

# The Promise of Salvation

**Listed Scriptures**

Jn 5:39; Mt 15:24, 24:14

**Lesson Aim**

- 1) To learn the prophecies concerning the promise of salvation and how they have been fulfilled thus far
- 2) To understand that salvation comes through Jesus Christ alone and that in all things, we must recognize His power

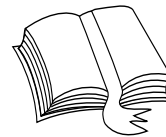
**Memory Verse**

“(God), who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.” (2 Tim 1:9)

**Bible Reading For This Week** (for students and teachers)

Psalms 26-30

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The all-knowing God knew a long time ago that human beings had fleshly weaknesses and could not withstand the temptations of Satan and the world. Therefore, He composed a plan of salvation for us. Paul wrote, “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Eph 1:4-5). This salvation is called the “eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began” (Tit 1:2). From these verses, we can see that before the beginning of time, God had already drawn His plan of salvation. We will now look at the promises and the progress of salvation.



Have you ever made a promise that you couldn't keep? What were the reasons behind your breaking this promise? Was it intentional or not? It is hard for us to always keep our word. That is why the Bible tells us to keep our words simple and not make promises we can't keep. Today, we will study one promise that has been made to us since the beginning of time and how it has been kept to this day. It is not easy to keep a promise, as we have discovered, but God always keeps His word.



### Part 1

### *Prophecies in the Old Testament*

Because the ancestors of men sinned, all of their descendants became cursed with death. But our merciful God could not bear to cast humans down to hell, and so He composed a plan of salvation. Although we are nothing when compared to the vast universe, God continues to care for us because He loves all of His creation (Ps 8:3-4). God once said, "As I live...I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek 33:11). From this, it shows how God never wished for people to die. Instead He wants us to repent (2 Pet 3:9). But in order for us to be saved, God had to send His one and only Son, Jesus Christ to die for us (Jn 3:16, 1 Jn 4:8-9). Clearly, God loves us just as fathers love their children (Ps 103:13). That is why God planned salvation for those who revere Him. The theme of the Bible is the salvation of God. That is why Jesus Christ says, "You search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (Jn 5:39). In today's lesson, we will examine the Bible and how God's plan of salvation has been fulfilled thus far. We will begin with the Old Testament. In it, there are many prophecies that pertain to the promises of God's salvation.

- a. When the serpent tempted Adam and Eve to sin, God told the serpent, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your

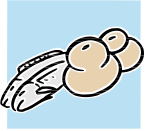
seed and her seed" (Gen 3:14-15). This was to prophesy that the descendant of woman, or the virgin, would bear the Lord Jesus to destroy the power of Satan (Mt 1:20-21; Heb 2:14-15).

- b. When Abraham obeyed God and sacrificed His beloved son Isaac, God told him, "...blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed..." (Gen 22:16-18). Later, Jesus Christ was born as the son of David, a descendant of Abraham.
- c. Before Jacob passed away, he told his sons what would happen in the future. He said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people" (Gen 49:1,10). Isaiah also prophesied, "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom..." (Isa 9:6-7).
- d. The Saints of old prophesied in Psalms, "Also I will make Him my first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth...His seed also I will make to endure forever, and His throne as the days of heaven" (Ps 89:27, 29). Jesus Christ is this king of kings. His people believed, were baptized, and were saved. They will enter the heavenly kingdom to enjoy everlasting life.
- e. God said, "Behold, the days are coming...that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called" (Jer 23:5-6). This prophecy tells us that God will pick the Savior from a descendant of David, to execute righteousness, rule God's kingdom and save His people.
- f. The Prophet Micah prophesied, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler of Israel, who's going forth are from of

old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). This tells us that the little town, Bethlehem, will see the birth of the Savior who will rule God's kingdom.

- g. "The LORD has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isa 52:10). Prophet Isaiah's words showed that God's salvation was to be for all people. All who have flesh will see God's salvation.

We can see from these prophecies that God had clearly laid out a plan for salvation since the beginning of time. This plan has careful steps so that there will be no loopholes or mistakes when the time comes for each step to be fulfilled. When we come to understand how God has planned salvation for us, we can only come to love Him more for all that He has done.



### Part 2

## *How Salvation Has Been Fulfilled Since the Beginning of Time*

In the previous section, we examined many of the Old Testament scriptures which testified to God's careful plan of salvation. We know that God never speaks empty words and always keeps His promises. We will now look at how this plan has been fulfilled from the calling of Abraham to the coming of Jesus Christ, from the establishment of the apostolic church to the church of the end times. We will see how God has prepared everything in order to save us from sin.



## **A . Abraham's Descendants Are Chosen**

About 4,100 years ago, God appeared to the 75-year-old Abram. God promised Abram that his descendants would become a great nation, and all peoples would be blessed because of him (Gen 12:1-3). Then, about 3,400 years ago, God arranged for Moses to lead 3,000,000 Israelites out of Egypt (Ex 12:37-42). After wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, Joshua led the people across the Jordan and entered the promised land of Canaan. After 360 years of Judges, the kingdom of Israel was established. Saul was the first king (1 Sam 13:1). The Israelites were God's chosen people, and they were separated from the rest of the people (Num 23:9). That is why Peter described God as "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers" (Acts 3:13). Jesus Christ also said, "I was not sent

except to the lost sheep of Israel" (Mt 15:24). Thus, the first steps of God's plan were fulfilled. His holy nation had been established and His people chosen.



## **B . The Holy Spirit Establishes the Apostolic Church**

According to the Bible, Jesus Christ came in the flesh about two thousand years ago. He spread the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. When He was thirty-three, He was nailed on the cross by the Jews. He then completed the work of salvation by resurrecting and ascending to heaven (Lesson 7 will explain this in detail). On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended and established the apostolic church (Acts 2). As people believed, they were baptized daily. However, because the majority of Jews did not believe that Jesus Christ was the Savior, salvation fell upon the Gentiles (Rom 11:1, 7, 11). Therefore, God chose Paul as a missionary to many foreign countries. Paul preached that, "for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3.26-29). Therefore, we know that in the New Testament, God sent salvation to all those who believed in Him.



## **C . The True Church in the End Times**

After the establishment of the apostolic church, it flourished for a while. But then heresies and differences of opinions among people crept in and the church no longer carried out God's original plan. In 1917, the truth appeared again in the Far East, in China. The True Church was established with truth, the Holy Spirit and miracles. These proved that God was with the True Jesus Church. The church was filled with the Holy Spirit and preached a gospel that was according to the Bible. The miracles were a testament to God's existence. The church also had the mission of correcting false faiths. It was just as the book of Amos prophesied, "On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which as fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11). Today, as we have the Holy Spirit, members of the True Jesus Church have the responsibility of preaching the gospel to all the earth. This is because Jesus Christ said, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Mt 24:14).

## Teaching Tips

You may wish to provide the students with the various passages that concern the promise of salvation. Then ask the students to read them and share how each of them has been fulfilled thus far. It will make for a more interactive Bible study and give the students an opportunity to familiarize themselves with specific Bible verses.

## C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



**1** Pick two of the Old Testament prophecies and describe how they have been fulfilled in God's plan of salvation.

**2** Why do you think God chose Abraham as our forefather? Why was it necessary to pick someone or some race?

**3** Do you believe that there is any significance to picking the Israelites as the chosen race? What if God had chosen the Chinese a long time ago as the chosen race? Would that have changed anything?

**4** Actually, God did build up the True Church again, but this time in the east. How much do you know about the history of the True Jesus Church, established in mainland China in 1917?

## L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



### *The Coffin*

(This story comes from an episode of an old "Alfred Hitchcock Presents" television show.)

A pretty woman was serving a life sentence in prison. Angry and resentful about her situation, she had decided that she would rather die than to live another year in prison.

Over the years she had become good friends with one of the prison caretakers. His job, among others, was to bury those prisoners who died in a graveyard just out-

side the prison walls. When a prisoner died, the caretaker rang a bell, which was heard by everyone. The caretaker then got the body and put it in a casket. Next, he entered his office to fill out the death certificate before returning to the casket to nail the lid shut. Finally, he took the casket onto a wagon to take it to the graveyard and bury it. Knowing this routine, the woman devised a plan to escape and shared it with the caretaker. The next time the bell rang, the woman would leave her cell and sneak into the dark room where the coffins were kept. She would slip into the coffin with the dead body while the caretaker was filling out the death certificate. When the caretaker returned, he would nail the coffin shut and take it outside the prison, with the woman and the dead body in it. He would then bury the coffin. The woman knew that there would be enough air for her to breathe until later in the evening when the caretaker would return to the graveyard under the cover of darkness and dig up the coffin, setting her free. The caretaker was reluctant to go along with this plan but since he had become good friends with the woman over the years, he agreed to help her.

The woman waited several weeks before someone in the prison died. She was asleep in her cell when she heard the bell. She got up, picked the lock of her cell and slowly walked down the hallway. She was nearly caught a couple of times. Her heart was beating fast. She opened the door to the darkened room where the coffins were kept. Quietly, in the dark, she found the coffin that contained the dead body and carefully climbed into the coffin. She pulled the lid shut to wait for the caretaker to come and nail the lid shut. Soon she heard the footsteps and the pounding of the hammer and nails. Even though she was very uncomfortable in the coffin with the dead body, she knew that with each nail she was one step closer to freedom. The coffin was lifted onto the wagon and taken outside to the graveyard. She could feel the coffin being lowered to the ground. She didn't make a sound as the coffin hit the bottom of the grave with a thud. Finally, she heard the dirt dropping onto the top of the wooden coffin. She knew it was only a matter of time until she would be free at last.

After several minutes of absolute silence, she began to laugh. She was free! She was free! Feeling curious, she decided to light a match to find out the identity of the dead person. To her horror, she discovered that she was lying next to the dead caretaker. The final scene faded to black as you heard the woman screaming.

Typical of Alfred Hitchcock movies, this story has an unexpected ending, albeit an unhappy one. This woman thought that she had everything figured out and could escape her fate in the prison cell. However, after all her careful planning, she only came to discover that she could not escape death. Although this story is just fiction,

it does serve to remind us that no matter how hard we try, we don't have control over sin and death. The only way to freedom and true salvation is through God alone. Only He can offer us eternal happiness. In addition, this lesson has taught us that God has the best plan laid out, one that can not be ruined or unexpectedly changed. Our salvation is guaranteed so long as we choose to walk on the heavenly path.

### Questions to think about:

1. *This story has taught us that we can never make a plan that has no holes in it. However, there are things we can do to ensure that we stay on the pathway to heaven. What are you presently doing to make sure of that?*
2. *Do you ever feel like this woman, that you need to take matters into your own hands? Do you find it difficult to rely on God to solve your problems, no matter how great or small? Why or why not?*

## R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



*Because God loved us, He prepared for us a beautiful salvation. He wants to freely give this to us. As Christians, we should treasure God's grace. We should not be ruled by our fleshly desires and sin. Instead, we should try our best to preach the gospel of salvation, so that more people may come to believe in the Lord. Then will we repay God's great love.*

## Lesson 7

# Salvation Through Jesus Christ

### Listed Scriptures

Mk 1:1; Acts 4:12; Eph 1:7; Ps 22:12-18; Heb 9:14

### Lesson Aim

- 1) To understand that Jesus Christ fulfilled the plan of salvation
- 2) To know that salvation is for all mankind and to know the steps toward salvation

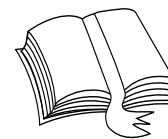
### Memory Verse

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8)

### Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 31-35

## B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



God's wonderful salvation can save us from the bondage of sin, Satan and death. It allows us to receive glory and enjoy eternal life in His heavenly kingdom. But how was God's plan of salvation fulfilled? If God simply forgave the sins of men without atonement of any kind, it would not be of God's righteous character. It would also evoke Satan's accusation against God, for God did not help the fallen angels but saved Abraham's descendants (Heb 2:16). Since men are made of flesh and blood, God too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death – the devil – and free those whose lives were held in slavery by their fear of death (Heb 2:14-15). Jesus Christ sacrificed His life on the cross for all sinners and fulfilled the plan of salvation which was designed since the creation.