



SALVATION IN
Jesus

STUDY GUIDE

Introduction

How does the word 'Theology' make you feel?

Maybe you find it interesting and exciting? Maybe it sounds rather dry and boring and not really like a living faith at all? Maybe you've never really thought about it!

At it's most simple it means, 'understanding God'. But that is not a simple subject. However, for Christians, God has made himself known in ways that we can understand. He made himself known most clearly by entering into his own creation in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

This series aims to open up the Biblical theology of what Jesus did in order to win our salvation. Saved from sin and separation from God, into being loved and forgiven people in his kingdom.

Each week we will consider one aspect of how the Bible describes this salvation in Jesus. Think of it like a multi-sided diamond. It's all one beautiful gift in God, but there are different aspects, different angles to look at it and enjoy this most amazing news.

We'll start with the Bible passage and then a description of each theme, including a short summary to try and convey these big ideas, some questions for thought and discussion (although these will also be supplemented by a set of questions from each preacher) and a link to a longer article if you'd like to read more.

Although the hope is that we deepen and expand our thinking of what Jesus has done, this should also help us with our walk with Jesus. To have greater joy in knowing how he has loved us and the confidence we can have in his promises.

I hope that as you read these passages of Scripture and reflect on what they mean, you will find yourself praising, worshipping and loving the Lord with faith and wonder. As Lent leads us towards Easter, I pray that this will help us all to know, love and follow Jesus even more closely.

God bless,

Tom.

Sunday 9th February

Incarnation (one of us) & Redemption

Hebrews 2:17-18 & Galatians 4:4-5

The Christian faith hinges on the Incarnation, God becoming fully human in Jesus Christ while remaining fully divine:

1. This miraculous union, sometimes called the 'hypostatic union', allowed Jesus to live a sinless life, perfectly fulfilling God's law on behalf of humanity, who had fallen short of his glory due to sin.
2. Through his sacrificial death on the cross, Jesus, the God-man, became the ultimate atonement for the sins of the world, reconciling humanity to God and offering the gift of salvation.
3. His resurrection confirmed the victory over sin and death, securing redemption for all who believe.
4. The Incarnation also reveals God to humanity and provides a perfect example of how to live in accordance with God's will.
5. Only by becoming human could Jesus bridge the gap between humanity and God, offering a path to forgiveness and eternal life.

Short summary:

The incarnation of Jesus, where God became fully human, was essential for human salvation. Only as God and man could Jesus atone for humanity's sin and bridge the gap between us and God.

For personal reflection and discussion:

- Do you find it harder to consider God becoming human, or that Jesus of Nazareth was fully God?
- Why is it so important for our salvation that he is both?
- Does this truth also help us in other areas of life and faith?

Further Reading:

www.gotquestions.org/incarnation-of-Christ.html

www.crossway.org/articles/what-does-the-bible-say-about-the-incarnation/

Sunday 16th February

Incarnation (one of us) & Humility

Philippians 2:6-11

The Incarnation of Jesus Christ, as God took on human flesh, is a profound display of humility. Jesus, being fully God, chose to empty himself of his glory and become a human, subject to suffering, and even death. This act of self-humbling demonstrates the immeasurable love and compassion of God, who willingly lowered himself before his subsequent glorification. Jesus's earthly life exemplified humility in his actions and teachings, providing a model for believers to follow. By embracing humility, and empowered by his Spirit, Christians can reflect the character of Christ and point to the Saviour.

Short summary:

The Incarnation exemplifies humility as Jesus, though fully God, emptied himself to become human, enacting God's love and providing the perfect example.

For personal reflection and discussion:

- What does it say about Jesus that he chose to humble himself?
- Do we really take on board just how far he lowered himself?
- How was Jesus able to remain humble, yet confident in his identity?
- How should Jesus' example impact the way we live?
- How does Jesus' humility do for us what we cannot do?

Further Reading:

equippedformercy.com/2016/12/22/the-humility-of-the-incarnation/

Sunday 23rd February

Substitutionary Atonement (in our place)

Galatians 3:7-14

Jesus Christ, through his sacrificial death on the cross, took the place of humanity and bore the punishment for our sins. As a perfect and sinless sacrifice, Jesus satisfied the demands of God's justice, allowing for the forgiveness and reconciliation of humanity with God. This act of substitution demonstrates the immeasurable love and mercy of God, who willingly gave himself to redeem a fallen world. Through faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice, individuals can receive forgiveness, restoration, and eternal life.

Short Summary:

Jesus's substitutionary atonement on the cross satisfied God's justice, enabling our forgiveness and reconciliation with God.

For personal reflection and discussion:

- How can we be sure that Jesus chose the cross?
- What do you think was the hardest part of the ordeal for Jesus?
- How readily do we acknowledge the justice we would otherwise have faced? Does it lead us to deeper worship?
- Can you think of any helpful illustrations to explain what Jesus did as our substitute?

Further Reading:

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/substitutionary-atonement/>

Sunday 2nd March

Substitution and our new status

1 Peter 2:21-25 & 2 Corinthians 5:21

Through Christ's substitutionary atonement, believers are given a new status before God. No longer defined by their sin and separation, they are now considered righteous in God's sight. This new identity is not based on personal merit but on the imputed righteousness of Christ, received through faith. As a result of this new status, believers are adopted into God's family, becoming heirs to his promises and temples of his Holy Spirit. This transformation empowers them to live a life of obedience and holiness, reflecting their new identity in Christ.

Short Summary:

Christ's substitutionary sacrifice grants believers a new status as righteous before God, adopted into his family and heirs to his promises.

For personal reflection and discussion:

- How would you sum up what we get from Jesus in exchange for giving him our sin on the cross?
- How can we ask God for help living in a new way?
- What are the obstacles to truly accepting our new status with God?
- What differences do you notice in your own life, knowing you have a perfect standing before God?

Further Reading:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/live-for-righteousness.html>

Sunday 9th March

Justification and peace with God

Romans 5:1-2

Justification is the act of God declaring a sinner righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. This declaration is not based on human effort or merit but solely on the atoning work of Christ. Through justification, believers are reconciled to God, experiencing peace with him and freedom from the condemnation of sin. This peace transcends circumstances and provides a foundation for a life of hope and assurance in God's love and favour.

Short Summary:

Justification brings peace with God as he declares sinners righteous through faith in Christ, removing condemnation and reconciling them to himself.

For personal reflection and discussion:

- How is the image of the courtroom helpful for understanding our 'justification'?
- How is it perhaps less helpful, or not fully adequate, for explaining what Jesus has done for us?
- Do we live like people who've been declared right with God?
- What does that mean for our lives - do we do what we like now we're free?

Further Reading:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/peace-with-God.html>

Sunday 16th March

Justification and becoming heirs

Titus 3:5-7

Justification not only brings peace with God but also establishes believers as heirs to his kingdom. Through faith in Christ, we are adopted into God's family and granted the inheritance promised to his children. This inheritance includes eternal life, fellowship with God, and participation in his glory. As heirs, believers have a confident hope for the future, knowing that our ultimate destiny is secure in Christ.

Short Summary:

Justification establishes believers as heirs to God's kingdom, granting us eternal life and participation in his glory.

For personal reflection and discussion:

- Have you ever inherited something with real significance?
- What does it mean for us to share in Christ's inheritance?
- How often do you consider the way God looks at you now, as justified and an heir to Christ's glory?

Further Reading:

<https://www.bibleref.com/Titus/3/Titus-3-7.html>

Sunday 23rd March
Union gives us new life
Romans 8:1-2

The concept of union with Christ emphasizes the intimate connection between believers and Jesus. Through faith, Christians are spiritually united with Christ, sharing in his death and resurrection. This union brings new life, breaking the power of sin and enabling believers to walk in freedom and obedience to God. It is through this ongoing connection with Christ that Christians receive the grace and strength to live a transformed life.

Short Summary:

Union with Christ brings new life and freedom from sin's power, enabling believers to walk in obedience to God.

For personal reflection and discussion:

- What are the differences between being 'in Adam' or 'in Christ'?
- Is it true that everything that is Christ's is also now ours?
- When do you feel most united with Christ?
- What difference(s) does it make when we live in union with Jesus?

Further Reading:

[ftc.co/resource-library/articles/union-with-christ-an-unbreakable-fellowship/](https://www.ftc.co/resource-library/articles/union-with-christ-an-unbreakable-fellowship/)

Sunday 30th March

Union such that Christ lives in me!

Galatians 2:20-21

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a key aspect of union with Christ. Through the Spirit, Christ dwells within believers, empowering and guiding them in their daily lives. This indwelling presence provides comfort, strength, and direction, enabling Christians to live in accordance with God's will. The Holy Spirit's work within believers is a constant reminder of their union with Christ and their identity as children of God.

Short Summary:

Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, Christ lives in believers, empowering and guiding them to live according to God's will.

For personal reflection and discussion:

- Can you describe the first time you knew God's Spirit with you?
- What are some of the ways that having Christ in you makes a difference to your life?
- What are you praying for in your heart and life to become more like Christ?
- When are you most tempted to forget that you are a dwelling place for God's Holy Spirit?

Further Reading:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/union-with-Christ.html>

Sunday 6th April

Union and the Church as Christ's bride

Ephesians 5:25-27

The Church, the body of believers, is often described as the bride of Christ, highlighting the intimate and loving relationship between Christ and his followers. This union emphasizes the unity and interdependence of believers, who are called to love and serve one another as members of Christ's body. Just as a bride is devoted to her husband, the Church is called to be faithful and obedient to Christ, reflecting his love and grace out to the world.

Short Summary:

The Church, united with Christ, is his bride, reflecting his love and grace through unity and service to one another.

For personal reflection and discussion:

- Why is the image of Christ and the Church as his bride such an emotive one?
- Are there ways of proclaiming this truth that don't exclude those who aren't married?
- How does this image impact our understanding of human marriage?
- When have you felt the strongest sense of God's unfailing, unending, faithful love for you?

Further Reading:

<https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/resources/union-with-christ/>

Space below for your notes