

# 119

## MINISTRIES

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### What is Salvation?

Have you ever been asked if you are “saved”? Salvation is a topic that is discussed all the time in Christian churches. Preachers, missionaries, and Christians of all denominations are always urging people to “be saved.” This is for good reason, because salvation is the central message of the gospel.

#### **John 3:16-17**

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

This salvation of the world was the message that the apostles constantly preached during their ministry. Peter, after healing a man who was lame, had this to say:

#### **Acts 4:10-12**

...let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ [Messiah Yeshua] of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus [Yeshua] is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

The word Jesus is the English translation of the Hebrew name *Yeshua*. *Yeshua* is a Hebrew word that means *the LORD saves*, or, more precisely, since God’s name in Hebrew is *Yahweh*, *Yeshua* means *Yahweh saves*. So Peter here is making a play on words: we are saved by way of Jesus’s name, that is, because of what he did, but his name, *Yeshua*, also literally means “salvation.”

But what do the Scriptures say about this salvation? What does it mean to be “saved”?

To answer this question, we have to go back to the very beginning. In the beginning, man lived in the paradise of Eden. Man had everything he needed: life, abundant food, companionship, and fellowship with God. Man had dominion over all of creation, and the responsibility to take care of the home that God had given him. As long as man obeyed God, he stayed alive, and the world remained a good place,

just as God had made it to be. But one day, at the prompting of a serpent, man disobeyed God. After this, he was expelled from the garden, removed from the presence of God. Man was now doomed to die, and before he dies, to live in a world full of toil and hardships. The world soon became full of all kinds of evil: jealousy, lies, murder, slavery, and war. However, God promised that a seed, a man, would come, and that he would crush the deceitful serpent's head (Genesis 3:15). God had a restoration in mind for the world that man had ruined.

Generations later, God gave a promise to a man named Abram. This promise was that Abram would inherit a particular land, that he would become a great nation, and that he would be a blessing for the entire world (Genesis 12:1-3). YHWH made a covenant with Abram, and with his seed after him—referring to the promised seed who would crush the serpent's head—that YHWH would be their God (Genesis 17:1-8). However, Abraham's descendants ended up leaving the land that was promised them and becoming slaves in the land of Egypt. As slaves to the Egyptians, they were not a blessing to the whole world, they were not prosperous or free, and they were not living as God's own people. But, this is where God provided salvation.

## The Pattern of Salvation

God raised up a prophet, Moses, who came to the people and taught them how to obey God. God worked through Moses in miraculous ways, destroying the country that had enslaved his people, and saving them out of their oppression. At the Red Sea, where God delivered his people from the Egyptians once and for all, the Scriptures record this:

### Exodus 14:10-14

When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD [YHWH]. They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD [YHWH], which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD [YHWH] will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

After God saved them from Egypt, the people moved from place to place in the wilderness. There, God travelled with them and, through Moses, taught them how they should live, how to be righteous, to pursue justice and goodness, and how to be holy, to be a special people. Finally, when their journey through the wilderness was complete, God led them into the Promised Land, where he again gave them miraculous victory over their enemies. In the land, they acquired their eternal inheritance promised to Abraham (Genesis 17:8), where they would have a life of peace and prosperity as God's own people.

Of course, historically speaking, this was not the end of the story. God told the people of Israel that they would have blessings and life as long as they obeyed God; however, if they turned away from God and disobeyed him, then they would instead receive curses, and be exiled from their land and oppressed by their enemies. It would be like leaving the Garden of Eden all over again.

### Deuteronomy 30:15-18

"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD [YHWH] your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD [YHWH] your

God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD [YHWH] your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess.

Israel was intended to fulfill the role that God promised to Abraham, to be a blessing for the whole world.

### **Deuteronomy 4:5-8**

See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD [YHWH] my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD [YHWH] our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

Sadly, Israel frequently did not live up to this role; many times they disobeyed God and ended up falling back into idolatry and slavery. However, each time, God would raise up a savior for them who would deliver them out of the hand of their enemies, and restore them to the proper service of God, and to a life of peace and prosperity. Here is one example from the book of Judges:

### **Judges 3:7-11**

And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD [YHWH]. They forgot the LORD [YHWH] their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth. Therefore the anger of the LORD [YHWH] was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. And the people of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years. But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD [YHWH], **the LORD [YHWH] raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.** The Spirit of the LORD [YHWH] was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD [YHWH] gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim. So the land had rest forty years.

This same pattern repeats with the judges Ehud (Judges 3:12-30), Deborah (4:1-5:31), Gideon (6:1-8:28), and Jephthah (10:6-12:7). In every case, Israel was disobedient, and because of their sins, they suffered oppression at the hands of their enemies. Then, God raised up a savior who delivered them from their oppression, restored proper worship and honor of God, and created peace in the land.

Eventually, Israel came under the rule of kings, rather than judges. Under the reign of king Solomon, we catch a brief glimpse of Israel fulfilling their promised role as a blessing to the whole world, as was prophesied in Deuteronomy chapter 4. When the queen of Sheba visited Solomon in Israel, she had this to say:

### **1 Kings 10:6-9**

And she said to the king, "The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard.

Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the LORD [YHWH] your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD [YHWH] loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.”

Not only was the queen of Sheba blessed by the righteousness and wisdom of Solomon, but the whole world was.

### **1 Kings 10:24**

And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind.

However, this time of righteousness and blessing was not to last. Solomon himself began to worship foreign gods, and during his son’s reign, the entire kingdom of Israel was split into two separate kingdoms, Israel and Judah. The same pattern repeated as it did under the reign of the judges: Israel and Judah would disobey God and suffer oppression and war and death, and then God would raise up righteous kings who would save them from their enemies and restore justice and peace to their lands.

While God displayed great mercy through these continual acts of salvation throughout history, we must ask: will this cycle of disobedience, oppression, and deliverance ever come to an end? How can the serpent’s head be crushed, and the curses upon man be removed forever? How can God restore mankind to the place he intended for them once and for all? This is where the Messiah comes into the picture.

## **The Prophesied Savior**

For hundreds of years, the prophets of Israel spoke of a time to come when all of God’s people would be united under one ruler; when they would be saved from the sins that had separated them from God, and God would dwell with them forever in peace. One such prophecy is found in Ezekiel chapter 37. The first ten verses of this chapter describe a vision of a valley full of dry bones. These bones then grow flesh and return to life. Verses 11 through 20 explain that these bones are the people of Israel, and that the kingdoms of Israel and Judah are going to become one kingdom again. Then, verses 21 through 28 say this:

### **Ezekiel 37:21-28**

...Thus says the Lord GOD [YHWH]: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But **I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned**, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

“My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the

nations will know that I am the LORD [YHWH] who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.”

There are numerous other prophecies with similar themes: the restoration of Israel, forgiveness of sins, the establishment of a righteous kingdom with a righteous king to be a witness to all the nations, and YHWH dwelling with his people forever. Here is one from Jeremiah chapter 31:

### **Jeremiah 31:7-9**

For thus says the LORD [YHWH]: “Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘**O LORD [YHWH], save your people**, the remnant of Israel.’ Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the pregnant woman and she who is in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back, I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

### **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD [YHWH], when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD [YHWH]. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD [YHWH]: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD [YHWH],’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD [YHWH]. For **I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.**”

There are similar prophecies in Joel 2, Zechariah 14, Hosea 2, Isaiah 60, Daniel 12, Micah 5, Jeremiah 23, and many other places. Again, the basic themes of these prophecies are that:

- 1) Israel will be gathered together,
- 2) their sins will be forgiven,
- 3) they will be righteous,
- 4) they will be ruled by a righteous king,
- 5) they will be a light and a blessing to the world, and 6) YHWH will dwell with them forever.

In Yeshua, we find the promised seed, the fulfillment of each of the parts of these prophecies.

- 1) In Yeshua, the outcasts of Israel will be gathered together:

### **John 11:49-52**

But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus [Yeshua] would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also **to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.**

(see also: Romans 11:25-27, James 1:1)

2) In Yeshua, we have forgiveness for our sins:

**Colossians 1:13-14**

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**Acts 5:30-31**

The God of our fathers raised Jesus [Yeshua], whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

(see also Matthew 26:28, 1 John 2:1-2, Romans 3:23-26)

3) In Yeshua, God's people will be righteous and obedient:

**Romans 6:8-13**

Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua].

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as **instruments for righteousness**.

(see also: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Titus 2:11-14, Philippians 2:12-13, Ephesians 2:8-10)

4) Yeshua will rule over the people of God:

**Luke 1:30-33**

And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus [Yeshua]. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and **he will reign over the house of Jacob forever**, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

(see also: Matthew 21:4-9, Revelation 11:15)

5) Yeshua’s kingdom will be a light and blessing to the whole world:

**Matthew 28:18-20**

And Jesus [Yeshua] came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

### **Revelation 21:22-27**

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. **By its light will the nations walk**, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

(see also Ephesians 3:6, 1 Timothy 3:16)

And, 6) through the work of Yeshua, God will dwell with his people forever:

### **1 Corinthians 15:24-28**

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that **God may be all in all**.

### **Revelation 21:1-4**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. **He will dwell with them, and they will be his people**, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

And so, through the Messiah, the ultimate salvation that God promised will be complete. This final salvation follows the same pattern of salvation that we see throughout the Scriptures. It's just like the Exodus: we have been enslaved, not by Egypt, but by sin (Romans 6:5-8). Because of that slavery, our ultimate destination was death (Deuteronomy 30:17-18, Romans 6:23). But God, in his love for us, sent us a savior (John 3:16). He set us free from our old master, sin and death, and now God journeys with us (Matthew 28:20b, 2 Corinthians 13:11, John 14:15-17) as we journey through the wilderness of this world (Revelation 12:1-6) and we learn how to serve God, how to live as God's people (1 Peter 1:13-21). We look forward to the day that we will enter our final inheritance (Hebrews 9:15, Ephesians 1:11-14), where man will dwell in peace and prosperity with God forever (Revelation 21:1-4).

This is all possible because Yeshua paid the price for the sins of all mankind. Now, we are reconciled to God; we do not have to “surely die” because of the disobedience of man in the garden.

### **1 John 3:8b**

...The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

### **Romans 5:12-17**

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over

those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ [Yeshua the Messiah] abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ [Yeshua the Messiah].

## **Salvation: Now or Later?**

The apostles describe this Messianic salvation in what seems like two different ways. Sometimes, they speak of being saved as though it is a thing that had not yet happened to them. Here are some examples of that:

### **1 Peter 1:3-5**

According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ [Yeshua the Messiah] from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for **a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

### **Philippians 3:20-21**

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it **we await a Savior**, the Lord Jesus Christ [Yeshua the Messiah], who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

### **Hebrews 9:28**

So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

These verses say that the apostles were awaiting their salvation, that it had not yet happened. However, other times, the apostles speak of being saved as though it had already happened, like in the following verses:

### **Ephesians 2:8**

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.

### **2 Timothy 1:8-10**

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, **who saved us** and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua] before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua], who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

So, were they saved already, or were they awaiting their salvation? The answer is, both! When Yeshua completed his work on the cross, the debt for man's sin was paid. The apostles had received reconciliation for their sins, and now they were obedient to God. They were no longer doomed to remain dead. They had been saved.

As Paul says in Titus 3:

**Titus 3:3-8**

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, **he saved us**, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ [Yeshua the Messiah] our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to **the hope of eternal life**. The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.

However, even though they were saved from sin, they had not yet experienced eternal life with God. That was the part of salvation that they still had to look forward to. Now that their sins were reconciled, and they were walking in righteousness, they knew that they would not die, but they would be resurrected to eternal life. And we, today, are in the same situation. If we are in Messiah, then we are like the children of Israel in the wilderness. We have been saved from our slavery to sin. Our sins have been forgiven, and now we are learning God's ways and walking in them. We are loving others as God loved us, and God is journeying with us. However, like the Israelites, we are still awaiting our promised inheritance, the completion of our journey, the end result of our salvation.

So, this is what it means to be saved: to be forgiven of our sins, to walk in righteousness, and ultimately to receive our inheritance, our eternal home where we will dwell with God forever.

*We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

**EMAIL:** Info@119ministries.com

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