



The Christian Life

Module 3

Salvation

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INTRODUCTION

Now that you have a good understanding of who Jesus is and why He came to this earth, we can study the biblical teachings concerning the salvation of man's soul. If you haven't recently studied Lesson Two, **Jesus Christ**, take a few moments and review it. Most importantly, bear in mind that Jesus is God's Son and that His blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. These two points are very important in our discussion of salvation.

TECHNICAL NOTE: How are you progressing with your studies in the Bible? Do you have a good, readable Bible? If not, we strongly encourage you to purchase one before you study another lesson. **A good Bible is the wisest Investment you can make.**

Now we're ready to begin our discussion of salvation. May God minister to your mind and heart as we study together.

1. THE MEANING OF THE WORD "SALVATION"

STUDY Titus 3:3-7.

These verses from Paul's letter to a young minister give us a beautiful picture of what salvation is all about. Basically, salvation means that **man is rescued from his own sins**. Jesus taught that those who were evil would face **eternal punishment**, but that those who were "righteous will go into **eternal life** (Study Matthew 25:31-46 and John 5:24-29).

Salvation, then, refers to the process of being Saved from eternal punishment, or hell, and instead being brought into fellowship with God whereby one may enter Heaven and live eternally with God.

In this lesson we will examine (1) man's need for salvation, (2) the method by which one is saved, and (3) the blessings of being in fellowship with God.

2. MAN'S NEED FOR SALVATION

STUDY Romans 3:9-18 and 23.

The Apostle Paul minces no words in stating emphatically that all men are sinners. And although his letter to the Christians in Rome was written almost 2000 years ago. These verses read like a news report. Let's look at how Paul sounds like a twenty first century reporter.

- (1) No one is seeking God (v.11).
- (2) Their tongues are filled with lies (v.13).
- (3) Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness (v.14).
- (4) They rush to commit murder (v.15).
- (5) Destruction and misery always follow them (v.16).
- (6) They don't know where to find peace (v.17).
- (7) They have no fear of God at all (v.18).

What society is Paul describing? His? Yes, but ours too!

STUDY Genesis 6:5-6 and Psalms 14:1-3.

Has there ever been a time when man has not chosen to disobey God's laws? **No, we read in Genesis, from the very beginning of the history of man, men's hearts were "consistently and totally evil."**

The Psalms are a collection of writings which reflect the heartbeat of life in the Jewish community when the nation of Israel was a major power in the Eastern world (we will study the Psalms further in Lesson five). They cannot be dated positively, but most of them were written from 1000 to 600 B.C. And even in that period, when man was becoming more civilized and God's hand of love was evidenced everywhere, the psalmist David was forced to write, "No one does good," and "all have become corrupt." **He even says that some were asserting with foolish boldness that God doesn't exist!**

Thus, it is evident not only from an observation of our modern world, but from the scope of biblical history that man is a sinner in need of salvation. Man was given a choice to obey or disobey God. From the very beginning man chose to disobey and break a close, spiritual fellowship with God.

God could have abandoned us to the penalties of our own sins. But He loves us very much. 2 Peter 3:9 says that God "is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent." **And because God loves us and wants to redeem us to a renewed, eternal fellowship with Him, He has provided a way of salvation.**

3. THE METHOD OF SALVATION

STUDY Ephesians 2:4-10.

The first thing Paul points out in this passage is that **God is rich in mercy because He has a great love for us**. In other words, it is God who initiates the process of salvation. He cannot bear to see man lost in his sins. Thus, it is because of **grace - God's unmerited favour on our behalf** - that He forgives us of our sins. Grace is **God's love in action**.

Notice that Paul discounts the possibility of anyone being saved by **good works**. Some people feel that if they are good enough they will get to Heaven. But we have already seen that no one can boast that he or she is good enough. Sin is a factor in everyone's life. **No one will ever do enough good works to save Himself**.

The third thing we need to note in this passage is that **we must believe** (have faith). Although Jesus died for the sins of mankind on the Cross, salvation is not automatic. **Each person must exercise his or her own faith in appropriating salvation**.

STUDY Galatians 2:15-16.

In what, or in whom must one have faith in order to receive salvation? Some expect salvation by adhering to a religion or a creed, and others believe it comes through church membership. Still others have equated salvation with Christian baptism.

Salvation Through a Person

But salvation is not wrapped up in a belief or in a church or in an action. **Rather, it is to be found in the person of Jesus, for the Bible tells us that salvation is received only through faith in Jesus Christ**. Paul writes in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

So when Paul and other New Testament writers say that a person is saved "by faith," they do not mean faith in whatever a person wants to believe in. Rather, they mean **faith in Jesus**, faith that He died for us and that He is the One whom God sent to be our Saviour.

The Meaning of Faith

STUDY John 1:12.

The question might be asked, "What does it mean to have faith in Jesus?" John uses two alternative words for faith which clearly illustrate "having faith" in Jesus.

Firstly, John says that Jesus gave people the right to be God's children when they "believed Him." There is a need to believe in Jesus as God's Son, not merely someone you believed in via the history books. Someone in whom you desire to have a relationship with.

Secondly, he says that Jesus gave people the right to become children of God when they "accepted Him (or received Him)." **Faith is not merely mental assent**. Some people say, "Yes, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God." But the evidence of their lives indicates that they have not accepted (or received) Him into their hearts, and so they have not really exercised faith in Him. **To "accept" Jesus means to open up our hearts to Him and follow Him in all that we say and do**.

Thus, in using “believe” and “accept” as alternative words for “faith,” John gives us a dynamic picture of what it means to “have faith.” To be saved by faith in Jesus means to accept Him into our hearts, to know Him in a personal way, and to follow and serve Him. That is the very meaning of faith and God’s method of salvation.

4. JESUS IS GOD'S ONLY WAY OF SALVATION

STUDY John 5:22-24.

Some people believe that there are many paths to God, and that Jesus Christ is just one of them. But that is like saying there are many ways to build a house, and laying the foundation first is just one of them.

Jesus declared in John 14:6, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."** And the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:11, "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have - Jesus Christ".

Jesus is God's way of salvation. Beliefs in any other person or system for salvation are the inventions of man. God has not designated a religion, a prophet, or a great teacher as the person in whom one can find salvation. **Rather, He has designated Jesus, His own Son, as man's path to eternal life.**

SELF-STUDY #1

STUDY 1 Timothy 2:5-6 and answer the following questions in your own words.

- (a) What does Paul say Jesus is? _____
 - (b) Can any other person do what Jesus does? _____
 - (c) How did Jesus bridge the gap between God and man? _____
- _____
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STUDY 1 John 5:11-12.

Christians have been accused of bigotry for asserting that it is only through Jesus that a person can experience salvation. **But to accuse Christians, and thus God, of being bigots is both unfair and missing the point entirely.**

Suppose someone tried to sell a handful of diamonds to a reputable jeweller. Would he be guilty of bigotry if, after examining each of them, he discovered that only one was a genuine diamond and the rest were imitations? Of course not.

How then can Christians be guilty of bigotry for teaching that which is stated in God's word, that **Jesus is the only way of salvation?** God, who initiates the salvation process, has declared **Jesus the only genuine Saviour.** As John says, eternal life is found only in Jesus. As a real diamond alone has monetary value. Jesus is the only person who has spiritual value. In other words, He alone can grant eternal life. "whoever does not have God's Son does not have life."

The assertion that Jesus is God's only way of salvation is not bigotry. It is truth.

5. THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION.

STUDY John 14:21-23.

The blessings of salvation are two-fold: temporal and eternal. It was stated in the first lesson that God wants to bless your life. It would be impossible to list all the blessings of the Christian life in this lesson. But you will find throughout this course many scriptures which relate the various ways God wishes to bless us.

The above scripture, however, deserves special mention at this point. After all, the real proof that Jesus is God's way of salvation lies in our **experience of the written Word. And Jesus said that all who truly love and follow Him would experience Him. He and God** will come and dwell in their hearts.

Therefore, the starting point of the life of blessing you have in Christ lies in the personal relationship you have with Him. **He is your friend. He is your help in a time of trouble. He is your provider.** Because He is all these things, you will see His hand of blessing opened up to you in many ways time and time again.

STUDY Revelation 21:1-4.

The greatest blessing of all as a result of that decision you made to follow Jesus is the **home in Heaven which awaits you.** The Apostle Paul yearned for Heaven when he said, "I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me" (Philippians 1:23).

Heaven is a place **without** sin and suffering. Heaven is **with God. Heaven is forever.**

And you, because you received Jesus Christ, God's way of salvation, into your heart, have a home in Heaven that will be far better than anything you can ever experience on this earth. **Praise God that He loves us and has provided a way of salvation!**

Study Luke 10:17-20 and **do what Jesus says!**

SELF-STUDY #2

1. What is the basic meaning of the word "salvation"? _____

2. Although all men are sinners, some ethnic groups do not sin as much as others.
T () F ()
3. God loves us in spite of our sins. T () F ()
4. Define the meaning of the term "the grace of God." (2 answers).
(a) _____

(b) _____

5. A person can get to Heaven solely on his or her good works. T () F ()
6. To "have faith" according to the Bible means to accept a religious creed. T () F ()
7. A person cannot receive salvation unless he or she exercises faith in Jesus Christ.
T () F ()
8. To "accept" Jesus Christ means to follow Him and serve Him. T () F ()
9. Jesus is the way of salvation because men have chosen Him to be their Saviour.
T () F ()
10. Why is Jesus man's only Saviour? (2 answers)
(a) _____
(b) _____
11. Even though Jesus lived on this earth almost 2000 years ago, we can have a personal relationship with Him. T () F ()
12. God wants us to be in Heaven with Him. T () F ()

ANSWERS TO SELF-STUDY #1

- (a) A mediator.
- (b) No.
- (c) He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone.

ANSWERS TO SELF-STUDY #2

- 1. Man is rescued from his sins.
- 2. F
- 3. T
- 4. (a) God's unmerited favour on our behalf
(b) God's love in action
- 5. F
- 6. F
- 7. T
- 8. T
- 9. F
- 10. (a) God has designated Him as man's Saviour.
(b) He is the only person who can grant eternal life.
- 11. T
- 12. T