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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 1

North Hamilton

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Don Crews Josh Elsea
Chris Randolph Curt Stewart
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David B. Smith

SUNDAYS

Bible Classes..... 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship..... 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship..... 5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAYS

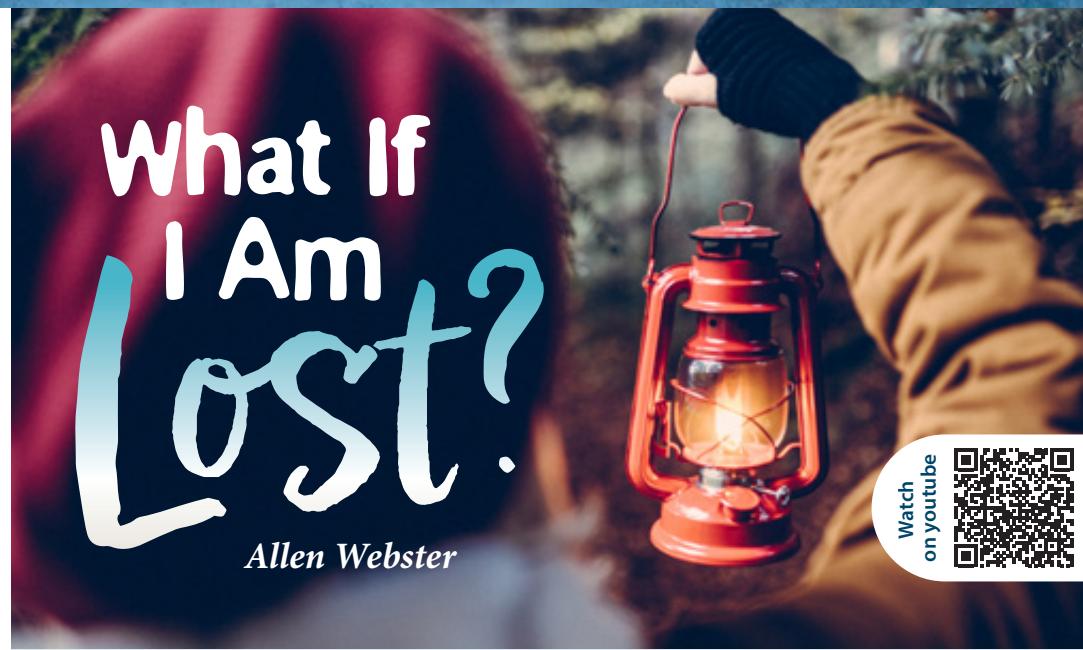
Bible Classes..... 7:00 p.m.

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- Bible literature (variety of subjects)

HOUSE TO HOUSE/HEART TO HEART is published monthly. It is sent to select Soddy Daisy routes and individuals free upon request. Send all correspondence to address above. To God be the glory.



Salvation is always from something—saved from a burning building, from drowning, from cancer. And a great hero requires a great villain:

- Superman had Lex Luther.
- Batman had the Joker.
- Sherlock Holmes had Professor Moriarty.
- The Chicago Bulls had the Detroit Pistons in the 1980s/'90s.

When Jesus came, the world did not need a political leader. Political leaders had come and gone, but the world was still lost. Man did not need a philosopher. The great philosophers—Aristotle (384–322 BC), Plato (428–348 BC), and Socrates (470–399 BC)—had already lived, but humanity sat in darkness. The world did not need a reformer to adjust society's wheels, levers, and pulleys.¹ It needed something never seen before. When Luke recorded, "There is born to you this day...a Savior" (Luke 2:11), a wave of hope was felt across the land. In Jesus was all human nature, all divine nature, all past history, and all future possibilities (John 1:14).

A SECOND DEATH

Not only did man need a Savior two thousand years ago, he needs a Savior now. Every person has a fatal spiritual condition called sin (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Sin is a spiritual...

- Disease (Isaiah 1:6). Thankfully, Jesus is the great physician (Matthew 9:12).
- Debt (Acts 2:38; Matthew 6:12; 18:24). Thankfully, Jesus is rich and paid it in full for us (Colossians 2:13). (*Remission* is a financial term referring to debts.)
- Death (Ephesians 2:1). Thankfully, Jesus is life (John 14:6) and the resurrection (John 11:25).

Spiritual death is similar to physical death, but more painful (Luke 16:23). It not only separates from loved ones, it also separates from God (Matthew 25:12). Both types of separation remove all freedom to choose something better (Luke 16:26).

The problem is that most sinners do not understand their condition. Madeleine L'Engle's novel, *A Severed Wasp*, offered a graphic image of human lostness. It is based on a George Orwell essay

in which he described a wasp that “was sucking jam on my plate and I cut him in half. He paid no attention, merely went on with his meal, while a tiny stream of jam trickled out of his severed esophagus. Only when he tried to fly away did he grasp the dreadful thing that had happened to him.”² People without Christ are dead in sin, but unaware, so they continue to consume life’s sweetness. Only when it is time to fly away will they grasp their dreadful condition.

Jesus is the world’s greatest hero. He saves man from his greatest enemy—death (Luke 24:45–47). Every person needs Jesus. No one can take His place.

- A physician may save your life.
- A lawyer may save your business.
- An accountant may save your money.
- A coach may save your athletic career.
- A consultant may save your reputation.
- But only Jesus can save your soul (Matthew 16:26; 1 Peter 1:8–9).³

Jesus conquered what had conquered us—sin, Satan, and death. He conquered death since “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive” (Ephesians 4:7–8). He spares saints from the second death (Revelation 21:8; James 5:20).

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE LOST

To be lost is to face insufferable shame. New England statesman Daniel Webster (1782–1852) was possibly the greatest orator America has produced. He was described as “one who walked like a man, but spoke as a god.”⁴ When Secretary of State under Millard Fillmore, Webster dined with twenty gentlemen at the Astor House in New York. He was reticent that night, so one asked him this question: “Mr. Webster, will you tell me the most important thought that ever occupied your mind?”

Webster passed his hand over his forehead, saying in a low tone, “Is there anyone here who does not know me?”

“No,” said he, “all are your friends.”

Then Webster said so all could hear, “My gravest thought has been that I shall someday stand before God in judgment and give an account of how I have lived.” He talked of this for twenty minutes, then retired to his room.⁵

In the third year of Persian King Cyrus, an angel spoke of the final judgment, saying many that sleep in the earth “shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2). Imagine standing at Judgment and having all of one’s sins read aloud before all the inhabitants of heaven. Then imagine being summarily dismissed to hell in their hearing.

Graphic language shows the humiliation in the afterlife: They shall “look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. . . . They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh” (Isaiah 66:24). When heaven’s inhabitants see how awful God’s wrath is, they will fall down and worship Him. How ashamed would we be to be at the center of that spectacle? (cf. Revelation 14:10).

To be lost is to face God’s unspeakable wrath. The Bible speaks of God’s fury. “God is angry with the wicked every day” (Psalm 7:11). He “will come with fire, and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire” (Isaiah 66:15).

In some ways, sinners already face God’s wrath, but the Bible speaks of something worse—full and eternal retribution. If one has not been delivered “from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10), then it will be “a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31). The Spirit shall not always strive with man (Genesis 6:3). A day will come when the Almighty shall release His overwhelming wrath on unprepared sinners.

When God makes His power known (Romans 9:22), the unrighteous will wish they had never been born. The wicked will plead for pity, but God’s mercy will have ended. His enemies will be as chaff before a whirlwind and stubble before devouring flames (Malachi 4:1). Sinners will say to mountains, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come” (Revelation 6:16–17).

Isaiah pictured it, “I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments” (Isaiah 63:3–4).⁶

God’s wrath is like great waters behind a dam, rising higher and higher (cf. Revelation 19:15). One day the dam will break.

To be lost is to face unbearable hell (Luke 16:19–31). Hell’s frightening concepts are:

- Beating (Luke 12:48).
- Torments (Luke 16:23).
- Separation (Matthew 25:46). The wicked shall be escorted from the presence of God and all the saved (Romans 2:7–9; 2 Thessalonians 1:6–9).
- Outer darkness (Matthew 8:12; 22:13).
- Unquenchable fire (Matthew 5:22; Revelation 20:10–14).

To be lost is to be everlasting without Christ. Only Christians possess heavenly citizenship (Philippians 3:20). At Judgment Day, Jesus will tell sinners that He does not know them, and that they are unwelcome at His house (Matthew 7:23; 25:12). A sinner will be a sheep without the Shepherd (Luke 15:1–7), a traveler without a way (John 14:6), a hungry man without bread (John 6:41), a weary pilgrim without a resting place (Matthew 11:28–30), a student without a teacher (John 3:2; Mark 12:14), a soldier without a captain (Hebrews 2:10), a branch without a vine (John 15:1–7), and an introvert without a friend (Luke 7:34). Sadly, he will be a child with no inheritance (Acts 20:32), a criminal with no advocate (1 John 2:1), and a soul with no Savior (Matthew 16:26). Sinners will have no share in heaven’s treasures (John 14:1–2).

To be lost is to be permanently hopeless. Hope refers to a “joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation.”⁷

- God has begotten us “to a living hope through the resurrection” (1 Peter 1:3).
- Hope awaits in heaven (Colossians 1:5).
- Christ in us is the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27).
- We are not to sorrow as others who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13).
- Christ is our hope (1 Timothy 1:1).
- Every man that has this hope purifies himself (1 John 3:3).

How pitiable to be hopeless! A Hindu physician once experimented on a criminal convicted for murder and sentenced to death. He was strapped down and it was explained that an artery would

be severed resulting in his bleeding to death. They then made only a superficial wound, and poured warm water over his arm, which he thought was blood. He died with a few minutes, convinced the situation was hopeless.⁸

To be lost is to be eternally without God. The Greek word *atheos* (from which comes *atheist*), only found in Ephesians 2:12 in the New Testament, can mean “abandoned by the gods.”⁹ God eventually gives up on rebellious sinners (Romans 1:28–32) because they set aside His counsel, and do not accept His reproof, so He will laugh at their calamity (Proverbs 1:25–31). How sad to be abandoned by God!

THE URGENCY OF FINDING SALVATION

Sinners walk on slippery places every minute of every day and may fall any second (Psalm 73:18). The devil sees them as prey. The old serpent is coiled and hissing, with his mouth open to swallow them up. Black clouds of wrath hang over them. God’s bow is bent; the arrow is on the string. One day that arrow will pierce every sinner’s heart.¹⁰

A wise person rushes to prepare (2 Peter 1:10). No sinner can stand before One with power to pick the earth up and shake it like a blanket or roll heaven back like a scroll. Once the end comes, no changes can be made (Revelation 22:11). Paul said, “Knowing . . . the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11).

Gaining entrance into the kingdom is worthy of the most strenuous effort. James Denney said, “The kingdom is not for the well-meaning but for the desperate.”¹¹ Men are bidden to seek

(*zeteo*) the kingdom (Matthew 6:33), which means “Make the kingdom the object of your endeavor.”¹² Men are said to *press* (*biazo*) into the kingdom (Matthew 11:12), a word sometimes used of attackers storming a city.¹³

The kingdom is worth any sacrifice. Jesus spoke in hyperbole of surgically removing body parts that hinder from salvation (Mark 9:43–48). The kingdom is equated with life itself. Compare Mark 9:43, 45 with Mark 9:47. In the first two verses life is spoken of; in the third the kingdom is spoken of, and the meaning is the same.¹⁴ The rich young ruler requested guidance on finding eternal life (Matthew 19:16). After his tragic choice, Jesus spoke of how difficult it is for the rich to enter the kingdom (Matthew 19:23).

God wants no one to miss it. He “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

Endnotes

¹ Adapted from unknown source.

² George Orwell, “Notes on the Way,” *My Country Right or Left, 1940–1943*, vol. 2 of *The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell* (Secker & Warburg, 1968), 15.

³ Author unknown.

⁴ Original source unknown.

⁵ Claude M. Fuess, “The Personality of Webster,” *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* (November 1932), 13.

⁶ V. P. Black, *Great Is Your Reward in Heaven* (Montgomery, AL: Faulkner University, 1988).

⁷ Joseph H. Thayer, “ἐλπίς,” in *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* (Biblesoft, 2011).

⁸ Bernard Lown, *The Lost Art of Healing* (New York: Random House, 1999), 31–32.

⁹ “ἀθεος,” *Topical Lexicon*, Biblehub.com.

¹⁰ Black, *Great Is Your Reward*.

¹¹ Quoted in William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, vol. 2, *New Daily Study Bible* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), Comments on Matthew 11:12–15.

¹² Thayer’s Greek Lexicon; BDAG (Bauer–Danker–Arndt–Gingrich), s.v. ζητέω.

¹³ BDAG (Bauer–Danker–Arndt–Gingrich), s.v. βιάζομαι.

¹⁴ William Barclay, *The Mind of Jesus* (New York: Harper Collins, 1960), 50–51.

The Very First Verse

The Bible’s first verse contains five basic facts about science:

1. Time: In the beginning
2. Force: God
3. Action: Created
4. Space: Heaven
5. Matter: Earth

Remarkable, isn’t it?

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

GENESIS 1:1



God’s Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16

God’s Grace: Ephesians 2:8

Christ’s Blood: Romans 5:9

Holy Spirit’s Word: 1 Corinthians 2:12–13

Sinner’s Faith: Acts 16:31

Sinner’s Repentance: Luke 13:3

Sinner’s Confession: Romans 10:10

Sinner’s Baptism: Acts 22:16

Christian’s Love: Matthew 22:37

Christian’s Work: James 2:24

Christian’s Hope: Romans 8:24

Christian’s Endurance: Revelation 2:10



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House to House Heart to Heart

Many of us learned to sing "Jesus Loves Me" long before we really knew who Jesus is. That can be good—but it can also cause problems.

We often study the Bible backward. We start with the New Testament and only later, if ever, get around

to the Old Testament. That is not how the Bible was written, and it is not how God's people studied for the first four thousand years. They knew the Old Testament well, which helped them understand the New Testament!

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Booth Saved Lincoln



The very title might offend some people, but it is the truth. Of course, context helps.

It was Edwin Booth, not John Wilkes. And it was Robert, not Abraham, Lincoln. Edwin and Robert were among customers buying passage on a sleeping car in Jersey City, New Jersey. Robert lost his balance and fell into an open space between the train and the station platform. By all accounts, he would have been crushed and likely killed if Edwin had not seized him and quickly pulled him out onto the platform.¹

Context can be very helpful. Without it, we can draw some erroneous and even fatal conclusions. This is especially true with the Bible, a book many may know a little about but neglect to study with depth and purpose. Doctrines and conclusions are based on statements taken out of context.

- “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).
- “The LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart” (Exodus 9:12; 10:20; 14:8).

- “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated” (Malachi 1:2–3; Romans 9:13).
- “Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved” (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13).
- “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20).

Sometimes, the content of a verse is understood better just by reading the verses before and after it. That is the case in Acts 16:31 and Matthew 18:20. In Acts, the jailer is taught about Jesus and that faith includes repentance and baptism (16:32–34). In Matthew, the subject is not worship, but church discipline (18:15–18).

Sometimes, a statement needs to be understood in light of the broader context. That would be the case regarding Pharaoh and Esau. The Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart through the plagues, causing the Egyptian king to rebel against God’s will and choose pride over penitence. In

the case of Esau, as Paul explains, the idea is God’s sovereign choice. God was not unjust. He had a purpose for choosing Jacob over Esau (Romans 9:11).

Sometimes, a statement causes us to look deeper into all the Bible says about the subject. Consider the idea of calling on the name of the Lord to be saved. Rather than salvation by confession only, the Bible teaches what is involved in calling on the name of the Lord. Ananias taught Saul that this is done when one is baptized, washing away sins (Acts 22:16).

When we are studying the Bible, we must always do so contextually. It makes the difference in the conclusions we draw. God expects us to handle His word accurately! (2 Timothy 2:15). May we be the best Bible students we can be.

—Neal Pollard, Bowling Green, Kentucky

Endnote

¹ Robert T. Lincoln, “Letter to Richard Watson Gilder,” *Letters of Note: An Eclectic Collection of Correspondence Deserving of a Wider Audience*, vol. 1, ed. Shaun Usher (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2014), 282.

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Bible Quiz

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Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark. We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark “Chapter by Chapter – Leviticus” as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

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Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 30:11 Getting to Know the Unknown God: 1. Athens (Acts 17:16); 2. Idols (Acts 17:16); 3. Synagogue; marketplace (Acts 17:17); 4. Jesus; resurrection (Acts 17:18); 5. New thing (Acts 17:21); 6. Very religious (Acts 17:22); 7. THE UNKNOWN GOD (Acts 17:23); 8. World; everything (Acts 17:24); 9. Temples (Acts 17:24); 10. Men’s hands (Acts 17:25); 11. One blood (Acts 17:26); 12. Times; boundaries (Acts 17:26); 13. Not far (Acts 17:27); 14. His offspring (Acts 17:28); 15. Divine (Acts 17:29); 16. Art and man’s (Acts 17:29); 17. All men everywhere (Acts 17:30); 18. Righteousness (Acts 17:31); 19. Raising; dead (Acts 17:31); 20. Mocked; hear (Acts 17:32).

V. 30:12 One Dozen Scriptures for Women: 1. Virtuous, rubies (Proverbs 31:10); 2. Could (Mark 14:8); 3. Beauty, fears (Proverbs 31:30); 4. Train, depart (Proverbs 22:6); 5. Love (Titus 2:4); 6. Gracious (Proverbs 11:16); 7. Modest apparel (1 Timothy 2:9); 8. Crown, husband (Proverbs 12:4); 9. Needed, good (Luke 10:42); 10. Silence (1 Timothy 2:11); 11. Adornment, hidden, quiet (1 Peter 3:3–4); 12. Builds (Proverbs 14:1).

Facts About the New Testament Church

Find answers in Acts 2:1–5, 14–36, 41–47, 3:1–10; 4:1–3, 18–20, 32–35; 5:1–10, 29, 42, 8:1, 4–17, 26–39; 9:1–6. Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

1. Where was the Lord’s church established on the Day of Pentecost? _____
2. Who preached the first gospel sermon that led to the establishment of the church? _____
3. How many people were baptized and added to the church on the Day of Pentecost? _____
4. What four things did the early Christians continue steadfastly in after their conversion? _____
5. What name is used in Acts to describe the group of saved people? _____
6. Where did the early church meet for worship and fellowship? _____
7. What miracle performed by Peter and John led to the preaching of the gospel at the temple gate? _____
8. What was the reaction of the Jewish leaders to the apostles’ preaching about Jesus’ resurrection? _____
9. What was the attitude of the early church toward sharing possessions? _____
10. Who lied about the sale of land and was struck dead as a warning to the early church? _____
11. How did the apostles respond when commanded not to preach in Jesus’ name? _____
12. Where did the disciples go to preach as a result of persecution against the church in Jerusalem after Stephen’s death? _____
13. Who preached Christ in Samaria, leading to the conversion of many, including Simon the sorcerer? _____
14. Whom did the new converts in Samaria receive when the apostles laid hands on them? _____
15. What man was converted by Philip on the road to Gaza, and what was his response to the gospel? _____
16. Who was the main persecutor of the church before becoming a Christian himself? _____

Wycliffe's Bible's frontispiece

Richard Roberts, in the *Biblical Illustrator*, tells the story of a frontispiece, an illustration facing the title page, in Wycliffe's Bible.

It pictures a fire burning and spreading rather rapidly, representing true Christianity. Around this spreading fire are congregated a number of significant individuals, all trying to devise methods whereby they can put the fire out. One with horns and tail represents Satan. There are red-coated false teachers, who forbade the promulgating of the Bible among the common people. Another represents infidelity.

At length, one suggests that they all make a united effort to blow the fire out.

The resolution is adopted, and there they are, with swollen cheeks and extended lips, blowing upon the fire with all their might, but instead of blowing it out, they are blowing it up, and they only blow themselves out of breath.

The fire is inextinguishable. "The word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:23).

In 1908, Kahlil Gibran wrote an Arabic novel entitled *Spirits Rebellious*. In it he included this timeless poem:

They burned Truth in the market place
And thought their work complete;
But next day, with a smiling face,

They met it on the street.

They threw it in a dungeon damp
And thought it was no more;
But lo, it walked with lighted lamp
Among them as before.

They scorned and ostracized it,
And ordered it to depart;
But still it dwelt in all the land
And challenged every heart.

—Author Unknown

*"The word of the LORD
endures forever."*

1 PETER 1:25



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Recommended Resource



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- What Happens in an Abortion Clinic?



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<input type="checkbox"/> Gold-Plated Christianity	<input type="checkbox"/> The Scourging of Jesus	<input type="checkbox"/> Heaven Is Just Four Steps Away Part 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Is Prayer the Answer?



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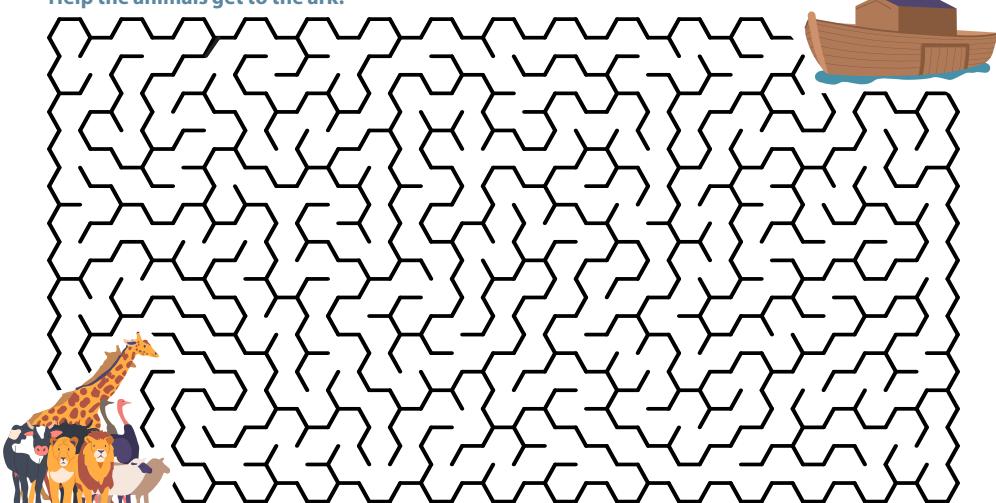




Christ's sacrifice fulfilled and surpassed all Old Testament offerings. Whereas the priests offered continual sacrifices for sin, Jesus "offered one sacrifice for sins forever" (Hebrews 10:12). He was the perfect Lamb of God (John 1:29), the spotless substitute whose blood accomplished what the blood of bulls and goats never could—true forgiveness and reconciliation with God (Hebrews 9:11-14). His offering was both a sin and a peace offering, securing atonement and fellowship in one act of divine love. Because of this, believers are now called to respond not with animal sacrifices, but with spiritual ones. Paul wrote, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Our lives—devoted, pure, and grateful—become continual offerings of worship (Hebrews 13:15-16), reflecting the total surrender and holiness symbolized by the altar sacrifices of old.

Just for Fun Noah's Ark Maze

Help the animals get to the ark.



Jesus, the Perfect Man

There is no other character in history like Jesus. As a preacher, as a doer of things, and as a philosopher, no man ever had the sweep and the vision of Jesus.

The system of ethics Jesus taught two thousand years ago was true then, has been true in every century since, and will be true forever.

Not all the investigation of chemists, not all the discoveries of explorers, not all the experience of rule, not all the historical facts that go to make up the sum of human knowledge on this day are in contradiction to one word uttered or one principle laid by Jesus.

The human experience of two thousand years shows that Jesus never made a mistake. Jesus never uttered a doctrine that was true at that time and then became obsolete. Jesus spoke the truth; He lived the truth, and truth is eternal.

No poet, no dreamer, no philosopher loved humanity with the love that Jesus bore toward all men.

Who, then, was Jesus? He could not have been merely a man. Jesus must have been what Christianity proclaims Him to be—a divine being—or He could not have been what He was. No mind but an infinite mind could have left behind those things which Jesus gave to the world as a heritage. —Adapted from Blaise Pascal's *Pensées*

(*Thoughts*), 1658

"No man ever spoke like this Man!"

JOHN 7:46



When Were You SAVED?

What would you say if someone asked you, “When were you saved?” Many people cannot point to a clear moment. Others might say, “When I prayed,” or “When I felt God in my heart.” However, the Bible gives a consistent answer that helps us know, not guess, when salvation truly begins.

Salvation is not earned, but it does begin at a definite moment—when faith meets obedience. Jesus said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16). Peter preached the same message on the day the church began: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Those who received his words were baptized, and God added them to the church (Acts 2:41, 47).

Throughout the New Testament, people did not wait weeks or months after believing to be baptized—they obeyed immediately. The Ethiopian nobleman asked, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” (Acts 8:36). Saul of Tarsus, though already praying and believing, was told, “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

Faith is the foundation, repentance is the turning point, and confession is the commitment—but baptism is where God washes away sins and brings new life through Christ (Romans 6:3–4). That is when a person is saved.

So when were you saved? The Bible’s answer is clear; it is an answer you can know with confidence.

If you would like to study what the Bible says about salvation and how to be certain that you have obeyed the gospel just as they did in the first century, we would love to open God’s Word with you and help you find assurance in His plan.

—Matt Wallin



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