

# What the Bible Teaches About Salvation

## Class Description

A study of what the Bible teaches about how sinful man can be accepted by and right with a holy God. Errors prevalent in our area with regard to salvation are discussed and biblically evaluated. The following will make up the content of this class:

- ✓ God's character and relationship to humanity
- ✓ Condition of humanity
- ✓ The consequences of sin
- ✓ The person and work of Jesus Christ
- ✓ Repentance and faith
- ✓ Roman Catholic teaching concerning salvation
- ✓ Amish teaching concerning salvation

## Goals for this Class

- God will be glorified and pleased by our consideration and study of these truths
- A key text for this teaching ministry is 2 Timothy 3:14-17; this should direct and control us during this class

**2 Tim 3:14-17** <sup>14</sup>You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, <sup>15</sup>and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

- Equip believers with a firm understanding of the gospel message (Eph 4:11-16)
- Understand crucial, "hot button" issues regarding the gospel such as
  - The nature and necessity of genuine repentance
  - The nature of true saving faith
  - Why sinners deserve eternal conscious torment in hell
  - Universalism (the idea that while there are many paths they all lead to heaven)
- Have a basic understanding of Catholic and Amish teaching concerning salvation and provide a biblical response to such

## Requirements

- In preparation for each class, please **read the notes covered during the previous class**
- Additionally, before each class **complete the worksheet** handed out for that class.
- By preparing for each class in this manner you will have a better grasp and handle on the material. Remember, *what you get out of this depends on what you put into it!*

## Notes and Class Instruction

- I have notes and blanks throughout – if at anytime you miss something, ask at anytime, call me, or check the church website (the full notes will be available in Adobe PDF format)
- The basic format will be as follows
  - (1) A question will be stated
  - (2) Scriptural teaching that answers the question will be set forth
  - (3) Where necessary definitions, explanations, and clarifications will be given
  - (4) The answer to the stated question will be given in the form of a statement
  - (5) Unless otherwise indicated I will use the *New American Standard Bible* (1995 edition) which is what I teach and preach from in the services of Orwell Bible Church. You are welcome to use the translation you currently use, but extra copies will be available if you so desire.
- The reason for this format is that we are endeavoring to discover “what the Bible teaches” about this particular topic.
- The goal and objective is not to “get a good grade” or “pass the class.” Rather, our goal and objective (according to 2 Timothy 3:14-17) is to
  - (1) *Listen* to the Word
  - (2) *Learn* the Word
  - (3) *Love* the Word
  - (4) *Live* the Word
- If at *any* time you have a question or comment, please ask! The objective is to learn, not plow our way through the notes in a set amount of time.

# 1. Introduction—What Do *You* Think About God?

## 1) The Starting Point

- Many presentations of the gospel focus on needs of the individual—emotional, physical, marital, etc
- God *can* help in these areas but the problem with such an approach is how God is viewed and thought of—he exists for our needs
- The Bible’s view is far different—man exists for God and is only rightly oriented when God is viewed correctly
- What people need, then, is **a right knowledge of God**—what one thinks and believes about God affects how life is lived

**Ps 50:21** “These things you have done and I kept silence; You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes.”

## 2) Some different opinions about God—what people believe and think about God:

- A grandpa in heaven with a long, flowing beard, sitting restfully on a throne
- The God of the Bible is just one of many different gods (polytheism)
- “God” is everything, and everything is God (pantheism)
- There is no God (atheism)
- No one can ever be sure if there really is a God (agnosticism)
- God exists but he does not concern himself with the goings on of this world (deism)
- God is far off and can’t be known
- God is everywhere and in everyone
- God is love (and nothing else)
- God is fury and wrath
- God is whatever I think he is
- God is wealth, possessions, work, family, etc
- God can be “bought”

## 3) What people think and believe about God controls how and who they live for:

- **If one does not believe in God**, he is his own standard of right and wrong and ultimately is responsible to no one but himself
- **If one believes in a number of gods**, he lives in fear, praying and working to please them all
- **If one does not believe in God** or believes that **“God” is an impersonal force**, such an individual can pursue whatever he desires and lives for pleasure and self (hedonism)

## 4) The Bible is clear: If one does not know the one true and living God, he lives a self-centered, selfish life and is doomed to separation from God (Job 8:11-14; Ps 9:17)

**Job 8:11-14** <sup>11</sup>"Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh? Can the rushes grow without water? <sup>12</sup>While it is still green and not cut down, yet it withers before any other plant. <sup>13</sup>So are the paths of all who forget God; and the hope of the godless will perish, <sup>14</sup>Whose confidence is fragile, And whose trust a spider's web."

**Ps 9:17** "The wicked will return to Sheol, even all the nations who forget God."

5) What people need, then, is **a right knowledge of God**—what does it mean to “know God”?

- Knowing God refers to a right **relationship** with God, knowing God in Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord (1 Sam 3:7; John 17:3)
- The essential aspects of knowing God in Jesus Christ are:
  - (1) Intellectually apprehending the character and attributes of God as he has revealed himself in Scripture
  - (2) Demonstrating a proper **fear** of God through reverential trust, exclusive worship, grateful thanksgiving, and moral likeness (loving what he loves, hating what he hates)
  - (3) Continually striving to glorify God by growing more in and like **Jesus Christ**
- *To know God and Jesus Christ is to understand, fear, and love who he is as he has revealed himself in the Bible. Such knowledge is personal and relational in nature, involving a total commitment of oneself to Jesus Christ. This knowledge and understanding also involves a growing likeness to and imitation of him in every aspect of life, loving what he loves and hating what he hates.*

6) How can one know God?

- Everyone knows about the one true God
  - (1) Through creation and “life,” Acts 14:17; Rom 1:20

**Acts 14:17** “and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness”

**Rom 1:20** “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse”
  - (2) The fact, however, is that despite this revelation about God that is indisputably clear to all men (general revelation), everyone denies it by their sinful deeds

**Rom 1:18-9** <sup>18</sup>“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup>because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them”
- Therefore, the only way anyone can have a right knowledge of God is if God graciously **tells us** about himself and his expectations
- God has told us these things in the **Bible**, revelation from God in written form (2 Tim 3:16)

7) Concluding this point:

- The balance of this lesson, then, will give a brief overview of what God tells us in the Bible about himself.
- It isn't up to us what we think about God—we must change our knowledge of God to match what God has said about himself. **That is humanity's only hope—a right knowledge of God**

Key Verse: John 17:3 “This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent”

Statement: What you **think** about God must match up with what God says about himself!

## 2. The Nature and Character of God—Who is God? What is He Like?

1) Is There a God?

**Gen 1:1** “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”

**Ps 14:1** “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’”

Statement: There is a God, the God the Bible tells us about.

2) Who is God?

- Note these passages:

**John 4:24** “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth”

**Ps 147:5** “Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; his understanding is infinite” cf. 40:5; 71:15; Rom 11:33

**Matt 5:48** “you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect”

**Rom 11:36** “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.”

**1 Cor 8:6** “there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him”

**Col 1:16-17** “by him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together”

- **Definition:** God is the **infinite** and **perfect spirit** in whom all things have their **source**, **support**, and **end**
- He is Spirit—he is personal and incorporeal (immaterial)/invisible

**1 Tim 1:17** “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

**1 Tim 6:16** “who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see”

- He is Personal

- (1) God is a rational, intelligent being—he has the ability to reason, plan, think, use language (see )
- (2) God is a moral being—he distinguishes between right and wrong (he himself being the standard) (see )
- (3) God is a free agent—he acts according to his own will, not consulting anyone nor affected by anyone or anything in the execution of his will (see )

- How Many Gods are There?

**Deut 4:35** “To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him”

**Deut 6:4** “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!”

Statement: There is only **one** God

- If There Is Only One God, What About The Father, Son, And Holy Spirit?

- (1) The Father is God

**Col 1:3** “We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”

- (2) The Son is God

**John 1:1-3** “<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”

**John 5:17-18** “<sup>7</sup>But He answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.’ <sup>18</sup>For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.” See also 10:30-33

- (3) The Holy Spirit is God

**Acts 5:3-4** “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...you have not lied to men but to God”

- (4) This one God exists in three persons

**Matt 28:19** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”

**2 Cor 13:14** “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”

Statement: There is only one God, Eternally Existing in Three Persons, a tri-**unity**

- Implications – things that are true because of Who God is
  - (1) Because God is *one* there are no other gods!
  - (2) Because God is personal he can be known by other persons
  - (3) Because God is personal one can have fellowship and communion with him
  - (4) Because God is personal he is not merely a force
  - (5) Because there is only one God we *must* seek him
  - (6) Because the Bible teaches the tri-unity of God we must believe it (try to understand it and you'll lose your mind; deny it and you'll lose your soul)

### 3) What is God Like?

*As God is spirit and we can't know him in material terms, we know him by his attributes, those characteristics he has revealed about himself that make him who he is*

- He is Great

#### (1) Self-Existing

**John 5:26** "the Father has life in himself"

Statement: God's existence does not depend on anything **outside** of himself—it is all in him. He is uncaused and independent of everything outside of himself.

#### (2) Infinite

**Ps 147:5** "Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; his understanding is infinite"

Statement: God has no **limitations**—he is not restricted by time or space.

#### (3) All-powerful (*omnipotent*)

**Gen 18:14** "Is anything too difficult for the LORD?"

Statement: God can do all things **consistent** with his nature and purpose. God can do all that he wills, but he will not do all that he can.

#### (4) All-knowing (*omniscient*)

**1 John 3:20** "God is greater than our heart and knows all things"

Statement: God's knowledge includes all things past, present, and future, immediately simultaneously, and eternally.

#### (5) Everywhere (*omnipresent*)

**Ps 139:7-10** <sup>7</sup>“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? <sup>8</sup>If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. <sup>9</sup>If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, <sup>10</sup>even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will lay hold of me.”

Statement: God is everywhere present at the same time.

(6) Eternal

**Ps 90:1-2** <sup>1</sup>“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. <sup>2</sup>Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”

Statement: God’s existence cannot be measured by **time**.

(7) Unchanging (immutable)

**Malachi 3:6** “I, the LORD, do not change”

Statement: God’s being and purposes are **changeless**, incapable of growth or decay.

• He is Good

(1) God is Holy

**Isa 6:3** “holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.”

**1 Pet 1:16** “you shall be holy, for I am holy”

Statement: God’s holiness means that he is **peerless** (without equal, incomparable) and **pure** (free from defilement).

**God’s holiness:**

- characterizes his existence (Eph 4:18-19; 1 Pet 1:14-16)
- is the chief subject of worship in heaven (Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8)
- is what he swears by (Ps 89:35; Amos 4:2)
- is the first and most prominent attribute impressed upon men (Luke 5:8; 1 Pet 1:16; Heb 12:14)
- is his “name” (Lev 20:3; 22:32; 1 Chron 16:10, 35; 29:16; Psa 30:4; 33:21; 97:12; 99:3; 103:1; 105:3; 106:47; 111:9; 145:21; Isa 29:23; 47:4; 54:5; 57:15; 60:9; Ezek 20:39; 36:20-23; 39:7, 25; 43:7-8; Amos 2:7; Luke 1:49)
- distinguishes him as God because he alone is holy (Exod 15:11; 1 Sam 2:2; Rev 15:4)

(2) Truth

**1 Sam 15:29** “The Glory of Israel will not lie”

**Isa 65:16** “he who is blessed in the earth will be blessed by the God of truth; and he who swears in the earth will swear by the God of truth”

**John 14:6** “I am the way, the truth, and the life”

Statement: God is everything God should be (he is not a lie); God's knowledge and declarations conform to his being (he does not lie); God is the source of all truth.

(3) Love

**John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life"

**1 John 4:8** "God is love"

Statement: God's love moves him to give of himself and his gifts spontaneously, voluntarily, righteously, and eternally for the good of personal beings.

Key Verses: 1 Timothy 6:15-16 "*He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.*"

Statement: God is the infinite and perfect spirit in whom all things have their source, support, and end.