

A4 - Salvation

Study 1 - Salvation from Slavery

BIBLE READING:

Exodus 11: 1-6; 12: 1-14, 29-31

KEY VERSE:

“When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you.”

Exodus 12: 13

The Old Testament contains many excellent ‘pictures’, or illustrations of the salvation which God has provided for us in the Lord Jesus Christ. In this series of studies, we shall examine four of these.

For more than 400 years, the Israelites had been living in Egypt. As their numbers increased, the king of Egypt, Pharaoh, viewed them as a threat to his power, so he made them his slaves and treated them increasingly harshly. God directed His servant Moses to go to Pharaoh to ask for the release of the Israelites, but Pharaoh refused.

As the king became more and more stubborn, God sent upon Egypt a series of ten plagues, or judgments, the last of which is usually known as ‘the death of the first-born’. In it, the eldest son (or ‘first-born’) in every Egyptian household was to die; there would be no exceptions, and when it took place, indescribable grief would spread over Egypt. Pharaoh’s distress would be so great that he would let the slaves go immediately. God planned to save His people from ‘the death of the first-born’ and so He unfolded to Moses a very wonderful way of salvation.

The plan, as it applied to each family, centred on a lamb. A year-old, healthy lamb was selected, kept isolated for a few days and then killed. Its blood was put upon the side-posts and lintel of the door of each Israelite home. That done, all the families went indoors and feasted upon the roasted lamb. All this was happening on the night of ‘the death of the firstborn’, but the Israelites knew that no harm would befall them, for God had promised, **“when I see the blood, I will pass over you”**. (Exodus 12: 13)

What a night it was! Death and dreadful sadness came to every house where no blood was on the door. But life and liberty were experienced by the Israelites, as Pharaoh gave permission for them to leave Egypt. Triumphant they marched away, in their tens of thousands!

In all the years of Israel’s history, this was their greatest ‘salvation’. On other occasions, God saved them from many kinds of troubles, but the ‘Exodus from Egypt’ exceeds all the others. Jews, everywhere, remember it annually, right up

to the present time. But for us it has a special significance, for it illustrates clearly God’s way of salvation today. Note how the facts of the Exodus ‘salvation’ are matched by the teachings of the New Testament concerning God’s way of saving sinners TODAY.



The pyramids at Giza in Egypt (Source: Wikipedia)

EXODUS: The first-born was under sentence of death, and in need of deliverance.

TODAY: We, as sinners, are condemned before God, and in need of salvation. (**Romans 3: 23; Romans 5: 12**)

EXODUS: Salvation was provided by God through a lamb.

TODAY: The Lord Jesus, the Son of God, is called **“The Lamb of God”**. (**John 1: 29**)

EXODUS: The lamb had to die, in order to provide deliverance for the Israelites.

TODAY: The death of the Lord Jesus is absolutely necessary for our salvation. (**1 Corinthians 5: 7; 1 Peter 2: 24; 1 Peter 3: 18**)

EXODUS: The lamb took the place of the first-born (in death). It died ‘for him’.

TODAY: The Lord Jesus died **“for us”**. (**Romans 5: 8**) He gave Himself **“for me”**. (**Galatians 2: 20**)

EXODUS: For peace of mind, and the assurance that all was well, the first-born had only to rely upon God’s promise. See Key Verse.

TODAY: We, today, believe what God has said, and trust His promise that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (**John 3: 16**)

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Study 2 - Israel's Red Sea Experience

BIBLE READING:

Exodus 14: 1-31; 15: 1-7

KEY VERSE:

“The Lord is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise Him.”

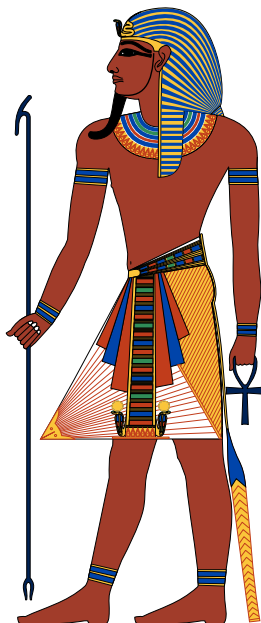
Exodus 15: 2

Pharaoh's change of heart was short-lived! No sooner had the Israelites set out upon their journey towards the 'Promised Land', than Pharaoh regretted giving them permission to go. He determined to send his army after them to bring them back!

The Israelites found themselves trapped. Ahead of them was the Red Sea; behind them the chariots and the soldiers of a huge Egyptian army! They were in a hopeless situation, out of which only God could deliver them.

And that is what He did! By the power of an east wind, which blew all night, the Lord caused the sea to go back, making a pathway through which the Israelites walked to safety. When the Egyptians attempted to do likewise, the waters returned, and they were all drowned.

This outstanding deliverance of the Israelites helps us to understand some important points about the salvation which God offers us in the Lord Jesus Christ.



A typical depiction of a Pharaoh
(Source: Wikipedia)



The Red Sea today (Source: Wikipedia)

TOTAL HELPLESSNESS

There was nothing they could do to get themselves out of the difficulty in which they found themselves.

One of the most difficult facts for us to accept is that we are altogether unable to save ourselves from our sins. Yet that is exactly what the Bible teaches! Read, for example, **Romans 5: 6**. Even the very best things that we do, cannot save us. It is **“NOT because of works done by us in righteousness”** that God saves sinners. (Read **Titus 3: 5**) If salvation can be obtained by our efforts, there would have been no need for the Lord Jesus to die upon the Cross!

COMPLETE PROVISION

God did everything that had to be done to save the Israelites. It was not a case of merely giving them 'a helping hand', in their moment of extreme need. His saving power was so immense that Moses said to the people, **“Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord.”** (Exodus 14: 13)

This illustrates the central truth of the Gospel; God has done everything needful for us to come into favour with Him. He has given us a Saviour, the Lord Jesus, who has borne our sins when He died at Calvary. What He did for us is complete and final - it will never need to be done again! (Hebrews 10: 12) In His finished work upon the Cross, we see today **“the salvation of the Lord”**.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Israelites had to step out upon the pathway which God had made for them through the Red Sea. When all was ready, the Lord said to Moses, **“Tell the people of Israel to GO FORWARD”** (Exodus 14: 15) By doing so, they were showing their acceptance of what God had done for them.

We must never forget that we have a personal responsibility to accept God's provision of salvation. We are not saved merely by hearing about the Saviour; we must, at a personal level, receive Him as our Lord and Saviour, committing ourselves to Him in complete trust. Have YOU taken that step?

This is the second of three units on Salvation.

Answer Sheet

A4 - Salvation

Study 1 - Salvation from Slavery

Name: _____ Return address on back of answer sheet

Address: _____

1. Fill in the missing words:

The Israelites were held in slavery in _____. The _____ was another name for the king of Egypt. God sent _____ to ask for the Israelites' release. Pharaoh refused and became more and more _____. In total, God sent _____ plagues.

□ /5

2. Read *Exodus 11: 4-6* again and describe in your own words what the final plague, or judgment, was.

□ /2

3. Read *Exodus 12: 1-7* again.

a) What were the Israelites to do on the tenth day of the month?

b) What three things were the Israelites told about the kind of lamb they were to take?

c) How long were they to keep the lamb?

d) Write down three things that the Israelites were to do on the fourteenth day of the month?

□ /8

4. Read what Peter writes in *1 Peter 1: 18, 19* and write a sentence about how he describes the Lord Jesus.

□ /2

5. In *1 Corinthians 5: 7* we read: "Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed". Explain in your own words what you think this means.

□ /2

6. The Jewish people have a name for the annual celebration of their deliverance from Egypt.

a) What is it? (*Read Exodus 12: 27 and Mark 14: 1*)

b) Can you suggest a reason for calling it this?

□ /4

7. What do we have to do to receive the salvation that God offers us?

□ /2

THINK: Have you thanked God for sending His Son Jesus, The Lamb of God, to die on the cross for you?

TOTAL = □ /25

Answer Sheet

A4 - Salvation

Study 2 - Israel's Red Sea Experience

1. **Answer the following questions:**

a) Why were the Israelites in great danger?

b) How did God rescue them?

 /4

2. **The Bible tells us that we too are in danger and need God to rescue us. In what way are we in danger?**

 /2

3. **The Bible uses several words to express what we have to do to be saved. Look up these references and write down one word from each which tells us what we have to do.**

a) **Acts 16: 31** _____

b) **John 1: 12** _____

c) **Matthew 11: 28** _____

 /3

4. **Some people think that they can prepare themselves for Heaven by their own efforts. Write down a Bible verse which contradicts this idea.**

 /2

5. **Answer the following questions:**

a) Read **Exodus 14: 13**. What did Moses tell the Israelites to do?

b) Look at **Exodus 14: 31** and describe in your own words what the Israelites witnessed and how they responded to this.

 /6

6. **The Lord Jesus, on the cross, uttered a cry which tells us that He had done everything necessary for our salvation.**

a) Find it in **John 19: 30** and write it out.

b) What is our 'personal responsibility' when we hear the good news of salvation?

 /4

7. **When the Israelites reached the other side of the Red Sea, they sang a song to the Lord. Read **Exodus 15: 1-2** again.**

a) Why did they sing to the Lord?

b) List three things they said about God.

 /4

THINK: If you were to write a song of praise to God about your salvation, what would you want to say in it?

TOTAL = /25

Answer Sheet

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Study 3 - Water from the Rock

1. Give short answers to these questions:

- a) Where had the Israelites come from? _____
- b) Where were they going? _____
- c) What kind of place were they passing through? _____

 /3

2. Who said?

- a) "Give us water . . ." _____
- b) "What shall I do with this people?" _____
- c) "You shall strike the rock." _____

 /3

3. Answer TRUE or FALSE to the following and put in the verse number which verifies your answer:

- | | True/False | Verse Number |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| a) Their livestock were thirsty too. | _____ | _____ |
| b) Moses had used his rod for God previously. | _____ | _____ |
| c) The rock Moses struck was in Hebron. | _____ | _____ |
| d) The people asked, "Is the Lord among us or not?" | _____ | _____ |

 /8

4. What is the Israelite's thirst 'a picture' of in our lives?

 /2

5. Read God's Word to the nation of Israel in *Jeremiah 2: 13*, and answer these questions:

- a) In what way is God described in this verse? _____
- b) What had the people chosen instead of what God offered? _____

 /2

6. Read *1 Corinthians 10: 4* and write a sentence explaining the 'spiritual meaning' given to "the Rock".

 /2

7. Read *John 7: 37*:

- a) Who gave the invitation? _____
- b) Who is the invitation for? _____
- c) What does the invitation say to do? _____
- d) The Key Verse, which is very similar, mentions the cost for the person who responds to the invitation. Which two words describe this? _____
- e) Explain as clearly as you can, what it means to "**take the water of life**". _____

 /5

THINK: Of some of the things in life which people look to for satisfaction. In what ways have you found the Lord Jesus to be a true source of satisfaction?

 TOTAL = /25

Answer Sheet

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Study 4 - The Serpents in the Wilderness

1. Read *Numbers 21: 5*:

a) The reference is to the special bread, or food, which God gave to the Israelites. Write a sentence, giving its name and describe it. Use **Exodus 16: 14, 15, 31** to help. _____

b) Write one untrue thing which the Israelites said. _____

 /3

2. What did God instruct Moses to do, in order that bitten people might not die?

 /2

3. According to *Romans 3: 23* why do people today need to be 'saved'?

 /2

4. Link these sins with the Bible references where they are mentioned by drawing a line between them.

unthankfulness

untruthfulness

unbelief

John 3: 18

Proverbs 12: 22

Romans 1: 21

 /3

5. Sin leads to suffering and has consequences.

a) Write out the sentence at the end of **Galatians 6: 7**. _____

b) Give an example from society or family which illustrates this principle. _____

 /2

6. In *Psalms 51: 1-4*, David confesses his sin after committing adultery with Bathsheba. Answer the following:

a) Who had David sinned against? _____

b) Find another word which David uses for his sin. _____

c) What three things did David ask God to show him? _____

d) Find the three verbs David uses in asking God to rid him of his sin. _____

 /8

7. Fill in the grid to compare the Israelites' experience with what God has done for us.

The Israelites - **Numbers 21: 4-9**

Us - **John 3: 14,15**

What was lifted up?

a serpent on a pole

What action is to be taken?

What is the result?

 /5

THINK: About how you would explain to someone how they can be saved. Can you include some of the verses which have been referred to in the study?

Return your completed answer sheet to:

TOTAL = /25

UNIT TOTAL = /100

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A4 - Salvation

Study 3 - Water from the Rock

BIBLE READING:
Exodus 17: 1-7

KEY VERSE:
**“And let the one who is thirsty come;
let the one who desires take the water
of life without price.”**

Revelation 22: 17

Exodus 17 tells us about the Israelites having no water. What a dreadful situation for them as they moved further into the scorching desert! They were so hot and thirsty that they became angry with Moses, their leader.

But God again proved to be their Deliverer. He instructed Moses to go to a large rock and to strike it with his rod. God performed a wonderful miracle, and streams of fresh, cool water flowed out from the rock.

This incident, from Israel’s experiences on the journey from Egypt to Canaan, helps us to understand some other aspects of God’s plan of salvation for us.



The wilderness in the Sinai in 1862 (Source: Wikipedia)

1. THE THIRST OF THE PEOPLE

For the Israelites, thirst was a physical sensation - a dryness or ‘emptiness’ which affected their tongues and throats, and which caused them to feel so very weak. For us today, their thirst is a ‘picture’ of the inner, spiritual emptiness which we experience when we live our lives without God, and without the Lord Jesus as our Saviour. Our deepest longings remain unsatisfied until we are saved, through faith in the Lord Jesus.

This story teaches us an important lesson. When we receive salvation, through accepting the Lord Jesus, He fills our lives with a real satisfaction. People try to find inner

peace and contentment in all sorts of ways but are often disappointed! The Lord Jesus is the only One who can both SAVE and SATISFY. Read what He said in **John 4: 13, 14**. When He speaks about **“the water that I will give him”**, He is speaking figuratively about Himself, as the Source of satisfaction. Read **John 7: 37**, for a similar verse.

2. THE SMITING OF THE ROCK

The rock which Moses struck was similar to rocks, as we know them. It was God who performed the miracle, and water flowed freely!

It is also true to say that the rock depicts our Lord Jesus, who was “smitten” in His death upon the Cross. (**Isaiah 53: 4**) So here again, we have a reminder of a central truth of the Gospel - it is only by the death of the Lord Jesus that the **“water of life”** is available for us. There is NO salvation for us apart from His sufferings and death. He is the ‘Rock of Ages’ about whom A. M. Toplady wrote in a famous hymn:

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in Thee!
Let the water and the blood,
from Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure;
cleanse me from its guilt and power.*



Rock of Ages, Burrington Combe (Source: Wikipedia)

3. THE ABUNDANT SUPPLY OF WATER

When the water flowed from the rock, there was more than enough! No Israelite needed to remain thirsty. No-one could say, ‘There is no water for me’. Whoever wanted it, could have it in abundance, and at no cost!

How true this is of God’s wonderful salvation! In Old Testament days, the prophet Isaiah spoke about the joy with which people would **“draw water from THE WELLS of salvation”**. (**Isaiah 12: 3**) As the Bible closes, the message is still the same, **“let the one who desires take the water of life without price.”** **Revelation 22: 17 (Key Verse)**

Taking a drink is a very personal thing. No one can drink for someone else! Receiving salvation is likewise very personal. Each of us must put our trust in the Lord Jesus, as individuals. **“Behold, NOW is the day of salvation.”** (**2 Corinthians 6: 2**)

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Study 4 - The Serpents in the Wilderness

BIBLE READING:

Numbers 21: 4-9

KEY VERSES:

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.”

John 3: 14, 15

Poisonous snakes! We can easily imagine how terrified the Israelites were when this new hazard occurred. How distressed they must have been, as news of one death after another spread around the camp!

Yet the story ends on a happier note. God not only removed the venomous snakes, but also provided a means of healing for those who had already been bitten. Once again, He revealed Himself as “the God of salvation”.

To help us understand how this incident illustrates God’s way of salvation for us, we may sum it up under four headings:

1. THEY SINNED.

As we read of their grumblings and complaints, we can see that they were guilty, not only of unthankfulness, but also of untruthfulness. (**verses 4-5**) Perhaps most serious of all was their unbelief, so clearly expressed when they said to Moses, **“Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?”**

It is very evident that they sinned in more ways than one! And so have ALL of us! (**Romans 3: 23 and 5: 12**) We make a great mistake if we think that only murderers, terrorists, and grossly immoral persons are sinners against God. Ingratitude, pride and jealousy are also sinful in the sight of God and put us at a distance from Him.

2. THEY SUFFERED.

The judgment of God upon their sin was swift! (**see verse 6**) Today, many people are deluded into thinking that sin pays no ‘wages’, and so they continue in their wrong-doing. The Bible, however, teaches otherwise; read **Ecclesiastes 8: 11 and Romans 6: 23**.

The violating of God’s laws always leads to suffering of one kind or another. Sometimes its ‘wages’ are paid in this life; sometimes not until this life is finished. How important it is that we should come to the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, putting our trust in Him for the complete forgiveness of all our sins!

3. THEY WERE SORRY.

Read what they said to Moses in **verse 7** and note how completely their attitude changed. The Bible’s word for this complete ‘about-turn’ is ‘repentance’. The Israelites repented by being genuinely sorry about the untruthful things they had said, and by sincerely asking for God’s mercy.

This is an important factor in our case also. If we are to receive salvation, we must be truly repentant of our sins, confess them to God, and whole-heartedly desire to be finished with them. **Read 1 John 1: 9 and Psalm 51: 1- 4.**

4. THEY WERE SAVED.

God’s unlimited power was available to give life, even to those in whom the deadly poison was already at work. If they would only take God at His word, and look at the uplifted brass serpent, they would be ‘saved’ from the consequences of their wrongdoing. Thankfully, there were many that day who **“looked”** and **“lived”**. (**see verse 9**)

Here is a clear illustration of what can happen to us. Read what the Lord Jesus said in the Key Verses. When He speaks about **“the Son of Man”**, He is referring to Himself; He will be **“lifted up”** on the cross, and through His death, eternal life will be available to all who believe in Him.

For the Israelites in the desert, it was a case of experiencing DEATH, through sin, or of finding LIFE, through accepting God’s way. For us, the alternatives are even more stark; it is either being separated from God and receiving the punishment for our sin or enjoying eternal life – knowing God and all the blessings He wants to give us through Christ. (**John 3: 36; John 17: 3**) How important it is to choose eternal life which God has provided for us.



The Brazen Serpent (circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot) (Source: Wikipedia)

This is the second of three units on Salvation.