

Study 5

Salvation

Being born-again by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for personal salvation (Jn. 1:13; 3:3; 1Pt. 1:23).

Salvation is a spiritual transaction where the Holy Spirit takes something from us and puts something into us. Without this spiritual transaction, we are not saved.

1. What are we saved from? Tick the correct answer(s)-

a) Hell

d) Eternal damnation

b) Unhappiness

e) Jury duty

c) Hell

f) Purgatory

2. What is everyone's spiritual condition before they are saved according to Ephesians 2:1?

3. We sometimes think of some people as *good* people, but how does Ephesians 2:2 everyone who is not saved?

4. Some people think that if something feels “natural” it must be right (or even *God-given*), but how does Ephesians 2:3 put a different light on this idea?

5. What two spiritual destinies are offered to all people according to John 3:36

1. _____

2. _____

6. Who will experience God’s wrath according to Romans 1:18? Why? (What for?)

Some people intuitively know that God is loving and forgiving.

7. According to Romans 5:8, when did God begin to love you?

I recently had someone come to see me because they desperately wanted to be forgiven of their sins, find peace with God, and experience salvation. They had grown up in a “Christian” household and been to church for most of their life until their late teens when church attendance became infrequent then ceased. During this time that they ceased to going to church, they began to explore alternate forms of spirituality. But nothing in this quest brought a sense of sins-forgiven and peace with God: *salvation*. They recently returned to church and for the first time in their life heard the Gospel and God’s offer of salvation. Weeping in my office as I explained that salvation was the work of God’s grace by His Spirit, *something happened*.

8. According to John 1:13, salvation is the result of whose *decision* (“will”)?

Because salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit within a person, it is not merely the result of a person’s “decision”. This is one of the reasons why you don’t hear me inviting people to “make decision” to follow Christ. Rather, you’ll hear me to invite people *receive* or *accept* Christ. You tell when the Holy Spirit is calling people to accept Christ - they now sense a need to be forgiven by God. This means that they have become aware of their *sinfulness*. If this is where you are at, you are on an exciting journey! Keep going! Salvation awaits!

9. How did Jesus describe salvation in John 3:3?

If someone came to you, very aware of their sinfulness, asking you as a believer in Christ, how they could find forgiveness for their sins, what would you say to them?

10. How has God most ordinarily ordained for people to be saved? (Romans 10:14; 1Corinthians 15:1-2)

The Apostle Peter wrote that whenever the Gospel is *preached* it is actually the Holy Spirit who ministers it (1Peter 1:12). Whenever the Gospel is preached, there is something extremely spiritual taking place because the Holy Spirit is working in people's hearts. For some people this spiritual transformation is sudden and dramatic. For many the work of the Spirit appears to take place gradually over an extended period.

The story is told of the man who was kidnapped and held captive on a high tower. Looking out his window from his locked room down to the ground too far below, he despaired at his predicament. As he vainly gazed out his window his despair was added to as an arrow fired at him narrowly missed his head and embedded in his cell's solid wood door. Taking cover in the now relatively safe prison cell he felt the gloom of his certain doom. Fighting back tears he wiped his eyes and realised that something was attached to the arrow. It was a thin thread. It went from the arrow through the window. Mustering the courage to look out of the window again he realised that the thread went all the way to the ground. For some inexplicable reason he pulled at it until the end of it eventually reached the window. He was that it was tied to string. He similarly pulled the string up to his window and discovered that it was tied to a rope. At the end of the rope he could see someone in the forest coyly waving to him. He tied the rope to the door handle of his cell and managed to climb down to his waiting father who was still holding his bow. Like salvation and the faith required to activate the work of the Spirit, it sometimes starts with tragedy. In the midst of our despair the faith required to be saved sometimes starts off as thin as a thread no thicker than a hair. But small faith is enough faith! Employing thread-like faith is sometimes the only means to saving rope-like faith.

We describe salvation as “new birth” and “being born again”.

11. How is this salvation described in 1John 3:9?

12. In 1John 3:10 it describes the way to tell whether a person has been born-again. Based on this verse (and the passage) how can we tell if someone has been truly born-again?
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13. Based on First John 3:23 what is the twofold commandment absolutely necessary to obey for all Christians?
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Just because someone glibly prays a “sinner’s prayer” or signs a “decision card”, this does not mean that they have automatically been born-again. Conversion to Christianity is not based on praying the right words, or raising your hand at the right moment. It does however cause a heartfelt surrender to God and a deeply thankful acceptance of what Christ has done for us.

Amen.