

Lesson 2 :
*The Need for Your Whole Family
to Be Saved*

I. The Unit of God's Salvation

Luke 19:9 And Jesus said to him, To-day salvation has come to this house.

Acts 16:30-31 And leading them [the Apostles Paul and Silas] outside, he said, Sirs, what must I do that I may be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.

The word of the Lord Jesus was spoken to a great sinner, Zaccheus the tax collector, confirming that a family is the unit of God's salvation brought by the Lord. The Lord did not say that salvation had come to that person that day, but rather that salvation had come to that house. Undoubtedly, the Lord wanted Zaccheus's entire household to believe in Him and be saved. The Lord's word to Zaccheus was at once a suggestion and a notice to him!

In the dialogue between the Philippian jailer and the two apostles, the jailer asked what he himself should do to be saved; however, the apostles answered that not only he himself but also he and his household would be saved. This proves that in the heart of the apostles, sent by the Lord to preach His gospel, the Lord's salvation was for the individual, while its unit was the household. Again, the apostles' word to the jailer is both a suggestion and a notice that he should not only pay attention to his personal salvation, but also to that of his whole family!

II. Cases of Family Salvation

A. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. The Whole House of Noah

Genesis 7:13 On that very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and

The Lord God charged Noah to enter into the ark with his entire house to escape destruction by the flood. This

the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark,

Genesis 7:1 Then Jehovah said to Noah, Come into the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation.

proves that God's desire is to take the family as the unit to which He applies salvation. We are also told that Noah brought his whole house, his wife, his sons, and his daughters-in-law, into the ark according to God's desire and that, as a result, he and his entire family were delivered by God. Such is the pattern we should all follow today.

2. The Houses of Israel

Exodus 12:3-4 Speak to all the assembly of Israel, saying, On the tenth of this month each man shall take a lamb according to his fathers' house, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor next to his house shall take one according to the number of the persons in the houses; according to each man's eating you shall make your count for the lamb.

When God was about to strike the firstborn of the Egyptians, He instituted the Passover for the Israelites to save them from the judgment of the destruction of the firstborn. What God instructed them to take was not a lamb for each person but a lamb for a house. This also strongly proves that the unit of God's salvation is the family. Moreover, God charged that if a certain family was too small to eat a whole lamb, they should share one with their neighbor next door. Obviously, the neighbor was also counted as a family and not as an individual. This further proves that we should not only bring our own families to receive God's salvation, but we should also lead our neighboring families to share in God's rich and boundless salvation, which our family cannot exhaust.

3. The Whole House of Rahab the Harlot

Joshua 2:12-13 So now, swear to me by Jehovah, I beg you, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's house; and give me some token of trust, that you will preserve my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters and all that they have, and will deliver our lives from death.

Joshua 6:25 And Joshua preserved Rahab the harlot and her father's house and all that belonged to her, and she has dwelt within Israel to this day; for she hid the messengers whom Joshua had sent to spy out Jericho.

This is the story of how Rahab the harlot and her household were saved when Joshua led the Israelites to destroy Jericho. She was willing to receive the Israelite spies and begged them to save her and her entire house from destruction. Joshua then fulfilled her wish. This also confirms that the family is the unit of God's salvation.

B. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. The House of Zaccheus the Tax Collector

Luke 19:5-6, 9 And as He came to the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, Zaccheus, hurry and come down; for today I must stay in your house. And he hurried and came down, and welcomed Him, rejoicing...And Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house.

This is the story of the salvation of Zaccheus the tax collector. In this story, what the Lord did was to stay in Zaccheus's house, and what He said was that today salvation had come to this house. This is evidence that the family is the unit of the salvation brought in by the Lord.

2. The House of Cornelius

Acts 11:13-14 Send to Joppa and send for Simon who is surnamed Peter, who will speak words to you by which you shall be saved, you and all your household.

Acts 10:24 And Cornelius was awaiting them, having called together his relatives and intimate friends.

Acts 10:44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those hearing the word.

Acts 10:48 And he charged them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

This is the story of the salvation of the household of Cornelius, who was a centurion in the Roman military, and of his intimate friends. This story also proves that a person's entire family is the unit of the salvation applied by the Spirit upon men. Cornelius led not only his whole family but also his intimate friends to receive the Lord. This coincides with what was mentioned before, that is, that an entire Israelite household should share the Passover lamb with their neighbor.

3. The House of Lydia

Acts 16:14-15 Lydia...who worshipped God, was listening, whose heart the Lord opened to give heed to the things spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized and her household...

The story of this female believer and her house believing in the Lord and being baptized is also an example of the family as the unit of the Lord's salvation.

4. The House of the Philippian Jailer

Acts 16:32-33 And they spoke the word of God to him together with all those in his house. And taking them with him in that very hour of the night, he washed their stripes; and he was baptized immediately, he and all his household.

The case of this jailer's salvation bears an especially strong proof that the family is the unit of the Lord's salvation.

Besides these cases, there is the house of the royal official in Cana (John 4:46, 53), the household of Crispus, the ruler of a synagogue in Corinth (Acts

18:8), and the household of Stephanas, another Corinthian believer (1 Cor. 1:16). The story of their salvation and of their entire households' salvation proves that the family is the unit of the Lord's salvation. This is a delightful matter in the heart of the sinner-loving God and is the Lord's goal in accomplishing redemption. We must imitate the ancient saints in taking care of God's heart's desire to lead our whole family to salvation that the goal of the Lord's redemption may be achieved.

III. The Issue of Salvation

Joshua 24:15 But as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.

This is Joshua's last declaration to the children of Israel before his death, which not only indicates that he and his entire house are the object of God's salvation but also reveals the result of God's salvation with the family as a unit, that is, that he and his house will serve Jehovah. May this also become the desire of each one of us before God and our declaration to the whole universe.

Study Questions

1. What is the basic unit of salvation? Practice speaking to one another at least one of the cases mentioned in this lesson.
2. What can you do if a family member or a friend isn't saved?

Weekly Challenge

Share with a family member or a friend who has not yet received the Lord about the need to be saved. If not, pray for your family throughout the week.

Song

1

What mercy that my eyes have seen the true God,
Happily transferred from darkness into light!
What grace that I can freely have salvation,
No need to work, endeavor with my might!

2

Now that I'm saved, remember, Lord, my family,
Their sins You've borne, the way has thus been
paved;
This day fulfill the promise You have given:
"Believe in Christ; your whole house shall be
saved."

3

Lord, hear my prayer and gain
all in my family!
My heart is burning with this
vow to You:
"I and my house will serve the
Lord forever!"
We'll worship God for He
alone is true!