

'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

We in the Western World of Christianity are heavily steeped in classical Greek thought. They believed that the material world is corrupt and worthless, and only the spiritual world was worthwhile. The Bible, however, was written from a Hebraic perspective. A concept held that God's creation is good, and that human life on earth is meaningful.

We sing songs with lyrics like:

*This world is not my home,
I'm just-a passing through,
my treasures are laid up a-way beyond the blue,
the angels beckon me from heaven's distant shore,
and I can't feel at home in this world any more.*

While it is good to look forward to our eternal life and Christ's return, because of our Greek thinking, we tend to disparage the life we have now as unimportant. We often live our lives simply as waiting. Waiting for Christ to return, or waiting to die and go to heaven. God didn't give us this precious physical life only to wait for something better. Re-examining the Bible's Hebraic picture of salvation gives us a different and much better perspective – namely *A Relationship with God*.

Most modern Christians would define salvation as being saved from judgment and allowed to enter "heaven" after death. But that is only a part of the picture. The Bible paints another picture of salvation that is rarely emphasize, Salvation as the restoring the relationship with God in this life.

An unrepentant person lives a life separated from God by his own choice, because his sin directs him away from God. Paul says:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation. (Col. 1:21-22)

Through the new covenant of forgiveness that Jesus established, we can come into a right relationship with God. Each time that we take communion, we are celebrating the fact that under this new covenant of forgiveness by Christ's blood, we can "sit down to dinner" with God, something that wasn't possible before.

In biblical times, partaking of a meal together was only done if people had a close relationship with each other. If there was a conflict between two people, after it was resolved, the parties would eat a meal together to celebrate their reconciliation. We see this picture in Revelation 3:20:

The picture is that of a person being restored to fellowship with God in this life, as well as the next. Jesus mentions this in His parables. He speaks of an unsaved person as being like a sheep lost from the flock. Or like a rebellious prodigal son who has left his family. Salvation only comes when the shepherd finds the sheep and brings it home, or when the prodigal son is received back into the family.

If we see salvation as something that we already have, we can have an awe and reverence for God, who is helping us bring every part of our lives into relationship with Him. Paul says "*by grace you have been saved...*" (Eph. 2:5&8), using the past tense, not the future tense.

Our picture of God changes if we only think of salvation as escaping hell. Our idea of God as an angry judge changes to Jesus as a loving shepherd who searches for his sheep, or a loving father eager to see his son come home. This picture is of a God that actively wants to seek out his lost children and bring them back into relationship with him. He loves us and wants us near Him; he doesn't just want to pardon us from our sins.

If we think of the Father as the angry judge and Jesus as the loving savior, we are seeing the godhead as the pagans do – one god against another. The trinity is NOT divided. If the Father says one thing the other two are in complete agreement – and vice versa.

If we think of ourselves as just waiting for a future promise, we can easily fall into wasting our life here. Our priorities change when we don't see our life as disposable. The world around us is filled with people who see no meaning in this life. We should not be one of them.

Perhaps the gospel would go forth more boldly if we took hold of our salvation and started living it here, rather than waiting for it in the future.

If we are already living in eternity,
in a relationship with God,
does our life show it?

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