

Salvation: The uniqueness of the Christian Faith

I. A major conundrum!!!!

We have a perfect God who created man in His image but man chose to sin.

- 1 Adam as our representative brought about the sentence of death
 - a. Death meant separation from God—no personal relationship
 - b. Death means spiritual darkness—no way to get back to God
 - c. Death means a physical death and eternal separation. Rom 5:12-14
Romans 6:23
- 2 Man is born in sin and has a sin nature from conception Ps 51:5
- 3 Everyone is personally responsible Romans 3:23

So how does a righteous holy God have a relationship with sinful man?

Man has no options to make the relationship whole

The only answer is that God must do something consistent with His character to rectify this overwhelming problem for man.

BREAKOUT 1

Examine the attributes of God reading the Scripture and ask 2 questions:

- 1) What attributes are unique to our God and the Christian faith?
- 2) What attributes are in play for answering our dilemma?

Attributes of God

1. Spirituality John 4:24
2. Invisibility I Tim 6:16 total essence never seen in its entirety but shows Himself through visible, create things
3. Omniscience I John 3:20
4. Wisdom Romans 16:20 always chooses the best goals and ways to achieve them
5. Truthfulness John 17:3, John 14:6 He is the truth and the final standard of truth
6. Goodness Luke 18:19 standard of what is good and all that He does is good
7. Love I John 4:8 self giving for the benefit of others

8. Holiness Exodus 26:33 separated from sin and devoted to seeking His own honor
9. Righteousness/Justice Deut 32:4, Isa 45:19 always acts in accordance with what is right and is the final standard
10. Jealous Exd 20:5, Isa 48:11 God seeks to protect His honor
11. Wrath John 3:36 God hates sin
12. Will/Sovereignty Eph 1:11 God approves and determines to bring about every action necessary for the existence and activity of Himself and all creation
13. Omnipotence Rev 4:11 God is able to do all His holy will

II. This is the story of Salvation, the story of grace, the story of Hope

A. The background

Genesis

- a. "The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." Genesis 3:14, 15--the fall: death entered creation, first hint that God would make a provision
- b. The covenant: Genesis 12: God makes a covenant with Abraham
- c. The prophecy: Isa 53, God repeatedly foretells of a coming answer to the dilemma

B. The Answer: John 1:14-- the incarnation; the cross

"For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." 1 Corinthians 1:18

What God did to answer our dilemma and not violate His Character

1. Emptied Himself and took on the form of man

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the

form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:3-11

2. Was made sin

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

3. Bore our penalty

“and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” 1 Peter 2:24

4. Bore the wrath of God

“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.” Romans 5:9

5. Jesus died for us

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

a. No forgiveness without the shedding of blood

“And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” Hebrews 9:22

b. Redeemed with blood

“but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.” 1 Peter 1:19

c. Justified us by His blood

“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.” Romans 5:9

d. God was propitiated through His blood

“whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed” Romans 3:25

e. God reconciled our relationship

“And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.” Romans 5:11

f. He has forgiven us

“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses” Colossians 2:13

d. He was the lamb of God

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death." Revelation 12:11

BREAKOUT 2

The exercise: Match up God's attributes with the actions taken to save us

Attributes of God

Actions taken by God

III. Application: Man's response to God's provision

A. What can a dead man do? Romans 3:10

B. Saved by grace through faith

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Ephesians 2:8,9

C. Faith is the conviction of the heart and mind that what God says is true. It is expressed in different terms throughout Scripture:

1. Believe: that Christ died for your sins Romans 10

2. Trust: that his death reconciled you to the Father John 3:16

3. Accept: His death was sufficient to satisfy the debt Romans 5:8

4. Repent: Turn from self sufficiency and depend on Him for forgiveness Luke 24:47

5. Confess: Certainty of being made new and forgiven 2 Cor 5:17, I John 1:9

6. Walk: by Faith Galatians 2:20, I Corinthians 5:7