

Welcome to this Quarter of the Wesley Bible Curriculum!

Once more we're pleased to offer thirteen weeks of thoughtful discernment and application of God's Word. How exciting it is to be led by God's Spirit in this weekly communion, through the words He inspired in His people thousands of years ago, though no less relevant for us today.

We at WPH believe the Bible to be the highest source of written authority for God's plan for His people; it reveals how we are to live out that plan, individually and corporately. All of our beliefs, practices, and priorities are to be anchored in clear biblical teachings.

What we are about through this publication is essentially the revealing of Scripture's light into each of our life paths. This is why we desire for you the same heart commitment as that so memorably proclaimed by John Wesley: "My ground is the Bible. . . . I follow it in all things, both great and small" (*A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part I* [1745]).

The foundation for transforming lives, churches, and communities through the hope and holiness of Jesus Christ rests in God's Word. The Bible prescribes the commitment of His people to be defined as a Spirit-led, praying movement called to evangelize and make disciples of all people. So when we study the Scriptures and "rightly divide" them (2 Tim. 2:15), we show ourselves to be the God-approved disciples He has designed for us to be. And we believe the fruit of our studies should be evidenced by the equipping and developing of believers, the multiplying of His church, and our being used by God's Spirit to transform lives and communities.

What we're about to enter into through this study is holy ground. Pray with us that we will do so in all wisdom—in the fear of the Lord and the joy that can only be known by the work of God's Holy Spirit, quickening and revealing His meaning to the core of our very souls.

Sincerely,

Wesleyan Publishing House Editorial Staff

Bible Study Tip—

Deepen your knowledge and understanding on these lessons by reading and studying *Wesley Bible Lesson Commentary*. This one-year volume will guide and enhance your study of the Bible by providing reliable Bible commentary; helpful features, graphics, and study options; interactive ideas for teaching and learning; and practical takeaways from each lesson.



One-Year Bible Reading Plan

By reading for about fifteen minutes each day, you can read every chapter of the Bible in one year. Begin anytime!

MARCH

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Luke 8–9 | 12. Numbers 7–8 | 23. John 4–5 |
| 2. Luke 10–11 | 13. Numbers 9–11 | 24. John 6–7 |
| 3. Luke 12–13 | 14. Numbers 12–14 | 25. John 8–9 |
| 4. Luke 14–16 | 15. Numbers 15–17 | 26. John 10–11 |
| 5. Luke 17–18 | 16. Numbers 18–20 | 27. John 12–13 |
| 6. Luke 19–20 | 17. Numbers 21–23 | 28. John 14–17 |
| 7. Luke 21–22 | 18. Numbers 24–26 | 29. John 18–19 |
| 8. Luke 23–24 | 19. Numbers 27–30 | 30. John 20–21 |
| 9. Numbers 1–2 | 20. Numbers 31–33 | 31. Deuteronomy 1–2 |
| 10. Numbers 3–4 | 21. Numbers 34–36 | |
| 11. Numbers 5–6 | 22. John 1–3 | |

APRIL

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Deuteronomy 3–4 | 12. Acts 4–6 | 23. Joshua 8–10 |
| 2. Deuteronomy 5–7 | 13. Acts 7–8 | 24. Joshua 11–14 |
| 3. Deuteronomy 8–11 | 14. Acts 9–10 | 25. Joshua 15–18 |
| 4. Deuteronomy 12–15 | 15. Acts 11–13 | 26. Joshua 19–21 |
| 5. Deuteronomy 16–19 | 16. Acts 14–16 | 27. Joshua 22–24 |
| 6. Deuteronomy 20–23 | 17. Acts 17–19 | 28. Romans 1–3 |
| 7. Deuteronomy 24–27 | 18. Acts 20–22 | 29. Romans 4–7 |
| 8. Deuteronomy 28–29 | 19. Acts 23–25 | 30. Romans 8–10 |
| 9. Deuteronomy 30–31 | 20. Acts 26–28 | |
| 10. Deuteronomy 32–34 | 21. Joshua 1–4 | |
| 11. Acts 1–3 | 22. Joshua 5–7 | |

MAY

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Romans 11–13 | 12. 1 Corinthians 5–9 | 23. 1 Samuel 25–27 |
| 2. Romans 14–16 | 13. 1 Corinthians 10–13 | 24. 1 Samuel 28–31 |
| 3. Judges 1–3 | 14. 1 Corinthians 14–16 | 25. 2 Corinthians 1–4 |
| 4. Judges 4–5 | 15. 1 Samuel 1–3 | 26. 2 Corinthians 5–8 |
| 5. Judges 6–8 | 16. 1 Samuel 4–7 | 27. 2 Corinthians 9–13 |
| 6. Judges 9–11 | 17. 1 Samuel 8–10 | 28. 2 Samuel 1–3 |
| 7. Judges 12–15 | 18. 1 Samuel 11–13 | 29. 2 Samuel 4–7 |
| 8. Judges 16–18 | 19. 1 Samuel 14–15 | 30. 2 Samuel 8–11 |
| 9. Judges 19–21 | 20. 1 Samuel 16–17 | 31. 2 Samuel 12–13 |
| 10. Ruth 1–4 | 21. 1 Samuel 18–20 | |
| 11. 1 Corinthians 1–4 | 22. 1 Samuel 21–24 | |

Key Verse

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you.

—1 Peter 1:3–4

Scripture

1 Peter 1:1–12

Lesson Focus

Salvation begins with the new birth and continues through glorification in heaven.

Check Out . . .

*Wesley Bible Lesson
Commentary Volume 1*

Unit: 3

Lesson: 1

Activity: God's Goodness

Page: 211

Full Salvation

Engage**SESSION OVERVIEW**

Our salvation is one of the greatest gifts that God has given us. Yet in the humdrum of daily living, we sometimes lose sight of the big picture. We fail to realize that God is working in our lives from the time we receive Christ as personal Savior, until the final glorification of our bodies in heaven. God has provided us with all we need for this spiritual journey, and Peter has given us an inspiring list of the milestones we should mark along the way. Are you taking full advantage of all that God offers His children? Don't live like a spiritual pauper when God has made you a child of the King.

Examine**INTRODUCTION**

First Peter is a beautiful little letter nestled near the end of the New Testament. It is concisely written and highly practical. This letter contains some great, but often overlooked, devotional writing. The epistle was penned by Peter, the apostle of Jesus Christ, and was probably sent from Rome to the churches in Asia Minor sometime between AD 62 and 64. Peter's writing deals with a variety of issues that early Christians were facing, including suffering, persecution, domestic relationships, and the meaning of salvation—both present and future.

Full Salvation

ONE: God has chosen us for salvation (1 Pet. 1:1–2).

KJV

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

NIV

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,

2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Peter used his Christian name (rather than his given name, Simon) to salute his readers and assert his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ. He was writing to a **scattered** (v. 1) group of Christians, both former Jews and Gentiles, who were temporarily living in Asia Minor. They were in exile because of persecution by the Roman government. Peter called these deported people **chosen**, or elect, **according to the foreknowledge of God the Father** (v. 2). Peter's salutation emphasized to his readers that God called them to be a part of His church and has given them the privileges enjoyed by the people of God. The purpose of God's call upon their lives was to obey Jesus Christ and be saved by His blood.

All three persons of the Trinity are involved in this salvation, which is witnessed to us by **the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood** (v. 2). Here Peter taught us that this world is not our home. He also taught us that Christians are scattered or sown throughout the world so that we might tell the good news and train others to prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ. Our heavenly Father carefully planned for our salvation, the Son shed His blood for it, and the Holy Spirit makes it all real to us.

Peter wished for his readers **grace and peace** (v. 2). Grace comes as a gift from God and the peace that reigns in our hearts results from it. We are well equipped to thrive in this world in spite of the fact that we are a displaced people.

Explore

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

1. What kind of circumstances make you feel that this world is not your home?
2. What do you think Peter meant by the term *elect*?
3. For what purpose has God placed you where you are now?

Peter identified his readers and their spiritual position in Christ. He next explained how valuable that relationship with God was.

TWO: Salvation is a gift (1 Pet. 1:3–5).

KJV

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,
 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

NIV

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you,
 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter launched into a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father. He praised God for the **great mercy** (v. 3) He has shown to us through the work of salvation in Jesus Christ. Jesus gave us the privilege of being born again and has brought us a **living** and active **hope** (v. 3). This hope should govern our daily Christian life and fill us with wondrous expectation. We should be looking for and see God day by day, working out our salvation. He has not saved us to abandon us and leave us alone. He is here with us because of **the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead** (v. 3). As children of God, we are His heirs, entitled to the wonderful **inheritance** (v. 4) of salvation. Peter described this **inheritance** as a gift from God which can never **perish, spoil or fade** (v. 4). It does not fluctuate like the stock market; neither is it

Full Salvation

dependent upon the goodwill of others. It will not lose its value and cannot be stolen. It is reserved and stored in heaven for all of those who claim Jesus Christ as Savior. Not only is our inheritance safe, but so are we as we are **shielded** or guarded by **God's power** (v. 5).

Explore

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

1. What is your most valuable earthly possession? How does that value compare with the gift God has given you?
2. What does it mean to have hope?
3. In what ways does God's power shield you today?

Because we have this great gift of salvation, the joy we feel is genuine, not dependent upon the variable circumstances of our lives.

THREE: We rejoice because of this invaluable gift, in spite of our trials (1 Pet. 1:6–12).

KJV

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

NIV

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

7 These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, **9** for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

KJV

10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

NIV

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care,

11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

After listing the benefits of the salvation that God has provided for us, Peter turned to an ever-present problem—the trials we experience in life. Trials are a part of life and Christians are not exempt from them. Jesus warned us in John 16:33 that “in this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” The fact that we experience problems in life is not a sign of spiritual failure or God’s punishment. Quite the opposite! God intends that by suffering these trials we should become more like Christ. We can **rejoice in the midst of all kinds of trials** (1 Pet. 1:6) because we know that they last for only a short time and that God will enable us to endure them. He gives multiple graces for multiplied problems.

Peter explained in verse 7 how suffering functions in our salvation, comparing our trials to **gold** that has been **refined by fire**. When gold is taken from the mine, it contains alloys that lessen its value. The gold is fired in order to purify it and increase its worth. So it is with our faith. Life problems such as financial struggles, illness, or the loss of significant people put us to the test. As we experience this testing, we have the opportunity to draw closer to God. As we trust Him to provide

Full Salvation

for our deepest needs, the things that have distracted us in the past melt away. Our faith is more valuable and precious after this testing. As a result, we will be in a position to be rewarded when **Jesus Christ is revealed** (v. 7).

The faith that draws us closer to Jesus in the times of trial also enables us to **love him** (v. 8) without ever having seen Him. Peter had “been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13) and knew Him face-to-face. None of Peter’s original readers had that privilege. Yet through faith, we are able to love Christ. Job also expressed his faith in and love for the God he had never seen. Job said, “And after my skin has been destroyed; yet in my flesh I will see God” (Job 19:26). Jesus said to Thomas “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

We are so blessed that we **are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy** (1 Pet. 1:8). We are so filled with this great salvation that we are unable to adequately express our delight in it. We cannot describe it because it is best experienced. Furthermore, it is a **glorious joy** (v. 8). It directs our thinking heavenward with future anticipation of a home with Jesus Christ. Our future salvation, which is the **goal of your faith** (v. 9) also includes sharing Christ’s inheritance (Rom. 8:17) and meeting Him in the air (1 Thess. 4:17).

Peter left the future and traveled back to the past as he reminded us of faithful Old Testament **prophets** (1 Pet. 1:10). They were inspired by the Holy Spirit and wrote concerning Christ and our salvation. They **searched intently** (v. 10), trying to find out the **time and circumstances** (v. 11) of Christ’s coming. They wanted to be a part of this salvation. It was disclosed to them that this deliverance was not for them, but for us. **Even the angels** (v. 12) who minister to us want to know more about our deliverance from sin.

Explore

UNDERSTANDING GOD’S WORD

1. In what ways has your faith been refined by suffering?
2. Do you think you would trust Jesus more if you met Him face-to-face? Why or why not?
3. What do you hope God will accomplish in your life through your present circumstances?

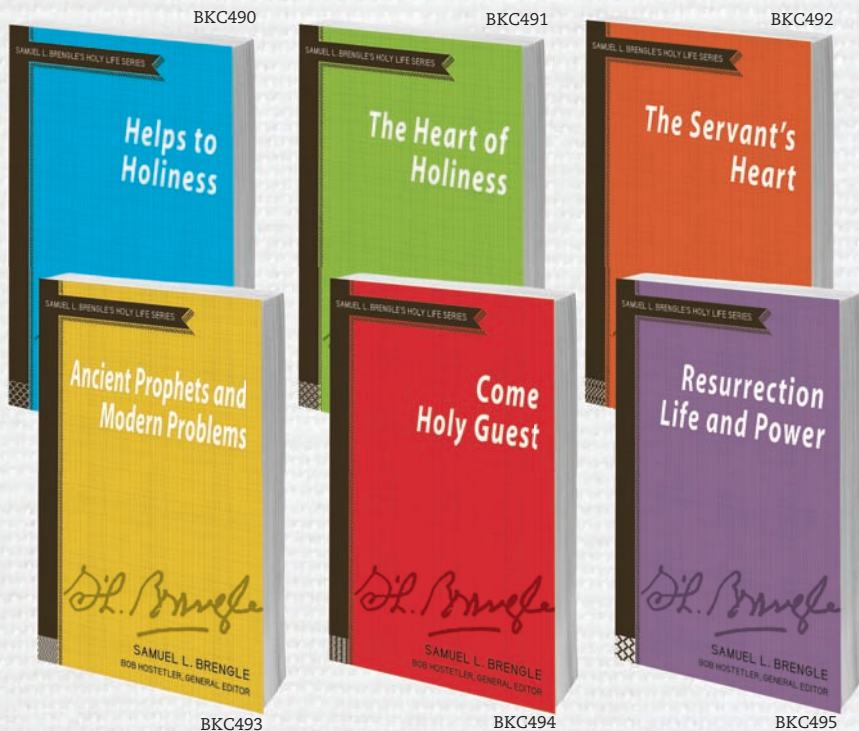
Exercise**LIFE APPLICATION**

Salvation is a journey that begins with new birth and continues through the glorification of our bodies in heaven. Review your progress on that journey so far by reflecting on these questions. Share one or two of your answers with your group.

- Have you been chosen by God?
- When were you born again?
- What spiritual progress have you made since becoming a Christian?
- Do you become more spiritually mature in good times or hard times? Why?
- What is the next spiritual milestone that you hope to pass?

This week pray daily, "Lord, what is the next step you have for me?"

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