

THE CYCLE OF SALVATION IN THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH: A SYNERGY BETWEEN HUMAN AND DIVINE WILL. THE ROLE OF DOGMAS AND SACRAMENTS.

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<https://doi.org/10.47433/tv.xcixn5-8.101>

Abstract

Is faith alone sufficient for salvation? Are deeds alone sufficient? Are dogmas necessary elements of faith or mere philosophical and moral issues that are not inherent to salvation? How can salvation be acquired? Would there be a specific recipe for those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?

This present article presents the views of the Orthodox Church – the Church of the Fathers – on salvation: a synergy that takes place and grows between the communicable energies of God and the free will of the believer who accepts them, receives them, and lives by them. It describes the journey of growing up in faith and in deed through constant spiritual struggle until vanquishing over sin and evil. Indeed, salvation is but a function of such synergy that educates the believer and cures them from spiritual and psychological (occasionally even physical) illnesses. The faithful Christian transcends from the fallen and weakened state of the body and soul into a lively participation in the Church sacraments that culminate in the Divine Liturgy. Hence, salvation becomes a closed cycle of what God gives to humans and what humans receive and give back to God.

Keywords: Faith, deeds, cycle of salvation, dogmas, sacraments, spiritual struggle, uncreated energies, Holy Eucharist, Divine Liturgy, Church Fathers, spiritual illness, cure, healing.

Introduction

According to the teaching of the Eastern Orthodox Church¹, the concept of salvation is not a vague legal theory of God's forgiveness

¹ The reference is made here to the "one, universal, holy, and apostolic Church" as Orthodox profess in the Nicæan Creed of Faith. Note that only the