

# Belief: Salvation

## MASTER KEYS

**Key Verse:** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

**Key Idea:** I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Key Question:** How do I have a relationship with God?

**Key Observation:** God is utterly God. He cares deeply for us. He has a plan and a purpose for our lives. Before the creation of the world, God had a plan in place for humanity to be in relationship with him. Being in relationship with God is perhaps the most important topic in the Scriptures and has all the makings of the greatest love story every told.

## PERSONAL STUDY

**Self-Evaluation:** Using a scale of 1– 6, rate how strongly you believe the statements below that are related to this Essential (1=no belief at all, 6= complete confidence). If you don't understand the statement currently mark yourself low. Don't rate yourself on whether you believe it is the right answer but on whether it is a way of life for you today.

\_\_\_\_\_ I believe I will inherit eternal life because of what Jesus has done for me.

\_\_\_\_\_ I believe nothing I do or have done can earn my salvation.

\_\_\_\_\_ I believe salvation comes only through Jesus.

\_\_\_\_\_ I believe people are saved because of what Jesus did, not because of what they do.

**Bible Engagement:** Answer the following questions. When you encounter Scripture take your time with it, allow it to take root in your heart and consider what salvation through Jesus means to you.

*The problem. We are not born into a relationship with God. Satan, the great deceiver, clothed himself as a serpent, one of God's good creatures, and set out to trick Adam and Eve into disobeying their good and gracious God. After creating Adam and Eve, God told them not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree in the Garden of Eden. But Satan suggested that God wasn't being honest when he warned of the results of eating the forbidden fruit. The deceiver's ploy succeeded, and Adam and Eve willfully rejected God and his promise of life together with them in the garden.*

The consequences of Adam and Eve's rebellion were passed on to their offspring and then again and again to every generation since. Every human born receives the "virus" at conception and then acts out of this nature throughout their life. The Bible calls it sin. It causes death – both the physical death of our bodies and the spiritual death of separation from God.

1. Read Genesis 2:8-9, Genesis 2:15-17 and Genesis 3:1-21. How would you describe Adam and Eve's life in the garden with God before they disobeyed him? What was life with God like for them afterward?

2. How did Adam and Eve's decision to disobey God affect all of mankind?

“And the Lord God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever.” So, the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.” Genesis 3:22-24

3. What are your thoughts about the power that temptation has over your own life? Have you thought about whose words are more effective in your life – God’s or the serpent’s?

*The Solution: There is Only One Solution and Our Good God Provided It.* When Adam sinned, God set into motion His plan to get people back into a relationship with Him. When He replaced their clothes of fig leaves with the skins of animals, he signaled something important – it would take the blood of another to cover the sins of humankind. God began by the founding of a brand-new nation through which he would reveal himself and his plan to restore humankind. For more than 1,600 years, every Biblical story of the chosen people of Israel would point to the coming of the solution.

One of the earliest examples of this “blood covering” took place as God was preparing to deliver Israel from 400 years of captivity in Egypt. God chose Moses as his messenger to Pharaoh to demand that he releases God’s people from slavery and let them take possession of the promised land. But Pharaoh was hardhearted and would not let them leave. To make Pharaoh understand and believe in God’s power, God issued ten brutal plagues on Egypt and its people. The tenth and final plague foreshadows the ultimate solution of deliverance from humankind’s slavery to sin.

Read Exodus 11:1 – 12:13 (Remember it is a foretelling)

4. What was the requirement for the Passover lamb's condition? (Exodus 12:5)

5. What or who does the Passover lamb symbolize?

Let's consider the similarities between the sacrificed lamb of the Israelites' Passover and Jesus, our consummate Lamb of God.

The Passover Lamb had to be slain (Exodus 12:6)	Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2)
The Passover Lamb was without blemish (Exodus 12:5)	Christ was the lamb without blemish or spot (1 Pet 1:19)
The Passover Lamb gave its shed blood (Exodus 12:7)	Jesus said, "No one takes my life, but I lay it down of myself" (John 1:18)
The Passover Lamb's bones were not to be broken (Exodus 12:46)	A bone in him shall not be broken (John 19:36)
Without the Passover Lamb the firstborn would die (Exodus 12:29)	The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)
The ones redeemed by the Passover Lamb were sanctified to the Lord (Exodus 13:2)	You are not your own but were bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Read Exodus 12:21-31.

6. What does the blood of the lamb symbolize?

In a very real way, the blood of the lamb saved the Israelites from death, as it kept the destroyer from entering their homes. The Israelites were saved from the plague, and their firstborn children stayed alive.

7. What type of "Passover" has resulted by Jesus's blood being applied to our lives?

The early church understood that Jesus fulfilled the symbolism in the Passover as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). The marking of blood on the doorpost has a clear tie to the shedding of Jesus' blood on the cross (Rev. 1:1-8). Without Christ, the Father looks upon the world He made and sees only a mass of corrupt sinners who are wholly deserving of His wrath. But since Jesus has died for His people, the Father now sees in the midst of fallen humanity, men and women who have been marked with the blood of His Son by faith. His wrath can leave these blood-bought saints alone in a passing over them even greater than the one over the houses of Israel so long ago.

8. Should the wrath of God aimed at sinners fall on you or pass over you? Why?

About 700 years after the time of Abraham and 700 years before the birth of Jesus, God inspired the prophet Isaiah to speak on his behalf. In Isaiah 52 & 53 we see a picture of the Lord's "suffering servant", which takes the concept of blood sacrifice, or substitutionary atonement, to a new level. Like the Passover lamb, this servant will suffer for the sake of others. This Scripture also foretells the mission of the One who will provide the way for ours sins to be forgiven."

Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12 which is a prophecy. While reading, think of the details of Jesus' time on earth weighing his actual life against that of the "suffering servant" that Isaiah speaks of.

*Video Teaching* Watch the video segment for this Essential. As you watch use the following outline to record some of the main points. The answer key is located at the end of this study.

- Key Question: How do I have a \_\_\_\_\_ with God?
- \_\_\_\_\_ is found in Jesus.
- Jesus has made the way possible for us to be \_\_\_\_\_ of our sins and come into a relationship with God. What is our part? How do we take hold of this \_\_\_\_\_ offer?
- Key Verse: "For it is by \_\_\_\_\_ you have been saved, through \_\_\_\_\_ – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9).

- In order for the sacrifice of Christ to be applied to us individually we must reach out and \_\_\_\_\_ it by faith.
- This is the only way to \_\_\_\_\_ Adam's decision and restore a right relationship with God.
- (Key Application) No matter what \_\_\_\_\_ I face in this life, they pale in comparison to my salvation for eternity.
- (Key Application) I need to walk in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ grace to others.

**Devotional Reading:** Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you in thinking like Jesus through this reading.

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9*

*Vincent Ardolino watched the Twin Towers explode from his little tugboat in New York Harbor on 9/11. Minutes later, as the towers fell, people swarmed the pier, desperate to vacate the island. Roads, subways, trains, bridges – everything was shut down. They escape from Manhattan Island? The water. Many of them leaped in, fearing for their lives.*

*Vincent urgently turned the prow of his boat toward the island as his wife exclaimed, "What if there's another attack?!" His response was, "If I only rescue one person, that's one less person who will suffer and die."*

*Joined by every boat on the water, Vincent became involved with the greatest sea evacuation since World War II, when 339,000 soldiers were rescued over the span of 9 days in Dunkirk. On 9/11 500,000 civilians were rescued in less than 9 hours through the grace gift of these captains. Each person jumping into a boat accepted the gracious gift of a rescue, putting their faith in the boat and in its captain.*

*Jesus offers you the only boat leaving the island of death. You need only jump in with faith and trust Him, the captain.*

*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.*

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**Closer Look:** Answer the following questions to help you apply this Essential to your own life.

God's ultimate solution to our problem of separation from Him was poignantly demonstrated and graphically foretold over hundreds of years of Jewish history. When God spared the Israelites through the sacrifice of their Passover lambs, His point was inescapable. When Isaiah foresaw one who would be "pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities," the identity of the suffering servant was undeniable. The ritual and the prophecy were fulfilled when the Messiah Jesus was crucified on a cross for the sins of humankind. God's plan, set into motion in the Garden of Eden, was at long last finished.

Looking back, Jesus said to his disciples, "As you know, the Passover is two days away – and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified." Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. (Matthew 26:1-4)

*The Outcome: A Lasting Relationship with Our Loving God.* Even with all the incredible stories connecting the dots from the promised Messiah to the person of Jesus, most members of the nation of Israel didn't recognize or accept Jesus as the Savior of the world. They didn't recognize the One who would provide the way for our sin to be forgiven so we could enter into a personal relationship with God, overcome death and have eternal life. John tells the story of one Jewish religious leader, Nicodemus who approached Jesus at night to probe his true identity and mission.

Nicodemus: Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.

Jesus: Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.





3. Can you pinpoint a moment or chart a sequence of moments in time when you realized that Christ died for you? How would you describe that process?

4. How would you define the word “grace”? What is the opposite of grace?

5. What specifically would it look like for us to offer grace to people who don’t deserve it as God did for us?

6. Many people find it hard to receive something they didn't earn. How could this behavior hinder someone's spiritual growth?

## LIFE APPLICATION

*Take Away:* What difference does this Essential make in the way you live your life? Consider how you can incorporate the core truths of this Essential into your daily life.

- We seek to please God because of what he has done for us, not to earn a relationship with him.

The apostle Paul writes, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) No matter what troubles I face in this life, they pale in comparison to my salvation for eternity. Paul reminds us not to lose heart: "Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." (2 Corinthians 4:16-17)

- We walk in grace.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul writes, "Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?" (Galatians 3:1-3)

- We offer grace to others.

Let us not forget Jesus' parable of the unmerciful servant recorded in Matthew 18:21 – 35. It would be wrong and inconsistent for us to refuse to offer grace & forgiveness to someone else in light of the grace and forgiveness God has shown to us.

*Case Study:* Use the following case study as a model for a real-life situation where you might put what you've learned into practice. If needed, refer to your *Video Teaching* notes. Considering the *Take Away*, what gentle advice or help would you give?

Rocky is a man's man. It appears as though there's nothing he can't fix. He spends more time tinkering in his garage than in his own house. Luckily, he's your neighbor. So, when you break something, he is always willing to lend a hand. One day in a moment of authenticity, he confesses that he has never quite understood God and religion but knows he needs them. Yet he fears that his past mistakes have disqualified him from ever being what he calls a "religious person".

How can you help Rocky begin a relationship with God? What misconceptions does he have about the character of God? In what ways can you relate to Rocky?









