



Week 1

Exploring the wonders of our salvation

Tom Mount – Fall 2019 – Neighborhood Church

Personal Introductions

- Tom Mount. Email me here: tommount@sbcglobal.net
- Download class notes here: <http://www.ncchico.org/fall-classes>
- Housekeeping: bring bibles and pen each week; bathrooms down the hall
- As we set out to learn together, let's introduce ourselves

Introduction to the topic

- “Jesus saves” (Acts 16:30-31). Genuine, ongoing relational trust in Jesus is all that’s needed to remain in a relationship with Him, the Father and Holy Spirit and thus be saved. (Cf. John 17:3: Gk: *ginosko*, Heb: *yadah*)
- The way of salvation is simple enough for a child to understand...yet sufficiently complex to fascinate a genius. Why? Because there are so many layers of complexity to it. Two examples from the simple statement “Jesus saves”:

1. Jesus is complex

- His being is entirely unique (cf. John 1:1-2, 14; Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:15-20)
 - Council of Chalcedon 451: “We... confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary...to be **acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence...**”
- His work is intricately multilayered. A few examples:
 - Jesus is the great physician who heals our distortions and diseases
 - Jesus is the mighty warrior who prevails over his/our enemies
 - Jesus is the high priest who offers the final, perfect sacrifice
 - Jesus is the unblemished lamb who takes away the sins of the world
 - Jesus is the perfect husband to whom we are betrothed
 - Jesus is the one in whom we are baptized, to whom we are joined forever
- His name is profoundly descriptive
 - "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matt 1:21). Eng. Jesus, from Ln. *Iesus*, from Gk. *Iesous*, from Heb. *Yeshua* a contraction of יהושע *Yehoshua* (Joshua) meaning “YHWH is salvation” (“Yeho-” יהוֹ is another form of יהוָ *Yahu*, a theophoric rendering of the name of God יהוה *YHWH*, the

Tetragrammaton; and שׁוֹאֵף *shua'*, a noun meaning "a cry for help", "a saving cry").

- NB: Jesus isn't merely the means or ground of our salvation. He IS salvation. Apart from Him (His very person, His body/soul) there is no salvation (cf. Acts 4:12).

2. Salvation is a complex. What does it mean? Saved from what? To what? How?

An Astonishing Array of biblical imagery

- The range of the biblical imagery is wonderfully diverse and suggestive. A few examples:

Mark 10:45

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Rom 3:20-25

"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

2 Cor 5:14b-21

"... one has died for all, therefore all have died;¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Col 2:9-15 (time permitting; otherwise extra credit!)

“For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.¹¹ In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.¹³ 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,¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”

Our plan for this class

1. We will make prayerful, reverent inquiries into the scriptural witness being careful to stay within the orthodox interpretive tradition. Three ideas are expressed here:

- a. “Scriptural witness” – This represents our final authority

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

- Scripture is: *norma normans non normata*

- b. “Prayerful” and “reverent” – This describes our heart posture

“But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.” (Isa 66:2b)

- c. “Orthodox interpretive tradition” – This defines our interpretive boundaries

- St. Vincent of Lérins (400-50): we are to believe and teach that “which was believed everywhere [*ubique*], always [*semper*], and by all [*ab omnibus*].”

2. We will respect the mystery that enshrouds the subject

“...no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.” (1 Cor 2:11b-13)

3. We will pray that the Lord gives us extraordinary assurance of faith and a deeper love for Him in appreciation of all that He has done for us

“Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷ By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.” (1 Jn 4:15-18)

Homework

Read **Ephesians 1:3-14** several times. Prayerfully ask yourself the following questions:

- How are each of the three members of the holy Trinity said to be involved in God's salvation of humanity? What are their respective roles?
- What specific terms are used to describe our salvation, and what do they connote?
- When does our salvation take place: in the past, the present or the future?

Come next week prepared to discuss your discoveries!

Benediction (Birkat kohanim)

²² The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

²⁴ The Lord bless you and keep you;

²⁵ the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

²⁶ the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

²⁷ "So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them."

(Numbers 6:22-27)