

GOOD NEWS
for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#145)
A "Salvation Survey."

1

INQUIRER:
WHAT DOES IT
MEAN TO BE
"SAVED"?

CHRISTIAN: *

READ THE NEW
TESTAMENT TO
FIND OUT!

A person who had absolutely no idea what "salvation" is could find out by simply paying attention to the **save/salvation concept**, as found in the **New Testament!**

(There is a lot more in the Bible that can be discovered, but this "salvation" study is a wonderful place to start!)

* **A person who seriously cares about eternity will be willing to take the time to find out how to get ready!**

* (In "real life," the Christian would probably say more than just these 7 words!)

2

ULTIMATELY, THERE IS AN ISSUE OF GREATER IMPORTANCE.

BEFORE CONSIDERING WHAT THEY MIGHT BE WILLING TO DO, CONSIDER THIS:

- How much do **YOU** care about eternity?
- What are **YOU** willing to do about it?

- Do you **really care** about your eternal destiny? You will be willing to **do what is necessary** to take care of it.
- Are you **seriously interested** in finding out about salvation? You will be willing to **take the time to find out** about it!

We are going to look at what our inquirer could find, if he was willing to read the New Testament and pay attention to what it says about the save/salvation concept. →

3

① There are different types of salvation/deliverance.

Our inquirer would find examples of physical salvation/deliverance that could serve as "pictures," to teach about eternal salvation.

SALVATION / DELIVERANCE from ...

- Enemies – Luke 1:71.
- Prison – Philippians 1:19.
- Sickness – Matthew 9:22; etc.
- Drowning – Matthew 8:25.
- Demon possession – Luke 8:36.
- Physical death – Hebrews 5:7.
- Egypt – Jude 1:5.
- Evil attacks (saved *through* death) – 2 Timothy 4:18.

OBSERVATIONS:

- ⇒ Salvation means you are rescued from the control/power/influence of something.
- ⇒ Salvation "from" one condition implies being saved "to" a different condition.

(Some of these examples may be translated by other words such as "healing," so our inquirer might not find all of them. But he will find enough examples to gain an understanding of the basic concept.)

4

② Concerning *eternal* salvation... We discover that there is a need for us to be saved "FROM" something.

Who/what needs SAVED?

- Our "souls"/"lives" – Mark 8:35; James 5:20; etc.
- Sinners – 1 Timothy 1:15.
- [As we read the New Testament, we come to the realization that everyone needs saved!]

We need SAVED from ...

- Our sin – Matthew 1:21.
- God's wrath – Romans 5:9.
- Ungodliness – Romans 11:26.
- (Spiritual) death – James 5:20.
- A crooked and perverse generation – Acts 2:40.

OBSERVATIONS:

- ⇒ We need to pay attention to context. There are different ways that we need "saved." Examples: (a) saved from deserved punishment; (b) saved from our own sinful conduct.
- ⇒ As before, this implies being saved "to" a different condition/situation.

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③ We learn about the *nature* of this eternal salvation.

Where it comes from.

- > **Its "country of origin":**
 - It comes from the Jews (i.e., they have *God's Word*, and Jesus was born a Jew) – John 4:22.
- > **Most passages center around one individual and what he did:**
 - Jesus is the source for those who obey him – Hebrews 5:9.
 - Jesus came to seek/save the lost – Luke 19:10.
 - The resurrection of Jesus – 1 Peter 3:21.
 - Jesus' *eternal* life – Romans 5:10.
 - Jesus, as "God's salvation" – Luke 2:30.

> How it's communicated:

- The word (= Bible) can save us – James 1:21.
- > **Many passages describe the "savior" as:** Jesus, God, Christ the Lord, Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, etc.

OBSERVATION:

- ⇒ As we look at these verses, we begin to learn additional details about salvation – different things about Jesus, our need to obey him, etc.

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[③ We learn about the *nature* of this eternal salvation.]

Other details about salvation.

- The "Good News" (or "gospel") is the power that God uses accomplish salvation – Romans 1:16.
- God's patience makes it possible – 2 Peter 3:15.
- It is something that God's people share – Jude 1:3.
- All people will see it – Luke 3:6.
- There are certain things that accompany it (if it is genuine) – Hebrews 6:9.
- There is a "dead" kind of faith that does *not* save – James 2:14, 17.
- It is associated with difficulty [= It's not an "easy life."] – 1 Peter 4:18.

There are past/present/future aspects of salvation.

- Past – Titus 3:5.
- Present – 1 Corinthians 1:18.
- Future – 1 Peter 1:5.

OBSERVATIONS:

- ⇒ To understand some of these verses, we will have to look at the context.
- ⇒ It's OK if we *don't* understand everything the first time we look at the issue! (Learning the truth takes time!)

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[④ How do we obtain this salvation?]

Here, we discover two main themes.

- First:** We already saw that salvation comes from Jesus/God. *He* is the one who saves. Here, we will learn more about God's involvement.
- Second:** We discover that *we*, as humans, have a responsibility to do certain things. Even *other people* have responsibilities to do certain things. *Yet we discover that these responsibilities do not detract from the fact that it is Jesus/God who does the saving!*

While reading the Bible, our inquirer will be exposed to many other issues related to God's truth. God may use some of these seemingly unrelated passages to reinforce and direct him toward a genuine salvation.

OBSERVATION:

- ⇒ We need to accept *all* of what Scripture says, without using one verse to "cancel" another.

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[④ How do we obtain this salvation?]

What God/Jesus does.
(We've already seen some verses about this.)

- God's grace (undeserved kindness) – Ephesians 2:5, 8.
- He did what was necessary to reconcile us to him – Romans 5:10.
- His purpose and grace made it possible – 2 Timothy 1:9.
- Through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit – Titus 3:5.
- Through what our Lord Jesus Christ did – 1 Thessalonians 5:9.

Other people have a role.

- They tell others about salvation – Acts 13:47 (example).
- Their willingness to endure suffering sometimes results in people being saved – 2 Corinthians 1:6.
- They are to attempt to turn sinners away from their errors – James 5:20.
- They must try to save (rescue) those who are being led astray – Jude 1:23.

OBSERVATION:

- ⇒ Different Scripture passages will focus on different issues. *But all are important.*

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[④ How do we obtain this salvation?]

What are WE to do?

- > Many passages focus on faith/trust:**
 - Believe – Acts 16:31; etc.
 - Believing and being baptized – Mark 16:16.
 - Faith connected to wisdom – 1 Timothy 3:15.
 - Believing the Good News – Romans 1:16.
 - It's the goal of faith – 1 Peter 1:9.
- > Some passages connect faith/trust to what God does:**
 - Faith, connected to grace – Ephesians 2:8.
 - Faith, connected to the Spirit's sanctifying work – 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

This "believe" concept may be difficult to understand, because the world has *distorted* the meaning of the word. By studying how the Bible uses this word, our inquirer will begin to learn what it means.

Scripture connects "believing" with the acceptance of facts, while the world has turned it into the opposite of facts: opinion and pretension.

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[④ How do we obtain this salvation? / What are WE to do?]

> Other actions connected to salvation:

- Calling on the name of the Lord – Romans 10:13.
- Draw near to God through Jesus – Hebrews 7:25.
- Godly sorrow and repentance – 2 Corinthians 7:10.
- Confessing who Jesus is – Romans 10:9-10.
- Baptism (as explained in the context) – Peter 3:21.
- Obeying Jesus – Hebrews 5:9.
- Loving the truth – 2 Thessalonians 2:10.

OBSERVATION:

- ⇒ Even if we *don't* understand the relationship between these actions and faith, we can trust God, obey him, and work toward a better understanding of *how* they work together.

The fact that these things are connected to salvation indicates that they will be present.

But being "*connected*" to salvation does not necessarily mean they are the "*cause*" of salvation.

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[④ How do we obtain this salvation? / What are WE to do?]

> Things that are NOT the cause of salvation:

- Our works, things we have done – 2 Timothy 1:9.
- Our righteous deeds – Titus 3:5.
- [Works are a part of salvation... but not the *cause* of it. We've already seen Hebrews 5:9 ("obeying" Jesus). In the next section, we will see Philippians 2:12-13 ("working out" our salvation).]

Our inquirer might not understand some of these issues. But what he *does* learn will point him in the right direction. If he chooses to follow Jesus, he will want to learn more about these less-familiar things.

[Helps like Bible dictionaries, are beneficial; but our focus here is on what a person can know *without* these things, since most inquirers won't have these on hand.]

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⑤ **What is a saved person to do?**

Some of these things may be described as *prerequisites* for becoming saved; some may be described as *consequences* of becoming saved. But they are all the *ongoing* way of life for a saved person.

Some specific actions to be done.

- Being willing to lose one's life – Matthew 16:25; etc.
- Endurance; standing firm to the end – Matthew 10:22; etc.
- Paying careful attention to one's life and teaching (for the sake of others, as well as for our own self) – 1 Timothy 4:16.
- Holding fast to the Good News message – 1 Corinthians 15:2.

Telling others the Good News.

- The Good News is the only way people can be saved; it's the *power* God uses – 1 Corinthians 1:18, 21; 15:2.
- Some may try to hinder this communication – 1 Thessalonians 2:16.
- [There are many examples of the Good News of salvation being communicated to others – though the word "save" is not always in the immediate context.]

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[⑤ **What is a saved person to do?**]

Things done with salvation itself.

- We must grow in it – 1 Peter 2:2.
- We must "work it out," because God's power is enabling this "work" – Philippians 2:12-13.

Concepts that are connected to salvation by "connector words" will also teach us.

- "And" turning from sin – James 1:21.
- "And" coming to a knowledge of the truth – 1 Timothy 2:4.
- "And" loving the truth – 2 Thessalonians 2:10.
- [Most of these types of verses are included in the other sections.]

It is good for a person to know these things *before* choosing to follow Jesus. Jesus told people to "count the cost" before making such a decision (Luke 14:25-35)!

God *opposes* people who try to trick others into making an *uninformed* commitment, by withholding this information until *after* the person has expressed a desire to follow Jesus.

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What we have seen are the things a person might discover by reading the New Testament and paying attention to the salvation/save concept.

- Our inquirer might accidentally overlook some of these "salvation/save" passages.
- He probably won't understand some of them – even though paying attention to the *context* will often help.
- If he has taken notes (so he can review what he discovers, and organize his findings), he may learn *more*. But God can also save people *without* note-taking, *if* they are willing to think seriously about the Scriptures they are reading (or listening to).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ALL THIS: By simply paying attention to the Bible and accepting what it says, **A PERSON CAN BE SAVED!**

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Even though there are some things a person might *not* understand...

Even a **PARTIAL** understanding of these passages will enable a person to **KNOW** what it means to be saved.

⇒ But to actually *become* saved... a person must be willing to **APPLY** these facts to life!

⇒ **A PERSON WHO COMES TO SCRIPTURE WITH THIS ATTITUDE WILL HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR!**

BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU?

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This is *Your* MISSION:

⇒ **REMEMBER** these two facts:

- A person who *really* cares about his eternal destiny... will be willing to do what is necessary to take care of it.
- A person who is *seriously* interested in finding out about salvation... will be willing to take the time to find out about it!

What is SALVATION worth to YOU?

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SALVATION INVOLVES A PURSUIT OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (ALSO CALLED THE KINGDOM OF GOD).

HOW MUCH DO YOU VALUE IT?

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."

Matthew 13:44-46 (NIV)

IS THIS YOUR PRIORITY?

But seek first **his kingdom** and his righteousness, and all these things [= the basic needs of life] will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

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THE WORLD WILL OPPOSE YOU.

This series about "Studying the Bible" began with a look at how the world is actively (and deliberately) attacking the nature of language, and changing the meanings (or connotations) of words and the way language is used.

WARNING

For some, this distorting of language is a deliberate, conscious act. For others, it's more a matter of following along in ignorance. But either way, all who are part of the world are under the control of the evil one... and this evil one knows what he is doing.

DANGER

CONTINUED

We know ... that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.
1 John 5:19 (NIV)

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As this language distortion continues, it will become more difficult to understand accurately what the Bible says. It will take more effort and perhaps more research.

WARNING

It will become *increasingly necessary* to study the Bible, in order to accurately understand what it says.

NOTICE

Yet for those who are seriously concerned about finding out what the Bible says ... *it will still be possible.*

CAUTION

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them.
1 John 4:4-5 (NIV)

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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.

START AT THE CENTER AND WORK OUT!

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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