



Study 9

THE

SALVATION

THE NEW TESTAMENT COMMANDS

The doctrine of Salvation is not the first doctrine that deserves our common agreement. It is about third in the pecking order of importance. But it is the doctrine that will have the most *immediate* impact upon our lives. It is also the doctrine that determines how a church regards its purpose since God *commands* all to be saved.

WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES?

The first doctrine is Christ. Who we think Jesus is will determine the shape, size and colour of every doctrine we hold. If Jesus was just a man then His life was just an example. But if Jesus was God, then His life and death was not just *an* but *the* atonement for the sins of mankind. If Christ has totally atoned for sin, then God's forgiveness cannot be earned but must be *received* by grace.

Salvation means *deliverance*. When you are held captive by an enemy in enemy territory who continually mistreats you, persistently lies about your father and family



convincing you that they are bad, relentlessly lures you into greater acts of betrayal, and withholds from you letters from home- *you need deliverance!* This picture of our plight without salvation has attempted to incorporate several of the core aspects of what salvation means. Salvation also means *made whole* (Matt. 9:21-22) and *healed* (Mark 5:34). Salvation also means to be *translated* (moved) from darkness to light (Eph. 5:8), resurrected from death to life (Eph. 2:5), given sight (Luke 4:18; 2Cor. 4:4), given a new heart (Ezek. 36:26).

SALVATION & THE REFORMATION

The message of salvation through Jesus Christ was largely ignored or distorted throughout the period known as the Middle Ages. The Medieval Church had largely become corrupt and was using its power to teach Christian Doctrine to exploit people for their own benefit. That is, rather than proclaiming that salvation was a free gift from God received by faith, they were presenting people with a long list of requirements to be completed in order to *earn* their salvation.

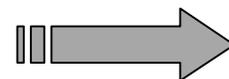
1. How does the last part of Romans 6:23 refute the idea that salvation can be earned?



Then around 1500 a German monk was reading the Book of Romans and found that its message about salvation was different to the one of the Medieval Church. Martin Luther asked 95 questions of Church authorities based largely on what he had come to understand from the Epistle to the Romans, where he challenged most of the corrupt teachings and practices that were going on. What he and others began became known as “the Reformation”. These “Reformers” summed up the teaching of the Bible about salvation with the acronym: *TULIP*.

T.U.L.I.P.

“T” stands for what the Reformers called *the Total depravity of man*. “Total Depravity” means that mankind is totally lost without God. When Adam and Eve sinned their sin affected us all (Romans 5:12). Everyone is now born into sin.



2. What does Romans 3:10, 23 tell us about the heart condition of every person?

3. From our perspective people can appear to be quite “good”. But how does God view the hearts of people who do not know Him? (Genesis 6:5)

4. How does Ephesians 2:12 describe the person who does not know God?

Being “totally depraved” doesn’t mean that we aren’t civil, nice, law-abiding citizens who are capable of acts of generous charity. It means that sin has totally corrupted every part of us and we all equally need a Saviour to cleanse us from our sins.

“U” stands for what the Reformers called *Unconditional election*. Salvation is God’s choice.

5. When did God decide that He was going to save you, according to Ephesians 1:4? (Note also Revelation 17:8)

Those God has predestined to save (note Romans 8:30, Ephesians 1:5, 11) are *the elect*. When we pray for others to be saved we are asking God to impact the will of that person toward Him. The fact that we pray this way says that we intuitively know that God can save even the most hardened sinner. Who God has elected for salvation is not our focus. It is a mystery. It is also a mystery *how* God chooses to save someone.

6. What does the Apostle Peter commend all believers to do in 2 Peter 1.10?

Our election by God to be saved is “unconditional” in the sense that there is nothing we can do to earn or merit it. There are no conditions to be met by the lost one. All the conditions have been met by Christ.



7. God’s salvation is described as a “gift”. How do these verses highlight that it is an *unconditional* gift? Romans 5:15, 16, 17; 6:23~
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8. According to Ephesians 2:8-9, on what basis are we saved?
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Some people teach that we must do some things in order to be saved (such as “clean up your act” or *have all the right doctrine*) but the ability to “clean up your act” is given to us by God’s grace (note Acts 5:31; 11:18). *What God commands, only His grace can enable.*

9. Based on Acts 26:20, what can we expect from someone who has truly received the grace of God and repented?
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When Jesus Christ was born this marked the beginning of His humiliation and suffering. This suffering for your sins and mine was also suffering for our salvation. It culminated in Him dying the cruellest execution on a Roman Cross.

10. What does Romans 5:8 tell us about God’s motive for saving us?
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11. Based on Romans 10:9-13, how does a grace-touched person respond to God?
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12. Read Philippians 2:12. Is it a light thing to claim to be saved by God?
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*“Father, please help us to walk with You. We know that salvation isn’t so much about just going to Heaven, but being made right with You so that we can truly know and enjoy You both now and forever. Help us to care about the salvation of others around us and to do all we can to demonstrate to this world what it means to be Your child.”
Amen.*