

The Redemptive Plan of God

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8–9)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
God had a plan for our redemption long before we even knew we needed it.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is holy.2. God is just.3. God is love.	Hold on to our salvation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reading the Bible,• keeping God’s commandments, and• holding on to our faith with the power of the Spirit.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. An Overview of Sin
- B. God’s Redemptive Plan
- C. The Meaning of Salvation
- D. Taking Hold of Salvation

Life Application: How to Keep Your Salvation!

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Knowing the importance of salvation, we must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to keep our salvation until the end.

Spiritual Teachings

Introduction: He Took My Place¹

We begin with a story of raiders who robbed, pillaged, and burned unsuspecting communities. The situation became so bad that some people formed a militia to pursue these raiders. They had orders to immediately execute any that were found. It was not long before a group of these men were captured. They were lined up with their hands and legs tied and their eyes bandaged. As the firing squad prepared, a young man who had been hiding in the bushes suddenly rushed out, crying, "Wait, wait!" He approached the officer in command and pointed to one of the men who was waiting to be shot and said, "Let that man go free. He has a wife and four children and is needed at home. Let me take his place. I am guilty."

The officer had never heard of such an appeal, but after a long consultation, he granted the man's request. They cut the ropes and released the condemned man. The volunteer was put in his place, and soon he lay dead under the firing squad.

Later, the man who was set free returned to the awful scene of the shooting. He uncovered the grave and found the body of his friend. He put it on the back of a mule and took it to a little cemetery where he gave his friend a proper burial. Then, he erected a memorial stone with the words: HE TOOK MY PLACE. HE DIED FOR ME.

Discuss

1. If you were the man hiding in the bushes, what would you have done?
2. If you were the man whose life had been spared, what would some of your thoughts or feelings have been?

A. An Overview of Sin

What is sin exactly, and why is it a problem that we face? We probably know how it came about and what it is, but today we will be going into a bit more detail about sin.

1. How sin entered the world

What caused sin to come into the world? You probably remember the story of Adam and Eve. When tempted by Satan, Adam and Eve disobeyed God's specific command and ate fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As a result, sin immediately entered the world, and its effects were clear. From the moment they ate the fruit, we can immediately see a radical change in their behavior. Let's read Genesis, chapters 2 and 3, and examine how Adam and Eve acted before and after they sinned.

- a. Before Adam and Eve sinned
 - They had a childlike innocence and did not know good and evil (2:25)
 - They abided with God and talked to Him freely and openly (2:8–15; 3:8–9)
- b. After Adam and Eve sinned
 - Their eyes were opened, and they recognized good and evil (3:4–5, 7)
 - They sewed fig leaves together to cover up their shame (3:7)

¹ Editor's note: Could not find any evidence supporting the truth of this story, although original can be found at <https://krausekorner.wordpress.com/2012/09/12/sermon-illustration-he-took-my-place-he-died-for-me/>

- They were afraid because of their nakedness and hid from God (3:10)
 - They passed on blame; Adam blamed Eve and God, and Eve blamed the snake (3:11–13)
- Because of their disobedience, they and their descendants became alienated from God. There was now a barrier between us and God (3:22–24).

2. The consequences of sin

What consequences did Adam and Eve’s sin bring upon mankind? Sin entered the world, and as a result, mankind came under the dominion of Satan and darkness. Paul wrote, “[T]hrough one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Rom 5:12). Where before there was no death, after Adam and Eve acted against God’s will, death entered the world.

This penalty of “death” does not refer simply to physical death. It is a spiritual death, which means eternal punishment in hell. Once our life on this earth is over, all we would have received was eternal suffering, with no hope for reprieve or salvation. Let’s read Romans 6:20–21. “For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.” Sin’s entry into the world made it impossible for us to have eternal life because “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23).

3. What is sin?

We know that sin entered the world from the moment Adam and Eve disobeyed God, but what exactly is sin? (*Allow students to respond.*) Sin is anything that goes against God’s will or command. Sin can be a thought, an action, or even failing to act when you know you should (Jas 4:17). Even things that don’t seem bad to us are still considered sin in God’s eyes. When we transgress against God’s law of righteousness, we have sinned.

In Romans 7:18–19, Paul lamented how even when he desired to do good, he committed evil instead. Like Paul, we too have no control over our sinful nature and its desires. Even when we do our best to do good, we are bound to end up doing something wrong in the eyes of God, and those who walk according to their fleshly nature and its evil desires are known as sons of disobedience. Fornication, uncleanness, foolish talk, and all unrighteousness are just a small number of things that will cause God’s wrath to come upon us (Eph 5:3–7; Col 3:5; Rom 1:18).

With the long list of what is considered unrighteous in God’s eyes, would it ever be possible for any of us to be declared sinless? Paul declares that it is impossible, “[F]or all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). As a result, all of us could only expect death in our future. We who were born into sin were faced with a problem that had no apparent solution.

B. God’s Redemptive Plan

God is holy and just, which means He cannot simply overlook the sins that we bear. If He did, God would be denying His very nature. According to His righteousness, sinners must be condemned to death. And yet, God doesn’t want any of us to perish. He is righteous, but He is also love, and because He loves us so much, He wants all of us to live. So, when sin entered the world through Adam and Eve, God provided a way to deliver mankind out of sin.

Jesus Became the Answer

All of mankind faced an insurmountable problem. According to Mosaic Law, blood must be shed in order for any sin to be forgiven (Lev 17:11; Heb 9:22). During Old Testament times, the only option available was to repeatedly offer animals as a sacrifice for their sins. However, this was only a temporary and imperfect solution (Heb 10:1–4). God had a better plan prepared, even before the creation of the world.

In order to atone for the sins of all mankind, the sacrifice had to be sinless. But all men born from Adam and Eve are born into sin, so no one on earth could ever satisfy this criterion. So, there was only one solution. God Himself, the only righteous being in existence, had to fulfill the righteous requirement. He lowered Himself and came to earth as Jesus Christ, conceived by the Holy Spirit and completely without sin (1 Jn 3:5). The Old Testament is full of prophecies that God spoke regarding the Messiah, as well as events that foreshadowed His coming long before He was even born. Let’s look at a few of them.

Bible Verse	Prophecy/Prefiguration	Meaning/Fulfillment
Gen 3:15	The Seed of Eve would bruise the head of the serpent.	The Lord has already been victorious over sin and death (Jn 12:31).
Gen 3:21	God made garments of skin to cover Adam and Eve, meaning an animal had to be killed, and its blood shed.	God would send His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross and shed His blood to cover our shame.
Gen 22:18; 12:1–3; 17:1–6	God promised Abraham that his descendant would bless all nations.	We are all heirs of God’s blessings according to the promise (Gal 3:16, 29).
Ex 12:21–23	On the eve of their exodus from Egypt, each family had to kill a Passover lamb and spread its blood on the lintel and posts of their door so that the LORD would pass over the door when passing through Egypt to strike the Egyptians.	Jesus Christ became the new Passover lamb, who died and shed His blood for sinners (1 Pet 1:19). Through His blood, we are able to escape death and be saved.
Deut 18:15–19	God would raise a new Prophet from among the Israelites to guide the people.	Jesus Christ became the new prophet to guide God’s children into salvation (Acts 3:22–26).

When Jesus was finally ready to begin His ministry, John the Baptist introduced Him with the words, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn 1:29). Jesus became the spotless and blameless sacrifice (1 Pet 1:18–19), bearing our sins and dying on the cross, so that through His blood, He could redeem us. Through Adam, we were made slaves to sin, but through Jesus Christ, we have been freed from death.

C. The Meaning of Salvation

What does receiving salvation mean for each of us? What exactly are we being saved from? It is sometimes difficult for us to really understand the meaning of our salvation because the idea is so nebulous. Let’s examine the reasons we need salvation.

1. Deliverance from Satan (Eph 2:1–3)

With God’s redemption, our home has moved from the realm of Satan to the realm of God. Our relationship with our heavenly Father has been restored so that we can once again be His sons and daughters.

2. Deliverance from sin (2 Cor 5:21)
We are no longer bound by sin and its evil desires. With the help of God's teachings and the power and strength of the Holy Spirit, we can experience true freedom in Christ. We can be transformed into His likeness and choose to follow the path of righteousness instead of sin.
3. Deliverance from death (Rom 6:23)
Through Jesus, we no longer fear death and the daunting prospect of eternal suffering in hell. Instead, we have been given the living hope of eternal peace and rest.
4. Deliverance into God's kingdom (Col 1:13)
Jesus Christ said, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (Jn 14:2–3). We will one day meet the Savior, who loves us and died for us, and unite with Him in His kingdom.

D. Taking Hold of Salvation

We have been given the opportunity to know the gospel today, either through our parents or our friends. However, there are still many who have not yet received this amazing grace. Just as we have freely been given salvation, God has charged us to freely share the same good news with others. Even those who already believe in God may think that all they need to do is confess that Jesus is Lord. However, Scripture has given us the complete and correct path to salvation:

1. Believe (Rom 10:9)
2. Repent (Acts 2:38)
3. Be baptized (Acts 2:38; Mt 28:18–20)
4. Receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; Mt 28:18–20)
5. Obey God's commandments (Mt 28:18–20)

Life Application

How to Keep Your Salvation!

We have learned today the importance of salvation and why it is necessary. When we are baptized in water and the Spirit, we have been given salvation, but we have to determine to hold on to it. If we allow our sinful natures to control us, we will no longer be guaranteed a home in heaven with the Lord. So, how do we hold on to our salvation?

1. Read the Bible daily.

Are you faithfully reading the Bible daily to see what is expected of you? Hosea 4:6 states: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." It is clear that each Christian is expected to read God's word daily. The only way to grow in Christ is by getting to know Him better, and the only way to get to know Him better is by studying the truth that He gave to us.

2. Keep God's commandments.

Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"

(Matthew 7:21–23)

Simply acknowledging our belief in the Lord will not save us. The Bible clearly instructs us that to belong to God’s kingdom, we must become His children. We must show our love for Him. But how do we do this? Let’s turn to the following verses. Do you see the common theme in the following instructions from the Bible?

John 14:15	“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”
John 14:21	“He who has <u>My commandments and keeps them</u> , it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”
John 14:23	“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will <u>keep My word</u> ; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.’ ”

The Bible has clearly told us that to become His children, we must keep His commandments. Only then will we be able to hold on to our salvation.

3. Hold firm to your faith and pray with the power of the Holy Spirit.

“For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.”

(2 Timothy 1:12)

The word "faith" carries with it the idea of total surrender, of having complete assurance in what Christ did for us on the cross. When we have faith in God, we no longer rely on our good works, talents, worldly knowledge, or physical possessions, but on Jesus Christ.

Jesus promised the Spirit as a constant guide, teacher, comforter, and seal of salvation. “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (Jn 14:26). Moreover, Romans 8:26 encourages: “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

The power of the Holy Spirit is the power of God! Do you pray daily that the Holy Spirit will give you guidance and understanding? In order not to slip away from salvation, we must pray as often as we can to fill ourselves with the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. Confess our sins if we slip and yield to temptation.

If we find that we have yielded to temptation, then we have to confess that sin. The Bible states, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1:8–9).

We may slip and fall from time to time, but this cannot become a habit, as simply confessing isn’t enough. We must fully repent. True repentance means striving not to repeat the sin. There is no use in confessing our sins, then going right back and doing it again. That is not repentance. In other words, when we repent of something, that particular sin must no longer be a practice in our lives. By confessing our sins and humbly repenting, we are striving to stand against temptation.

5. Live a life that is pleasing to God.

The Lord commanded us, “Do not touch what is unclean” (2 Cor 6:17). We have to remain separate from evil! When you face something at school, with your friends, or by yourself, ask yourself the following questions:

- a. Does it violate the principles taught in the Bible?
- b. Will God be pleased if I do it?
- c. Will it be a stumbling block to others?
- d. Can I ask for God's blessing for it?
- e. Would I be doing this if Christ were standing next to me?

If we truly know the Lord and are seeking to follow Him, we cannot afford to be complacent or unconcerned about the presence of sin in our lives. In fact, we need to hate sin and have the determination to conquer it. As those cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ and sealed with the promise of the Spirit, we must keep God's commandments. As long as we do our best to glorify Him daily, we can continue living in full confidence that we will receive the blessing of eternal life with our God in heaven.

Check for Understanding

1. **What were the consequences of Adam and Eve's disobedience?** Sin entered the world, the wages of which are death.
2. **Why was Jesus the necessary answer for our freedom?** In order to atone for the sins of all mankind, the sacrifice had to be sinless. But no one on earth could ever fulfill the righteous requirement. God is the only righteous being in existence.
3. **What are four reasons we need salvation?** Deliverance from Satan, sin, death, and deliverance into His kingdom.
4. **Name two specific Old Testament prophecies/prefigurations regarding Jesus' coming.** Refer to *Spiritual Teachings, Section B*.
5. **Your friend tells you that in order to be saved, a person only needs to believe in the Lord Jesus. How would you explain to them that this is not enough?** Refer to *Spiritual Teachings, Section D*.

Memory Verse

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8–9)

Meaning

We did not receive salvation because of any works that we did. We did not “earn” our salvation. Rather, God's salvation is freely given to us out of His love and mercy. It is easy to become proud and say that God called us because of all the great works that we have done. But when we do, we are removing God from the picture and putting ourselves front and center. We must do as Paul did and acknowledge that our salvation is from God alone, and that He gave it freely, out of His love.

Conclusion

We learned today that the wages of sin is death, and that being born into sin, we were faced with a problem that had no apparent solution. But because of God's sacrificial love, we have been redeemed from death and given the hope of eternal life. We must hold on to our salvation by keeping God's commandments, and by growing in faith with the power of the Holy Spirit. Then we will be able to dwell with Him in heaven for all eternity.

Lesson 9 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. Why is it important to remember that we did not “earn” our salvation?
When we become proud and say that God called us because of our great works, we remove God from the picture and put ourselves front and center. God gave His salvation freely, out of love.
2. Why is sin such a serious problem for us? What is sin?
Because with its entry, a barrier was formed between us and God. The wages of sin is a spiritual death, with no hope for reprieve or salvation (Rom 5:12; 6:20–23). Sin is disobedience against God’s will or command.
3. Why can’t God simply overlook our sins?
Because God is holy and just. He is a righteous God, and according to His righteousness, sinners must be condemned to death.
4. Why was Jesus, and Jesus alone, the necessary answer for our freedom?
In order to atone for the sins of all mankind, the sacrifice had to be sinless. God Himself, the only righteous being in existence, had to fulfill the righteous requirement Himself.
5. Of the steps to keeping our salvation, which do you need to work on the most? Explain.
Personal answers.
6. Write a letter to the Lord. What would you say to Him about His act of dying in your place?
Personal answers.