

## The Mediator (Bob Gordanier)

All teachings to do with life after death teach that we are saved by our own efforts, primarily through good behavior, right living or strict adherence to religious rules and rituals. In Buddhism you save yourself by ceasing all desire. In Orthodox Judaism you save yourself through repentance, prayer and working hard to obey the law. With Hinduism you save yourself by detaching yourself from the separated ego and making an effort to live in unity with the divine, and then you will achieve Nirvanah. In Islam you save yourself by living a life of good deeds so as to please Allah enough to be allowed into paradise.

Some teach other ways to save yourself. New Ageism teaches that you save yourself by gaining a new perspective, enabling you to see how you are all connected to all things as a divine oneness.

Confucianism teaches that you save yourself through education, self reflection, self cultivation and living a moral life. And Taoism teaches that you save yourself by aligning yourself with the Tao to have peace and harmony in and all around you.

And many believe that you are saved by simply being a good person. Do your best and this will please God.

All of these are mankind's efforts to save him-self.

But there is nothing mankind can do to save himself. To attempt to save your-self by pleasing God misses the point. It makes no difference how pleased God is with our efforts, it's not enough to save us. It doesn't deal with the sin of mankind that stands between God and man.

***All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.***

What is this about sin? What happened to mankind that we have fallen into this pitiful state of existence in the first place? Why is there a separation between man and God, and what does it have to do with sin?

The answers are found in the Bible, and this is what God has to say about the sinful state of mankind.

When God created the first man, Adam, he created him without sin; holy.

Adam spent time in the presence of God. He walked with God and talked with God.

God gave Adam just one command, and when Adam and the woman with him broke that command, they broke the relationship between God and man. This is what we refer to as the fall of man.

In the Garden of Eden was where God met with Adam to walk and talk with him in the coolness of the evening, and being sent out of the Garden of Eden gave a tangible essence to being sent out of God's presence. Mankind has lived apart from God ever since.

This sinful or unholy state is passed down by virtue of birth. As descendants of Adam, we inherited his spiritual condition. Mankind is born into sin.

Along with the command not to eat from the tree came a decree. In the second chapter of Genesis, we are told: ***And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."*** *Genesis 2:15-17*

The decree made by God was "when you eat of it you will surely die"; death will become a sure thing. This is the death sentence given to man.

We can choose to live a life free from acts of sin, but we are still unholy, sinners by birth, and under the sentence of death.

When a man's crime is serious enough to get him a death sentence, there is nothing he can do to earn his release back into society. Adhering to prison rules to please the Warden will not secure his release. Nor will inflicting self punishment atone for his crime. His sentence is death and when the time comes he must serve the sentence. There is nothing he himself can do to avoid that day.

However, there is a way that, if another cared about him enough to take up his case and act on his

behalf, he could possibly avoid the death sentence.

Fortunately, God does care enough about us and has taken up our case. The Bible tells us of God's plan to rescue mankind, to meet the requirements of the law, and restore a right relationship, one day bringing us back into God's presence.

***Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But God does not take away life; instead, he devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him. Samuel 14:14***

In order for God to secure a release from the decree he must find another way to satisfy the law. He has to find a substitute, another to die in our place. But that man must be free of sin, not under his own death sentence, not born of man, a man whose father is not descended from Adam.

God has provided such a man, a man without sin, born of the Holy Spirit to a virgin who had slept with no man. That man sacrificed his life for the sole purpose of redeeming mankind.

Now that man, having risen from the dead and thus conquering death, stands as a mediator between God and man to bring reconciliation.

***1 Timothy 2:5 ... there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.***

Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and man.

(Mediator: one who interposes between parties as the equal friend of each to effect reconciliation)

When we die the first death, (when we leave this body), then comes the judgement. This is when we will need a mediator, Jesus Christ, if we are to hope for a pardon from the offence of sin.

***Romans 6:23 The penalty of sin is death.*** This verse is referring to the second death, or eternal separation from God.

The Bible talks of atonement and redemption.

(Atonement: satisfactory reparation for an offence or injury.)

(Redeem: to regain possession of by repurchase.)

Atonement is satisfying the law that says the sinner must die. Redemption is buying back what was once yours. Isaiah 52:3 ***For this is what the LORD says: "You were sold for nothing, and without money you will be redeemed."***

Paying the price and redeeming mankind through Jesus is what God planned to do.

Who was Jesus and what made him different?

***Luke 1:26 God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."***

***Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High."***

***Luke 1:34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"***

***Luke 1:35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."***

The virgin will be with child by the power of God and because the child, Jesus, **was not born of man** but was born of the Holy Spirit, he is not born into sin, he is holy, **innocent of sin**, and thus worthy to atone for our sin by dying in our place, thus satisfying the law.

***Romans 3:25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement.***

***Romans 5:6-18 ...just as through the disobedience of the one man (Adam) the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man (Jesus) the many will be made righteous.***

What else is different about Jesus?

*John 1:1 **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.***

*John 1:3-4 **Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.***

*John 1:10 **He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.***

*John 1:14 **The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

**...the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.**

Jesus is God, the second personality of what is referred to as the Trinity, which is made up of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Jesus was not just a good man who rose above all others to achieve sainthood or deity. He was deity who became a man for the purpose of redeeming mankind back to himself. He died on the cross, rose from the dead, and is today back in Heaven sitting at the right hand of the Father.

*Col 2:9-10 **For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.***

This is the atonement, the death of Jesus, which has satisfied the law and paid for the repurchase of mankind.

As he died on the cross, Jesus proclaimed, "It is finished". God did his part. He provided for your forgiveness. It is now up to you whether or not you choose to accept God's offer of salvation.

Do you hope to spend eternity with God?

*John 14:6 **Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.***

*Acts 4:12 **Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."***

*1 Tim 2:5 **... there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.***

Now this is what God requires of you. To exercise the freedom of choice he gave you; the freedom to believe in Jesus, and the freedom to accept or reject his offer.

*1John 1:9 **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*** (A guilty man who denies or doesn't see his guilt doesn't deserve a pardon.)

In other words, the penalty still is death, unless one sees and admits his guilt and repents, asking God for forgiveness, thereby accepting the sacrifice of Jesus to set him free from the penalty of sin.

God wants you. The question is, do you want God? If the answer is yes, then say so. Say to God right now, out loud, but quietly if you wish, "God, I want to accept your offer of salvation through Jesus. I see that I am a sinner and I ask that you forgive my sin."

The "out loud" is not for God. Romans 10:10 **For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.**

Now get yourself a Bible from a bookstore and let God teach you.

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