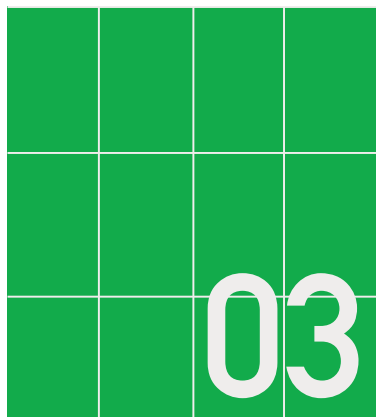




GRACE UNVEILED:

The Ultimate Rescue Story

I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Hope Channel. My name is _____ and I'll be your host for the series *There is More to Life*.

In this series of eight studies, we are exploring the foundational beliefs of Christianity from a biblical point of view. From the origins of the Bible to salvation and what happens when we die, our time together will be a time of discovery and learning, guided by Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

Today we explore the subject of salvation by asking several questions: Why do human beings need to be saved? What was the divine initiative to rescue the human race? What part do humans play in salvation?

Let us open our hearts to rediscover the depth and richness of God's Word. We begin with a word of prayer:

"Heavenly Father, we come before You with open hearts, longing to hear Your voice through Your Word. Fill our minds with understanding and our spirits with wisdom. May Your truth guide us, Your love inspire us, and Your presence transform us. Teach us to walk in Your light and to reflect Your grace to the world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

II. MAIN ARGUMENT

Have you ever considered why Christians talk so much about our need for salvation?

Why do human beings need to be "saved"? And from what?

As we explored in our last study, to understand salvation, we must first understand

the reality of our human condition. This is a condition we have to face every day of our lives. Sin has left humanity in a state of spiritual brokenness and separation from God.

Let's revisit what the Apostle Paul affirms in Romans 3:23:

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

The story of our fall from glory is a harrowing tale of lies and rebellion.

Imagine that in a dark corner of the cosmos, a certain race enjoys a face-to-face relationship with their Creator. Their home in this part of the universe is a beautiful place where everything works perfectly for their peaceful, joyful existence. Until one day this intimate relationship is severed because humanity decides to go their separate way, throwing out the privilege of this direct connection.

This fall from glory affects every aspect of our lives. Everything about us has been impacted by sin—our thoughts, actions, desires, and even our relationships. Sin distorts how we see God, ourselves, and others. In our condition, we are unable to bridge the gap that sin has created between us and God.

Sin has changed our very nature. Sin has made us spiritually dead, as described in Ephesians 2:1:

“You were dead in your transgressions and sins.”

We need someone outside of ourselves to save us, to offer us forgiveness, cleansing, and restoration. This isn't something we can achieve on our own. We can't fix our sinful nature by trying to be good, or by personal improvement. The gap is too wide, the damage too deep.

Sadly, our first parents had no idea what they had got themselves into when they chose to disobey. They didn't fully consider the cost of this separation. They couldn't foresee all the pain and suffering this separation would cause to billions of humans for thousands of years! Our situation was hopeless.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God's response was immediate. He didn't wait for us to figure out our condition for ourselves. In His infinite love, God took the first step to rescue us, even before we knew we needed saving. He didn't leave them in despair but gave them a promise—a Savior who would crush the power of evil (Genesis 3:15). That promise pointed to Jesus Christ, the ultimate expression of God's

love.

God didn't wait for us to come to Him; He came to us. His initiative to rescue humanity is the greatest love story ever told. Through Jesus, God extends an invitation to every one of us: to be forgiven, restored, and reunited with Him forever. Will you accept His gift?

Think about it: the Creator of the universe became one of us. Jesus left the glory of Heaven to live as a human, experiencing our struggles, pain, and temptations—yet without sin. He walked among us, showing us who God truly is: a loving, compassionate Father who longs to save.

This wasn't a last-minute decision. The plan of redemption was in place before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). God's love for us was so great that He prepared a way to restore our relationship with Him, knowing the cost He would bear.

And then came the ultimate act of love. Jesus willingly died on the cross, bearing the weight of our sins. As John 3:16 affirms:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Our real condition may seem hopeless on our own, but with God, there is hope. Through Christ, we find forgiveness, restoration, and the promise of a new life.

Only by God's grace can our broken relationship with Him be healed. Salvation is His gift to us, a demonstration of His love and mercy. When we accept this gift, our lives are made new. We move from spiritual death to life, from separation to communion with God.

This divine initiative isn't about what we can do; it's about what God has already done. We can't earn salvation or deserve it—it's a gift, freely given by a God who longs to bring us back to Him.

Now, let's explore an interesting aspect of salvation.

If you have spent time studying God's plan of salvation in Scripture, you soon realize that a lot happened between God and His people before Jesus came to the world to save us.

Perhaps your study caused you to ask yourself how people in the Old Testament were saved if Jesus hadn't yet died on the cross.

Let's look at this question closely.

Before Jesus' death, salvation was based on faith in God's forgiveness through grace and His promise of a coming Savior.

In the Old Testament times God's people didn't have the full picture of who Jesus was and what He would accomplish for them, but they trusted in what God revealed to them. For example, Abraham lived almost two thousand years before Christ was born. Yet he was justified by faith, as Genesis 15:6 tells us:

“Abraham believed the Lord, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Abraham's trust in God's promises demonstrated the same kind of faith that brings salvation today: faith in God's goodness and grace.

But there's more to this story. Let's look at the system God used to forgive people in the Old Testament.

You have probably heard of the sanctuary in the Old Testament. The sanctuary was a temple where animals were sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins. It played a vital role in pointing forward to Christ's ultimate sacrifice. Leviticus 17:11 explains what happened when an animal was sacrificed:

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”

In other words, the blood of sacrifices was also a gift given by God. to Israelites to atone for their sins! The sacrifices of animals symbolized the need for atonement and taught that forgiveness comes at a cost. Hebrews 9:22 explains why blood sacrifices were needed:

“Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.”

Sin is so offensive to God that it requires the death of the transgressor.

However, there is something very important we need to understand: the sacrifices of the Old Testament themselves didn't save anyone. They were ineffective in themselves. As the author of Hebrews explains in 10:4:

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”

The purpose of those sacrifices was to reveal the offerer's faith in God's plan for salvation.

Ultimately, the blood of the animals pointed to Jesus' blood which would one day atone for our sins.

These rituals were like shadows of what was to come, teaching believers to trust in the ultimate Lamb of God who would one day take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Each offering and each festival reminded God's people of His promise to send a Redeemer.

Obedience to the system God had implemented was an expression of faith for Old Testament believers. By following God's instructions, they showed their trust in His plan and demonstrated their reliance on His grace. Their salvation before Jesus, like ours after Jesus, was always based on God's grace and their faith in Him—not their works or the rituals themselves.

Though they didn't know Jesus, their faith anticipated His atoning sacrifice as “the Lamb of God.”

When Christ died on the cross, He fulfilled all those promises and confirmed that salvation has always been by grace through faith.

So, to answer this question: how were people saved before Jesus? The same way we are saved today: by faith in God's grace. For them, God's grace pointed forward to the cross. For us, God's grace points back to the cross. Either way, the source of salvation is the same—the cross of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

So that's it? All I have to do to be saved is to believe in Jesus and confess His name as my Savior?

Yes! Our only part is to confess our sins, repent and accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

But this also raises an important question: Is believing in Jesus enough to be saved?

Let us look closely at this question.

Salvation is a gift of grace, freely given by God and received through faith in Jesus Christ. As Paul explains in Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Salvation is not something we can earn or achieve through our own efforts. All we have to do is believe.

Believing in Jesus means more than merely acknowledging His existence—it’s about trusting Him completely as our Savior and submitting to Him as Lord of our lives.

It almost sounds too good to be true, right?

Yes, it is! The good news of salvation is too good! Our fall from grace was so great that there’s nothing we can do to redeem ourselves. Our salvation is a divine act, from beginning to end. That’s why it is such good news!

All other religions require human beings to do something to redeem themselves through good works. Christianity is the only religion in the world where God does everything for our salvation, all we have to do is believe!

Am I saying that salvation only happens outside ourselves with no human input? What about good works? Are they a requirement for salvation?

The beauty of God’s plan of salvation is that being saved means more than just forgiveness—it means being restored to a daily saving relationship with God. Ezekiel 36:26 promises,

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you.”

This transformation isn’t just about avoiding punishment; it’s about becoming the person God created us to be. It requires repentance, confession and a change of ways.

This is where the power of the Holy Spirit comes in. The Holy Spirit speaks to our

hearts, revealing our true condition, shining a light on the brokenness we often try to ignore. It's the Holy Spirit who convicts us of sin and points us to the only solution for our predicament: Jesus Christ.

Through Christ, we find what we cannot provide for ourselves. His sacrifice on the cross paid the penalty for sin, making forgiveness possible. He lived a perfect life on our behalf that we could never emulate. His sacrifice paid a debt we could never repay.

Accepting this gift means that we are no longer the same as before. We are “born again”, we begin from scratch. We constantly look for ways to be thankful to God for His gift of salvation. And one way we show we love and adore God is by living how He wants us to live: like mirror images of Jesus Christ.

The Bible is clear: good works are not the cause of our salvation, but they are its natural result.

When we accept Jesus, we are “born again,” meaning that the Holy Spirit empowers us to live a new life, producing actions that reflect our faith. As the Apostle James explains:

***“Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead”
(James 2:17).***

This transformation into the image of Jesus isn't about reaching a state of sinless perfection, a moment when we feel we have reached a superior state of existence where we no longer sin.

The Ten Commandments serve as our guide, revealing our sin and our need for a Savior. We can find the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. These precepts cannot save us but point us to Christ, who fulfills its demands on our behalf.

We are called to actively cooperate with the Holy Spirit by walking in faith, obeying God's Word, and surrendering daily to His guidance. With His help, we discover who God is and how He would like us to live. The Holy Spirit works in us daily, teaching us to walk in God's ways and to reflect His love to the world.

Think of salvation as a tree: faith is the root of this tree and good works are the fruit. A healthy tree doesn't produce fruit to prove it's alive; it produces fruit because it's alive. In the same way, our obedience, love, and service to others are evidence of a

genuine faith, not a prerequisite for salvation.

While being justified before God is a central part of salvation, it doesn't stop there. Through Christ's sacrifice, we are not only acquitted of our sins but also invited to a new birth. The new birth is a new reality that touches every part of our lives.

To answer this question: are we saved just by believing in Jesus? The answer is Yes—because salvation is by grace through faith alone.

But salvation is so much more than a legal declaration—it's a life-changing event! True faith in Jesus isn't passive; it's alive and active, transforming how we live to serve God and how we love others. Salvation begins with belief, but it blossoms into a life that glorifies God and serves others.

Faith isn't just something we profess with words—it's something we live in actions. And when we trust in Jesus, He changes everything, from the inside out.

When we think of how incredible the gift of salvation is, we understand how God could only declare us saved without any help on our part!

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we are justified—declared righteous in God's sight because of Christ's perfect life and sacrificial death. Romans 5:1 assures us,

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”.

This legal acquittal removes the penalty of sin, reconciling us to God.

Salvation doesn't end with God's declaration that we are righteous based on what Jesus Christ did for us. Salvation leads to a life filled with the power of Holy Spirit, a life that shows the fruits of the Spirit.

According to the Apostle Paul, the works of the Spirit are ***“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control.”*** (Galatians 5:22–23)

Those who accept Christ display these fruits because they ***“have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”*** (Galatians 5:24–25).

In other words, God's saving work goes beyond forgiveness; He renews our hearts, reshapes our desires, and empowers us to live in harmony with His will.

In summary, salvation is both a declaration that happens in Heaven declaring us just and a transformation in us. This transformation allows us to bring Him honor, shine as lights in the world, and live with hope for the eternal life He has promised.

In Christ, salvation is the beginning of a new life—a life that reflects God's grace, truth, and love.

As we come to the end of our time together, let's take a look at some of the main questions people have about salvation.

If salvation is a free gift from God, can I lose my salvation?

The short answer is, "yes." Salvation is secure as long as we remain in a saving relationship with Christ. God promises to never let us go (John 10:28), but He also respects our free will. If we choose to turn away from Him, we can forfeit eternal life. The choice is always ours.

What happens to those who have never heard of Jesus? Are they going to be saved?

God is just and merciful. Romans 2:14-16 explains that He judges everyone based on the light they have received and their response to the truth revealed to them through creation, conscience, and providence.

Is baptism necessary for salvation?

Baptism is a vital act of obedience and a public declaration of faith, symbolizing our death to sin and new life in Christ (Romans 6:3-4). While we are saved by grace through faith, baptism reflects that transformation.

Is salvation available to everyone?

Absolutely! God desires all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). Salvation is offered to everyone who accepts Christ, regardless of background or past mistakes.

I hope these brief answers can set you on the right track as you continue to study this fascinating topic.

III. CONCLUSION

Before we close our study together, let me tell you a story.

In 1996, at the age of 23, Charles was sentenced to 13 years in prison for armed robbery. His crime stemmed from a confrontation with someone who owed him money from drug dealings. While incarcerated, a friend introduced him to Islam, and Charles immersed himself in its teachings, eventually becoming the imam of the prison mosque during his final four years behind bars.

However, his life story took a profound turn when he discovered the transformative power of a relationship with Jesus Christ. When Charles was released after 11 years of incarceration, his faith began to falter. While attending mosques outside of prison, he found that something was missing.

He started questioning the treatment of women in the community and whether this faith aligned with the life he wanted for his family. Around this time, he met his future wife, who attended a Christian church. Though unfamiliar with Christianity, Charles began attending church with her and felt the stirring of a deeper spiritual need.

A turning point came in August 2013 when a friend persistently invited Charles to a Christian Church. At first reluctant, he eventually attended, drawn by the promise of a free T-shirt. That day, Charles realized that while he had always believed in God, he lacked a personal relationship with Him. He also began to confront his long-standing struggle with understanding Jesus—not merely as a prophet, as Islam taught, but as the Son of God.

When Charles accepted Jesus into his life, Charles's life transformed in every way.

He experienced a profound peace and felt a heavy burden lifted. He began taking steps to grow in his faith, serving in various ministries and using his story to guide and mentor young people.

Reflecting on his past, Charles recognizes that the money and material possessions he once pursued pale in comparison to the life he now has through his relationship with Jesus.

Today, Charles is a testament to the redemptive power of faith. He believes that God has given him back everything he lost—and more. For him, true wealth lies not in

money or possessions but in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Charles often says, “I feel like I had a second chance, and I was resurrected” (Source <https://newspring.cc/stories/charles-mcmillan>).

As we reflect on God’s gift of salvation, may Charles’s story remind us of the power of God’s grace. No matter how broken or far from Him we may feel, salvation is God’s gift to us—a gift we cannot earn but can only accept through faith in Jesus Christ.

If you’ve been carrying burdens, searching for meaning, or longing for peace, I invite you to open your heart to Jesus. He stands at the door, ready to enter and bring light, hope, and restoration into your life.

Let us leave today with this promise from Romans 10:13:

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

May we answer His call and live in the fullness of His salvation. God bless you.

Let us close with prayer:

“Heavenly Father, we thank You for the incredible gift of salvation. Thank You for pursuing us with Your love and offering us a way back to You through Jesus Christ. May we accept Your gift with open hearts and live as a reflection of Your grace and goodness. Guide us to share this hope with others and walk in the light of Your truth. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”