

Session 12: The Doctrine of Salvation & The Doctrine of the Church (Chapters 28 and 29)

The Doctrine of Salvation

4 Major Subdivisions of the Doctrine of Salvation:

1. **Basis:** Salvation is a *gift* God gives to those that believe.
 - In His mercy, God offers to forgive our sin and *give* us a new nature of holiness so that we can be in a perfect relationship with God.
 - God's offer has one condition: that we believe in and receive Jesus as our Savior.
2. **Result:** God extends *forgiveness* of sin and eternal life to those who accept Him.
 - God's solution to man's inherent dilemma is to offer him *forgiveness* of his sins and to give him a new nature that is not flawed. Man still languishes under the impact of sin until his flawed body dies and he receives a new body. Then he is free to serve God forever in heaven in undiluted righteousness.
3. **Cost:** The penalty of sin is paid for by the *substitutionary* death of Christ.
 - Sin brings death and separation from God. Jesus was without sin and He willingly died with the understanding that His death could count as a *substitution* for our own death. If you believe in Jesus and receive Him as your personal Savior, God will count His death for yours and give you eternal life.
4. **Timing:** Our salvation is completed at the *death* of the *body*.
 - Man is body and spirit. Upon becoming a Christian, a person's spirit is born again and he is given eternal life. However his body, at this point, remains unchanged. It is corrupted by sin and is still encumbered with old programming counter to biblical truth. Because of this, Christians experience a continuous struggle between the new inner man who wishes to serve God and the outer man who feels the pull to sin. This conflict continues until the death of the body, at which time the spirit of the Christian is transported immediately to heaven to receive a new body, untouched by sin.

The Doctrine of The Church

The church is to be the physical representation of Christ on earth now that He has returned to heaven. Because the world can no longer see Christ living on earth, it should be able to get a pretty good idea of Christ by looking at His church.

4 Major Subdivisions of the Doctrine of The Church:

1. **Universal:** The universal church is the church, totality of all *believers* in Jesus.
 - The universal church, also called the body of Christ, refers to all people all over the world who have become Christians since the beginning of the church and who will become Christians before Christ returns. Christ is the head of the church.
2. **Local Church:** A local assembly of believers *organized* to carry out the responsibilities of the universal church.
 - A church is not a building, but people.
3. **Leadership:** Those in the church worthy of being followed because of their *spiritual* maturity.
4. **Membership:** *Belonging* to a universal church and a local church.
 - When a person becomes a Christian, he or she immediately and automatically becomes a member of the universal church, the body of Christ.
 - Throughout church history, local churches have had varying requirements for membership that range from very limited to very strict. This appears to be a point of freedom given local churches in the scripture. ****The important point here is that everyone should be a part of local church. God never intended for Christians to try to make it alone. Placing oneself under spiritual authority and in mutual ministry with others is essential to spiritual health.**