PONDERING GOD WITH PRESBYTERIANS:

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY "JESUS SAVES"?

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“SALVATION” IN SCRIPTURE

- Ps. 18:46: “Blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of my **salvation**.”
- Matt. 1:21: “She will bear a son, and you are to name him **Jesus,** for he will **save** his people from their sins.”



- Acts 28:28: “Let it be known to you then that this **salvation** of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.”

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM (1563) QUESTION AND ANSWER #1

What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A. That I am not my own,
but belong—
body and soul,
in life and in death—
to ***my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ***.
He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood,
and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.
He also watches over me in such a way
that not a hair can fall from my head
without the will of my Father in heaven;
in ***fact, all things must work together for my salvation. (HC 4.001)***

WHAT THEN DOES IT MEAN TO SAY “JESUS SAVES”?

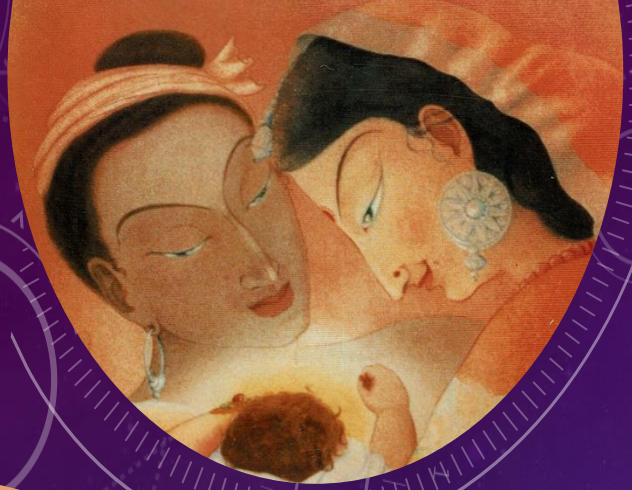
WHICH OF THESE PASSAGES IS MOST CENTRAL TO YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF JESUS?

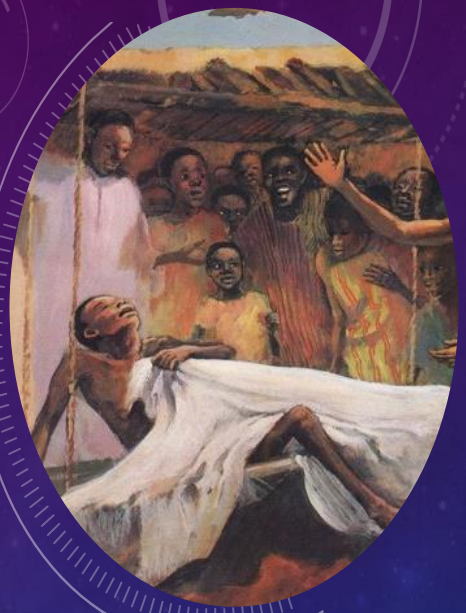
John 1:1-5: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”

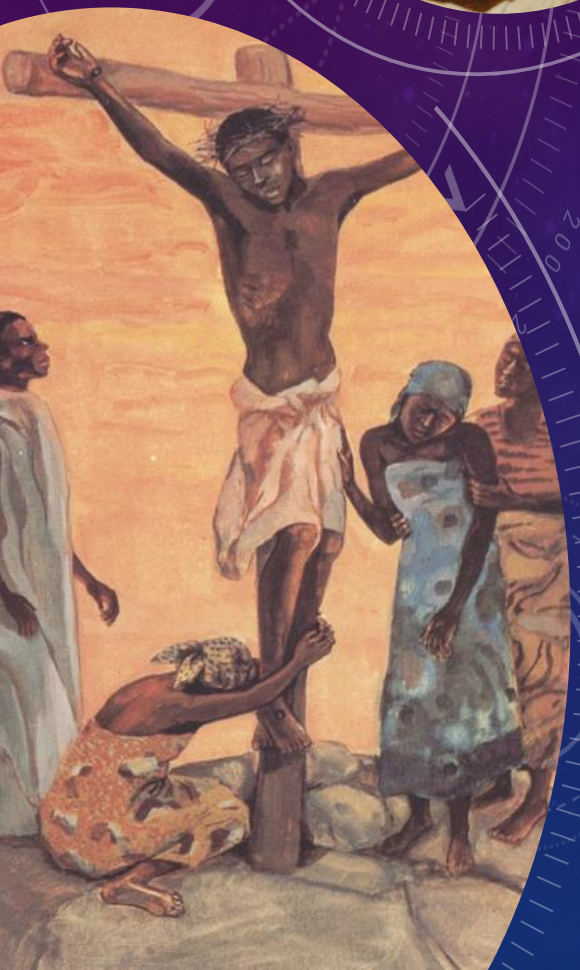
Matthew 4:23-24: “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them.”

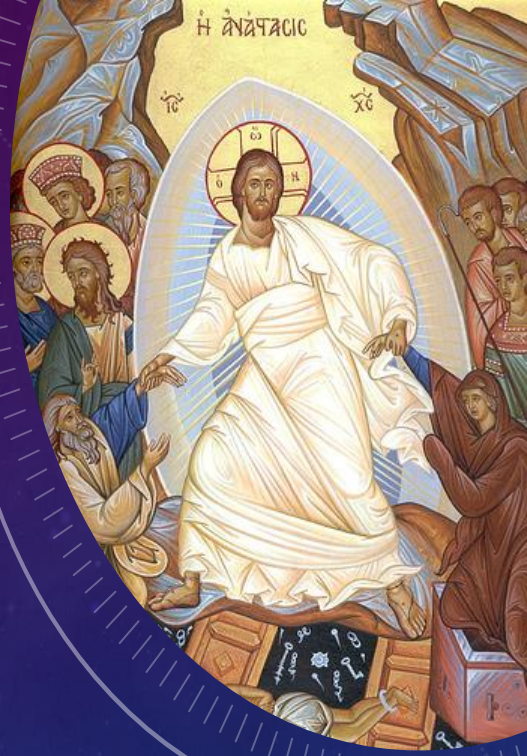
Mark 15:33-39: “When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which means ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, ‘Listen, he is calling for Elijah.’ And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, ‘Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.’ Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was God’s Son!’”

Acts 2:24, 32-33: “But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. . . . This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear.”









WHERE YOU BEGIN IN THE STORY OF JESUS SHAPES HOW YOU THINK HE ***SAVES***

STARTING WITH JOHN 1 (“IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD”)

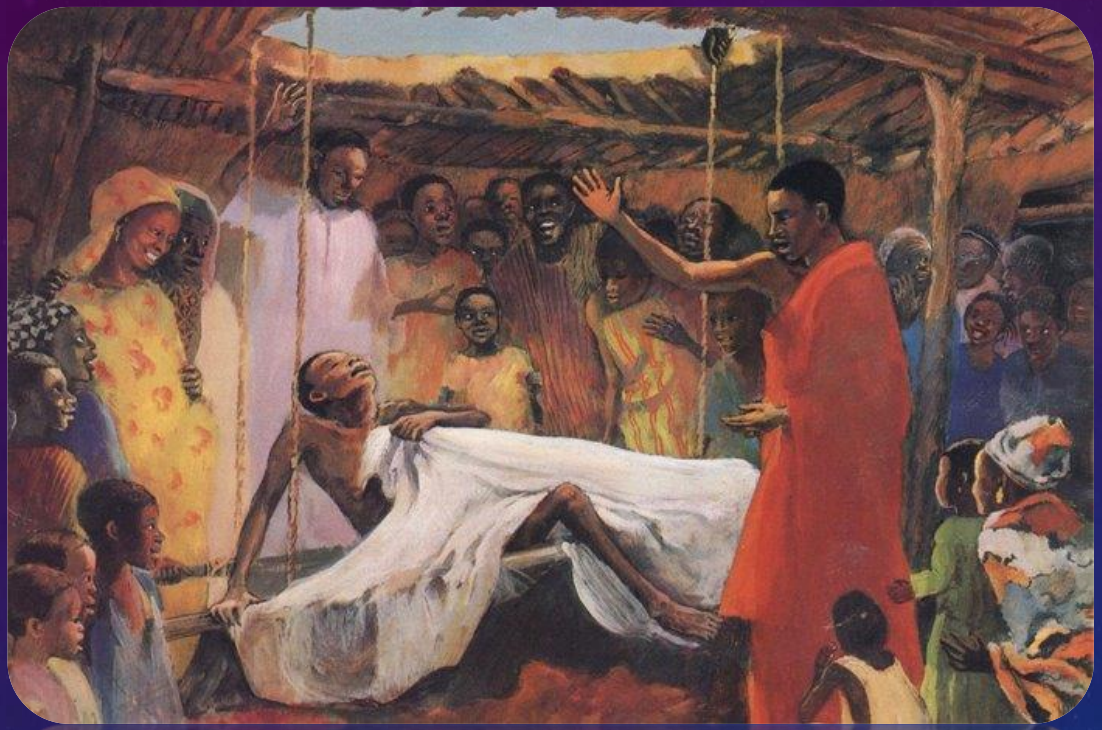
“In Jesus, the divine became human so that humans could become divine.”

Athanasius of Alexandria, 4th century



Wesley, Frank, 1923-2002. Holy Family in Saffron, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=59201 [retrieved July 21, 2025]. Original source: Estate of Frank Wesley, http://www.frankwesleyart.com/main_page.htm.

STARTING WITH MATTHEW 4 (“JESUS WENT THROUGHOUT GALILEE”)



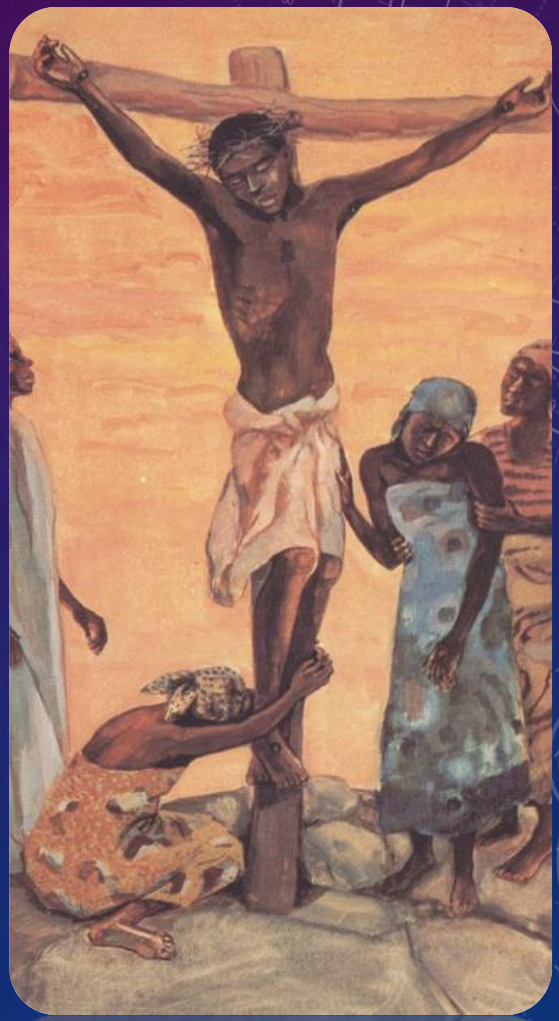
- “The spirit of God in Jesus came to show humans *life*—to show redemption through the perfect *ministerial* vision of righting relationships.”

- Delores Williams,
- 20th-21st century

JESUS MAFA. Jesus heals a paralyzed man, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48306 [retrieved July 21, 2025]. Original source: http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr (contact page: https://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr/contact).

STARTING WITH MARK 15 (“JESUS GAVE A LOUD CRY AND BREATHED HIS LAST”) (OPTION 1)

- “Our redemption through Christ’s suffering is that deeper affection in us which not only frees us from slavery to sin, but also wins for us the true liberty of the [children] of God, so that we do all things out of love rather than fear.”
- Peter Abelard,
- 12th century



JESUS MAFA. The Crucifixion; Jesus dies on the cross, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48390 [retrieved July 21, 2025]. Original source: http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr (contact page: https://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr/contact).

STARTING WITH MARK 15 (“JESUS GAVE A LOUD CRY AND BREATHED HIS LAST”) (OPTION 2)

“This man freely offered to the Father what he would never have lost by any necessity, and paid for sinners what he did not owe for himself.”

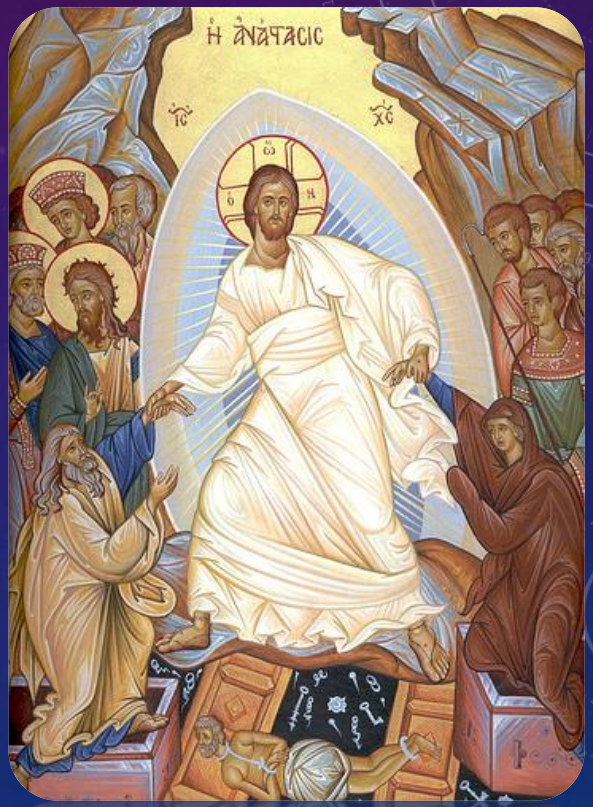
Anselm of Canterbury,
12th century

STARTING WITH ACTS 2 ("BUT GOD RAISED HIM UP")

"O Death, where is thy sting?
O Hell, where is thy victory?

Christ is risen, and thou art overthrown!
Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen!
Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice!
Christ is risen, and life reigns!"

John Chrysostom,
4th century



Icon of the Resurrection. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Resurrection_%2824%29.jpg. Public domain.

HOW DO *YOU* UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS TO SAY "JESUS SAVES"?

"These are expressions of a truth which remains beyond the reach of all theory in the depths of God's love for humanity. They reveal the gravity, cost, and sure achievement of God's reconciling work."

Confession of 1967 9.09


QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?