

Salvation Part 1 – Why do we need to be saved?

An Annotated Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is for a one-hour adult Bible Study / discussion group held each Wednesday evening at 7:00 PM. It is a combination of in-person and online participants. This week we are beginning a three-week series on Salvation. (Lecture 3. 2:35). This lesson will have some introductory overall salvation themes and address the first question.

1. Why do we need to be saved?
2. How are we saved?
3. What are we saved to?

Lesson Objectives:

1. Introduce the topic of Salvation and key elements that will be discussed in this three-part series
2. By the end of this hour, participants will be able to discuss the fact that there is more than one kind of salvation in Scripture, realizing the salvation found in Isaiah is for the community not the individual; salvation from communal, systemic sins of injustice.

Facilitation Guide	Topical Content	Annotated Notes
Welcome	Give a brief overview of the series as described above.	Friendly greeting to break the ice and get participants talking
Series Overview	<p>A lot of Christians go around saying "I've been saved!" ... but do they even know what that means? We are going to ask some tough questions and perhaps get some surprising answers.</p> <p>What if, in searching the Scriptures, salvation doesn't mean what you've been taught. There are certainly differences of interpretation in discussing salvation and being saved just within the Scriptures themselves. The salvation Isaiah prophesied about, the salvation revealed in Luke and Paul's salvation are very dissimilar. Which one is right?</p>	This overview is designed to pique their interest to pay closer attention and participate as well as come back for the next two parts

	<p>Week 1 on July 26th, we'll explore WHY we need to be saved; what are we being saved from? Hell is one possible answer, but scripture reveals other possibilities. Is there original sin, and if so, what was it? Certainly not eating an apple. There is a struggle between being made in the image of God and being sinners, which are we? If we are made in the image of God and we are sinners, is God a sinner also?</p> <p>Week 2 on August 2nd, we will discuss HOW we are saved. Is it the cross, the resurrection, our belief by faith, baptism, repentance, Christ's suffering, his life of selfless service and sacrifice in love? Which of these specific acts actually do the saving? Is it really just by grace, do we not have to do anything but believe? Do we not have to repent, if so, what does that mean? Can we lose this salvation if we don't live a Christ-like life? What does that mean?</p> <p>Week 3 on August 9th, we ask WHAT are we saved to? Heaven is the easy answer we all want to hear, Eternal Life! Jesus teaches something different I believe, at the very least something additional. Are we saved into the Kingdom of Heaven? Where, when and what is that?</p> <p>What if none of us is saved, until all of us are saved?</p> <p>Join us to find out.</p>	<p>My congregation is used to my posing these kinds of challenging questions, exposing them to new ways of thinking and looking at what they thought they knew</p>
<p>Prayer</p>	<p>LORD, speaking through your prophet Isaiah*, you say,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come and my deliverance will be revealed.”</i></p> <p>O’ God, you who have given us your holy words and revealed yourself to us by your mighty deeds, interacting with humanity before and after there was any Scripture written down, inspiring the authors, interpreters, and hearers of your word,</p>	<p>*Isaiah 56:1 (NRSV)</p> <p>I frequently reinforce that Scripture is just one way to understand God</p>

	<p>provide us with discernment and wisdom in understanding the salvation you have graciously bestowed upon us.</p> <p>We seek to understand why and how, not to question your motives or methods but to more effectively live into the salvation by which we have been called through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.</p> <p>Bless this time we share together exploring your word, discussing our experiences with your presence through your Holy Spirit as we learn together, so that we might share your good news with others.</p> <p>Amen</p>	<p>The ask: what are we praying for?</p> <p>The why: why are we asking?</p> <p>I also reinforce that learning is more effective as a communal experience</p> <p>The impact: what are we trying to accomplish?</p>
Activity	Take a few minutes to write down everything you've heard about salvation and three questions you have about salvation	(Lecture 1) This activity promotes critical thinking early in the class
Debrief	Ask several participants to share one or two of their thoughts and write them down on a flipchart or whiteboard	This will let participants know their input is valued and promotes their further participation in discussion questions
Scripture	<p>Have someone read Luke 24:44-47</p> <p>Then he said to them, <i>“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.”</i> 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and he said to them, <i>“Thus it is written, that the Messiah[n] is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”</i></p>	<p>(Brondos. Kindle Locations 426-428).</p> <p>I think this is critical. By using this Scripture, which I selected for our first reading in the sermon version of this lesson, I point to why we are looking at the Hebrew Scriptures for answers concerning salvation.</p> <p>My congregation is very used to my using the Hebrew Scriptures to</p>

		support things I am teaching from the New Testament and vice versa. I believe that is one of the strongest testaments to Scriptural authority as the Word of God, that there is consistency in messages from God across the ages.
Question	<p>Why did Jesus and the Gospel writers emphasize that he was the fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures? What if anything does that mean for us today?</p> <p>Expects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To convince the Jews he was the Messiah • To point us to study and try to understand the Hebrew Scriptures • If Jesus was the Messiah, the Hebrew Scriptures reveals what that means but he had to open their minds to a different interpretation than what they had been taught 	I am opening with Jesus pointing to the OT to transition into how salvation was understood before Christianity made it so personal and individual
Scripture	<p>Have someone read Isaiah 1:2-4</p> <p>Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth, for the Lord has spoken: I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. 3 The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.</p> <p>4 Ah, sinful nation, people laden with iniquity, offspring who do evil, children who deal corruptly, who have forsaken the Lord, who have despised the Holy One of Israel, who are utterly estranged!</p>	(Brondos. Kindle Locations 111-113)

<p>Question</p>	<p>Isaiah is often described as the fifth Gospel because both Jesus and some of the Gospel writers quote from it claiming Jesus is the fulfillment of many Isaiah prophecies. Although it is important to note that it is a Jewish book written to a Jewish audience. *</p> <p>What does this passage tell us about the need for salvation; if anything?</p> <p>Expects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are all sinners • Despite God’s upbringing (teaching) and all God has done for God’s people, we still rebel against God 	<p>*(Lecture 4. 0:28)</p>
<p>State</p>	<p>Throughout Isaiah, as you have heard me preach many times, God decries the sins of the whole community, not as much the individual. *</p>	<p>*(Lecture 4. 2:00)</p>
<p>Scripture</p>	<p>I will read Isaiah 1:16-17.</p> <p>Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow....</p>	<p>(Brondos. Kindle Locations 113-114).</p>
<p>State</p>	<p>A lot of action words. Sounds like God wanted Israel to do something</p> <p>Throughout Isaiah, as you have heard me preach many times, God decries the sins of the whole community, not as much the individual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel’s sins from which they need saving are communal – systemic oppression and not individual deeds. • Injustice, a lack of concern for other people’s needs, especially the poor or disadvantaged. <p>The question to ask here is, “is sin still communal, does our society as a whole commit these types of sin?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racism • Sexism 	<p>(Brondos. Kindle Locations 116-117).</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unjust incarceration • Xenophobia • Wealth inequity • Structures that keep the poor and minorities in their place 	
State	<p>The classical Christian explanation of sin and evil is very personal and individualistic. In fact, scholars refer to it as Adamic evil or Adamic sin. Disobedience to God’s will. Evil is the consequence of sin. Someone’s free-will decision causing suffering for others.</p> <p>A second reality of evil is considered Tragic Evil. A world of evil, that people live in which is not of their own doing.</p>	<p>(Lecture 2. 12:50)</p> <p>(Lecture 2. 13:10)</p>
State:	<p>That evil exists is born out by the reality of human lived experience.</p> <p>One question of why we need salvation is can we resist doing evil?</p> <p>In the tragic view of sin, suffering and evil are already in the world when we are born. Our free-will does not account for the origins of evil. Humanity enters the world powerless.</p> <p>Paul talks about his individual powerlessness in his letter to the church in Rome.</p>	<p>(Lecture 2. 15:25)</p>
Scripture	<p>Read Romans 7:15-17</p> <p>15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. 17 But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.</p>	
State	<p>My struggle is that “I am a sinner” while seeming based in real-life choices, almost denies that I am made in the image of God</p> <p>Using the language that we are all sinners gives us an excuse of why we sin; we can’t help ourselves</p>	<p>To grasp the critical nature of our need for communal salvation I feel it is necessary to challenge the traditional view of individual salvation</p>

<p>Question</p>	<p>How do we reconcile being made in the image of God with being sinners and having a sinful nature?</p> <p>Expects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's Adam and Eve's fault – original sin • The devil (Satan) tempted them by saying they would be like God, knowing good and evil <p>Could our "sin" be that simple; wanting to be like God? Being made in God's image, could that be part of our created nature?</p> <p>Expects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That might explain our selfish nature, arrogance and pride, our ego • Those things may be the root of all evil, a lust for power, to be God-like over others <p>Does that mean God has this selfish nature, this pride, arrogance, and ego? Is God a sinner?</p> <p>Expects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, we misunderstand God • That is why he sent his prophets and Jesus Christ 	<p>I did a dry run teach-out with three participant and had plenty of time to cover this critical related question.</p> <p>I don't feel there is enough in the comparison of Adamic and Tragic evil/sin to answer the question of why we create the systemic sin we need to be saved from.</p> <p>I don't know if this is the right answer, but is an answer that came to me through prayer and study.</p>
<p>State</p>	<p>Remember what we learned just from that first chapter of Isaiah.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's people didn't understand his teaching (either did the disciples understand Jesus' teaching by the way) • When God accused the people of doing evil, and told them to stop it, he said doing good was seeking justice, recusing the oppressed, defending the orphan, pleading for the widow. (action verbs) fighting against societal communal sins. <p>Those are the very things Jesus said he came to fulfill.</p> <p>In Isaiah salvation is not individual but is of the whole community.</p>	<p>(Lecture 4. 3:45)</p>

State	<p>At the end of Jesus life, he finally opened-up the scriptures for the disciples to understand. Perhaps that is why the early church lived as they did, sharing all their possessions so that no one was lacking anything.</p>	
Scripture	<p>Have someone read Acts 2:44-47</p> <p>All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.</p>	<p>(Acts 2:44-47 NRSV)</p> <p>This passage supports the disciples understanding that being a follower of Jesus means no one goes without. This will point to the third lesson in the series, what are we being saved to.</p>
State	<p>What are we being saved from?</p> <p>Perhaps our misunderstanding of what it's like to be God.</p> <p>Being made in the image of God is not about selfishness, but self-sacrifice, not about pride, but humility, not about accumulation, but sharing, not about being afraid of scarcity, but having faith in the abundance of God's creation.</p> <p>Why do we need salvation?</p> <p>Because of our misunderstanding of God's nature and our desire to be like God, over the millennium we have created systems of oppression that have crushed God's people and kept too many in poverty.</p>	
State	<p>Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament, God has a partiality towards the poor and oppressed. The surest way for the Israelites to incur the wrath of God, was to create systems and societies of injustice.</p> <p>It's those who suffer under those systems who need and receive God's salvation through Jesus Christ.</p>	

State:	Next week, we'll talk about how that salvation was accomplished. Or is being accomplished.	
Prayer	<p>O' compassionate, merciful and loving God, you who continually look out upon the suffering of your people and hear their cries, you who continually rescue them and bring salvation and deliverance</p> <p>Have mercy on us Still today, we create and participate in systems that oppress your people, We remain silent in the face of injustice, we do not defend, plead for, and rescue the poor the oppressed</p> <p>Have mercy on us Thank you, LORD, for your living example in Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Please continue to teach us to live into the salvation he brings.</p> <p>Amen</p>	

References

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- Brondos, David. Salvation and the Cross. 2007. Minneapolis. Fortress Press. Kindle Edition
- Browning, Christopher R. Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 56–57, 61.
- Kirkliches Jahrbuch für die Evangelische Kirke in Deutschland, 1933–1944 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1948), 481.
- Lakeland, Prof Paul. Constructive Theology. 2005. Minneapolis. Fortress Press. Kindle Edition.
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In everyday language, salvation has to do with how we are saved or delivered from our fallen condition. We are, as noted in another article in this series,[1] rebels in God's image, fallen and in need of restoration. Usually the core idea is that human beings need only realize that they are perfect and divine, resulting in salvation. But we are far from perfect and deep down everyone knows this fact. God exists, but He is not us and we are not Him. Certainly faith plays a part in salvation, but there is a difference between blind faith and justified faith. Even Acts 1:3, for instance, observes of Christ, "After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive," while in Acts 26:25, Paul states that his Christian beliefs are "true and reasonable." What do we need to be saved from? To answer that question, first we go back to the time when man was created by God. "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being [soul, King James Version]" (Genesis 2:7). Later, the prophet Ezekiel noted that all souls (living beings) belong to God. "That is why salvation is necessary, and why Jesus came to the earth as a human being. "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Therefore, part of being saved from the penalty of past sin is to try our hardest to stop sinning with God's help. Our transgressions against God's law have to end. As the apostle Paul wrote: "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"