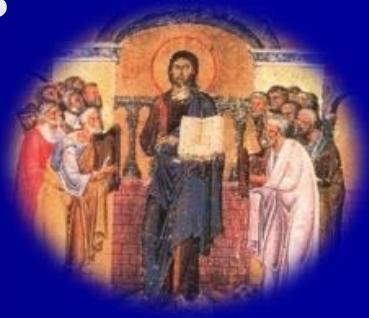


# **Fall 2022 Adult Study: The Early Christians**

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Session 4: Christology and Soteriology —  
Who is Jesus Christ? How are we saved?

9 Nov 2022

# Who is Jesus Christ?

- Pentecost and Peter's Sermon – Acts 2.22-36
  - "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up.... Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."
- Lord/YHWH/Kyrios – Ex. 3.13-14; Jn. 18.4-6
  - Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" Exodus 3:13-14
  - Then Jesus, knowing all that was to befall him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When he said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. John 18:4-6

## What did the Early Christians Believe?

### Earliest Documents – Scriptures

Then we'll also look at additional documents from around the same time and shortly thereafter to see how the early Christians understood the Scriptures.

# Who is Jesus Christ?



The One Who Is

# **Who is Jesus Christ?**

- Christ/Messiah/Anointed One – Lev. 4.5; 1 Sam. 16.13; Mt. 16.16; Jn. 1.20, 4.24-25, 7.31; Heb. 7.26-8.2
- Savior/Healer – Mt. 1.21; Luke 2.11; Jn. 3.16-17, 4.42; Acts 13.23
- Word/Logos – Jn. 1.1-3, 14

## **Christ/Messiah/Anointed One**

**And the anointed priest shall take some of the blood of the bull and bring it to the tent of meeting**  
**Leviticus 4:5**

Then Samuel took the horn of oil,

**and anointed him** in the midst of his brothers; **and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David** from that day forward. And Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah. 1 Samuel 16:13

**Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."** Matthew 16:16

He confessed, he did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." John 1:20

God is spirit, and those who

worship him must worship in spirit and truth." 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." John 4:24-25

Yet many of the people believed in him; they said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?" John 7:31

**For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest,** holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the

heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; he did this once for all when he offered up himself. Indeed, the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect for ever. Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent which is set up not by man but by

the Lord. Hebrews 7:26 - 8:2

## Savior/Healer

she will bear a son, and you shall  
**call his name Jesus, for he will  
save his people** from their sins.  
Matthew 1:21

for to you is born this day in the  
city of David a Savior, who is  
**Christ the Lord.** Luke 2:11

For God so loved the world that he

gave **his only Son**, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but **that the world might be saved through him.** John 3:16-17

They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed **the Savior of the world.**" John 4:42

he raised up David to be their king; of whom he testified and

said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.' **Of this man's posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised.** Acts 13:22-23

## Word/Logos

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and

without him was not anything made that was made. John 1:1-3

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. John 1:14

# Who is Jesus Christ?

- "Son of God" – Mt. 3.17, 17.5;  
Heb. 1.2; Rom. 11.36
- Fish symbol
  - Jesus Christ of-God Son Savior



## Son of God

and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "**This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well**

**pleased." Matthew 3:17**

**He was still speaking,  
when lo, a bright cloud  
overshadowed them,  
and a voice from the  
cloud said, "This is my  
beloved Son Matthew  
17:5**

**but in these last days**

**he has spoken to us  
by a Son, whom he  
appointed the heir of  
all things, through  
whom also he created  
the world.** Hebrews 1:2

**For from him and  
through him and to him  
are all things. To him  
be glory for ever.  
Amen.** Romans 11:36

*He was in the beginning  
and is co-worshipped  
with the Father.*

# Who is Jesus Christ?

## ■ “Son of Man” – Mk. 10:33-34; Dan. 7:13-14

– I saw in the night visions,  
and behold, with the clouds of heaven  
there came one like a son of man,  
and he came to the Ancient of Days  
and was presented before him.  
And to him was given dominion  
and glory and kingdom,  
that all peoples, nations, and languages  
should serve him;  
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
which shall not pass away,  
and his kingdom one  
that shall not be destroyed.

## Son of Man

"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; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise." Mark 10:33-34

# Who is Jesus Christ?

- Relationship to the Father and the Spirit - Jn. 10.27-31; 14.28; 14.16; 15.26; 16.7b, 13-15
  - My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one." John 10:27-30

# Who is Jesus Christ?

- You heard me say to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. John 14:28
- And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever John 14:16
- But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me; John 15:26

it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. John 16:7

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. John 16:13-15

# Early Christian Witnesses

## ■ 1 Clement – salutation, 3.4

- *A contemporary of the Apostles already shows an established church, proclaiming Jesus Christ as "Lord," who redeems from the fall, the ancestral curse and death.*
- The church of God, living in exile in Rome, to the church of God, exiled in Corinth—to you who are called and sanctified by God's will through our Lord Jesus Christ. Abundant grace and peace be yours from God Almighty through Jesus Christ.

*He also indicates the high calling and conduct becoming those who come to receive the gospel.*

For this reason, righteousness and peace are far from you, since each has abandoned the fear of God and grown purblind in his faith, and ceased to walk where the rules of his precepts or to behave in a way worthy of Christ. Rather does each follow the lusts of his evil heart, by reviving the wicked and unholy rivalry, by which indeed, “death came into the world.”

# Early Christian Witnesses

- Ignatius to the Ephesians – 7.2
  - *A confession of Jesus Christ in a nutshell, from one who saw Christ as a child and bore witness to Him as a martyr in the year 110 AD.*
  - There is only one Physician—of flesh yet spiritual, born yet unbegotten, God incarnate, genuine life in the midst of death, sprung from Mary as well as God, first subject to suffering then beyond it—Jesus Christ our Lord.

# Early Christian Witnesses

- XI. Witness of Irenaeus – Against Heresies Book 1: 1.1, 10.1
  - *A 1st/2nd century bishop here emphasizes the necessary unity of the Church in the correct doctrine of Jesus Christ.*
  - Now the church, although scattered over the whole civilized world to the end of the earth, received from the apostles and their disciples of its faith in one God, the Father Almighty, who made the heaven, and the earth, and the seas, and all that is in them, and in one Christ

Certain men, rejecting the truth, or introducing among us false stories and vain genealogies, which serve rather to controversies, as the apostle said, that to God's work of building up in the faith. By their craftily constructed rhetoric they see the stray the minds of the inexperienced, and take them captive, corrupting the oracles of the Lord, and being evil expounders of what was well spoken. For they upset many, leading them away by the pretense of knowledge from Him who constituted and ordered the universe, as if they had something higher and greater to show them than the God who made the heaven and the earth and all that is in them. By skillful language they artfully attract the simple-minded into their kind of inquiry, and then crudely destroyed them by working up their

blasphemous and impious view about the Demiurge. Nor can their simple hearers distinguish the lie from the truth.

Now the church, although scattered over the whole civilized world to the end of the earth, received from the apostles and their disciples of its faith in one God, the Father Almighty, who made the heaven, and the earth, and the seas, and all that is in them, and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was made flesh for our salvation, and in the Holy Spirit, we through the prophets proclaimed the dispensations of God—the comings, the birth of a virgin, the suffering, the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily reception into the heavens of the beloved, Christ Jesus our Lord, and his coming from the heavens in the glory of the Father to restore all things and to raise up all flesh, that is the whole human race, so that every knee may bow, all things in heaven and on earth and under the earth, to Christ Jesus our Lord and God and Savior and King, according to the pleasure of the invisible Father, and every tongue may confess him, and that he may execute righteous judgment on all. The spiritual powers of wickedness, and the angel who transgressed in fell into apostasy, and the godless and wicked and lawless and blasphemers among men he will send into the eternal fire. But to the righteous and holy, and those who have kept his commandments and have remained in his love, some from the beginning [of life] and some since their repentance, he will by his grace give life incorrupt, and will clothe them with eternal glory.

Having received this preaching and this faith, as I have said, the Church, although scattered in the whole world, carefully preserves it, as if living in one house. She believes these things [everywhere] alike, as if she had but one heart and one soul, and preaches them harmoniously, teaches them, and hands them down, as if she had but one mouth....

## Early Christian Witnesses

- Jesus, the Son of God, who was made flesh for our salvation, and in the Holy Spirit, we through the prophets proclaimed the dispensations of God—the comings, the birth of a virgin, the suffering, the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily reception into the heavens of the beloved, Christ Jesus our Lord, and his coming from the heavens in the glory of the Father to restore all things and to raise up all flesh, that is the whole human race, so that every knee may bow, all things in heaven and on

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## Early Christian Witnesses

- earth and under the earth, to Christ Jesus our Lord and God and Savior and King.

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# How are we saved?

## ■ Redemption

– “For God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that all who believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3.16-17).

# How are we saved?

## ■ *Christus Victor*

- a. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Co 15:54-57)

# How are we saved?

## ■ *Christus Victor*

- b. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man; then indeed he may plunder his house. (Mark 3.27)



# How are we saved?

- Prodigal Son – Luke 15.11ff.
- Contrast with Anselm of Canterbury's *Cur Deus Homo*

## The Parable of the Prodigal and His Brother

And he said, "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants."'" And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. "Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house,

he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'" Luke 15:11-32

### **Anselm of Canterbury's *Cur Deus Homo***

**Anselm.**.. If man or angel always rendered to God his due, he would never sin.

**Boso.** I cannot deny that.

**Anselm.**.. Therefore to sin is nothing else than not to render to God his due.

**Boso.** What is the debt which we owe to God?

**Anselm.**.. Every wish of a rational creature should be subject to the will of God.

**Boso.** Nothing is more true.

**Anselm.**.. This is the debt which man and angel owe to God, and no one who pays this debt commits sin; but every one who does not pay it sins. This is justice, or uprightness of will, which makes a being just or upright in heart, that is, in will; and this is the sole and complete debt of honor which we owe to God, and which God requires of us. For it is such a will only, when it can be exercised, that does

works pleasing to God; and when this will cannot be exercised, it is pleasing of itself alone, since without it no work is acceptable. He who does not render this honor which is due to God, robs God of his own and dishonors him; and this is sin. Moreover, so long as he does not restore what he has taken away, he remains in fault; and it will not suffice merely to restore what has been taken away, but, considering the contempt offered, he ought to restore more than he took away. For as one who imperils another's safety does not enough by merely restoring his safety, without making some compensation for the anguish incurred; so he who violates another's honor does not enough by merely rendering honor again, but must, according to the extent of the injury done, make restoration in some way satisfactory to the person whom he has dishonored. We must also observe that when any one pays what he has unjustly taken away, he ought to give something which could not have been demanded of him, had he not stolen what belonged to another. So then, every one who sins ought to pay back the honor of which he has robbed God; and this is the satisfaction which every sinner owes to God.

*Anselm.*.. Let us return and consider whether it were proper for God to put away sins by compassion alone, without any payment of the honor taken from him.

*Boso.* I do not see why it is not proper.

*Anselm.*.. To remit sin in this manner is nothing else than

not to punish; and since it is not right to cancel sin without compensation or punishment; if it be not punished, then is it passed by undischarged.

**Boso.** What you say is reasonable.

**Anselm..** It is not fitting for God to pass over anything in his kingdom undischarged.

**Boso.** If I wish to oppose this, I fear to sin.

**Anselm..** It is, therefore, not proper for God thus to pass over sin unpunished.

**Anselm..** Therefore God maintains nothing with more justice than the honor of his own dignity.

**Boso.** I must agree with you.

**Anselm..** Does it seem to you that he wholly preserves it, if he allows himself to be so defrauded of it as that he should neither receive satisfaction nor punish the one defrauding him.

**Boso.** I dare not say so.

**Anselm.** Therefore the honor taken away must be repaid, or punishment must follow; otherwise, either God will not be just to himself, or he will be weak in respect to both parties; and this it is impious even to think of.

## How are we saved?

- The Cross as Sacrifice and Ransom
  - To whom, and why, is this blood poured out for us and shed, the great and most precious blood of God, the High Priest and Victim?

Georges S. Florovsky, *Creation and Redemption* pp. 103-104:

And yet this burdensome gift of freedom is the ultimate mark of the Divine love and benevolence towards man. The Cross is not a symbol of Justice, but the symbol of Love Divine. St. Gregory of Nazianzus utters all these doubts with great emphasis in his remarkable Easter Sermon:

*To whom, and why, is this blood poured out for us and shed, the great and most precious blood of God, the High Priest and Victim? ... We were in the power of the Evil One, sold to sin, and had brought this harm on ourselves by*

*sensuality. . . . If the price of ransom is given to none other than him in whose power we are held, then I ask, to whom and for what reason is such a price paid? ... If it is to the Evil One, then how insulting is this! The thief receives the price of ransom; he not only receives it from God, but even receives God Himself. For his tyranny he receives so large a price that it was only right to have mercy upon us.... If to the Father, then first, in what way? Were we not in captivity under Him? ... And secondly, for what reason? For what reason was the blood of the Only Begotten pleasing to the Father, Who did not accept even Isaac, when offered by his father, but exchanged the offering, giving instead of the reasonable victim a lamb? ...*

By all these questions St. Gregory tries to make clear the inexplicability of the Cross in terms of vindictory justice. And he concludes: "From this it is evident that the Father accepted [the sacrifice], not because He demanded or had need, but by economy and because man had to be sanctified by the humanity of God."

Redemption is not just the forgiveness of sins, it is not just man's reconciliation with God. Redemption is the abolition of sin altogether, the deliverance from sin and death.

And Redemption was accomplished on the Cross, "by the

blood of His Cross" [Col. 1:20; cf. Acts 20:28; Rom. 5:9; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:22; I John 1:7; Rev. 1:5-6; 5:9]. Not by the suffering of the Cross only, but precisely by the death on the Cross. And the ultimate victory is wrought, not by sufferings or endurance, but by death and resurrection. We enter here into the *ontological* depth of human existence. The death of Our Lord was the victory over death and mortality, not just the remission of sins, nor merely a justification of man, nor again a satisfaction of an abstract justice. And the very key to the Mystery can be given only by a coherent doctrine of human death.

# How are we saved?

## ■ Adoption

– “But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir” (Galatians 4:4-7).

# How are we saved?

## ■ Baptism

- Read Rom. 6 – walking in newness of life
- “But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed [lit. “chrismated”] us; He has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee” (2 Cor. 1.21)

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Romans 6:3-11

# How are we saved?

- The Body of Christ
  - “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me” (John 15.4)

# How are we saved?

## ■ The Body of Christ

– “So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him’” (John 6.53-56).

# How are we saved?

## ■ Grafting

– "...you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree..." (Romans 11.24).

## How are we saved?

- Why God became Man

– Georges S. Florovsky, *Creation and Redemption* p. 95

Georges S. Florovsky, *Creation and Redemption* p. 95:

“THE WORD BECAME FLESH”: in this is the ultimate joy of the Christian faith. In this is the fulness of Revelation. The Same Incarnate Lord is both perfect God and perfect man. The full significance and the ultimate purpose of human existence is revealed and realized in and through "the Incarnation. He came down from Heaven to redeem the earth, to unite man with God for ever. "And became man." The new age has been initiated. We count now the "anni Domini." As St. Irenaeus wrote: "the Son of God became the Son of Man, that man also might become the son of God."<sup>1</sup> Not only is the original fulness of human nature restored or re-established in the Incarnation. Not

only does human nature return to its once lost communion with God. The Incarnation is also the new Revelation, the new and further step. The first Adam was a living soul. But the last Adam is the Lord from Heaven [1 Cor. 15:47]. And in the Incarnation of the Word human nature was not merely anointed with a superabundant overflowing of Grace, but was assumed into an intimate and hypostatical unity with the Divinity itself. In that lifting up of human nature into an everlasting communion with the Divine Life, the Fathers of the early Church unanimously saw the very essence of salvation, the basis of the whole redeeming work of Christ. "That is saved which is united with God" says St. Gregory of Nazianzus. And what was not united could not be saved at all. This was his chief reason for insisting, against Apollinarius, on the fulness of human nature, assumed by the Only Begotten in the Incarnation. This was the fundamental motive in the whole of early theology, in St. Irenaeus, St. Athanasius, the Cappadocian Fathers, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and St. Maximus the Confessor. The whole history of Christological dogma was determined by this fundamental conception: the Incarnation of the Word as Redemption. In the Incarnation human history is completed. God's eternal will is accomplished, "the mystery from eternity hidden and to angels unknown." The days of expectation are over. The Promised and the Expected has come. And from henceforth, to use the phrase of St. Paul, the life of man "is hid with Christ in God" [Colossians 3:3].



# How are we saved?

- St. Athanasius, On the Incarnation:
  - "The Word of God came in His own Person, because it was He alone, the Image of the Father, Who could recreate man made after the Image. In order to effect this re-creation, however, He had first to do away with death and corruption. Therefore He assumed a human body, in order that in it death might once for all be destroyed, and that men might be renewed according to the Image [of God]."

## Summary

- We cannot earn salvation, it is "the free gift of God" (Rom. 5.15).
- Works will not save us, particularly, "works of the Law," which is what St. Paul specifically combats. Only Jesus saves; He is only Savior.
- Understanding salvation from its Hebraic/Biblical sense, it means victory—victory over the enemy and death. Only Jesus is the Savior.

The early Christians believed that man was originally created in perfect communion with God, but through his own actions he turned away from God and sinned ("missed the mark"). Because of man's refusal to fulfill the "image and likeness of God" within him, corruption and the sickness of sin whose consequence is death entered man's nature. But when Jesus came into the world, He Himself was Perfect Man and Perfect God united. Through his participation in humanity, human nature was re-created, allowing human beings to participate in the divine nature.

Salvation, or "being saved," therefore, refers to this process of being saved from death and corruption and the fate of hell. It is a distinct concept separate from the

concept of "going to heaven." The Orthodox Church believes that its teachings and practices represents the best and most complete path to participation in the gifts of God. Yet, it should be understood that the Orthodox do not believe that you must be Orthodox to participate in salvation. God is merciful to all. The Orthodox believe that there is nothing that a person (Orthodox or non-Orthodox) can do to earn entrance into Heaven. It is rather a gift from God, who wants nothing more than to restore the original relationship with mankind. However, this gift of relationship has to be accepted by the believer, since God will not force Heaven on humanity. Man is free to reject the gift of salvation continually offered by God.

## **Summary**

- At the same time, we must produce works 'worthy' of our repentance. It is not enough to confess that God exists, the Son of God became man, He died on the Cross and rose, etc. Even the devil knows this. Faith means loving God, doing His commandments (John 14.15).
- Real love is exhausting work (1 Thess. 1.3; cf. Matt. 25.31-46).

## **Summary**

- We cannot judge even ourselves (1 Cor. 4.3-4). Jesus, our only Savior, will come again to judge all, but we must hold that thought together with the principle that those who are saved are already, even while in the body, living the life of the Kingdom, having passed from death to life, we do not come into judgement (John 5.22-24).

## **Summary**

- As long as we are in the body, however, it is possible to fall away. Only God can see the real intention of the heart.

## Summary

- Only Jesus saves, but He also expects us to do our part to receive it: "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2.12).

## **Summary**

- Speaking to those who are already Christians, St. Paul warns: "For He will render to every man according to his works: ... for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury" (Rom. 2.1-8).

## **Summary**

- “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12.1-2).

## Recommended Reading

- *The Holy Bible*
- Georges S. Florovsky, *Creation and Redemption*
- John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*
- Constantinou, Eugenia. *Thinking Orthodox: Understanding and Acquiring the Orthodox Christian Mind*. Chesterton, Indiana: Ancient Faith Ministries, 2020.