

QUIET TIME

Theme: Salvation

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understand.

- Day 1 Philippians 2:5-11
First step: Jesus became a man
- Day 2 John 13:3-15
Second step: Jesus became a servant
- Day 3 John 10:11-18
Third step: Jesus gave his life
- Day 4 Romans 6:3-14
Fourth step: Jesus was raised from the dead
- Day 5 Ephesians 1:17-23
Fifth step: Jesus is the Lord over everything
- Day 6^{BS} John 3:14-21
Salvation through Jesus Christ
- Day 7 Ephesians 2:4-10
Salvation is a gift
- Day 8 Isaiah 9:2-7
Prophecy about the coming Saviour
- Day 9 Isaiah 53:4-6
He brings forgiveness of sins
- Day 10 Isaiah 42:1-7
He brings freedom from captivity

- Think about Romans 10:13.
The sincere prayer asking salvation is always heard!
- Pray regularly for the salvation of one or more of your family, friends or acquaintances.
- Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

STUDY

Theme: Christ's work of salvation

Read study 4 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: Salvation through Jesus Christ

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passage is: **John 3:14-21**

MEMORISATION

1. Motivation

Bible verses which you memorise will help you to pray with confidence according to God's will (Genesis 32:9-12; Exodus 32:9-14).

2. Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

SALVATION

John 3:16

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.

John 3:16 (NIV)

3. Review

Review the first four memorised verses once every day.

4. Memorisation of the Bible books

The 5 poetical books:

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.

4. Christ's work of salvation

God created the world and man to be perfect (Genesis 1:31). However, the sin of the first man (Adam) was reckoned to the account of all people, because he was the representative head of humanity (Romans 5:12,19). Consequently man and the whole humanity were cast into perdition. Without God's saving and restoring love the world and all people would have remained lost. But God intervened into human history through Jesus Christ in order to solve the problem of sin.

Which steps did God take and what did it cost him to save people from sin?

The Bible reveals that God had taken five steps to solve the problem of sin.

The first step: Jesus Christ became a man

1. Jesus came as a human, not as a divine appearance

Read Philippians 2:5-7. Jesus Christ *is* GOD, but he did not come to this earth in the appearance of a fantastic divine appearance. He became a MAN. Without letting go of his divine nature, he humbled himself and took on the human nature as well and entered his creation and our human history to live among people on earth (John 1:1;14). He came to dwell as close as possible to the lost and suffering people in the world. He listened to them, understood them, empathised with them, spoke with them and helped them (Matthew 9:36; Hebrews 4:15).

If Jesus would not have come as a human being, but would have come in a fantastic divine appearance, he would not have been acceptable to the people of the world. He would not have been able to really identify with their feelings, problems, temptations and sufferings.

That is why Jesus Christ came as a human being (with a human nature). He took on the human nature in Mary, was born and was 100% human, just like one of us, except for sin (Hebrews 4:15). He was a real Person in the history of our world and not a myth or merely an appearance. For more than 30 years he lived amongst people. Thousands of people knew him personally, have seen his miracles with their own eyes and heard his teachings with their own ears. They felt him with their own hands and personally experienced his life-giving work (1 John 1:1)!

If Jesus would only have come as a good man, would only have given us a good example and would only as a prophet have pointed the way to God, he would not have been acceptable to God. Jesus Christ would not have qualified to die for us in order to bring us back to God, because not a single human being or prophet is without sin. Not a single good man or prophet in human history can bring lost people back to God (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)! Only GOD Himself can do that (Isaiah 43:10b-11)! And Jesus Christ was GOD who became MAN.

The second step: Jesus Christ became a servant

1. Jesus came as a servant, not as a ruler

Read Mark 10:45. Jesus Christ is GOD, but he did not come into the world as a mighty ruler. He came as a humble servant (Luke 22:27b). He did not come to be served by people, but to serve them. He never threatened people, but taught them. He never used force, but convinced people. He chose to associate with the socially rejected people, the poor, the sinners and the suffering people (Matthew 11:19; Luke 5:32; 19:10).

If Jesus had come as mighty ruler or a powerful religious leader, he would have used his position, his power, his wealth and his popularity to force people to serve him. His goal would have been to found a totalitarian religion that would dominate the political, economic, military, social, intellectual and religious life of all people in the world! He would have become the antichrist. And people would have followed him for selfish reasons: either to enhance their own position and gain advantages for themselves or to escape the threat of being killed if they did not comply.

2. Why did Jesus come as a servant?

Read John 13:12-15. Do you remember that one of the reasons why there is so much suffering in this world is that no one wants to be a servant (study 3)? People suffer because they are godless and wicked and do not want to serve others! Everyone wants to be served!

However, Jesus Christ did not come to be served, but to serve people in order to set them free of their sins and their suffering. God's method to solve the problem of sin and suffering in the world is to serve others! An example of this is when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. As the highest Lord of the universe he behaved like the lowest slave in a household. Jesus Christ is the best example of a servant!

The third step: Jesus Christ died on the cross

1. Why is a human sacrifice necessary to make atonement for sins?

Read Hebrews 9:7-10,18-22; Hebrews 10:1-4.

Because God is holy, he hates sin (Psalm 5:5-6). Therefore he cannot associate or fellowship with unholy people. All people are by nature unholy. They are sinners (they miss God's goal) and are enemies of God (they live without God or are opposed to the God of the Bible) (Romans 5:10). And they cannot change their hopeless condition!

Because God is righteous, he must punish sin (Romans 2:5-6)! Therefore a person can only draw near to God when his sins have been punished and he has been reconciled to God.

The Old Testament foreshadowed this principle: The Old Testament covenant between God and his people, Israel, was dependent on the shedding of blood to make atonement for sins! The sacrificing of an animal symbolised the animal carrying the sins of the sinner in the place of the sinner. The animal was punished *in the place of the sinner!* Nevertheless, after the people sacrificed the animal they still did not feel forgiven! The blood of animals was only a symbol that the holy and righteous God requires that sins must be atoned. The blood of animals could not take away the sins or the guilt from people, because animals and people are different!

In order to solve the human problem of sin and suffering a *human sacrifice* would be needed! The animal sacrifices only served as an illustration during the Old Testament period to remind people of their sins and guilt and that the holy and righteous God required the atonement of sins! The animal sacrifices pointed people to the absolute requirement that a perfect human sacrifice was necessary to solve the human problem.

2. Why was Jesus the completely perfect sacrifice of atonement for the sins of people?

The completely perfect sacrifice of atonement would have to be a *human* being; he would have to be perfectly *sinless*; he would have to be completely *willing* to die; and he would have to be *God's choice* for this task!

Jesus Christ is the only completely perfect human sacrifice in human history. Jesus was the only One who met all these requirements! Jesus was a human being (Philippians 2:8). He was the only human being in history that was perfectly sinless (Hebrews 7:26-27). He willingly gave himself to die as the sacrifice of atonement (John 10:11, 18a). And he was the only One chosen by God before the foundation of the earth to be this human sacrifice of atonement that would take away the sins of the world (Isaiah 53:5-6; 1 Peter 1:18-20; John 1:29, 3:16).

3. The sacrifice of Jesus made atonement for sins

Sin brought separation between God and man (Isaiah 59:1-2), but the death of Jesus Christ on the cross functions as the bridge for man back to God. The problem that separates man from God, namely 'sin', is nailed in the body of Jesus Christ onto the cross! The death of Jesus Christ removed the problem of man from man, because Jesus Christ took that problem onto himself onto the cross (1 Peter 2:24).

And the death of Jesus Christ enables a godless and wicked person, who puts his trust in Jesus Christ, to come to God and be reconciled to God. God declares the sinner 'righteous' and henceforth regards and treats him as 'righteous' (forgiven, saved). This is the only way in which a godless and wicked person can become a child of God. Jesus Christ himself is the Mediator who once for all removes the separation between man and God and brings the believer to God (Romans 5:6,8,10; 1 Peter 3:18a).

4. How can the sins which you experience as a believer now be removed?

Believe that God has once for all declared you righteous through Jesus Christ

(Romans 4:28; Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

After you have come to faith in Jesus Christ you may always believe without a shred of doubt that you have been justified and that God regards and treats you as completely 'righteous' (forgiven and saved)! This is not because you always live righteous, but because by his mercy and grace God has once for all adopted you as his child through Jesus Christ. Because you believe this, God imputes the righteousness, which Jesus Christ earned, to you.

Always confess your new sins to God

(1 John 1:9-2:1).

Ask him to forgive you and to cleanse you. Believe that he has forgiven you and cleansed you from the specific sin you confessed (Hebrews 8:12). Remember that when you sin again, you need to confess that sin again and receive his forgiveness and cleansing. When Jesus Christ died on the cross two thousand years ago he died for all your sins in the past, in the present and in the future! *Your responsibility is to confess every new sin to him, to ask his forgiveness and cleansing and to break with that sin (Proverbs 28:13). Allow the Holy Spirit to renew you.*

Be prepared to suffer as a Christian!

(Read 1 Peter 4:1-5, 12-19).

Weapon yourself with the thought that that when you withdraw yourself from a particular sin, you would have to suffer sometimes! Often you have to give up something in order to conquer sin. For example, choose to have fewer friends than the wrong friends! Choose to exercise self-discipline rather than giving in to self-indulgence (in eating, drinking alcohol, smoking, drugs, sex, gambling, etc). Choose to be sincere rather than keeping up the appearances.

Pray together with someone else

(Romans 15:30b-31a; James 5:16).

You are stronger when you fight sin together with another mature believer.

The fourth step: Jesus Christ was raised from the dead

1. Jesus has really risen!

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a miracle of God and a historical fact! Natural science cannot prove this, but can also not deny this! The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was affirmed by very many eye-witnesses. They were very reliable witnesses, because their testimonies were affirmed by archaeology and non-Christian historians!

If Jesus had not been resurrected from the dead, then everything he accomplished through his life would be worthless. For living people faith in a saviour that lies dead in his grave would be meaningless. Christians would still be in their sins. Everything would end with death. And death would be the final victor!

But Jesus Christ has really been resurrected and he lives (*Read* 1 Corinthians 15:17-20)! God has accepted the sacrifice of atonement of Jesus Christ in his human nature. He has given Jesus Christ the highest position in the universe. And now Jesus Christ lives to apply his fulfilled work of salvation in the lives of all people who believe in him! While all other religious leaders in the world are still in their graves, the grave (tomb) of Jesus Christ is empty!

2. What are the consequences (fruit) of the resurrection of Jesus Christ for you as a believer?

Read Romans 6:11-14. The first result of Christ's resurrection is that your spirit is made alive and that your whole life will be renewed. The power of sin in your body is taken away. From now on you *can, want to and will* live the new life in which you will crucify your sinful deeds and in which the fruit of the Holy Spirit will grow in you.

The second result of Christ's resurrection is that you will receive a completely perfect and glorified spiritual body at the resurrection of all the dead (1 Corinthians 15:42-44; Philippians 3:20-21).

The fifth step: Jesus Christ ascended into heaven

1. The authority and task of Jesus Christ in heaven

Read Philippians 2:9-11. After his resurrection from the dead Jesus Christ ascended into heaven. God gave to Jesus the highest position in the universe and all the power in the heavens and on earth. Jesus Christ is the Lord of the universe and the Head of the Church. He rules over the world on behalf of the Church (Ephesians 1:20-22). He will reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet (1 Corinthians 15:25-26)! In the future every knee will bow before him and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is truly the Lord.

Jesus Christ is also the Head of every individual Christian. He rules over the Christians and the Church by means of the Bible (Matthew 4:4), his Holy Spirit (John 16:8,13-15) and by means of the council of elders in every congregation (Acts 20:17,28).

The reign of Jesus Christ will reach its peak at his second coming, when he will resurrect all the dead (John 5:28-29), judge all people that have ever lived (*Read* Matthew 25:31-46) and renew this present universe and earth (2 Peter 3:10-13).

2. The reign of Jesus Christ means the following for believers:

Read Hebrews 7:25. The special task of Jesus Christ now is to save people completely. If you believe in Jesus Christ you may be sure of the following: No one can nullify your justification in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29-30). Jesus Christ will help you in your struggle against temptations and weaknesses (Hebrews 2:18). All events in your life will work together for your good (Romans 8:28). God will continue and complete the good work which he began in you (Philippians 1:6). Jesus prays for you continually and so will save you perfectly (Hebrews 7:25). No one and nothing can separate you from the love God has for you (Romans 8:37-39)!

In short, (1) Jesus Christ solved the problem of sin and suffering of people by *becoming a human being* and by living among human beings. He understands, empathises and identifies himself with their problem and suffering.

(2) He *became a servant* who took the lowest position and the most difficult task among men. He tackled the problem of sin and the consequent brokenness and suffering of man.

(3) He died on the cross in order to carry all the sins of those who believe in him away and thus to reconcile them to God.

(4) He was raised from the dead in order to give believers a complete new life on this present earth and to give them a new glorified body on the future new earth.

(5) He ascended into heaven in order to completely perfect the salvation of believers and to put all his and their enemies under his feet.

THE JOHN 3:16 ILLUSTRATION

The gospel says, “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 (John 3:16). How could you explain the good news about the work of salvation of Jesus Christ to another person?

See the illustration below. The Bible references correspond to the numbers in the illustration.

Read:

1	Genesis 1:27	7	Acts 4:12
2	Isaiah 59:1-2	8	Romans 5:8
3	Romans 3:23	9	1 Peter 2:24
4	Romans 6:23a	10	1 Peter 3:18
5	Ephesians 2:8-9	11	Matthew 11:28-30
6	Galatians 3:10-11	12	John 5:24

The problem and the solution:

Sin brings separation between man and God (2, 3, 4).

Man by himself cannot solve this problem (5, 6, 7).

But Jesus Christ can and did (8, 9, 10).

Jesus invites everyone to come to him and find rest (11).

Whoever hears and believes the good news and comes to

Jesus Christ (12) has from that moment on eternal life and

will never be condemned, never perish (John 3:16)!

