

SALVATION

God's Work In Progress

Proteens

Salvation: God's Work In Progress

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Introduction

Salvation: God's Work In Progress

Salvation—is it something God *did*, is doing *now*, or *will* do in the future? Absolutely! All three are true, and the unfolding of God's plan of salvation would be incomplete without any of these three components. Each of these three components of salvation applies to two specific aspects of what God reveals about salvation.

The first aspect is God's plan for the world. Scripture shows how God revealed truth about Himself and His plan for salvation to different people in order that they might believe. He began with Adam and Eve in the garden after their sin and continued with Enoch, Job, Abraham, Melchizedech, David, Isaiah, John, Paul, and countless others. God first revealed this plan in seed form, but now through Scripture we can see the full picture of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone. We can even see the end of the story in the Revelation and other prophetic books that point toward the resurrection of the saints and God's final triumph.

The second aspect is how salvation achieves progress in producing Christlikeness in believers. Although we often think of "salvation" as a point of time in the past when we trusted Christ, the New Testament concept of salvation does not stop there. At that point in time we received "justification"—God applied the righteousness of His Son to our account so that when He sees us, he sees not our sin but the righteousness of Christ. But that is not the end of our salvation. God also plans for us to be gradually changed into the image of His Son. We call this process "progressive sanctification." When Christ returns, sets up His kingdom, and then hands over the kingdom to His Father, believers will see the consummation of their salvation. Sometimes we call this "glorification." At this time we will finally be liberated from the influence of our sinful flesh. Only then will all aspects of our salvation be complete.

Does this mean that we aren't saved now, or that there is some doubt as to whether someone who has trusted Christ will be saved in the future? Not at all. Even though we still fall into sin and await the final redemption of our bodies, Scripture teaches that we "hope" in Christ. Hope in God is not like the kind of hope we think of today that is limited by the uncertainty of the future. Hope in God is certain because it is grounded in His nature and character. Because of this foundation, we can have complete confidence in the promise that He will complete the work He has begun in us (Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:6). In this sense, even though we await the fullness of our salvation, we can say we are saved *now* because we have no doubt that God will keep His promise to finish His work.

These concepts may be unfamiliar to your teens. That is why this HotShot is so important. They need to understand that their salvation has ongoing implications for their lives in the present and the future. This study unfolds these truths in five lessons that address the following:

- Man's universal need of salvation.
- God's provision of salvation for the world.
- The application of salvation to individuals by grace through faith.
- The implications of salvation upon the lives of believers in the present and future.
- The assurance of salvation.

In your ministry as a youth leader, do you work with teens who seem to be satisfied with a distant memory of a prayer when they were younger? Are you sometimes discouraged because you see little or no spiritual fruit? We believe this study is important because it will help teens:

- Praise God for what He has provided.
- Understand what they possess in Christ.
- Examine whether their profession of faith matches with biblical salvation.
- Share their faith accurately.
- Rest in assurance based on faith in Christ.
- Avoid mixing truth about salvation with the trends in our culture.
- Remember how God's grace helps them grow.
- Remember that salvation is not just a past event but also a present process and a future culmination.

How To Teach This Study

HotShots are based on the principle that teens learn best in an interactive, stimulating environment. Instead of relying on stale lectures or redundant Q&A sessions, this study will help you include the teens in active learning, relying on illustration, discussion, and study. The study will bring you in closer proximity with the teens and bring stories to life by giving meaning to mere information. It has the potential to change thinking, speech, behavior, and life.

The four sections within each lesson function as stepping stones in the whole of the lesson's goal.



The Warm-Up is a fun game or interesting discussion that creates a sense of unity in the group.



The Bridge uses a thought-provoking illustration to introduce the lesson's subject content.



The Content explains and applies the lesson to the teens' lives.



The Closing summarizes experiences and calls for a commitment from the teens.

The content is reinforced and illustrated through different active learning styles, including: discussion, role play, Q&A, and more.

Before you start the study...

Read the introduction, course objectives, and overview in order to understand the scope of the study.

Before each lesson:



1. Note the lesson aim, objectives, content text, and materials needed for active learning segments.
2. Modify the lesson, if necessary. Specific facility or equipment needs will dictate the extent of modification.
3. Prepare the lesson to fit your time constraints. Lessons are designed for 20–30 minute segments.
4. Teach with excitement! Your listeners will notice and mirror your enthusiasm.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course the teens will:

- Understand that all mankind is cursed with a sin nature.
- Know the elements of the Gospel.
- Comprehend what happens when a person is saved.
- Be sure of their salvation.
- Be challenged to demonstrate spiritual fruit.

Overview

Lesson 1: Need

- Lesson Aim: To explain why people need a Savior
- Text: Romans 5:12; Genesis 3:21–24; Revelation 20:15

Lesson 2: Provision

- Lesson Aim: To explain the gift that Christ's sacrifice makes available
- Text: John 3:16; selected others

Lesson 3: Application

- Lesson Aim: To explain in simple terms the different aspects of what God does when He saves a person
- Text: Selected texts

Lesson 4: Implications

- Lesson Aim: To show teens how salvation affects them now and into the future
- Text: Romans 6

Lesson 5: Assurance

- Lesson Aim: To show how we can live in confidence of what God has accomplished
- Text: selected texts from 1 John

LESSON 1

Need

We live in a society of victims. People refuse to take responsibility for their actions and constantly shift blame for their personal problems. It is not stylish to acknowledge our failure humbly and take steps to rectify the situation. This cowardice began in the Garden of Eden. We must all realize that no matter what our social standing, race, gender, or religious background, we are worthy of condemnation. The call to salvation is not a friendly suggestion but a matter of eternal destiny.



To explain why people need a Savior



Teens will:

- See how sin entered the human race.
- Understand that they are sinners.
- Comprehend the punishment for sin.



Romans 5:12; Genesis 3:21–24; Revelation 20:15

This world is a mess—a big mess. Christians know that. We can see culture getting worse and worse. Many unbelievers can see this slide as well, but many people view themselves differently. They think that because they try to live a good life themselves, they will not be held responsible for the problems in this world. But there’s a problem with that view: God doesn’t agree. These passages reveal God’s perspective—that all of us are personally responsible to Him for our sin, and He will hold us accountable at a future day of judgment.

The Lesson



As you prepare this lesson, look in the news for a contemporary illustration of someone being rescued. Some possible examples of what you might be able to use would include a person being rescued from a flood, a burning car, a violent criminal, or an animal attack. Share the story with the teens, then have them complete the “Troubleshooting” exercise.

What you need:

A contemporary illustration of a successful life-or-death rescue
Copies of “Troubleshooting” handout on pg. 14
Pens or pencils



Explain that this lesson will address how these questions relate to the spiritual rescue that God offers people. How often are we amazed at the rescue stories we see on television, but how seriously do we ponder the condemnation we faced and how God intervened miraculously to save us?

T Mankind has a problem.

The following three facts about God and people help us grasp the gravity of our situation and our need for salvation.

God Is Holy, But People Are Sinners.

By this we mean that God is absolutely separated from evil and sin. Habakkuk 1:12–13 teaches that God is holy and will not allow evil to exist unpunished. Why are people sinners? Romans 5:12 teaches that sin permeated humanity through the sin of one man. Isaiah 64:6 also demonstrates how all people are sinners.

God Lives In Heaven, But People Deserve Hell.

Jesus Christ taught His disciples in Matthew 6:9 to pray to their Father in heaven. He recognized this as the place where God the Father dwells. Psalm 11:4 also teaches this. Numerous other passages refer to God as “the God of heaven” (Ezra 1:2; Neh. 1:4; Dan. 2:37; Rev. 11:13). Psalm 9:17 teaches that those who are guilty of wickedness—even entire nations—should expect hell to be their eternal dwelling place. The fact that a person is a sinner condemns him to hell. Hell is the final abiding place of all sinners. John 3:18 teaches that sinners are already condemned. Revelation 20:13–15 describes this place of judgment as a lake of fire. Because of sin, people are condemned to dwell there eternally, separated from the holy God of heaven.

God Loves People, But People Hate God.

Although people are separated from God by sin, God still shows His love. Romans 5:8 teaches that God demonstrated this love by sending His Son to pay the penalty for sin while we were still sinners. It is incomprehensible that although we have sinned against God, He still loves us! The familiar verse, John 3:16, teaches that God loves the world.

Ask: Can you think of any scenarios that would be comparable to how people treat God? How do people sometimes show hatred for someone who has shown sacrificial love to them? Discuss.

John 3:19–20 teaches that men prefer darkness to light because they prefer their evil deeds. Even when God sends the light of truth into the world, people reject it because it reveals the wickedness in their lives. Because

people are sinners, they hate God. Even though God demonstrated His love by offering His Son as a sacrifice, people still hate God. What a terrible condition mankind is in! People are separated from God by their sin. Their sinful nature has already condemned them to hell.

All People Have This Same Problem (Genesis 3:21–24).

This is the classic passage on the fall of man. Both Adam and Eve made a choice to disobey God, forever changing the course of humanity and leading it astray from its created nature and purpose. For His own reasons that He has not revealed to us, God chose Adam to be our representative so that in His sin, we all became guilty. While this may not seem fair to us, each of us would have made the same decision had we been in the garden facing the seduction of the serpent. As a result, every baby that has been born or ever will be born is branded with the mark of sin. All have come under the condemnation of God's wrath because of that fateful choice in the garden (Rom. 5:12–21).

If you have time, you may also want to show your teens how Romans 3:10–20 reveals that we have nothing in us that would cause us to seek after God. Our unrighteousness and spiritual blindness has left us in a condition in which we are by nature uninterested in spiritual things and incapable of understanding them.

What You Need

Several bean bags or small foam balls

Two blindfolds

Targets that can be knocked down,
such as empty 2-liter bottles or bowl-
ing pins



Game

Select two volunteers and explain the following game: Using bean bags, have the volunteers throw them at targets you set up 10–15 feet away. The targets can be two-liter bottles, bowling pins or other objects. The winner is the first to knock down all the targets. After seven to eight throws, blindfold the throwers. Quietly remove the targets from the area and have the throwers resume throwing the bean bags. Coily nod to the teens to “ooh” and “aaah” as if the throws were very close to hitting the target. After a few throws take the blindfold off and tell the teens that trying to please God as sinners is as impossible as trying to hit a target that does not exist. We simply do not have the ability to please God in our unredeemed state. Because of our sinfulness, it is impossible.

All People Must Be Punished For Their Sin (Rev. 20:15).

Ask: Why does God have to punish sin? Discuss.

Sin is a serious matter because our sin tells a lie about who the holy God is. God created people in His own image. When we sin, we portray a false image of God. God's justice and righteousness cannot allow a false picture of His nature to stand unchallenged and unpunished.

The Bible says that all sinners who do not trust in Christ will be cast into the lake of fire. John 3:18 clearly states that those who refuse to believe in the name of Jesus Christ are already condemned.

There are many terms in the Bible for what we call *hell*. The Old Testament calls it *sheol*, meaning “a place of punishment and retribution.” The New Testament calls it *gehenna*, referring to the Valley of Hinnom on the south side of Jerusalem. This valley was a garbage dump that burned continuously. In Old Testament times, it was used to offer human sacrifices to pagan gods (Matt. 7:13, 8:12, 10:28, Mark 9:43; Luke 16:19–31).

These examples are earthly pictures of hell and help us take the reality of hell seriously. We often hear jokes or see cartoons that reduce this terrible place to something funny. Do not allow yourself to trivialize the pain and torture—both physical and spiritual—that the unsaved will find in hell.

Why Does Salvation Exist?

Ask: Why do you think God made salvation possible? Discuss.

Most answers will probably have something to do with the fact that God loves people and wanted to make a way to pay for their sins so they would not spend eternity in hell. These answers are true, but they are *not* the whole answer. The Bible reveals two reasons God provided for our salvation.

God Cares About People’s Need

Salvation exists because all people need to be saved. God loves the world in such a way that He sent His Son to die for them in order to make salvation available to anyone who would believe (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8). Whether people realize it or not, they have two types of needs that place them in the condition of needing spiritual deliverance. What are people’s needs? First, people are in slavery to sin and the desires of their sinful flesh. Notice Christ’s words to the men of His day in John 8:31–34. (Note that Christ maintained that their captivity to sin was a spiritual fact, whether they recognized it or not.)

The second reason people stand in need of salvation is that they are now spiritually dead. This leaves them condemned to experience the second death in the future—in eternity without God. People have no innate spiritual life and no righteous desires that are pleasing to the Lord. As long as they remain in this condition, they cannot expect to enter heaven and experience life in the presence of God for eternity. They need to be saved! Notice how this truth is revealed in John 3:18 and Ephesians 2:1, where we see that God gives us a new birth and brings us to life.

God Cares About His Own Glory

Many people tend to think that providing salvation was something that God did simply for people. Although this is true, it is not the whole truth. Everything God did was primarily for Himself, including the creation of all things (Rev. 4:11), particularly the people He has caused to inhabit the earth (Isa. 43:6–7).

Ask: Is God selfish to do things for Himself? Why or why not? Discuss.

Salvation is a pivotal part of God’s plan to magnify His majesty and bring glory to Himself. Christ Himself is the personal revelation of the glory of God (John 1:14; 2 Cor. 4:6). Romans 9:23 specifically describes how God has planned to magnify His glory by showing mercy on those who believe. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 we see that the gospel—the good news of Christ’s death and resurrection—is the revelation of the glory of Christ. Ephesians 1:3–14 shows us how God planned to save sinners to the praise of *His* glory. For the believer, salvation is certain. It was accomplished through Christ’s death and resurrection and is applied to individuals when they believe. However, God is still completing His work of salvation in each believer. Lesson four will explain these present and future aspects in greater detail, but we can see God’s past, present, and future work all together in Ephesians 1. As you read the passage, you will be able to show your teens:

- What God did (redeemed, chose, predestined, revealed the mystery of His will, sealed).
- What God is doing (transforming, providing forgiveness, working all things according to His will, guaranteeing our inheritance).
- What God will finish in the future (making us holy and without blame, making us “the praise of His glory,” gathering all things together in Christ, redeeming the possession He purchased).

Philippians also helps us understand this truth. It shows us 1) how God has already begun a good work in us, 2) is continuing to advance this work, and 3) will complete it at the day of Christ still to come (1:7). When a person trusts Christ, he is confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord. This confession of Christ as Lord brings glory to God the Father (2:11). In the future all people—believers *and* unbelievers—will confess that Jesus is Lord, but right now only believers bring glory to God in this way. Clearly, these passages teach us that God had a plan to bring glory to His own name by offering salvation to mankind.



J. Bruce Ismay had a serious problem. What made his problem worse was that he didn’t know he had a problem. As the Managing Director of the White Star Steamship Lines, Ismay was responsible to know about the problem looming over his head, but he was so ignorant of the problem that he even put his own life in mortal danger.

Now, Ismay's problem was that White Star operated a brand new ship called the Titanic, and the Titanic possessed several design flaws and possibly substandard construction. Ultimately, this proved fatal to hundreds of people when the Titanic struck an iceberg in April of 1912. Ismay had denied that such a disaster could strike the Titanic, and some historical accounts suggest that he said, "God himself could not sink this ship!" Although Ismay was rescued by a lifeboat, his life was forever haunted by the souls that were lost as a result of his company's failures.

This story gives us a clear example of a spiritual principle: Just because we are unaware of a problem or give no attention to it, doesn't mean that the problem will go away. Whether or not people admit the shadow of sin and its penalty that looms over us, its reality is certain, and its consequences are sure and severe. What reality are you ignoring today? What problem are you pretending does not exist? How are you ignoring your spiritual need and lying to yourself by pretending to be self-sufficient?

Troubleshooting

- What is the problem the central character faced?

- When did the problem start?

- What caused the problem?

- What immediate impact could the problem have on the life of the character?

- What needed to happen for the person to be rescued?

- Why did the rescue succeed?

Troubleshooting

- What is the problem the central character faced?

- When did the problem start?

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- What immediate impact could the problem have on the life of the character?

- What needed to happen for the person to be rescued?

- Why did the rescue succeed?

LESSON 2

Provision

Our culture focuses on what we can provide for ourselves. It says that we need to love ourselves, esteem ourselves, and respect ourselves. Why? Because our culture is convinced that we are capable of achieving success in our own strength if only we recognize our goodness and empower ourselves. This teaching rebels against the truth of God's Word, which shows us how we are completely incapable of meeting our greatest needs. But God did not leave us to be crushed by His wrath. He made a way for us to be reconciled to Himself so that we might be made whole. This way required great sacrifice on His part.



To explain the gift that Christ's sacrifice makes available



Teens will:

- Believe that Christ died for the world.
- Remember the sacrificial love of Christ.
- Understand what salvation does to the sinner.



John 3:16; selected others

The Lesson



Purpose: to show why God provided salvation for people

Instructions: split the teens into Team A and Team B. Give each team a copy of the corresponding handout, but give the key to the puzzle only to Team A. Give them a few minutes to work on the puzzle. Team B will ask you what they're supposed to do. Simply tell them to do the worksheet and ignore their complaints.

Discussion: when Team A has solved the puzzle, ask them what the answer is. Ask Team B why they had problems. Discuss the missing instructions and how important they were to finishing the task.



Read Revelation 20:15 to the class. Tell the teens that many people are trying to get to heaven without directions, or perhaps without accurate directions. Instead of following the Biblical plan of salvation and going to heaven, many will wake up from death in the midst of an eternal, fiery hell. The person following the wrong path ends up at the wrong place.

What You Need

Copies of "It's Self Explanatory" handouts A and B on pg. 19

Pens or pencils



What did salvation demand of Christ?

Even though John 3:16 is still widely familiar even in our post-Christian culture, it is nevertheless almost universally rejected. Our culture accepts it as an icon of religion, but that acceptance is a mile wide and an inch deep. People follow their own way. They go the way in which they are bent. Although modern thought mocks the simple truth of this verse, no amount of mocking can decrease the seriousness of its meaning. This verse reveals that salvation required two things of Jesus.

Salvation required His incomparable love.

Imagine that you discovered that a convicted murderer needed a kidney transplant to save his life, and that your kidney was the only one that would match. Would you save him? It wouldn't harm you. Maybe, then? But what if that murderer had taken the life of the person you love most?

It is difficult, if not impossible, for us to imagine sacrificing our own life for another person. But if that person is a parent, a sibling, a close friend, or a great person, it is somehow easier to face. But God did not send His Son to die for a close friend. He sent His Son to die for the ungodly. Christ died for us while we were still sinners. He died for people whose sins could be forgiven only by the death of His own Son. That is the message of Romans 5:6–8. That is the kind of love only God can give.

Salvation required Him to make an incomparable sacrifice.

The phrase “only begotten Son” refers to the relationship between the persons of the Trinity and Christ's uniqueness within the Trinity. There is no greater sacrifice than Christ's, not even Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac. There is no greater relinquishment of personal rights than Christ's exchange of His crown for human flesh and carpentry tools. Christ's sacrifice of Himself makes the gift even more incomprehensible.

Although the Israelites are God's chosen people, the world is God's chosen mission field. He demonstrated His love for the world by sacrificing His Son on the cross as the spotless Lamb (Matt. 9:36, 18:11–13, 23–37; Isaiah 53:4).

How Was Salvation Provided?

As we have seen, people were helpless to do anything for themselves to change their spiritual condition or even to make themselves better so that God would favor them. Therefore, people were totally dependent upon God and His choice as to whether or not He would provide salvation. God took the initiative to provide salvation for unworthy people. He did what He alone could do to meet each of the three spiritual needs of people.

God sent a deliverer for the captives (Heb. 2:14–15).

Christ came to this earth and became a man—actual flesh and blood—and then died as a man. Why would God do such a thing? Because He wanted to use death itself to destroy the hold that Satan had over men. Through His victory, people could be delivered from their bondage to sin and Satan and thus be “saved.” This salvation ultimately accomplishes a restoration to mankind of the plan He intended for them in the Garden.

God sent a substitute for the condemned (1 Pet. 2:24).

Christ came as a substitute for those who were already condemned. He took their place by taking their sins upon Himself and accepting their punishment, though He was perfectly innocent. By taking the place of the dead and condemned, He provided salvation from death and condemnation so that those who were dead could now be alive in Him.

God sent a healer for the sick (Luke 4:18–21).

When Christ explained His mission on earth, He quoted from Isaiah and proclaimed that He had been sent to provide spiritual healing for those with an incurable spiritual disease called sin.

What Does Salvation Provide?

Our lesson would not be complete without taking a glimpse at the glorious results of receiving the provision of God for people’s salvation. We will discuss these truths in even more detail in lesson four.

Freedom Instead Of Bondage

A believer is free from three aspects of sin (Rom. 6:5–23):

- Freedom from the penalty of sin. There is no more fear of death and condemnation.
- Freedom from the power of sin. Though we will still sin, we no longer *have* to sin. Christ gives us the power overcome sin.
- Freedom from the presence of sin. Though we live on a sin-cursed earth, we have the hope that one day we will be completely free from sin’s presence, never having to see sin rear its ugly head again (Phil. 1:3–6; Col. 1:24–29).

Have two students perform a series of tasks that require movement, such as catching a football, jumping jacks, pushups, etc. Have one of the students do these actions with handcuffs on or while wearing a backpack filled with bricks. This will illustrate that people can function and live if they are unregenerate, but everything they do is affected by the sin that has them in bondage.

What You Need:

- Handcuffs or a large backpack
- Eight or ten bricks
- A football (optional)

Power Instead Of Weakness

- Power to live righteously, where previously we were helpless (2 Pet. 1:3).
- Power to see other lives transformed through the preaching of the gospel (2 Cor. 3:1–6; Phil. 1:3–11; Col. 1:3–6).
- Power over death and the grave (1 Cor. 15:51–57).

















Have you ever felt completely helpless? Has someone bigger and stronger than you ever dunked your head in a swimming pool and held you under water for what seemed like an eternity? Have you ever been riding in a car that lost control during heavy rain or a snowstorm? Have you ever been in an airplane that hit some turbulence and suddenly seemed to drop out of the sky? Have you ever been speeding along on inline skates with no way to stop when a car pulled out right in front of you?



























When Scripture describes the condition of the unbeliever in relation to sin and death, he or she is just as helpless as you would be in the above situations—in fact, even more so. But the good news of the gospel is that the grace of Jesus Christ is available to all who believe, bringing full deliverance from the power of sin and death.

Have you ever seen yourself as spiritually sick? As a captive to the power of sin? As deserving of God's condemnation? How have you tried to deal with those problems? Or have you given up? What are you really trusting in? A prayer you prayed? Something your parents said you did? Your baptism? Or are you really relying on Christ's work on your behalf—and on His work alone?

It's Self-Explanatory

Solve the puzzle using the key chart below.















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Form A

It's Self-Explanatory

Solve the puzzle.

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Form B