



BOOK 02 – CHAPTER 01 – STUDY 07

THE STORY, The Eye Opener.

An interactive story with a twist.

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Let me start with a short story. I am pretty sure many of you can relate to some of this story.

One day John Doe (a 21-year-old male) was approached by Pastor X (a youth Pastor) and the pastor spoke beauties about Jesus and how Jesus loves John Doe and how we are sinners and how Jesus has many blessings for John Doe. They were both talking for a while and got to a point where John Doe opened up, told his story, and asked Pastor X some specific questions:

JD- 2 years ago, I was invited and went several times to a small Christian church. It was weird and kind of boring, nothing compared to the big churches. Even though they were very loving, friendly, sang some psalms and had food, it was more like a family meeting with lots of reading and talking.

They said I could be baptized and saved the same day, but the thing that got me the most were all those requirements for salvation!

They had a long list: You have to believe in Jesus, and His death on the cross, you have to confess Christ as Savior **out loud**, you have to confess you are a sinner, you have to repent, you have to be baptized with water for the remission of sins and also for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. They have to lay hands and to pray for the Holy Ghost in order to indwell within you, and they even mentioned doing good works to maintain your salvation. They had so many rules, that just did not feel right!

They have to keep the sabbath day, supposedly on the 7th day and not Sunday. They did not even eat any pork or crab legs, something about unclean foods and us being part of God's family, or the children of Israel. I just felt in my heart that it was a bit too much!

Supposedly, most baptisms performed by other churches are invalid because the one performing the baptism must be ordained by God Himself or at least ordained by someone who was ordained by God. They said God gives the person who is doing the baptism the authority so that through Christ, they can remit sins. Even though, they showed me all those things in the bible and offered all the help I needed to understand, I just figured they were just manipulating the bible to what they wanted to teach.

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I just felt that was not what God wanted so that's when I walked out! It felt more like a trap than a church. When they mentioned about the Pastor forgiving sins, it sounded like a Catholic priest, but they said, they have no affiliation with the catholic church and even said that the Catholic teachings go against God. What do you think about all that?

Pastor X- Oh yes, I know those type of Christians. They are not Catholics and even though they may mean well, they are lost, and they err in their teachings and doctrine. Usually, those Christians read only the King James bible and say that the other bibles are not inspired by God. They are legalistic and try to live by the law. But we know that Jesus fulfilled the law, so we no longer live by the law, but by grace and faith alone. We definitely do not have to do any types of works to be saved. **Ephesians 2:8-9** declares, “By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”. **Just stay far away from those type of people!**

JD- I think you are right, they even offered me a King James bible, and a concordance, and other materials for free! They even said they follow the apostle's doctrine, and I have never heard that! Even until today, I have never heard of any church following or mentioning the apostle's doctrine! Looks like they were trying to indoctrinate me on something that does not exist. I guess I am very lucky I followed my instincts and left them. Because of them, I have been questioning my salvation for the last 2 years!

I have gone to churches that supposedly speak in tongues and are always grabbing you and touching you. **Just kidding**, they lay hands and take out demons from believers on a weekly basis. It was like watching the exorcist, but in person. Some other churches are just a bunch of old people, it is more like going to a funeral. They are so serious about everything and the church smells funny.

I have also gone to big mega concert churches, but I felt that was a bit too much, and the main issue there, was that you could not speak to the pastor

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because he was too busy. You have to make an appointment to speak to some other church leader and they dismiss you quickly. It felt like a fast-food restaurant. Hurry up, order what you need, pay for it, grab what you can and leave.

One church I went to was so crazy, all it was missing were the drugs and alcohol. So, in a serious note Pastor, I just cannot find peace of mind about my salvation, or a place to belong.

Please tell me, what do I need to do right now to be saved?

Meaning, that if I cross the street and die, I will go straight to heaven. What are the requirements?

Pastor X- God tells us in *John 3:16 (NIV) that for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

God even repeats and tells us in *Romans 10:9 (NIV) If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Paul clearly expressed the fact that eternal salvation is the “gift of God” (*Rom. 6:23*). He even specified that it is a “free” gift (*Rom. 5:15-18*). In other words, there are no requirements. There is pretty much nothing whatsoever that you need to do. All you must do is, believe with your heart in Jesus Christ. Believe that he is the Son of God, that He died for all of us and that He resurrected 3 days later, and that He is sitting on the right-hand side of the Father interceding for us!

JD- That is all? I have heard that before, but it seems too simple!

Pastor X- It is plain and simple, but false teachers complicate things! You see, God loves us all, and He wants us all to be saved! He says in *1 Timothy 2:4 He wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.* So, he makes it plain and simple for us. Do you now believe?

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JD- I have always believed, but how come I feel that I am not forgiven? Like if I am still missing something.

Pastor X- The bible says in *Acts 10:43 (NIV) All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.* You see now, that if anyone truly believes, they will automatically receive forgiveness for their sins! So, if you truly believe with your heart, then that means Satan is messing with you and making you doubt the word of the Lord! Just like he did with Eve in the garden of Eden.

JD- Oh, wow, that makes a lot of sense to me. Yes, yes, I believe with my heart and want to be a child of God. I have been praying and asking God to show me the way for 3 years, and now you are here answering my prayers.

Pastor X- Praise the Lord! You are now a child of God and have been saved. All your sins have been forgiven. Pray the sinner's prayer with me.

JD- Wait, so just to make sure, now that I know that God has no requirements for salvation, and believing is all that God needs of us to give us His salvation, and I believe in my heart; And I will also pray the sinner's prayer with you, that means that if I die right then, I will be going to heaven?

Pastor X- Yes, you will!

JD- Does it also mean that I have received remission of my sins? Once a person is saved are they always saved? So, I will never lose my salvation, right?

Pastor X- When people come to know Christ as their Savior, they are brought into a relationship with God that guarantees their salvation as eternally secure. So, yes you have received forgiveness for all your past, present and future sins!

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JD- What about baptism? I was already baptized as a baby! I have heard that baptism is necessary for salvation!

Pastor X- Where did you hear that? Those preaching baptism as necessary for salvation misunderstand the scriptures. God tells us in *1 Peter 3:21 this water symbolizes baptism, not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*. In other words, Baptism is an outward expression of an inward change. It is a public declaration of how Jesus changed your life. Being baptized shows others that you have decided to follow Jesus and allows them to celebrate this decision with you.

Even though we are commanded to be baptized, baptism is not needed for salvation, so you can do it at any time!

JD- Oh, I am understanding now. So now that I believe even more, I am completely saved!

Pastor X- To be clear, salvation is more than saying a prayer or “making a decision” for Christ; salvation is a sovereign act of God whereby an unregenerate sinner is washed, renewed, and born again by the Holy Spirit and not by baptism (*John 3:3; Titus 3:5*). When salvation occurs, God gives the forgiven sinner a new heart and puts a new spirit within him (*Ezekiel 36:26*). The Spirit will cause the saved person to walk in obedience to God’s word (*Ezekiel 36:26–27; James 2:26*). Numerous passages of Scripture declare the fact that, as an act of God, salvation is secure: and I can give you all those passages later if you like!

Can we pray now?

JD- Definitely, let’s do this!

Pastor X and JD- They prayed, the sinner’s prayer.

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Pastor X- Oh yes, and since you were baptized as a baby, it does not count. You will have to be baptized again. Your baptism was performed by a Catholic priest and their belief system is wrong! They even pray to saints and worship idols. Plus, you need to be dunked under water and not sprinkled. We have group baptisms every six months, but we have one coming up in only 3 months. We will sign you up and baptize you on that day! It will be awesome, lots of families there getting baptized at the same time. You can even ask your dad to baptize you! Our church also has a heated pool, and you and your family can stay for the pool party afterwards.

JD- OK, that is awesome. I would really like my family to be there with me! And I would love for my dad to baptize me also. I will definitely be in church this week.

Later that month after church service!

JD- I have been having a hard time sleeping these couple of days. It is like something is messing with me and bringing so many questions. So, I did some google research and tried to verify with my NIV and NLT bibles and now I have even more questions and doubts than before!

Pastor X- It happens. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. So, what questions do you have?

JD- If Baptism is commanded, why are we waiting 2 more months to get baptized? Wouldn't that mean that I will be in disobedience to God for those 2 months?

Pastor X- Even though God commands baptism, He understands that it may take some time to make arrangements! Did the thief on the cross get off that cross to get baptized? No, he did not, and he received salvation! So, it is ok to wait, as long as you do it eventually.

JD- I do not really get it, but I guess I will understand it later. Regarding repentance, you said that God had no requirements, and thinking about it,

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Believing is a requirement, because if we do not believe, we will not be saved. And now you tell me that I need to repent after I am saved? Would it not be repenting before receiving salvation?

Pastor X- As for repentance, yes, of course you have to repent! But that comes after salvation! We are saved the moment we believe, just like the gospel shows us in *Acts 4:4*, and directly tells us with *John 3:15*. You have salvation, trust me! Plus, God says in *Romans 3:25* that He has already forgiven your past and future sins and that is the true meaning of Christ's death on the cross. Now all you have to do is walk by faith and trust in God. Know that He loves you and will guide you to become a better brother in Christ!

JD- Hmm, ok. So, 1- when and how do we receive the Holy Ghost?

- 2- Why does the bible say, baptism also saves us in *1 Peter 3:21* and that if we do not believe and are baptized, we will not be saved in *Mark 16:16*?
- 3- Why does *Acts 2:38* say that baptism is done to receive remission for our sins?
- 4- Why does the NIV and NLT do not have the word remission and instead change it to forgiveness? When in forgiveness you still remember and in remission you do not?
- 5- Why did Paul baptize some disciples again to receive the Holy Ghost in *Acts 19*?
- 6- Why does it say in *Titus 1:16*, that if we do not do good works we deny professing God, are abominable in the eyes of God, are disobedient to God and reprobates or not pure unto every good work?
- 7- Was Apostle Peter saved curing the first two years that he walked with Christ? Because in *Luke 22:31-32* Jesus says that Peter was not converted and denied Jesus 3 times by the time of the resurrection & then in *Matthew 18:3* Jesus tells us that if we are not converted, we will not enter into the kingdom of heaven?

Pastor X- Wait, wait, wait. Hold your horses. One question at a time. *Mark 16:16 (NIV) Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.* only faith, and not baptism, is essential

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to salvation, just as the omission of baptism from the last clause shows! If baptism was essential to salvation, then the verse would have said “*but whoever does not believe and is not baptized will be condemned*”.

1 Peter 3:21 (NIV) “**Baptism also now save us**” Even though that is what the bible says, it does not mean that baptism saves us or that water baptism is essential to salvation, since it cannot wash away the filth of the flesh. Baptism ONLY shows the answer of a good conscious toward God. In other words, baptism is a conscious testimony to one’s faith to the resurrection of Jesus Christ because it symbolizes our resurrection with Him.

The incident of **Acts 19** is unique. There you have 12 men that are believers and are rebaptized. This happened because they were baptized by John the Baptist, and they knew nothing about the church age or the coming of the Holy Spirit. And because of this, Paul deemed it necessary to rebaptize them. The evidence that they had already been saved is substantial. First Luke refers to them as disciples. Second, Paul speaks of them as those who have believed. Again, God’s Word says that *we are saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus and not by our own efforts or works (Ephesians 2:8-9)*. Grace Alone. Faith Alone!

I can continue all day answering your doubts about Gods word, but in reality, we are never going to have all the answers. Only when we get to heaven will we have true knowledge. Meanwhile God requires of us to walk in faith and trust in Him. As you continue coming to church and being part of the church, God will reveal some of the answers to you, Whatever He believes is important for you, He will reveal to you. So, all those questions you have, they are great questions, but they are not needed for you to be saved. You are already saved. So, I would not worry about them. Worry more about those that are not saved and need you!

Meanwhile, we must have patience and help others come to Christ! We cannot stop believing just because we have questions. It is all about walking in faith! Trust me, I have been a Pastor for 20 years and I still have some questions, but it has not stopped me from loving God and staying with my church family and helping them grow in Christ. You are a newborn in

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Christ, so the bible will not make a lot of sense.

Like I said, after 20 years, I have learned a lot, but there are still a few things I do not understand. I can try and explain all the questions that you have, but only God can really give you the understanding to them.

As for now, just take everything that I have proven to you with scriptures and that you know in your heart that you are saved and continue your journey with Jesus. Meanwhile, I have something that will help you grow because I can see you have the spirit of an evangelist. I am going to introduce you to our gifted team of evangelists. They will love for you to be a part of their team.

Remember, God says do not worry about tomorrow, because it will take care of itself! God loves you, and we love you. Don't be so hard on yourself and let's enjoy this gathering with your brothers and sisters in Christ!

Finishing the story. John Doe trusted his Pastor and became a loved member of the church and was looking forward for his dad to baptize him during the group baptism. Bad news is that 3 days before his baptism, John Doe was struck by a drunk driver and was at the hospital for 10 days missing the group baptism.

The story picks up again After John Doe got out from the hospital.

JD- Hey Pastor, can we reschedule my baptism. I really want my dad to baptize me, and I do not really feel comfortable waiting six months for the next group baptism.

Pastor X- Yes, sure. My schedule is pretty full, so I will get my assistant to schedule the time for you. We will see what we can do.

JD- Hopefully, sometime soon, before you go on to your vacation. I feel that there is something wrong with me. I am even having dreams of a sudden death.

Pastor X- You know. God loves you and He has you covered. He has saved you and healed you from that terrible accident. So, you do not have to worry

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about that. If God did not have his angels protecting you, we would have lost you in that accident. But God has plans for you to finish here on earth before He calls you to heaven. So, there is nothing to worry about.

JD- This morning as I was at the store picking up my medication, the main Pastor from the King James church approached me, asked me how I was doing and invited me again to his church. I was amazed he still remembered me from 2 years ago. He said that God has been trying to keep His promise of salvation toward me as a believer and I was rejecting it. Something about not studying, verifying, and rejecting God's truth. He then advised me to read a couple of scriptures and handed me a post-it with them already written in it. Like he had been prepared and waiting to give me that post. He then looked up toward the sky and told me that time was short. He then looked down in a sad way and walked away. I think his eyes were teary also. Now I am worried and scared.

Pastor X- wow, that is interestingly freaky. I hope he did not brain wash you with those scare tactics. He sounds like those people that go around giving flyers and shouting to repent and be baptized because the end of the world is near.

JD- No, I have not had any time to research those verses. I still have the post-it in my pocket. ([Gal 3:22](#), [1 John 2:25](#), [Eph 1:13-14](#), [2 Tim 2:15](#), [2 Tim 3:16](#)).

But the thing is that after the accident, I kind of have been hearing voices. More like thoughts put in my head. I pray to God and tell Him to help me get rid of them but feel that God is not listening to me. Memories of that King James bible church keep popping up. Thoughts of leaving this church and going back to them for answers and baptism, but I do not understand why!

Pastor X- I am sorry, I should have warned you about that. You are making such great progress here and helping make a big difference in God's ministry, that Satan is trying to get rid of you. It is Spiritual warfare. You have become one of his biggest enemies. Welcome to the family, (the pastor

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smiles and places his hand on JD's shoulder). As you keep walking in faith and submit to God more, your faith will be strengthened, and Satan will have no other choice than to leave you alone! God tells us in **James 4:7 Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**

Those thoughts you are having placed in your mind, even prove that they are from Satan, because God already showed you that church is legalistic, and believe they are saved by doing works of the law and becoming righteous. just like the pharisees were, and we know that the entire Matthew chapter 23 is talking about how the religious leaders are hypocrites and liars. You should read **Matthew 23**.

Satan wants you to go back to something that is not of God, and that guy showing up after you have been making so much progress here proves it. Plus, who knows what else they are hiding. Once you are indoctrinated to them, it is too late. They sound more like a cult than a lost church! I would be scared too, if I was not where I am with Christ at this moment.

JD- Wow, I did not think about it that way, thank you. I guess that without you and your guidance, I would have just given up. I thank God, He placed you in my path.

Pastor X- Let's pray. Repeat after me "*God, I confess that I am too concerned with the physical world and neglect the spiritual. Open the eyes of my heart that I may become more aware of the spiritual battle taking place around me. Remind me that there is a real enemy seeking to destroy me—Help me not to invoke unhealthy fear in my heart, but rather alertness that leads to obedience.*

Use the Holy Spirit to awaken me so that I may become more attentive, watchful, and sober minded. Grant me wisdom to better discern the way the enemy is attacking me so that I may become more intentional in choosing to walk in faith. Amen".

Later that day, John Doe's baptism was scheduled for 21 days later. Meanwhile John Doe chose to submit more to God, by giving all his time and

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money to help the church and the ministry. All this in hopes of helping others and keeping his mind busy enough to ignore “the attacks from Satan”. Sad part is that on day 14, just 7 days before his baptism, John Doe had a brain hemorrhage while heading to church and died on the spot.

At John Doe's funeral the Pastor gave a great sermon.

Pastor X- John Doe was a great kid and a child of God. He loved God and gave his life to God. He will be greatly missed. And even though this is a very sad moment for us, it is a great moment for JD, because he no longer has the worries, pains and suffering of this world. But best of all, is that he is now with God, and we know that nothing can be greater than being in heaven.

Even in our saddest moment, our heavenly Father can teach us some lessons.

For over 2 years Satan was attacking JD, trying to make him believe he was not forgiven and not saved. Making him believe that he needed baptism for salvation, and for a great moment, JD's faith was failing, and questioned his faith on a daily basis!

When I say question, I really mean he had a lot of questions and doubts, but he overcame the devil by committing to our church and submitting to God by walking in complete faith.

With JD moving on to heaven 7 days before his baptism; God is showing us that baptism is NOT necessary for salvation! **1 Peter 3:21** says that baptism is NOT by the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God. We know for a biblical fact, that it is only an outward expression of our faith. That we are saved the moment we believe in our hearts and accept Jesus as our Lord and savior.

God loves His children and will always take care of His children. God is so amazing, that, if this was not true, then God would have called upon His child JD sometime after his baptism and not 7 days before.

So let us all submit to God and walk in pure faith, just like JD.

Let us all help others come to the truth of God by being committed to bringing truth and salvation to others.

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Satan's lies are everywhere. He whispers or shouts them every day to you and others. Your potential is through Jesus, and it is boundless. No matter how wonderful you envision your life and future to be, it's even more wonderful as a child of God than what you imagine. That is why the lying, scheming evil one is jealous of you.

Satan doesn't have the bright future that you do. Because he is bound by limitations and you are not. He is miserable and wants you to be miserable alongside him.

Satan isn't interested in telling lies about little things, although he does that, too. He wants you to believe the biggest lies of all – lies about God and lies about your salvation!

Satan lies to try to twist your mind about who God is and his character. If he succeeds, then he has won. Satan will do all he can to thwart you along your way to eternal life. He will try everything from telling you every lie imaginable to tripping you up when he can.

So, if Satan comes around, trying to question any of you about your salvation or even baptism, just send him back to where he came from!

For God says in **2 Timothy 2:24 (NIV)** *Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.*

The end.

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1 John 4:1 (KJV) Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Your first assignment is to memorize the above verse, place it in your heart and abide by it every time someone gives you spiritual advice, teaches you or corrects you!

And it includes applying it to whatever you are learning here!

Do you think JD is in heaven? YES, or NO?

Did you verify the scriptures Pastor X used?

Did you read the scriptures on the note that JD received?

What do you think is biblical and what is not?

If yes, why? If not, then why not?

Can you answer any of John Doe's **last questions?**

Notes:

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