



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#140)

Learning the basics about being saved:
Studying the Bible to find out (3).

A BASIC METHOD FOR UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE.

⇒ We're looking at a basic and valuable starting point for studying the Bible, using the "save/salvation" concept to illustrate it.

We need to pay attention to:

- ① The words and their meanings.
- ② How those words connect.
- ③ The context of the passage.
- ④ What other passages say.



⇒ We're looking at step #2 in this method:
Paying attention to:

- ② How words connect (or go together).

ILLUSTRATING HOW WORD CONNECTIONS CAN TEACH US, USING THE "SALVATION CONCEPT" FOR OUR EXAMPLE.

OUR CURRENT EMPHASIS IS ON CONJUNCTIONS.
Conjunctions are important!

- LAST WEEK: We saw what "AND" teaches.
- TODAY: We find out what some other conjunctions teach.

No need to memorize all the conjunctions and their definitions!
Just pay careful attention to them as you find them.

TWO SPECIAL TYPES OF CONNECTORS:

① CONJUNCTIONS – These words *combine* separate statements.

- ✓ Each of the statements is meaningful by itself.

TWO STATEMENTS: "I have a cat." + "I have a dog."
COMBINED: "I have a cat AND a dog."

✓ EXAMPLES: **AND, OR, BECAUSE, SO THAT**

② PREPOSITIONS – These words *add* information to a statement.

- ✓ *By itself*, the additional information has little meaning.

STATEMENT: "My dog chased a squirrel."
PREPOSITION (little meaning by itself): "up a tree"
COMBINED: "My dog chased a squirrel up a tree."

✓ EXAMPLES: **UP, IN, TOWARD, AFTER**

BEFORE WE START ⇒ "What if my translation says it different than yours does?"

THE OVER-ALL MESSAGE OF GOD'S WORD IS **RESILIENT**. It will show through, even if our understanding of a random verse or phrase seems cloudy.

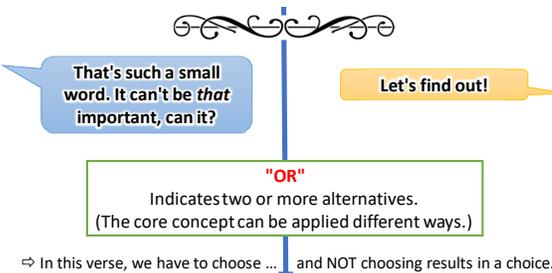
WORDS HAVE A RANGE OF MEANINGS. A New Testament concept (in Greek) can often be communicated using *different* words (in English).

EXAMPLE: Sometimes the word "IF" can be translated as "SINCE."

- Colossians 2:20: "IF you have died with Christ" can also be translated "SINCE you have died with Christ." (Either translation is appropriate.)
- Paul is writing to Christians who *have* died with Christ; *he is not questioning that fact* by saying "if you have...!"
- *Since* they have died with Christ, he can tell them the significance of that death: They have died to the world's religious regulations, and are not to be controlled by them!

★ Our goal: to look at some different conjunctions, and see how important they are. ★

What can we learn from the conjunction "OR"?



That's such a small word. It can't be *that* important, can it?

Let's find out!

"OR"
Indicates two or more alternatives.
(The core concept can be applied different ways.)

⇒ In this verse, we have to choose ... and NOT choosing results in a choice.

"OR" teaches us: Our choices are an expression of values.

⇒ Doing good is *more important* than doing religious activities.

Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you: Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath **or** to do evil, to save life **or** to destroy it?"

Luke 6:9 (CSB) ; also Mark 3:4

ALSO
Implied: Choosing to NOT do good is like choosing to do evil. See also **James 4:17**.

Scripture tells us that our #1 priority is love for God, and our #2 priority is love for people. *What people overlook is that love for God is NOT the same as doing religious activities!* (First and foremost, love for God involves obedience and moral integrity – 1 Samuel 15:22; Mark 12:33.)

Under normal conditions, there will be *no conflict* between the religious activities that God has commanded and love for neighbor. If at any time there is a conflict, love for neighbor comes first – as Jesus illustrates in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37).

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What can we learn from the conjunction **"BUT"**?

Once again, that's such a small word. It can't be that important, can it?

Let's find out!

"BUT"
 Adds more information to a sentence, usually a contrast or an exception.

⇒ We learn about two alternatives ... and only ONE is correct.

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"BUT" teaches us: ① Of the TWO ways to live, only *one* is the right way.

Each way has consequences. Only one way has good consequences.

⇒ The right response to the Good News (= the first of these options).

Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. **But** anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.

Mark 16:16 (NLT) (We've already learned what "believing" implies.)

⇒ The right attitude about our own life (= the second of these options).

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, **but** whoever loses his life because of me [= Jesus] will save it.

Luke 9:24 (CSB); also Matthew 16:25; Mark 8:35

"BECAUSE" identifies the specific type of "life-losing" that will result in one's life being saved.

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"BUT" teaches us: ② Of the TWO potential reasons for Jesus' first coming... only one is correct.

For I did not come to judge the world, **but** to save the world.

John 12:47b (NIV)

⇒ This is important, because Jesus often said it.

⇒ **"BUT" we need to look at other Scripture passages to get an understanding of the full issue.**

- Jesus came to save the world; but that does not mean that all will be saved. (2 Thessalonians 2:12; and verses on the previous slide.)
- People are already judged and condemned; Jesus did not have to do it. (John 3:18, 36.)
- Jesus often condemned those who rejected the Good News. He also warned people about their sin. (Matthew 23; Luke 13:1-5.)
- The next time Jesus comes, it will be to judge. (Acts 10:42; 17:31.)

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What can we learn from the conjunction **"SO THAT"**?

That sounds a little more important. But it wouldn't be a life-and-death matter, would it?

Let's find out!

"SO THAT"
 "That" can be used in a variety of ways. Here, as a conjunction, it indicates reason or purpose. (Sometimes, "so" or "that" may be used by itself.)

⇒ There are five verses ... ALL point to the *same* obligation.

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"SO THAT" teaches us: Our interaction with the unsaved is to be purposeful.

If we really care about others – if we really love them – we will do whatever is necessary (and God-honoring) to give them the opportunity to be saved.

Jesus and Paul both provide examples of what to do.

⇒ **SPEAKING** the way of truth, proclaiming the Good News – *in spite of opposition*.

I say these things so that you may be saved.

John 5:34b (CSB) Jesus, reminding his opponents about John's testimony

... speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved.

1 Thessalonians 2:16b (CSB) The unsaved Jews were trying to keep Paul from doing this.

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⇒ **LIVING in a way that removes barriers and creates opportunity for salvation.** (This may involve major or minor life issues, but it does not involve moral compromise.)

I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some. Now I do all this because of the gospel, ...
1 Corinthians 9:22b-23a (CSB); see the context for examples.

So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Don't give offense to Jews or Gentiles or the church of God.*
I, too, try to please everyone in everything I do. I don't just do what is best for me; I do what is best for others so that many may be saved.
★ **And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.** ★
1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 (NLT)

* (Though the main focus here is on the *salvation* of others, Paul indicates that this principle applies even to our interactions with *saved* people.)

⇒ **Willing to deal with unrepentant sin within the church.**

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, ... And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?

For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.
1 Corinthians 5:1a, 2-5 (NIV)

- ✓ The primary issue was *sexual immorality*, not the specific type.
- ✓ Did they proudly *affirm* this sin, or quietly *ignore* it? Either way, their pride (mentioned often in 1 and 2 Corinthians) was sin.
- ✓ An unwillingness to recognize sin and deal with sin properly can have *eternal* consequences. Scripture gives us NO basis for thinking that a *chronically unrepentant church-goer* is saved.

WHEN A CHURCH REFUSES TO DEAL WITH ITS MEMBERS WHO ARE LIVING IN SIN...

- Like yeast, it will influence the rest of the church (1 Corinthians 5:6-8). We could also compare it to a cancer that is left to grow.
- Sins "ignored" in one generation tend to be "affirmed" in the next.
- Churches like this often have an attitude of self-importance and pride. Jesus' words in Revelation 3:14-22 apply to them.
- **IF WE ARE WILLING TO OBEY GOD and deal with the sin:** *The world* will accuse us of being judgmental hypocrites, and (often) unloving hateful bigots. They will cast many inflammatory slurs at us.
- **IF WE ARE UNWILLING TO OBEY GOD and don't deal with the sin:** *The world* will love us, but Jesus will condemn us.

Be aware that, when we deal with sin in the church, we must also deal with any sins we may be guilty of. God requires **BOTH** of these.

What can we learn from the conjunction "IF"?

If you can show me that this little word "IF" is a life-and-death matter, I'll be convinced that conjunctions are important!

Then prepare to be convinced!

"IF"
"IF" can be used in a variety of ways. Here, it indicates a necessary condition or situation that will result in something else.

⇒ One verse ... one option.

"IF" teaches us: Clinging to the Good News message that Paul preached is the only way to be saved.

⇒ Any other "good news" will send you to hell (Galatians 1:8-9)!

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.
1 Corinthians 15:1-2 (NIV)

- The issue involved Jesus' *physical* resurrection. If it did not occur, then our "salvation" does not exist; and our "believing" is a waste of time!

Sometimes there may be *more than one* condition ("if") that could result in a specific desired outcome. Here, the word "otherwise" shows us that there are *no other possibilities*.

WHAT can we conclude?

These conjunctions **FORCE** us to focus on *life-and-death issues that mark the difference between following and not-following Jesus.*

- ① Values and choices
- ② Choices and consequences
- ③ Purposeful living
- ④ Only one saving option

WE MUST PAY ATTENTION TO THESE VERSES!

There are too many of them for us to excuse or ignore!
We would have to deliberately *suppress* the message of Scripture and *sacrifice* our integrity to do that!
(It's not like having an isolated statement that might need explained by other verses, or a misinterpreted obscure text!)

This leads us right into...

Our MISSION:

Let these conjunctions encourage us to follow Jesus more closely!

- ✓ Conjunctions can teach us a lot about salvation and related issues. Are any of the things we learned *new* concepts to you?
- ✓ Do any of these issues make you feel "uncomfortable"? If so, they are probably where you need to focus your attention—until you have developed the "renewed mind" mentioned in Romans 12:2.



On the following pages are some questions based on these conjunctions, which may point to issues we need to deal with.

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SUMMARY: What "OR" teaches us:

Indicates two or more alternatives.

"OR" teaches us about values. Love for neighbor takes precedence over religious activities.

- Do I focus on religious activities, yet neglect my obligations toward other people—especially when those obligations are outside my "comfort zone"?
 - ⇒ [Perhaps I should pay attention to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37).]
- What about those times when I *know* I should do something, but choose to *not* do so? How often do I *suppress* my awareness of an obligation, to make it easier to ignore?
- Do I even know what genuine "love for neighbor" is?

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SUMMARY: What "BUT" teaches us:

Adds more information to a sentence, usually a contrast or an exception.

- ① There are TWO ways to live, each with its own consequences. A "Jesus focus" results in life, but a "self focus" results in death.
 - Do I really trust (believe) Jesus? What about when things don't go the way I planned?
 - Does my desire for "self-preservation" hinder my ability to follow Jesus? What does it mean to "lose my life" for Jesus?
- ② Jesus' *first* coming was *not* to judge, but to save.
 - It's easy to accept this fact; but do I use it as an excuse to ignore those other verses that warn me about judgment?
 - ⇒ If I'm ignoring some of the verses about *Jesus*, I'm probably ignoring some of the verses about "*following* Jesus."

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SUMMARY: What "SO THAT" teaches us:

In our verses, it indicates reason or purpose.

"SO THAT" teaches us that our interaction with the unsaved is to be purposeful. It's a matter of eternal life and death. It's also a *command*.

- Are my *words* and *actions* a reflection of what it means to follow Jesus? Have I ever paid attention to what Scripture says about speech and conduct?
- Am I willing to deal with any sin that characterizes *my* life? Do I treat sin lightly, as though it *weren't* a "heaven-or-hell" issue? Do I pretend it *isn't* sin?
- When the issue involves the sin of others in the church, what would "love for God and neighbor" require me to do? If I choose to leave them on "the path to hell," is that love?

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SUMMARY: What "IF" teaches us:

Here, it indicates a *necessary condition* that will *result* in something else.

"IF" teaches us: To be saved, we need to cling to the Good News message that is proclaimed *in Scripture*. THERE ARE NO ALTERNATIVES.

- Am I determined to find out what the Bible's "Good News" is, and to hold on to it firmly? Or, am I willing to compromise or make "adjustments" to it, so it will sound more appealing?
- Do I take serious Paul's warning that *anyone* who teaches a different "good news" is deserving of hell (Galatians 1:8-9)?
 - ⇒ Paul considered it serious enough to warn us *twice* in one passage! At the Day of Judgment, *both* verses will testify against those who ignore the warning. (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1.)

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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