

# What Makes Jesus Superior to Other Saviors?

Vintage Jesus, week 8

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Pastor Mark Driscoll

*Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.*

— Luke 2:11

A savior is someone or something that delivers us from a terrible plight. In ancient Greek culture, philosophers like Epicurus, gods like Zeus, and rulers like Ptolemy were heralded as saviors. Likewise, in ancient Roman culture, the emperors from Nero's family line were also considered saviors.

In current pop culture, the concept of a savior remains a popular theme. There are movies called *Saved!* (a comedy), *Sweet Savior* (a horror film), and *Savior* (a drama). In music, "savior" is a song title for works by Bob Dylan, Lisa Marie Presley, 30 Seconds to Mars, Billy Bob Thornton, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers. There's also a Christian rock opera group called Saviour Machine and a brutal death metal band called Severed Savior. The band Antimatter produced an album titled "Saviour."

In the world of comics, *Saviour* was published by Trident Comics. The software world includes RD1 BIOS Savior Software. On television, *Law and Order* had an episode called "Savior." There are role-playing games called Savior Knight, Vampire Savior, Dark Savior, and there is a "cloak of the savior" in World of Warcraft. In the world of fashion, Savior jeans are made for women in sizes 14–30.

Furthermore, Jack Bauer is portrayed as a sort of savior on the hit television show *24*, Howard Stern has been declared the savior of satellite radio, and *Rolling Stone* magazine touted Kanye West as the savior of the music biz. Every election it seems that candidates are presented as nothing short of saviors. Additionally, it seems like every pharmaceutical commercial is touting yet another pill as some sort of savior to make life in a cursed world sheer bliss.

Many religions also have their own concepts of a savior. In Buddhism you save yourself by ceasing all desire. In Confucianism you save yourself through education, self-reflection, self-cultivation, and living a moral life. In Hinduism you save yourself by detaching yourself from the separated ego and making an effort to live in unity with the divine. In Islam you save yourself by living a life of good deeds. In Orthodox Judaism you save yourself through repentance, prayer, and working hard to obey the Law. In New Ageism you save yourself by gaining a new perspective, enabling you to see how you are connected to all things as a divine oneness. In Taoism you save yourself by aligning yourself with the Tao to have peace and harmony in and around you. What nearly all religions and spiritualities hold in common is the theme that if there is a savior, it is each person saving themselves.

In contrast, Christianity repeatedly speaks of a savior in the following distinct ways.

## 1. God alone is our savior.

The concept of God alone being our savior and therefore the only source of our hope is a common theme throughout the Old Testament, especially in Psalms and Isaiah:

- **Isaiah 43:11** *"I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior."*
- **Isaiah 45:21** *"... there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me."*
- **Isaiah 49:26** *"... all mankind will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."*
- **Isaiah 60:16** *"... you will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."*
- **Isaiah 62:11** *The LORD has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your Savior comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.'"*

## 2. Jesus is our savior God.

Savior appears twenty-four times in the New Testament, with eight occurrences referring to God in general and sixteen referring to Jesus in particular. The words *save* and *salvation* also appear frequently throughout the New Testament in reference to Jesus.

- **Matthew 1:21** *She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus [meaning "Yahweh is savior"], because he will save his people from their sins."*
- **Luke 2:11** *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.*
- **Luke 2:28–30** *Simeon took him [Jesus] in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation . . ."*

## 3. Jesus saves many people.

Unlike many saviors who are only for a particular group of people, Jesus is presented as the global savior for many diverse peoples:

- **Acts 5:30–31** *The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead—whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.*
- **Ephesians 5:23** *Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.*
- **1 John 4:14** *And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.*
- **Luke 19:10** *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."*
- **1 Timothy 1:15** *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.*

## 4. Jesus saves people from many things.

- Jesus saves us from sin (Matthew 1:21)
- Jesus saves us from God's wrath/hell (Romans 5:9)
- Jesus saves us from death (2 Timothy 1:10)

- Jesus saves us from Satan (2 Thessalonians 2:6–10)

## 5. Jesus is our only savior.

In our day of tolerance and diversity, it is perhaps most controversial to state that Jesus is the only savior, which makes Him distinct from and superior to any other proposed savior. But this is precisely the teaching of Scripture. It is, in many ways, responsible for so much of the opposition and persecution that Christians from the early church to the present have encountered:

- **2 Peter 1:1** *Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours . . .*
- **2 Peter 3:18** . . . *grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*
- **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.*

Our great God and Savior the Lord Jesus Christ began His work of saving through His sinless life, substitutionary death, and bodily resurrection. The next major event in redemptive history is the Second coming of Jesus. This will finish Jesus' work as Savior, and is what Christians deeply long for:

- **Philippians 3:20** *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ . . .*
- **2 Peter 1:11** . . . *you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*
- **Titus 2:13** . . . *we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ . . .*

**Next week:** How did people know Jesus was coming?