

# The Pursuit Of God

Session Ten / August 24, 2016

## Soteriology – The Theology Of Your Personal Salvation

1 The term *Soteriology* is derived from two Greek words, *soteria* and *logos*. The first word  
2 means SALVATION and the last one means DISCOURSE. Or DOCTRINE. So  
3 tonight's study concerns the doctrine of salvation, as clearly described in Scripture.  
4

### The Sin Problem

5  
6  
7 In our PURSUIT OF GOD thus far we have covered the fact that God is omniscient – all  
8 knowing. From the start of creation, God knew that mankind would fail and fall into sin  
9 – utterly and totally ruined even before He created him. So when Adam and Eve  
10 disobeyed God's edict in the Garden of Eden, it did not come as a shock to Him. In fact,  
11 God had already laid out the PLAN OF REDEMPTION for mankind. How do we know  
12 that? The Bible teaches us so: Ephes. 1:4 **According as he hath chosen us in him**  
13 **before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before**  
14 **him in love:**  
15

16 What happened in the Garden of Eden? God had given Adam and Eve the full run of  
17 His creation with the exception of the one tree: the tree that bore the fruit that imparted  
18 knowledge of good and evil: Genesis 2:16-17 **And the Lord God commanded the**  
19 **man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: [17] But of the tree**  
20 **of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou**  
21 **eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**  
22

23 Why this prohibition? God had not created human robots but people of free will. They  
24 would have to CHOOSE to obey God or not to obey Him. God was looking for human  
25 companions who obeyed and served Him joyfully and willingly.  
26

27 But what a place He prepared for them: *Man's first home was a garden. When Adam*  
28 *first opened his eyes to the light of day he looked out upon a scene of matchless beauty*  
29 *and tranquility. The fields were emerald green, the hedge rows ablaze with blossoms,*  
30 *the atmosphere laden with the fragrance of flowers, the forests ringing with joyous*  
31 *song. Strolling through his vast estates, Adam could pause to see a wolf play tag with*  
32 *a lamb, could stop to romp with a jungle lion or to inhale the perfume of the most*  
33 *perfect rose that ever gladdened the eyes of man. He could pause to pick a plum, to*  
34 *prop a burdened vine, to plant a peach tree, to gaze with awe and wonder at the tree of*

1 *life - the first tree to ever become extinct upon the earth. He might wander by the way*  
2 *of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil standing silent, mysterious, alone, the only*  
3 *tree forbidden to him in all of his boundless domains.*

4 EXPLORING GENESIS / JOHN PHILLIPS / MOODY PRESS / PAGES 50-51  
5

6 God had warned Adam that the day he ate of the forbidden tree he would die. But God  
7 was not referring to physical death, but spiritual death, for Adam lived a long, long time  
8 after. But the Spirit of God initially breathed into Adam (Genesis 2:7 **And the Lord**  
9 **God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath**  
10 **of life and man became a living soul.**) is what died. That's why Jesus told Nicodemus  
11 in John 3 that man had to be "born again" to have eternal life.  
12

### 13 THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD 14

15 When Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sin came into a previously perfect world, for the  
16 first time the original couple lost original innocence and holiness. However, the  
17 intuitive knowledge of God did not disappear. Paul made this clear in his letter to the  
18 church at Rome: Romans 1:20-21 [The Message] **By taking a long and thoughtful**  
19 **look at what God has created, people have always been able to see what their eyes**  
20 **as such can't see: eternal power, for instance, and the mystery of his divine being. So**  
21 **nobody has a good excuse. [21] What happened was this: People knew God perfectly**  
22 **well, but when they didn't treat him like God, refusing to worship him, they**  
23 **trivialized themselves into silliness and confusion so that there was neither sense nor**  
24 **direction left in their lives. As Dr. Thiessen pointed out in his systematic theology,**  
25 **"Evidently God saw to it that this knowledge (of God) never completely disappeared."**  
26

### 27 THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN 28

29 We did not lose that awareness either. Even those who don't believe in God believe in  
30 the presence of sin. I have never met a man or woman who claimed to be perfect.  
31 These unbelievers may have a different definition of sin than does the Christian; but they  
32 still believe that certain things are offensive.  
33

### 34 THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE NEED OF SACRIFICE 35

36 Missionaries tell of finding tribes no one has ever heard of who still were already  
37 sacrificing to some unknown deity for their own transgressions. They found them with a  
38 fear of their gods, even though those "deities" were man-made. There would be a felt  
39 need of a mediator (priest) and a work of mediation (sacrifice) long before they ever  
40 heard the Gospel.  
41

## THE SALVATION PATH THROUGH THE BIBLE

I often say that a person who does not have a basic knowledge or understanding of the Old Testament (the Hebrew Scriptures) will not have a sound comprehension of the New Testament, for the former is the foundation for the latter. We start to read God's plan for redemption, salvation, in Genesis 3:15 **And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.** God made it plain that He was the enemy of Satan and would provide one who would strike the death blow to the devil - and that One, of course, was and is Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God.

### The Law

In the Old Testament we encounter the moral law of God - the Moses legislation, the Torah, the commandments. God clearly specified to the people of that time His divine demands and the penalties that would incur for those disobeying them. In case they wondered what sin was, God clearly spelled it out in the Old Testament: Romans 3:20 **Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.** To enable those in that day to be victorious in the never-ending battle for their souls, God gave them the rules of SACRIFICE and the PRIESTS to administer them.

### The Prophets

Through the ministry of the prophets - both vocal and in writing - mankind learned of a coming Savior. We read in those magnificent and anointed writings so many things about the coming Jesus such as HE WOULD BEAR THE SINS OF US ALL: Isaiah 53:12 **Therefore will I divide him (Jesus) a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.**

Even in the lives of Old Testament figures such as Adam, Melchizedek, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David and others and in such stories as the near sacrifice of Isaac, we were given clues as to the ministry of Jesus when He would come among us. Oh, the purpose of God is so clear in the Old Testament! Ephes. 1:9-10 **Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: [10] That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:**

## THE PLAN OF SALVATION

Can you think of anything on earth - or in your own personal life - that is more important than the implementation of God's plan for eternal life? His plan includes:

- the sole means by which His salvation is granted
- the human beings who are to benefit by that plan
- the only conditions by which His plan is available
- the way that salvation is applied

**GOD HAS ONLY ONE PLAN FOR SALVATION AND EVERYONE MUST BE SAVED IN THE SAME WAY IF WE ARE TO BE SAVED AT ALL.**

A lady with whom I once worked in television told me, "There's no reason to tell me what the Bible says.....God and I have our own plan going for us!"

What blasphemy! What a slap in the face of the Savior! Do we think we can come up with our own personal redemptive plan? Then why did Jesus suffer? Why was He crucified? Why the crown of thorns, the spear driven into His side? Why did He give His blood? There is no other plan but God's.

The Scriptures teach that God has provided salvation only in the Person and work of His Son Jesus. He became flesh (the blessed incarnation), He died in our place (for the result of sin is death but He died for us), He rose from the grave three days after He died, He ascended to His Father, He received the place of power at God's right hand and He intercedes for YOU and me in our behalf before the Father. He is coming back! That's the plan. That's the only plan!

Mohammed came along CENTURIES later with his concocted theories. Joseph Smith gave the world his twisted theories before dying at the hands of angry family men in a jail cell in Carthage, Illinois. The mere machinations; of deluded men. Nothing more. Following those man will send a person into Hell.

The first step in salvation is Repentance - genuine sorrow for sin, for causing God pain. Then believing on faith that Jesus is the Way, Truth and Life follows. You cannot earn your salvation, no matter how hard you may attempt it! Salvation is the blessed gift of God. Now....rewards are an altogether different issue; but here we are talking about salvation. God uses His Word to convict us of personal sin, to point the clear way to the saving life of Christ Jesus and to regenerate the soul. Then, as we spiritually grow in the grace of God, sanctification begins its purifying work in us. And one blessed day Jesus will present His redeemed saints to the Father at that great ingathering in heaven. That is the plan! And friend, there is no other!

1 GOD'S WAYS OF REACHING YOU AND ME

2  
3 We must remember that God is not only our Creator, but He is also our Heavenly Father.  
4 He has a father's heart toward us. John 3:17 **For God sent not his Son into the world**  
5 **to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.** If one of  
6 our four children - now parents and grandparents themselves - needed something I could  
7 provide morally and legally, I would do whatever I could to make it happen. That's a  
8 father's heart. When it comes to eternal life, salvation through Christ, God would reach  
9 you in any way consistent with His loving and divine nature.

10  
11 God's plan for redemption did not happen overnight. Galatians 4:4 **But when the**  
12 **fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under**  
13 **the law...** Why the delay? Mankind had been on Earth for centuries before Jesus  
14 came. Why was the first agreement (testament, contract, covenant) between God and us  
15 dependent upon the sacrifice of sheep and goats, etc.?

16  
17 It appears there are a number of reasons for it.

- 18  
19 1. It took all that time to show us our true nature, the ingredients of divine salvation and  
20 the depravity of the human heart.
- 21  
22 2. In the "fulness of time" Jesus came during the reign of Caesar Augustus (formerly  
23 known as Octavian). It was during this time that there seemed to be a lengthy lull in  
24 mankind's activities and the Romans had established the famed "pax Romana" - the  
25 Roman peace. It was a period of extensive international travel, especially by ship and  
26 via the network of highways the Romans constructed. The Gospel could be exported  
27 from Judea to the "uttermost parts of the earth" relatively quickly by the standards of that  
28 time. We could go on at great length on this particular aspect of Christ's birth in  
29 Bethlehem.
- 30  
31 3. It was very clear by this time that not even Greek culture and art, Roman power and  
32 governance, could change the hearts of men. We needed a Savior.
- 33  
34 4. The Old Testament practice, divinely given, of sacrificing animals at the great altar of  
35 the Temple in Jerusalem could never envelop the burgeoning world.
- 36  
37 5. To show the world that truly transformed lives (such as that of the Apostle Paul) did  
38 not happen by learning, philosophies, inventions, etc., but only by a truly permanent  
39 substitutionary sacrifice - provided by Jesus on the cross.
- 40

1 THE HISTORY OF SOTERIOLOGY (SALVATION) THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES

2  
3 1. The Garden of Eden - Genesis

4  
5 God created Adam and Eve and gave them the magnificent Garden of Eden. (To this day  
6 no one really knows where this earthly paradise was located, but probably somewhere in  
7 the Near East near the conjunction of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.)

8  
9 The first human pair were created without a carnal nature. But God gave them an  
10 obedience test - that of the forbidden fruit of the tree of good and evil. They were not to  
11 eat the fruit from that tree. But Satan came and tempted Eve first, who succumbed to his  
12 lies, and she gave the fruit to Adam who also "caved in." They became guilty before  
13 God; their nature became corrupt; they died much later physically, but spiritually they  
14 died that very day. God expelled them from the Garden and pronounced a curse on Satan  
15 and on the very planet Earth.

16  
17 2. Leading To The Great Flood (the ante-deluvian period).

18  
19 Mankind's consciences were now active but moral disaster had set in, starting with the  
20 murder of Abel by his brother Cain (children of Adam and Eve). We learn from God  
21 Himself that sin now exploded in the human race (Genesis 6:5-8 **And God saw that the  
22 wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the  
23 thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. [6] And it repented the Lord that he  
24 had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. [7] And the Lord said, I  
25 will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and  
26 beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have  
27 made them. [8] But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. ) Despite rather  
28 incredible financial growth on the earth there seemed to be little or no seeking after God  
29 with the exception of Noah and his family. The conscience of men could not be a saving  
30 force among humanity. God destroyed everything and everyone, except the Noah line.**

31  
32 3. After The Flood (the post-deluvian period).

33  
34 The task given to Noah after the flood was to institute human government. People were  
35 to be turned to God and righteousness because of His holy laws and decrees. But just  
36 the opposite happened. Under a Babylonian ruler named Nimrod, the people thumbed  
37 their noses at their Creator. Genesis 11:1-9 **And the whole earth was of one  
38 language, and of one speech. [2] And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the  
39 east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. [3] And  
40 they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And**

1 they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. [4] And they said, Go to, let  
2 us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us  
3 a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. [5] And the  
4 Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.  
5 [6] And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and  
6 this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they  
7 have imagined to do. [7] Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language,  
8 that they may not understand one another's speech. [8] So the Lord scattered them  
9 abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.  
10 [9] Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the  
11 language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon  
12 the face of all the earth.

#### 13 14 4. The Patriarchal Period (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc.)

15  
16 In Genesis 12 we begin to learn of the odyssey of Abraham and his ancestors. God now  
17 called on Abraham to leave his country (Ur of Chaldea - which is present-day Iraq) and  
18 follow Him to a promised land. Abraham obeyed the Lord and God made a  
19 commitment, a covenant, with him - which was to give him and his subsequent family  
20 (the Jews) the land today known as Israel. Abraham and his descendants were to be a  
21 spiritual blessing to the world. Still, the patriarchs often had failings despite their  
22 prosperity which led humanity to its next stage.

#### 23 24 5. The Period of the Mosaic Law (the laws of Moses).

25  
26 At Mount Sinai, Moses was given the Ten Commandments, the very spinal cord of decent  
27 civilization. You will find them in Exodus 20:3-17:

28 1. (Verse 3) **Thou shalt have no other gods before me.**

29 2. [4] **Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any**  
30 **thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water**  
31 **under the earth: [5] Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I**  
32 **the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the**  
33 **children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; [6] And**  
34 **shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.**

35 3. [7] **Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will**  
36 **not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.**

37 4. [8] **Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. [9] Six days shalt thou labour, and**  
38 **do all thy work: [10] But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it**  
39 **thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant,**  
40 **nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: [11]**

1 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and  
2 rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

3 **5 [12] Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land**  
4 **which the Lord thy God giveth thee.**

5 **6. [13] Thou shalt not kill.**

6 **7. [14] Thou shalt not commit adultery.**

7 **8. [15] Thou shalt not steal.**

8 **9. [16] Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.**

9 **10. [17] Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy**  
10 **neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass,**  
11 **nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.**

12  
13 Wonderful way to live! Yet the innate depravity in the hearts of people made it unlikely,  
14 impossible really, for them to obey. Even as the commandments were being given to  
15 Moses, the people at the foothills of Mt. Sinai were creating a false god, the golden calf -  
16 already shattering the second commandment.

17  
18 When we come to the book of Judges, following God's miraculous deliverance of the  
19 people from Egyptian bondage, we read of seven cycles of disobeying God (after which  
20 God raised up deliverers (judges) such as Gideon, Samson and others to conquer invaders  
21 of Israel.

22  
23 Then we come to the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, and the writings of the  
24 prophets, and again we read over and over the disobedience of the people to God's edicts  
25 and warnings.

26  
27 Then as Paul wrote to the Galatians, in the fullness of time God sent His own Son Jesus.  
28 Even He was rejected and crucified. The people honored the laws of Moses WITH  
29 THEIR LIPS ONLY but their hearts were far removed from God. *It was proved once*  
30 *and for all that legal prescriptions cannot make man seek after God and animal*  
31 *sacrifices cannot change the human heart.*

32  
33 6. Today

34  
35 You and I live in the Church Period. Romans 3:21-25 (Living Bible) But now God has  
36 shown us a different way to heaven --not by "being good enough" and trying to keep  
37 his laws, but by a new way (though not new, really, for the Scriptures told about it  
38 long ago). [22] Now God says he will accept and acquit us--declare us "not  
39 guilty"--if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in  
40 this same way, by coming to Christ, no matter who we are or what we have been



1 like. [23] Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious ideal; [24] yet now God  
2 declares us "not guilty" of offending him if we trust in Jesus Christ, who in his  
3 kindness freely takes away our sins.

4 [25] For God sent Christ Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to end all  
5 God's anger against us. He used Christ's blood and our faith as the means of saving  
6 us from his wrath. In this way he was being entirely fair, even though he did not  
7 punish those who sinned in former times. For he was looking forward to the time  
8 when Christ would come and take away those sins.

9  
10 God has offered His salvation to every person through Christ Jesus. All that is required  
11 of any person is to accept what God has provided in Christ. If a person by faith accepts  
12 God's offer of eternal life, He is BORN AGAIN of the Holy Spirit Who then regenerates  
13 the person spiritually.

14  
15 But even as we approach the end of time, as we know it, many either reject or throw off  
16 God's plan and opt for their own, which will never work. But one day, and I believe it is  
17 imminent, God will take His people home to Himself and deliver the rest of the world to  
18 awful tribulation that is to come.

19  
20 In the late 1800's, Jack P. Scholfield wrote a great hymn that we sang over and over in my  
21 church when I was a kid:

22  
23 *I've found a friend who is all to me/ His love is ever true /*  
24 *I love to tell how He lifted me and what His grace can do for you /*

25  
26 *When poor and needy and all alone in love He said to me /*  
27 *Come unto me and I'll lead you home to live with me eternally /*

28  
29 *(Chorus)*

30  
31 *Saved by His power divine / Saved to new life sublime /*  
32 *Life now is sweet and my joy is complete for I'm saved, saved, saved.*

33  
34  
35 Next Wednesday more on the study THE PURSUIT OF GOD