

SALVATION:

WHO IS SAVED AND  
HOW DO WE KNOW?

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ADULT FORUM—CHRIST CHURCH GEORGETOWN

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# OUTLINE FOR TODAY

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- Introductory comments
- Alternative views of who is saved
- Salvation outside the church
- Predestination
- Universal salvation
- Questions and comments



# ASKING “WHO IS SAVED”

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- Reminders from last week
  - Overemphasis on the afterlife
  - Overemphasis on individual salvation
- Hazards of asking “Am I saved?”

# THE DESPAIR ABOUT SALVATION

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“If I’m lost -- now/That I was found -- /Shall still my transport be --  
That once -- on me -- those Jasper Gates/Blazed open – suddenly --

That in my awkward – gazing – face -- /The Angels -- softly peered --  
And touched me with their fleeces,/Almost as if they cared --

I’m banished – now -- you know it -- /How foreign that can be --

You’ll know – Sir -- when the Savior’s face/Turns so -- away from you --”

--Emily Dickinson



# WHO IS SAVED? SOME ALTERNATIVE VIEWS

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# CORRECT CHRISTIAN BELIEF


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- One needs to believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved
- “...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.” (Romans 10:9)
- “Jesus said to [Thomas], “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)



# MEMBERSHIP/BAPTISM IN THE AUTHENTIC CHURCH


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- “No salvation outside the church”
  - Baptism is usually the key
  - “Most firmly hold and by no means doubt, that not only all pagans, but also all Jews, and all heretics and schismatics who die outside the Catholic Church, will go to the eternal fire that was prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Council of Florence, 1442, based on Fulgentius [6<sup>th</sup> century])
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# PREDESTINATION

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- God freely selects who will be saved and who will be damned, and we don't ever know who is in each category.
  - Consistency of a theological vision
  - Predestination (single and double)
  - Augustine, original sin, and the possibility of salvation
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# MORAL BEHAVIOR

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- Everyone who lives an ethical life can/will be saved, regardless of what they believe about God or Christ

# VOLUNTARY UNIVERSALISM


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- God will save everyone except for those who refuse adamantly to be saved
- Hell is populated only by those who refuse God's grace and forgiveness at the end of time



# INCLUSIVIST UNIVERSALISM


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- Universal salvation as the work and intention of a loving God
  - “When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one [all in all].”  
I Corinthians 15:28
  - An early Christian suggestion: “...in those ages to come God will show the riches ‘of His grace in kindness,’ since the worst sinner, who has blasphemed the Holy Spirit and been ruled by sin from beginning to end in the whole of this present age, will afterwards in the age to come be brought into order, I know not how.”  
(Origen)
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# EXCLUSIVE OR INCLUSIVE: WHAT ARE WE ASKING?


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- Who does God intend to save?
  - Who is/will be saved?
  
  - God “desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”  
(I Timothy 2:4)
  
  - Council of Quiercy (853 A.D.): “...just as there is not, has not been, and will not be any human being whose nature was not assumed in our Lord Jesus Christ, so there is not, has not been, and will not be any human being for whom He has not suffered, even though not all are redeemed by the mystery of His suffering.”
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# FOR ALL, FOR MANY, OR ONLY FOR SOME?

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- “This is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.” (Mark 14:24)
  - “This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Book of Common Prayer, Rite I, Eucharistic Prayer A)
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# AGNOSTICISM


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- We have no idea of who is saved or damned, and there is no way to know
  - This can involve a complete rejection of any reality to eternal life, afterlife, heaven or hell
  - Constructions of the afterlife
  - Our “epistemological” limitations
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# IS SALVATION AND TRUTH FOUND ONLY IN ONE FAITH?

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- “To recognize in Christ the full revelation of God and the Saviour of all is not, then, to deny to other faith any true knowledge of God and mediation of salvation. The unique and normative role of Christ in the history of salvation extends to the numerous and varied ways he works as divine Wisdom in the lives of people who follow other religions and receive salvation through them.” (Gerald O’Collins)
  - Pluralism and faithfulness as ethical and philosophical choices
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# PAUL'S SALVATION?

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“Conversion on the Road to  
Damascus”

--Caravaggio

# FINAL QUOTATION

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- “...in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them...For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

--2 Corinthians 5:19-21



# QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

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