

This Magnificent Salvation—Teaching Guide

by

Janet Burton

For Leading a Study of

This Magnificent Salvation

by

Duane Brooks

BAPTISTWAY PRESS®

Dallas, Texas

This Magnificent Salvation—Teaching Guide

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This book is produced in cooperation with the Baptist Distinctives Council/Texas Baptist Heritage Center of the Baptist General Convention of Texas—Executive Director Emeritus, BGCT, and volunteer Director, Texas Baptist Heritage Center, William M. Pinson, Jr.; volunteer Director of Organization and Communication, Doris Tinker; Chair of Baptist Distinctives Council, Royce Measures.

First edition: March 2010

This Magnificent Salvation—Teaching Guide

About This <i>Teaching Guide</i>	4
The Writer: Janet Burton	4
Steps to Studying <i>This Magnificent Salvation</i> in Your Church	5
How to Use This Teaching Guide	6
Session 1, Chapter 1. A Mighty Savior: Old Testament Snapshots of Salvation	8
Session 2, Chapter 2. We Need a Savior	11
Session 3, Chapter 3. God’s Provision of Salvation: Salvation Is Here	14
Session 4, Chapter 4. Conversion: The Experience of Salvation	17
Session 5, Chapter 5. A New You	20
Session 6, Chapter 6. A Moment and a Lifetime	23
Session 7, Chapter 7. Saved into a Community	26
Session 8, Chapter 8. Proclaiming the Message of Salvation	30
Session 9, Chapter 9. Blessed Assurance	34
Session 10, Chapter 10. Toward Salvation’s Glorious Completion	37

About This Teaching Guide

The teaching plans in this teaching guide are designed for leading a study of the book *This Magnificent Salvation* by Duane Brooks. The book *This Magnificent Salvation* is one of a series of studies on Baptist beliefs that BAPTISTWAY PRESS[®], the publishing imprint of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, is producing.

The Writer

Janet Burton wrote *This Magnificent Salvation—Teaching Guide*. She lives in Austin, Texas, and is widely known for her work as a Christian educator, author, and conference leader. She is the author of two books and is a veteran curriculum writer, having written numerous assignments for BAPTISTWAY[®] study materials.

Steps to Studying *This Magnificent Salvation* in Your Church

1. Decide to have the study.
2. Decide the best schedule for your church. For example:
 - Sunday night worship service for ten weeks
 - Wednesday night prayer service for ten weeks
 - A combination of Sunday and Wednesday nights for ten sessions in five weeks
 - Study period prior to Sunday night worship for ten weeks
 - Adult Vacation Bible School
 - Church, department, or class retreat
 - Deacons' retreat
 - Senior adult gatherings
 - Other short-term training opportunities
3. Identify the best teacher (or teachers). Good possibilities are your pastor, minister of education, minister of adults, other staff member, or adult Sunday School teachers. If you're reviewing this *Teaching Guide*, most likely it's **you!**
4. Order a copy of *This Magnificent Salvation* Duane Brooks for each participant. Call 1-866-249-1799, or see www.baptistwaypress.org, or e-mail baptistway@texasbaptists.org, or fax your order to 214-828-5376.
5. Get the needed teaching resources. In addition to *This Magnificent Salvation* by Dr. Brooks and this *Teaching Guide* by Janet Brooks, get the PowerPoint® presentation, free at www.baptistwaypress.org.
6. Conduct the study in your church.
7. Rejoice in the growth and fellowship that occur!

How to Use This Teaching Guide

This teaching guide is designed to assist leaders in guiding the study of the book *This Magnificent Salvation* by Duane Brooks. The suggestions in this guide assume that every participant will have a copy of the book to use in preparation and during the sessions. Participants will gain the most if they will study the assigned chapter prior to each session.

In addition to use in the current study, this book and the others in this series of studies are designed so that participants can accumulate for their personal libraries helpful resources on Baptist beliefs and Christian beliefs in general.¹ Each church library needs a copy of this book and the other books in this series.

Study Options

Ten study sessions are provided in *This Magnificent Salvation—Teaching Guide*. Decide the best schedule for your church situation. (See number 2 in “Steps to Studying *This Magnificent Salvation* in Your Church.”)

The basic sessions are designed for thirty-five minute periods but can be expanded by using the additional suggestions. Thirty-five minutes seems most appropriate for use during Sunday and Wednesday nights. Lecture is the primary teaching method used in the basic plan, but other large-group methods are used as needed. The additional suggestions can be used when the schedule allows fifty-five to sixty minutes or when the learning group is small enough to use other teaching methods.

Session Design

Each session (except session eight) is divided into the following four major parts with numbered steps:

- *Introduce the Study*—A three- to four-minute idea to help participants relate to the material to be studied.
- *Guide the Study*—A thirty-minute procedure that leads learners to investigate and summarize the significant content to be studied.
- *Prepare for the Next Study*—A one- to two-minute assignment that encourages participants to read and study the chapters to be considered during the next study.
- *Additional Ideas*—Teaching ideas that can be used to expand the basic teaching plan.

Session Preparation

Read the entire book prior to the study. Knowing the direction and content of the book

helps the leader (you) avoid dealing with material that will be studied in a subsequent session. Preview this teaching guide to allow enough time to prepare materials for each session.

Prepare visuals as suggested for each session. PowerPoint® presentations could be developed if you have the equipment. A PowerPoint® presentation that you can use as is, alter, or add to is available at www.baptistwaypress.org. Overhead cells, marker boards, posters, and other visuals can be used as well. Remember that learners retain more when they both see and hear information. Reading and underlining material in a book also create visual impressions and cause people to think about the content.

Although the steps in the session plans suggest actions you will take, effective learning always is from the perspective of what the participants will be doing. That is why your actions instruct learners to engage in learning activities such as listening, reading, looking, writing, thinking, answering questions, etc.

No teaching plan will fit every leader and every situation. Take the ideas given in this guide and use them to develop your own teaching plans. These ideas are provided to make your planning easier.

Session One

Chapter One, A Mighty Savior: Old Testament Snapshots of Salvation

Introduce the Study

1. Begin a series of visuals (PowerPoint® cells, posters, overhead cells, or flip chart would all work well) by which to illustrate and review the study as you go along. On the first theme poster, print the title of the book, emphasizing the word *SALVATION* by capitalizing and enlarging it. Slant the *T* of salvation into a large cross. Display this poster before the study begins. (This could be easily adapted into a publicity poster by adding the dates and times of the study.)
2. If music is desired, sing together a hymn of salvation, such as “I Will Sing of My Redeemer” or “Amazing Grace.”
3. Begin the study by telling (or having a member read dramatically) the story of Wesley Autry at the beginning of chapter one, *This Magnificent Salvation*. Draw the parallels that follow (see *This Magnificent Salvation*, p. 8).
4. Provide copies of *This Magnificent Salvation* for participants, telling them that the book is full of wonderful stories and illustrations of the many truths of our magnificent salvation. Invite members to open their study books and jot on the fly leaf names or initials of friends, acquaintances, and family members who may not yet have received God’s magnificent gift of grace through Jesus. Ask them to make a second list of people who may have professed salvation but seem not to be living in the fullness of it. Lead in prayer that this study will help us become agents of truth and change in these lives.

Guide the Study

5. Display the second visual, with the title of chapter one and the outline of this session (cell in PowerPoint® presentation).

A Mighty Savior
Old Testament Snapshots of Salvation.

- I. Beginning at the Beginning
- II. God, Our Delivering Savior
Sees! Hears! Cares! Comes to Us!
- III. God as Kinsman Redeemer
- IV. God as Redeemer of our Rebellion
- V. This Amazing Story

6. Recall the familiar stories of people's need for salvation from Genesis by asking the group these questions. Enrich their answers from the study book section, "Beginning at the Beginning."

- What was the act of Adam and Eve by which sin entered into our world?
- How did sin destroy the relationship of Cain and Abel?
- Why did God save Noah but wipe out his world?
- Explain why the tower of Babel displeased God.
- What promise to Abraham brought hope to humankind?

7. Invite learners to turn in their Bibles to Exodus 3:1-10, as you set the scene with material from the first four paragraphs under, "God Our Savior Sees!" (*This Magnificent Salvation*, pp. 11-12). Bring this passage to life dramatically by enlisting someone to speak the quoted words of Moses (Exodus 3:3-4), and another person to read the quoted words of God (Exod. 3:4-10). You, then, read the surrounding narrative that is not in quotation marks.

8. Follow the Scripture reading with questions like these, adding to their responses from the chapter 1 sections, "God Our Savior Sees!" "God Our Savior Hears!" "God our Savior Cares," and "God Our Savior Comes to Us." Circle the key words on the visual outline as you progress through this group lecture.

- Why did God rescue his people from Egyptian bondage? (Circle "Sees!")
- Explain why we might call Moses a reluctant leader.
- Why is it sometimes hard to hear God's voice in the midst of our struggles? (Circle "Hears!")
- What are probable reasons Jonah ran from God's call?
- How did Jonah's actions betray his attitudes about lost people? (Circle "Cares.")
- Why do you think some people refuse to receive Jesus as Savior? (Circle "Comes to Us.")

9. Divide the group into two teams, and assign each team one of these sections of the study book to review: "God as Kinsman Redeemer (Ruth)" and "God as Redeemer of our Rebellion (Hosea)." Instruct both team to discover parallels between their Old Testament story and God's act of redemption through Jesus. Allow five minutes preparation time, and call for a spokesperson to share from each team. (If forming teams is not appropriate for your study setting, plan and make this presentation yourself.)

10. Close with "This Amazing Story," at the end of chapter one. Sing the chorus, "O How He Loves You and Me," as a closing prayer.

Prepare for the Next Study

11. Ask members to come to the next session prepared to answer this question: *After we have been saved and forgiven by Jesus' atonement, why do we still struggle with sin?*

Additional Idea

Special Reports

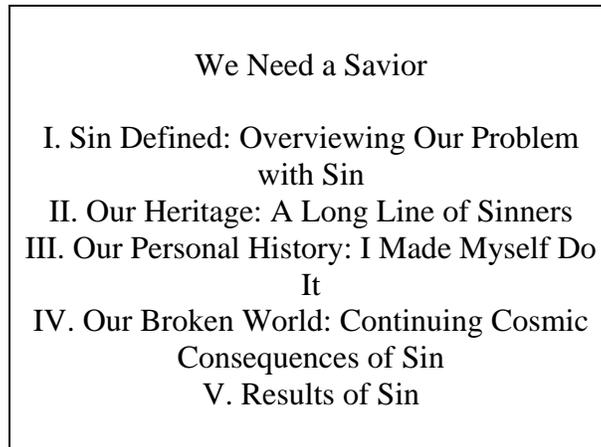
In lieu of the two search teams in step 9, contact two members before the study, and ask them to prepare the reports from Ruth and Hosea called for in step 9. Suggest a two-minute time limit on each report.

Session Two

Chapter Two We Need a Savior

Introduce the Study

1. Make and display this visual outline for chapter two (cell in PowerPoint® presentation):



2. If music is desired, choose a hymn that focuses on our sin problem, such as, “Search Me, O God,” or “Grace Greater than Our Sin.”

3. Begin with the funny story about the little boy at the beginning of chapter two in *This Magnificent Salvation*.

Guide the Study

4. Guide study of the sections, “Sin Defined: Overviewing our Problem with Sin,” and “Our Heritage: A Long Line of Sinners,” by asking the leading questions mentioned in *This Magnificent Salvation* and having members of the group search and comment on the parenthesized Scripture verses as you go. Follow this outline, enriching members’ input with material from the study book.

- (1) What is sin? (Psalm 51:4)
- (2) Where does sin begin? (Hebrews 3:19)
- (3) Are there degrees of sin, such as mortal and venial sins? (James 2:10)
- (4) What if we mean no harm by our actions? (Psalm 19:12-14)
- (5) Who is responsible for sin? (Romans 6:23)
- (6) When did sin begin? (Genesis 3:6)
- (7) What do Adam and Eve’s choices have to do with us? (Romans 5:12)

(8) We have all sinned, but *why* have we sinned? (James 1:13-15)

5. Invite members to turn in their Bibles to Genesis 3:1-13. Have the passage read dramatically by enlisting four people to speak the quoted words of the serpent (3:1, 4-5), the woman (3:2-3, 13b), the Lord God (verses 9, 11, 13), and the man (3:10, 12). You, as leader, read the surrounding narration that is not within quotation marks. Follow the reading with a summary lecture of the study text material, “Our Personal History: I Made Myself Do It.”

6. The study text section, “Our Broken World: Continuing Cosmic Consequences of Sin,” is filled with thought-provoking truths. Read each of these for the group, and invite them to agree or disagree and to dialogue with you as you teach this section (cells in PowerPoint® presentation).

(1) God has wrath about sin because of his love for us.

(2) “God stopped at nothing to reach us . . . rather than allow us to spend eternity without him.”

(3) “. . . No one can excuse sin by saying, *Well, I just didn’t know there was a God.*”

(4) God has absolutes, and “any behavior that ever was wrong still is.”

(5) Sin is our problem, too.

(6) “. . . Hell is the ultimate monument to human freedom.”

(7) “We cannot include Christ *in* our lives without subtracting sin *from* our lives.”

7. On markerboard list these questions (cell in PowerPoint® presentation): “What are the results of sin . . . to ourselves? to our society? to our families? to one who becomes enslaved? to our eternal destiny?” As you teach the section, “Results of Sin,” pose those questions and allow the group to help you with the answers.

8. Close with the story of John Newton, told at the end of chapter two in *This Magnificent Salvation* (pp. 35-36). Sing together stanzas 1-3 of “Amazing Grace” as a closing prayer.

Prepare for the Next Study

9. State that there is an ongoing debate in the Christian community over whether everyone can be saved, or whether God chooses (“elects”) some to be saved and others lost. Come prepared to give at least one Scriptural reason each side has a valid point.

10. Enlist a volunteer to prepare to tell during session 3 the story of Father Damien found in *This Magnificent Salvation*, in chapter 3, in the section “Incarnation: The King Has Arrived” (p. 43).

Additional Ideas

Pass the Hat

As an alternative to asking each question of the entire group, write out the eight questions in step 4, with their references, cut them apart, and place them in a hat or other container. Pass the hat, and invite eight members to choose one, read it with the Scripture, and give a one-minute spontaneous answer.

Note-taking Sheets

Steps 4 and 6 of this teaching plan lend themselves to a note-taking, hand out sheet. The questions and Scriptures in step 4 could be printed out, with space provided between for members to write important truths from the study. The thought-provoking truths of step 6 could be printed on side 2 in the same way.

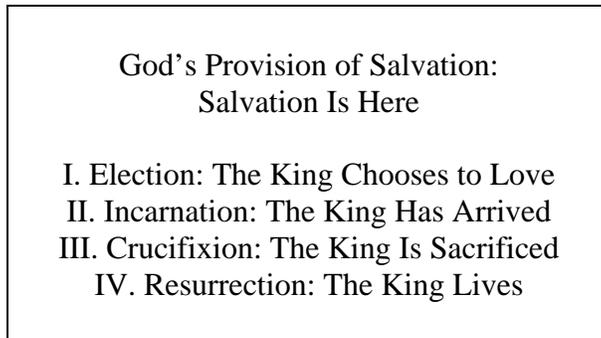
Session Three

Chapter Three

God's Provision of Salvation: Salvation Is Here

Introduce the Study

1. Prepare and display this visual outline of the session (cell in PowerPoint® presentation):



2. Sing a hymn about salvation, such as “I Will Sing of My Redeemer” to begin this study.

3. Give everyone a piece of notebook paper. Allow two minutes for group members to jot definitions of *salvation* at the top of their pages. As volunteers share what they have written, list their words and phrases on the markerboard. Summarize paragraphs 1-4 of chapter three in *This Magnificent Salvation* (pp. 37-38).

Guide the Study

4. Circle “Election” on the outline visual (see step 1). Label two columns on markerboard: “God Chooses Us,” and “We Choose God.” Call for the “homework” assignment (step 9 of session two) to come up with one Scriptural proof for each view: (1) that God chooses who will be saved or lost; or (2) that humans exercise free will and choice in the matter of salvation. List under each column the reasons they suggest.

5. Instruct learners to fold their papers in half, and make two columns like those on the markerboard. Ask them to list truths in the appropriate columns as you present a balanced view of election from the text section, “Election: The King Chooses to Love.” Complete this discussion by asking for several oral testimonies to the question (cell in PowerPoint® presentation), *When did God choose you—and when did you choose God?*

6. Circle “Incarnation” on the outline visual. As you summarize “Incarnation: The King Has Arrived,” lead with these discussion questions:

- Why did many people in Jesus’ day miss the fact that he was the Messiah and True King of Israel?
- Why was Jesus called “Immanuel”?
- What kind of kingdom does Jesus rule over?
- Why did God send his Son into the world?

7. Call on the member who has prepared to read or tell the story of Father Damien, found in the section on incarnation.

8. On the markerboard write (cell in PowerPoint® presentation): “Lost . . . a sheep . . . a coin . . . a son.” Invite volunteers to summarize from memory these parables from Luke 15. Ask, *Why do you think Jesus told three stories to illustrate one point? From our view which is more important: how they were lost, or who found them?* Call for several volunteers to answer the question, *Whom did God use in your life to bring you to faith in him?*

9. Circle “Crucifixion” on the outline visual. Note that this section of chapter three has an outline within an outline. Guide the group to find four subtitles under, “Crucifixion: The King Is Sacrificed” (cell in PowerPoint® presentation). Teach by summarizing each point and then calling for a personal testimony from the group. The plan will look like this:

(1) The Cross as Victory: Victory over the Domain of Darkness

- Jesus “has rescued us” (Colossians 1:13).
- Jesus faced the devil in the wilderness.
- We also face spiritual forces and must put on armor.
- Jesus’ death on the cross won victory for us.
- Ask: *When are you most aware that Jesus has given you power to overcome evil?*

(2) The Cross as Sacrificial Substitution

- The doctrinal term is *substitutionary atonement* (Hebrews 9:22).
- Sacrifice was a prominent part of Old Testament worship.
- Jesus is called “our Passover Lamb.”
- Jesus paid the price for us.
- Ask: *What is one way you try to show Jesus how much you appreciate his sacrificial death on the cross for you?*

(3) The Cross as Ransom and Redemption

- Define *ransom* (Mark 1:7) and *redemption* (Ephesians 1:7).
- Enlist a member to recall from the story of Ruth how Boaz became her *kinsman-redeemer*.
- Invite someone else to recall from the story of Hosea how he purchased (*redeemed*) Gomer back to himself after her unfaithfulness.
- Jesus is both our Priest and our Sacrifice.

- Ask: *Can you tell us of a time when you personally had opportunity to explain to someone how to receive Christ as Redeemer and Savior?*

(4) The Cross as Example

- After we receive Christ as Savior, we are to follow his example (Luke 9:23).
- Following Christ we become servant ministers.
- Following Christ we may suffer persecution and trials.
- Following Christ we love as Christ loved.
- Ask: *Who in your experience has best modeled Christ for you?*

10. Circle “Resurrection” on the outline visual, and ask, *What difference does Christ’s resurrection make in your life?* After several responses, call on someone to read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. Suggest that members follow along and underline in their Bibles items that would be lost to us if there had been no resurrection. Check their answers from the list in the section, “Resurrection: The King Lives.

11. Keying on the author’s personal experience in the loss of his wife’s mother, at the end of chapter three in *This Magnificent Salvation* (pp. 56-57), ask: *Have you experienced the hope of resurrection in the loss of someone close and dear to you?* Take time for one or two personal testimonies. Close with one stanza of the hymn, “He Lives!”

Prepare for the Next Session

12. Ask members to come to session four prepared to explain their answers to this question (cell in PowerPoint® presentation): *Did your salvation experience come as a dramatic moment, or was it more like a process of understanding and accepting over time?*

Additional Idea

Group Work

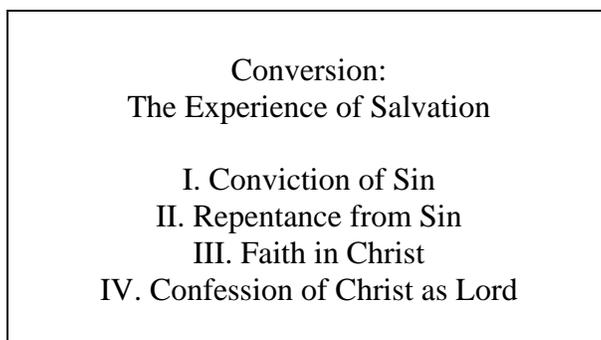
As an alternative to step 9, divide the group into four teams, and ask each team to summarize one of the subtopics and to tell how it has mattered in their lives. Limit study time to five minutes, and each report to two minutes.

Session Four

Chapter Four **Conversion: The Experience of Salvation**

Introduce the Study

1. Prepare and display this visual outline of the session (cell in PowerPoint® presentation):



2. On markerboard jot this list of, “Reasons to Study the Topic of Salvation” (cell in PowerPoint® presentation):

- To better understand the doctrine ourselves
- To remember with gratitude what Christ has done for us
- To better explain to family and friends how to accept Christ
- To reaffirm our belief in this most basic Bible truth
- To recapture the urgency of evangelism and missions
- To encourage us to share our faith with someone

As members gather, ask them to select from the list the reason most important to their lives today. Compare answers.

3. If music is desired, “At Calvary” or “Let Jesus Come into Your Heart” are possibilities to sing or read.

Guide the Study

4. Ask, *Do you remember the time you became a Christian? the day of the week? The time of day? where you were?* Allow several responses. Then ask, *Are there some of us who know we are Christians, but we can't remember just when and where?* Follow with, *Are there some who know we are Christians, but the experience came on so gradually it's actually hard to know just when conversion took place?* Note that all three of these responses are scriptural and reflect the experiences of Christians.

From the introduction of chapter four, *This Magnificent Salvation* (pp. 58-59) draw the contrast between the experiences of Peter, who met Jesus several times, and was even called to follow him, before confessing his faith; and Paul, who confessed faith in a blinding moment on the Damascus highway. Summarize with the statement on page 59: “Salvation begins with a transaction, continues as a lifetime process, and culminates with a glorious consummation. Conversion requires a conscious decision to follow Jesus Christ.”

5. On the visual outline, check “I. Conviction of Sin” and ask, *Who in the Bible comes to mind when you think of conviction of sin?* Invite the group to turn to three stories in their Bibles.

- Psalm 51:1-5. Instruct the group to scan the passage and answer, *What phrases show that David was feeling convicted about his sin?*
- Isaiah 6:1-5. Have the group scan the passage to discover what caused Isaiah to become so aware of his sinfulness.
- Luke 5:4-8. After scanning ask: *What brought Peter to realize his condition?*

Summarize this section with this quotation about the source of conviction from the text (p. 63): “Through an encounter with the holy God of heaven, sinners recognize that we are unholy. So God alone brings conviction in the life of a sinner.”

6. Check “II. Repentance from Sin” on the outline. Ask the group to compile a definition of *repentance*. Suggest that they scan paragraph two on page 65 to find what the Old and New Testament terms for *repent* actually mean. Compare to what they have written. Recall two familiar Bible stories that illustrate repentance.

- How can we tell that the rich young ruler did not fully repent (Mark 10:17-22)?
- How can we tell that Zacchaeus had fully repented when he came down from his tree (Luke 19:1-10)?

7. Check “III. Faith in Christ” on the outline. Explain that you will say a key word, and the group is to respond with another word that means the same—or almost the same—thing. Repeat in sequence, allowing responses: *believe, trust, faith, grace*. Ask members to look in paragraph two, sentence two, under “Faith in Christ” on page 67 of this section of the study book to find three important components of trust. Call for someone to read Ephesians 2:8-9, and ask, *What is the relationship between faith and works? between faith and grace? In whom must a person have faith to be saved?*

8. Refer to the question at the beginning of paragraph four on page 68 of *This Magnificent Salvation*, “What about those who do not have access to the gospel?” Review the information on pages 68-69 related to this question. Invite comments from the group. (If you use “Presentation” in “Additional Ideas,” have the presentation at this point instead of the ideas in this step.)

9. Place a check by “IV. Confession of Christ as Lord” on the outline. Invite participants to share what they recall of the faith journey of Nicodemus (see John 3; 7:52; 12:42-43; 19:39, and page 71 of *This Magnificent Salvation*). Prompt with these questions:

- When did Nicodemus first meet Jesus?
- How did Nicodemus’s status as a leader of the Jews cause him to encounter Jesus on later occasions?
- Why do you think Nicodemus did not confess his faith in Jesus openly before his peers?
- What do you think prompted Nicodemus to finally speak up?
- Did Nicodemus’s taking a risk to bury the body of Jesus in any way make up for his silence on earlier occasions?
- What do you think may have happened to Nicodemus after the burial of Jesus?

Summarize the discussion by reading Matthew 10:32-33.

Prepare for the Next Study

10. Read the theme verse for session five: 2 Corinthians 5:17. Ask the group to come prepared to share three ways their life has changed because they are believers.

11. Enlist one member to prepare to tell the story of Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones, and the author taking his class to the cemetery (page 77, *This Magnificent Salvation*). Ask another person to prepare the story of Jean Val Jean’s being forgiven in *Les Miserables* (see page 81, *This Magnificent Salvation*).

Additional Ideas

Small Group Work

Use the three stories in step five as assignments. Allow groups five minutes to read the Scripture and prepare their answers.

Presentation

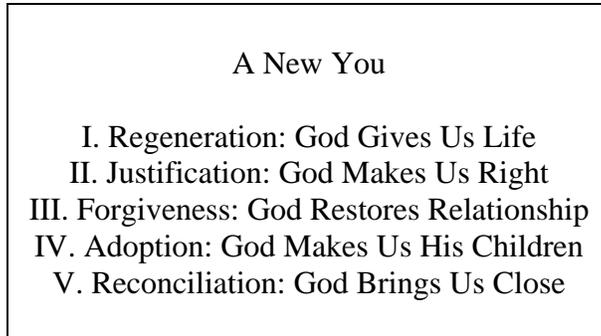
In advance of the session invite a member, or perhaps a missionary, to speak to the question, *What about those who do not have access to the gospel?* Refer the person to pages 68-69 of *This Magnificent Salvation*.

Session Five

Chapter Five A New You

Introduce the Study

1. Display this outline of the session (cell in PowerPoint® presentation):



2. As the group gathers, invite them to respond to the assignment given in the step 10, session four: *Tell three ways your life is different because you are a believer.* Affirm all answers given.
3. If music is desired, consider the hymn, “Breathe on Me.”

Guide the Study

4. On the outline, underline these terms: *Regeneration, Justification, Forgiveness, Adoption, Reconciliation.* Explain that this is a pre-test to see whether we understand the basic meanings of these key words. Read each definition as the group to select the word it best describes (cell in PowerPoint® presentation). (Answers are in parentheses.)

- (1) sins atoned for (forgiveness)
- (2) brought back to God (reconciliation)
- (3) being “born again” (regeneration)
- (4) God takes our side (justification)
- (5) becoming God’s child (adoption)

Note that these terms have overlapping implications because all of them are involved in the process of our becoming *new creations* in Christ.

5. Remind the group of Nicodemus’s story from session four (see step 9, session four). List the sequence of the story on markerboard as they recall it for you. Our emphasis before was on whether Nicodemus was willing to witness to his faith in Christ. In this

session we are concerned with the truths Jesus shared with him on the occasion of their first meeting. Bring John 3:1-10 to life by having one member read the quoted words of Nicodemus (verses 2, 4, and 9) and a second member read the quoted words of Jesus in verses 3, 5-8, and 10 (easiest with a red-letter version of the Bible). You as leader read the narration that is not in quotation marks. Have each reader use the same version of the Bible. Circle the word “Regeneration” on the outline, and follow the Scripture reading with these questions. Enrich responses from “Regeneration: God Gives Us Life” in chapter five, pages 74-79.

- Why do you think Jesus introduced a term like “born again”? (verse 3)
- What did Jesus mean by “water and the Spirit”? (verses 5-6)
- Why do you think the term “born again” has become one of the most favored ways believers speak of their conversion experience?
- How important is God’s Holy Spirit to the conversion experience?
- In what ways can the Holy Spirit be compared to wind?

6. Call on the member who has prepared to tell about Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones and the author’s cemetery experience (see step 11, session four). As needed, add information from *This Magnificent Salvation*, pages 76-78. Summarize with the author’s statement (cell in PowerPoint® presentation), “Jesus Christ did not come to make bad people good. He came to make dead people live” (p. 78, *This Magnificent Salvation*).

7. Turn to Jesus’ parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee in Luke 18:9-14. Enlist two people to read the quoted words of the Pharisee (verses 11 and 12), and the tax collector (verse 13). You, as leader, read the narration outside the quotation marks. (Have all readers use the same Bible translation.) Circle “Justification” on the outline. Ask someone to read Romans 5:8-9, and follow with these questions:

- What is Jesus’ part in our justification?
- What was the Pharisee depending on for justification?
- What did God see in the tax collector that caused him to receive justification?
- What kinds of things do people in our world do to try to make themselves right with God and earn salvation?
- What attitude is God looking for in those who seek to be justified?

8. Circle “Forgiveness” on the outline. Invite the member who has prepared to tell the story from *Les Miserables* of the forgiveness of Jean Val Jean (see step 11, session four). Lead members to draw some parallels between the bishop and our Heavenly Father. Summarize this section with the first paragraph on page 83, which begins, “The same Lord who taught his disciples to pray. . . .” On markerboard write: “Because we have been forgiven, we must be forgivers.”

9. Call on a member to read Ephesians 1:3-5 as you circle “Adoption” on the outline. Focus on the idea of adoption in discussing this passage. If assistance is needed, though,

on “predestined,” though, see pages 39-41 of *This Magnificent Salvation*. Summarize the information on page 84 of *This Magnificent Salvation* about the author’s experience with adoption. Ask, *Why is it special for us to be adopted into God’s family?*

10. Circle “Reconciliation” on the outline. Lead the group to discuss the italicized questions on pages 85-86 of *This Magnificent Salvation*. Develop this section further with these questions:

- What is the opposite of reconciliation? (alienation)
- What has alienated us from God? (Adam and Eve’s sin and our own sin.)
- How did Jesus’ death on the cross provide reconciliation?

11. As a member reads Romans 5:10-11, draw a large cross on the board. To the left write “alienation,” and to the right write “reconciliation,” letting the cross form a bridge between the two concepts. Write “love” across the crossbar to connect the two. Ask, *How does the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15 illustrate reconciliation?*

Close with the story of Paco, told on page 87 of *This Magnificent Salvation*. Sing or read a stanza of the hymn, “Just As I Am,” as a closing prayer.

Prepare for the Next Study

12. Suggest that everyone look up the word *sanctification* before the next study to determine what it means and also to list at least three words that begin with the same root as *sanctification* (such as *sanctify*).

Additional Idea

Huddles

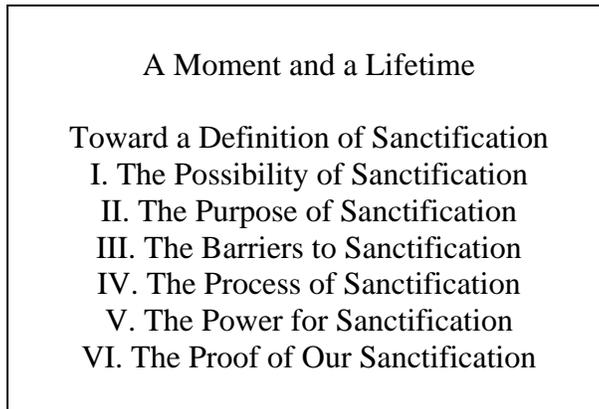
The study of the parable that is outlined in step 7 could be done in huddles of three-to-five members. Print and duplicate the questions, and allow about five minutes for group work. Call the group back together to receive reports.

Session Six

Chapter Six A Moment and a Lifetime

Introduce the Study

1. Set a healthy house plant in the front of the room. Prepare and display this visual outline of this session (cell in PowerPoint® presentation):



2. As members arrive, ask them to begin sharing their homework from step 12 of session five. List on the markerboard words they have found that begin with the same root as *sanctification*. (Some possibilities are *sanctify*, *sanctuary*, *sanctum*, *sanctimonious*. Avoid insisting on 100% accuracy.)

3. Refer to the plant you have brought, and ask, *What elements enter into the process of a house plant's healthy growth? What can stunt growth? Can the growth process be speeded or enhanced? How?* Call for someone to read Philippians 1:6. Note that the process of sanctification is similar to that of growing a plant in that it requires time and nurture to develop holiness.

Guide the Study

4. Using material in the section “Toward a Definition of Sanctification” on page 89 of *This Magnificent Salvation*, lead members to build a list of words and phrases that give understanding to the term *sanctification*. List their findings on a tear sheet. After discussion, ask: *Which of these phrases best defines sanctification for you?* (cell in PowerPoint® presentation)

- Set apart for God
- Growing in Christlikeness
- Living a holy life
- Avoiding sin

5. Explain that in our study of sanctification will be deep, we need to go about it much as investigative reporters research a story. We will try to answer the six traditional questions: *How? Why? What? When? Who? How much?*

On a clean marker board write: “Question 1: How can we stop sinning?” (cell in PowerPoint® presentation) Follow with discussion questions like these. (Employ the Scripture verses, and also material in the section “The Possibility of Sanctification,” which begins on page 91 of *This Magnificent Salvation*.)

- Can sin be outlawed? (Did prohibition work?)
- Can a person become sanctified by keeping God’s laws? (Galatians 3:10-11)
- Will we ever get beyond our struggles with sin? (Romans 7:15, 24-25)
- How does the Holy Spirit help in this struggle? (Romans 8:8-9)
- How does a believer become holier without being *holier than thou*?

6. To the markerboard add: “Question 2: Why does God want us to be holy?” (cell in PowerPoint® presentation) Call for someone to read Romans 8:28-29, and ask, *What is the good toward which God is working in our lives?* (See page 93, last paragraph.) Note that growing in Christlikeness is one of the definitions of sanctification.

7. Add “Question 3: What stands in the way of our holiness?” (cell in PowerPoint® presentation) Instruct members to scan the section, “The Barriers to Sanctification,” which begins on page 94 of *This Magnificent Salvation*, and underline obstacles to spiritual growth (see especially paragraphs 1-2 under “The Barriers to Sanctification”). Then ask them to underline and share the three ways faith can overcome (see pages 94-95, *This Magnificent Salvation*).

8. Add “Question 4: When will we become sanctified?” (cell in PowerPoint® presentation) Make two columns on a tear sheet and label them: “(1) What Is God’s Part?” and “(2) What Is Our Part?” Divide the class into two teams, and assign one question to each. Point them to the section, “The Process of Sanctification,” and ask them to select the Scripture passage mentioned in this section that they feel best answers their question. After five minutes, call for responses, and jot them on the tear sheet in the appropriate column.

9. Add “Question 5: Who helps us to become sanctified?” (cell in PowerPoint® presentation) Summarize the material in the section, “The Power for Sanctification,” which begins on page 98 of *This Magnificent Salvation*. Write

these phrases on a clean tear sheet as you develop the material (cell in PowerPoint® presentation) :

- Jesus left us his words of truth.
- We grow as we hear and do them.
- The community of believers strengthens us.
- God’s Holy Spirit produces fruit in us.

10. Finally, add “Question 6: How much holiness is enough?” (cell in PowerPoint® presentation) At the bottom of the markerboard draw a horizontal line to illustrate the process of sanctification. At the left end write: “Lost in sin;” and at the right end write: “Perfect and complete.” Near the left end intersect the line with a cross labeled: salvation begins. Ask these questions for thought and discussion:

- If sanctification is a process of growth toward Christlikeness, where would you place yourself on the line?
- Why might some people get discouraged and give up trying to please God?
- Is it possible to reach a point of sinless perfection in this life?
- How might a believer settle for less than God’s standard?

11. Sing as a closing prayer stanzas 1, 3, and 4 of “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian.”

Prepare for the Next Study

12. For session seven, ask members to prepare a one-minute testimony of a time when their church meant the most to them.

Additional Ideas

Research Teams

The six questions (steps 5 through 10) could be assigned to six teams to research and report, using the material in *This Magnificent Salvation*. Allow ten minutes for research, and then call the teams together. Suggest that each team take up to three minutes to report. Be prepared to enrich their answers from your own study of chapter six.

Visualize the Questions

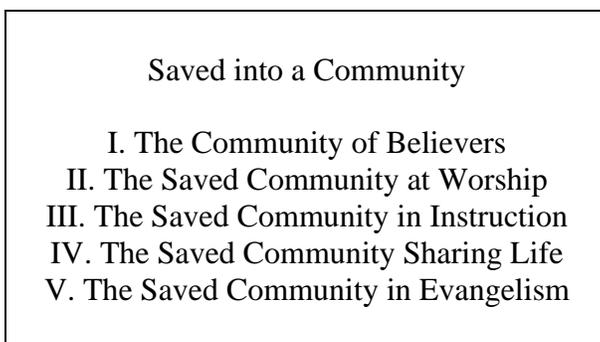
On six sheets of bright-colored paper write the six questions. Post them at various places around the study room. Refer to them as the study progresses instead of writing them on a marker board.

Session Seven

Chapter Seven Saved into a Community

Introduce the Study

1. Prepare and display this visual outline of the session (cell in PowerPoint® presentation):



2. As members gather, begin comparing testimonies of *a time when my church meant the most to me*. (See “Prepare for the Next Study” in session six.) State that sessions seven and eight shift the focus from the personal experience of receiving Christ as Savior to the responsibility of the community of believers—the church—to provide the message of grace to the world.

3. Open the study by reading the words of the hymn, “The Church’s One Foundation.” Lead in a prayer thanking God for your church.

Guide the Study

4. Provide everyone a copy of this “Church Check-Up” true/false quiz. Ask that they work in partners or huddles of three to work through the quiz. Instruct them to be positive and constructive—not critical—in their evaluations and comments. Allow about fifteen minutes for completion of this pre-test.

W-I-S-E Church Check-Up
(Mark each question *True* or *False*)

1. The community of believers—our church—asks each person who seeks membership to affirm:

- Faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior
- Baptism by immersion
- A desire to participate actively in the mission of our church

2. *W* – Worship in the Saved Community

(1) In our church worship, we

- Focus on devotion to God.
- Expand worship beyond Sunday mornings to weekday and/or home gatherings.
- Attempt to re-engage members who have dropped away.

(2) The attitude of our church at worship is

- Reverent, expecting God to work among us.
- Lively and contemporary in an attempt to draw in the lost.
- Divided as to how worship should be conducted.
- Genuinely joyful.

(3) The actions of our church in worship

- Are close to those of the early church described in Acts 2:42-47.
- Include regular observances of the Lord's Supper.
- Encourage individual reflection of our dedication and holiness before the Lord's Supper.
- Encourage seekers and non-believers to receive Jesus as Savior.
- Include a permeating involvement in prayer.

3. *I* – Instruction in the Saved Community

- We emphasize attendance at Bible study in small groups or Sunday School on a weekly basis.
- Many of our members study their Bibles individually and in their families.
- Like the Berean church in Acts 17:10-15, our Bible study affects our lifestyles and actions.

4. *S* – Sharing Life in Our Saved Community

- The spirit of our congregation is one of caring and sharing.
- People of all ethnicities and economic levels are comfortable with us.
- We accept and integrate new members well.
- When a fellow Christian has a need, we will sacrifice to assist him or her.

5. *E* – Evangelism in Our Saved Community

- Evangelism is one of the top priorities of our church;
 - We seek to lead people to Christ and active church membership through:
 - Worship; Bible Study;
 - Personal sharing with our neighbors, family, and friends;
 - Someone has been won to Christ in our church
 - within the past month. within the past year.
-

5. After fifteen minutes of small group work, call everyone together and begin to review the quiz, enriching answers from the material in chapter seven of the study text. Follow these guidelines in your sharing time:

- Take the quiz one section at a time, asking questions like these: *What is our church doing well in this segment of the check-up? Does this section raise any concerns for you? Do you have any thoughts on how we might be stronger here?*
- Take time to read the two Scripture passages within the quiz: Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 17:10-15.
- Take every opportunity to affirm your church where it measures up.
- Guide the group away from a critical spirit on any weaker points by asking, *What could or should you and I be doing to strengthen this area of our church's life?*
- Suggest that, as participants go through the quiz, they put a check by any points where they themselves might grow or improve as members of the saved community.

6. Lead group members to write a short paragraph at the end of their quiz, stating what they personally will do to make their church stronger. Close with a time of prayer, with several voicing prayers for your church.

Prepare for the Next Study

7. Request that members take time before the next study to write down three reasons they are grateful to be part of the body of Christ. Ask them to share their thoughts about belonging to a church with one person who is outside the community of believers, and come to session eight prepared to tell about that experience.

Additional Ideas

Notes of Appreciation

Follow the “Church Check-Up” discussion by writing brief notes of appreciation to staff members of your church. Come prepared with one *thank-you* card or letter for each member of your staff. (In some groups these notes could be sent by e-mail from the study room.) Include your building maintenance and secretarial associates in this activity.

Group Lecture

Instead of working through the *W-I-S-E Check-Up* in huddles, work through it as a group, section by section, asking:

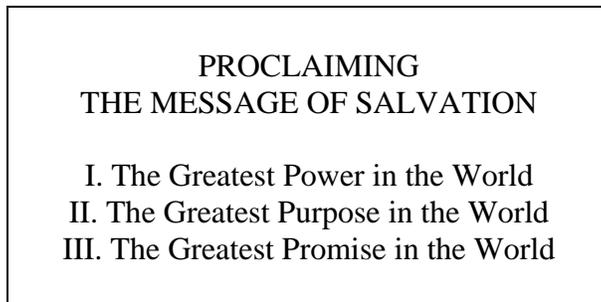
- Which of these did you mark *True*? Why?
- Which do you feel are false? Why?
- What is our church doing well?
- Where do we need to be strengthened?
- Choose the item you feel you personally could work on.

Session Eight

Chapter Eight Proclaiming the Message of Salvation

Introduce the Study

1. Prepare and display this visual outline of the session (cell in PowerPoint® presentation):



2. In preparation for steps 8, 9, and 10 of the session, place four small pieces of bright poster paper randomly on walls around the room. At the top of each one write “ALL” in five-inch letters.

3. As members gather, encourage them to share experiences they have had telling friends, associates, or strangers why they are glad to belong to the body of Christ. (See “Prepare for the Next Study” in session seven.) Affirm them for “proclaiming” the message of salvation to their worlds.

4. If music is desired, consider using “I’ll Tell the World that I’m a Christian” to set the theme for this session.

Guide the Study

5. Call on three members to read these three Scripture passages. As they read, list the Scriptures and key (parenthesized) words on a tear sheet (cell in PowerPoint® presentation).

- (1) Luke 9:1-2 (power, authority, preach the kingdom)
- (2) Luke 10:1, 8-9 (sent them, heal, tell)
- (3) Matthew 28:18-20 (authority, go, make disciples, baptize, teach)

6. Circle the word “authority” in the first and third references. Lead a group discussion on authority, presenting ideas from the section “The Greatest Power in the World” (p. 117) and asking questions as follows:

- How was Jesus’ authority evident in his ministry? (In the way he called disciples, taught, healed, forgave sin, confronted religious leaders, took charge over nature.)
- Why are we sometimes tempted to hold to our own authority, and not accept Jesus’ supremacy over us?
- How does surrender to Christ’s authority affect our being effective witnesses in the world?
- Tell or read the illustration of the community leader who took responsibility for the failures of his city council (p. 121, *This Magnificent Salvation*). Ask, *What do you think about his statement? Do you agree or disagree with it?*
- Tell or read about the cartoon of a college student praying for God’s intervention (pp. 121-122, *This Magnificent Salvation*). Follow with, *When did you hear Jesus say words like that to his disciples?* (See Mark 6:37.)
- Ask these questions from page 122 of *This Magnificent Salvation*: “What is happening in our lives and churches that we could not do on our own?” “What could Jesus’ authority look like in our lives and churches?”
- Call on a participant to read the quotation on pages 122-123 that begins, “*I am part of the ‘Fellowship of the Unashamed’ . . .*”

7. Circle “make disciples” by Matthew 28:18-20 (see step 5). Read aloud the first paragraph of the section, “The Greatest Purpose in the World” (p. 123, *This Magnificent Salvation*). Call for a show of hands on the question, *How many of you knew that “make disciples” was the main emphasis of those verses—greater than “go,” “baptize,” and “teach”?* Continue with, *Why is that important? What is involved in making a disciple? How did you develop as a disciple?*

8. Ask whether anyone has noticed the four “ALL” posters around the room (see step 2). Give a marking pen to a participant, and ask him or her to record answers for the group. Instruct everyone to look at Matthew 28:18-20 and find the first instance of Jesus’ using the word “all.” Ask the recorder to choose one poster and write, “all authority” under the large word, “ALL.”

Follow by asking, *What is the second time Jesus uses the word, “all”?* Ask the recorder to choose a second poster and write, “all nations” on it. Raise the author’s question (p. 125), “*Why do we spend money sending missionaries around the world [when] there is so much need in the United States?*”

9. Circle the words, “go” and “sent them” on the tear sheet (see step 5). State again that the main purpose of Jesus’ words was “make disciples,” and we are to do that as we go about in the world. He was saying, *As you go. . .*

Quickly divide the learners into two teams (form additional groups with duplicate assignments if the group is larger than twelve). Assign Team One “Baptizing” and Team One “Teaching” from the section, “The Greatest Purpose in the World.” Ask them to take five minutes to scan their material and speak to these things (cell in PowerPoint® presentation):

(1) Team One: Baptizing

- What does baptism mean?
- Why do Baptists teach the immersion form of baptism?
- When can a child be baptized?

(2) Team Two: Teaching

- What can happen when we do not teach new believers?
- What are we to teach?
- What is the third “all” of Matthew 28:18-20? (Point out that some translations use “all” (KJV), and others use “everything.” Have “all Jesus’ commands” added to the third “ALL” poster.)

10. Instruct the group to look once more at Matthew 28:18-20 to find the fourth use of the idea of “all,” if not the word itself. Ask the recorder to write: “Always” on the fourth “ALL” poster. Invite everyone to read or recite in unison Matthew 28:18-20. Ask, *Why is that promise of Jesus’ presence important to you personally?* Listen for responses.

Prepare for the Next Study

11. Ask members to come to the next session with the title of their favorite hymn about assurance of salvation. Plan for a *Sing-Along of Assurance* for the next session.

Additional Idea

Commissioning Certificates

From an office supply store, purchase a package of blank certificate paper (bordered paper without writing). On computer, prepare a certificate that looks like this:

Official Commissioning Certificate

Be it known on this _____ day of _____ in the year _____

that (name) _____

has been commissioned under the authority of Jesus Christ to

MAKE DISCIPLES

Be it further known that the Above Named Person is Challenged to
GO, BAPTIZE, and TEACH in Jesus' Name.

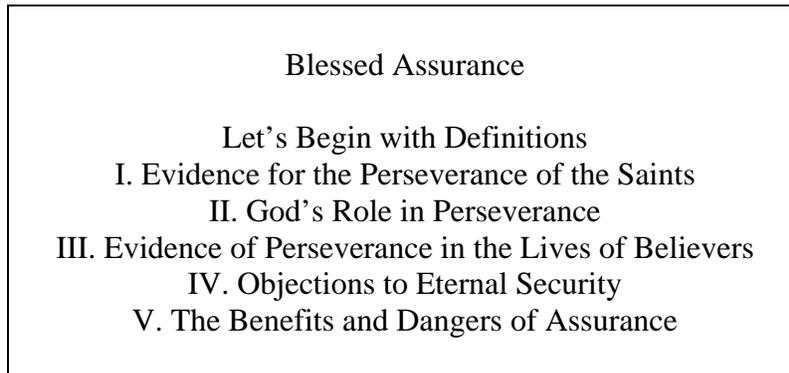
Present a certificate to each member of the study at the close of Session Eight. Ask that each one fill in his or her name and the date. State that Jesus' "Great Commission" in Matthew 28:18-20 is as much to each of us as it was to the original disciples. Close by singing again a stanza of, "I'll Tell the World That I'm a Christian."

Session Nine

Chapter Nine Blessed Assurance

Introduce the Study

1. Prepare and display this visual outline of the session (cell in PowerPoint® presentation):



2. Ask whether members have thought of hymns to suggest that express assurance of salvation. Post their suggestions on a tear sheet. (Consider these: “Blessed Assurance,” “Saved, Saved,” “I Know Whom I Have Believed,” and “Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It.”)

3. Refer to and or tell the funny shaving story at the beginning of chapter nine in *This Magnificent Salvation*. Lead the group to sing, “Blessed Assurance.”

Guide the Study

4. Point the group to the first section of chapter nine, “Let's Begin with Definitions.” Ask them to scan for the italicized phrases that are used to describe the belief that we do not lose our salvation. List these in the left column of the marker board as they are mentioned: *once saved, always saved; eternal security; the security of the believer; assurance of salvation; the perseverance of the saints.*

- Lead the group to find 1 John 5:11-13 in their Bibles. As it is read, point out three words to underline: “has,” “has,” “know.” Ask how these three words give us assurance of our salvation.
- Suggest that they mark this passage, and begin a listing of “Scriptures about Assurance” on a Bible fly leaf.

Ask them to scan the last paragraph of, “Let’s Begin with Definitions” (*This Magnificent Salvation*, p. 135) for two italicized phrases that express an opposing view. List these in the right column: *apostasy*; *falling away*. State that these two views will form the structure for this study.

5. Lead the group to sing the hymn, “I Know Whom I Have Believed.” Instruct members to turn to John 6:37-40, and mark this as an assurance passage. Suggest underlining these phrases: “never drive away,” “shall lose none,” “shall have eternal life.” Summarize the ideas in “Evidence for the Perseverance of the Saints.”

6. Add John 10:27-30 to the assurance passages. Suggest that they underline: “I know them,” “shall never perish,” “no one can snatch them.” Present these truths from the section, “God’s Role in Perseverance” (p. 136, *This Magnificent Salvation*). (cell in PowerPoint® presentation)

- God offers salvation as a gift.
- Once this gift is received we are in Christ’s hand, which is in the Father’s hand.
- “God’s grip don’t slip.”
- Without a saving relationship with God, there is no salvation and no security.

7. Enlist someone to read or tell the author’s illustration of holding his little sons’ hands in heavy traffic. Continue the truths of the section, “God’s Role in Perseverance,” by giving out the following five Scriptures. Ask that they be read aloud and marked by members as assurance passages. Add enrichment from the study text material, including the following points (cell in PowerPoint® presentation):

- God finishes what he started (Philippians 1:6).
- Nothing can separate us from God’s love (Romans 8:37-39).
- Even if we waste our efforts, our salvation is secure (1 Corinthians 3:15).
- God guards our trust (2 Timothy 1:12).
- Jesus intercedes for our security (Hebrews 7:25).

8. Lead in singing, “Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It.” Invite testimonies on these questions: *Have you ever doubted your salvation? Did you doubt God’s ability to save, or your ability to receive that salvation?* Have members turn in their Bibles to 1 John and underline these proofs that assure us we have been saved (cell in PowerPoint® presentation). See paragraph 2 on page 140 of *This Magnificent Salvation*.

- “. . . We know we are followers of Christ if we believe and live the truth.” (1 John 2:20; 4:2, 14, 16)
- “. . . Our conduct confirms our confession.” (1 John 2:3, 6, 29)
- “. . . Authentic followers of Christ love one another.” (1 John 2:10-11; 4:20-21)

9. Refer to the two markerboard columns (step 4)—terms for assurance and objections to assurance. Call for testimonies on this question: *Have you ever been certain that a person was a believer in Christ, only to discover later that he or she denied being a Christian?* Note that this is the problem of “apostasy” or “falling from grace.” Pose these objections, and ask the group to scan the section, “Objections to Eternal Security” to find possible answers:

- (1) “*If God gives us the freedom to choose Christ, then God gives us the freedom to reject him as well*” (p. 141).
- (2) Assurance of salvation leads a person to spiritual laziness at best, and sin at worst (see p. 141, third paragraph under “Objections to Eternal Security”).
- (3) There are Bible examples of men who believed and then fell away, such as Judas Iscariot and Ananias of the early church (see p. 141, last paragraph).
- (4) Some Scriptures seem to teach falling from grace (see pp. 142-143).

10. On a clean markerboard list three categories of church people (cell in PowerPoint® presentation): (1) those who are saved but not certain of it; (2) those who think they are saved but have never truly believed in Christ; and (3) those who are saved and certain of it. (See “The Benefits and Dangers of Assurance,” pp. 144-145, *This Magnificent Salvation*.) Challenge the class to help those in the first two categories find the “Blessed Assurance” we enjoy. Close by singing, “Saved, Saved.”

Prepare for the Next Study

11. Ask members to come to the next study with an answer to this question: *What would you like to do on your first day in heaven?*

Additional Idea

Debate

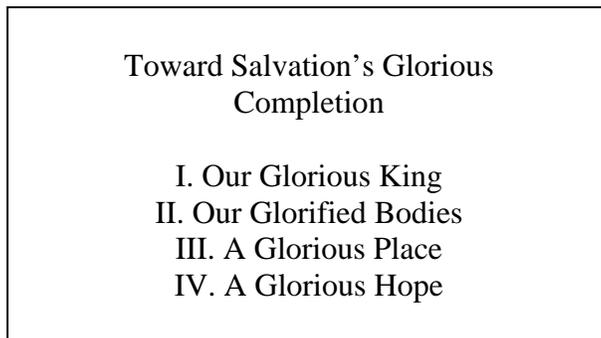
Enlist two members before the study to prepare a debate on the material in step 9. Present this resolution: “Those who have truly believed in Christ can choose to deny him and walk away.” Assign one the affirmative: yes they can walk away; and the other the negative: no, true believers cannot be lost. Ask them to list their proofs, using the material in This Magnificent Salvation, chapter nine. Allow each debater three minutes to present proofs, and then two minutes for rebuttals.

Session Ten

Chapter Ten Toward Salvation's Glorious Completion

Introduce the Study

1. Prepare and display this visual outline of the study (cell in PowerPoint® presentation):



2. As members gather, ask, *Did you decide what you would like to do on your first day in heaven?* (See step 11 of session nine.) Encourage with: *Who would you like to see? What will you do when you see Jesus? Would you look for the place prepared for you?*

3. Probably many of the group have flown on commercial airlines, and so lead them to rehearse the familiar spiel given by the flight crew upon take off. Begin a sentence, and let them complete it (cell in PowerPoint® presentation).

- Welcome aboard our flight to _____.
- Before we depart from the gate, please give attention as the flight attendants demonstrate _____.
- The captain has turned on the _____.
- There are six exits on this plane: _____.
- Restrooms are located _____.
- When we are airborne, attendants will come through the cabin with _____.
- Our expected time of arrival will be _____.

State that we are on a journey of faith, begun at the time of our decision to receive Christ as Savior. There is a destination, or completion, toward which we travel, and that is eternal life in heaven. Just as we look forward to arriving from a trip and being united with loved ones, so we look forward to the glorious hope of seeing our Lord in heaven.

4. If music is desired sing, consider “O That Will Be Glory.”

Guide the Study

5. Using material in the introduction of chapter ten, “Toward Salvation’s Glorious Completion” (pp. 146-147), explain the biblical concept of *glorification*. Include these points (cell in PowerPoint® presentation):

- It has already begun from God’s point of view (Romans 8:30).
- It can be defined as being transformed into Christ’s likeness now (2 Corinthians 3:18).
- It will be completed upon our joining Christ in heaven (Romans 8:17-18).

6. Invite members to help you explain what the Bible means when it speaks of the glory of God, using material from the section, “Our Glorious King.” As they read the following Scripture verses, fill in the background story (cells in PowerPoint® presentation).

- Exodus 33:19-23. Moses was asking for God to reveal himself and help him lead the people to the Promised Land.
- Matthew 17:1-3, 5. Jesus was transfigured before three of his disciples, and they saw God’s glory revealed on him.
- Matthew 24:30-31. At the Last Supper, Jesus promised that he would return in power and glory to claim his elect.
- Revelation 1:14-16. John the disciple, on Patmos, saw a vision of the risen Christ in his glory.
- John 17:1-5. As Jesus prepared to go to the cross, he prayed that God would restore to him the glory they shared from eternity.

State that the completion of our glorification in heaven will not be about *us*, but about Jesus and the Father. We have many hopes and dreams of heaven, but central is the desire to be with Jesus in his glory.

7. Ask, *What questions do you have about life in heaven?* Prompt with: *Will we know each other there? Do we “sleep” a while before we go there? What will our new bodies be like? How does God raise the dead back to life?* Admit that there is much we do not know for certain and cannot fully grasp about these things. Refer to and use material in the section, “Our Glorified Bodies” (pp. 150-153, *This Magnificent Salvation*, to lead this discussion. Use the following questions and guidance, too:

- What are some common false beliefs about after life that Christians do not hold? (reincarnation, annihilation, becoming angels)
- What is missing when we attend the funeral of a non-believer? (hope)

Together, turn to 1 Corinthians for answers to our questions about life in heaven. Lead them to find answers in the verses:

- What will our new bodies be like? (1 Cor. 15:42)
- Why do we call them “glorified bodies”? (1 Cor. 15:43-44)
- How will our spiritual bodies compare to those we leave behind? (1 Cor. 15:43-44)

8. Divide into two teams, and list the following verses on the markerboard (cell in PowerPoint® presentation). Assign the verses to each team. Ask them to research and find everything they can know from Scripture about what heaven (“A Glorious Place”) is like. After several minutes, call for groups to compare what they discovered, as you list by each verse the truths they found there.

- Revelation 21:1 (It will be a new place.)
- Revelation 21:3 (God will dwell with us there.)
- Revelation 21:4 (Death, sorrow, and pain will be missing.)
- Revelation 21:22 (There is no temple because God and Jesus are present.)
- Revelation 21:27 (Only the redeemed will live there.)
- John 14:1-2 (There will be a place prepared for us.)
- John 14:3 (Jesus will come and take us to himself.)

9. Close with the author’s story of his father’s coming home from war. (See “A Glorious Hope,” p. 156.) Sing together the last stanza of, “Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound.”

When we’ve been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise
Than when we first begun.

Additional Idea

Poster of Heaven

Invite members to bring pictures of loved ones who have gone to be with the Lord. On a large piece of blue wrapping paper, center a picture of Jesus. (Perhaps available in the teaching picture file of a children’s Sunday School room.) As members arrive, let them tape their pictures around the picture of Jesus to visualize that heaven is a place where we will be with him and believers who have preceded us in death.

¹ Use the order form near the end of the book *This Magnificent Salvation*, log on to www.baptistwaypress.org, or call 1-866-249-1799 for an order form.