:7 KJV) "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

(Heb 6:11 KJV) "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:"

(Heb 6:18-20 KJV) "That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the **hope** set before us: {19} Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; {20} Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (This work of Christ is what makes our hope possible.)

(Heb 7:19 KJV) "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did;* by the which we draw nigh unto God."

(1 Pet 1:3 KJV) "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,"

(1 Pet 1:13 KJV) "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and **hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;**"

(1 Pet 1:21 KJV) "Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and **hope might be in God.**"

(1 Pet 3:15 KJV) "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the **hope that is in you** with meekness and fear:"

This last verse seems to sum up our blessed hope, which is also the reason for our salvation. Glory and honor to God alone for what He has done for us through our Lord Jesus Christ!

(1 John 3:2-3 KJV) "**Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.** {3} **And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.**"

Karen George

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