

The Doctrine of Salvation

From the doctrine of Creation and Man, we move to the Doctrine of Salvation. In this area, conservative Bible-believing Christians have strong disagreements despite unity on the majority of most other points of doctrine. The Doctrine of Salvation thus is a distinguishing doctrine that defines a local church fellowship and can preclude cooperation with all Bible-believing Christians at the local church level.

Our Statement	FBFI Statement	Toronto Baptist Seminary Statement
<p>Sin and Salvation</p> <p>We believe that sin entered into the world at the fall of Adam, that it eternally separates men from God, that it condemns every man to Hell, that its mark is upon every man and that man cannot escape its consequences by any effort of his own. We believe that Salvation is the free gift of God provided by His marvelous grace and love. We believe that it is obtained by the individual upon personal faith in the saving power of Jesus' blood. We believe that such saving faith will be evident in a godly sorrow and shame for sin and a turning away from the life of the flesh to the godly walk. We believe that any man who will receive Jesus Christ by faith shall be saved to live with God forever while those who reject Him are condemned already to eternal damnation.</p> <p>Romans 5.12, Romans 3.10-19, Romans 1.18, 20, Ezekiel 18.19-20, Ephesians 2.8-9, John 1.12, John 3.16, Ephesians 1.7, Ephesians 2.8-20, 1 Peter 1.18-19, Acts 3.19, Matthew 25.46.</p>	<p>Section 6. Salvation: We believe in the salvation of sinners through Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, Who is the only Savior of men by virtue of His shed blood, i.e., His substitutionary death for sinners. We believe that salvation is completely dependent on the grace of God, is a free gift of God that man cannot earn or merit in any way, and is appropriated by repentance and faith in the person and cross work of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We hold that in salvation the believer is called, regenerated, Spirit baptized into union with Christ, justified, (including the forgiveness of sin and restoration to favor with God through the merit or righteousness of Christ), adopted, sanctified, and glorified. We believe that God secures and guarantees the final salvation of every true believer, and that the genuine believer will continue in his faith and show evidence of his faith in Christ until he meets the Lord. We believe all the elect of God, once saved, are kept by God's power and are secure in Christ forever.</p> <p>(Jn 14.6; Rm 3.25; Isa 53.4-6; Eph 2.9; Jn 16.8-11; Acts 20.21; Eph 2.8-10; Jn 1.13; Rm 6.3-5; Rm 5.1; Rm 8.15; Heb 10.10, 14; Rm 8.30; Jn 6.39; 2 Cor 5.17; 1 Jn 2.19; 1 Cor 15.2; Rm 8.37-39)</p>	<p>VI. Of the Atonement for Sin</p> <p>We believe (a) that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; (b) through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, Who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honoured the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and expiatory atonement for our sins; (c) that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, bearing the penalty of God's Holy Law, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; (d) that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven and uniting in His person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection. He is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Saviour.</p> <p>VII. Of Grace in the New Creation</p> <p>We believe (a) that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; (b) that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; (c) that it is instantaneous and not a process; (d) that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life as the gift of God; (e) that such are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation and shall never perish; (f) that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; (g) that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.</p> <p>VIII. Of Justification</p> <p>We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification; (a) that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; (b) that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but it is the imputation of the righteousness of Christ on the ground of His perfect life and expiatory death.</p>

Observations:

1. Overall, I think our present statement says most of what we would like to say about salvation. We could adjust its wording slightly to increase clarity and we should address one or two additional points.

2. The strengths of the FBFI statement include a more detailed definition of salvation and a clear statement concerning the security of the believer.
3. The Toronto statement is very detailed. However, note that it is very Calvinistic, doesn't mention salvation by faith, and rather holds to faith as a fruit of salvation. It also describes the security of the believer as being "kept through faith" rather than simply "by the power of God." Nevertheless, it says many true things that we agree with.
4. The Toronto statement on the Atonement more properly belongs to Christology, though the statement need not be as detailed. Our suggested statement on Christ says this:

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ died as a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of all men; that God raised the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave; that He bodily ascended to Heaven; where he presently intercedes as High Priest for us; and that He will bodily return for the saints at the end of the age, inaugurating the events of the last days.

Suggestion:

Salvation

We believe that sin entered into the world at the fall of Adam; that it eternally separates men from God; that it condemns every man to Hell; that its mark is upon every man and that man cannot escape its consequences by any effort of his own. We believe that salvation is a gift of God freely provided on the basis of the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ for the sins of all men. We believe that the individual obtains salvation by personal faith in the saving power of Jesus' blood. We believe that in salvation the believer is called, regenerated, Spirit baptized into union with Christ, justified, (including the forgiveness of sin and restoration to favor with God through the merit or righteousness of Christ), adopted, sanctified, and glorified. We believe that saving faith manifests itself in godly sorrow and shame for sin and turning away from the life of the flesh to a godly walk. We believe that any man who will receive Jesus Christ by faith obtains salvation and will live with God forever while those who reject Him are condemned already to eternal damnation. We believe that God keeps his saints by his power and that they are secure in Christ forever.

Isaiah 53.4-6, Ezekiel 18.19-20, Matthew 25.46, John 1.12, John 3.16, John 6.39, Acts 3.19, Acts 20.21, Romans 1.18, 20, Romans 3.10-26, Romans 5.12, Romans 6.3-5, 2 Corinthians 5.17, 2 Corinthians 5.21, Galatians 4.4-5, Ephesians 1.7, Ephesians 2.8-20, 1 Peter 1.18-19, 1 John 2.2