

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this meditation and memorisation series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will meditate on the meaning of a Bible verse about one characteristic of a disciple of Jesus Christ and then memorise it together. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. In this third series God teaches that there are 5 things that are important in the gospel message: understanding the nature of sin, knowing that judgement is a punishment for sin, believing that sin must be atoned, realising that salvation is God's gift and personally receiving Jesus into one's life. The topic of today's meditation and memorisation is: A DISCIPLE HAS PERSONALLY RECEIVED JESUS INTO HIS LIFE.

(S) **POINT 1. MEDITATION OF THE NEW BIBLE VERSE**

The new Bible that verse we will meditate and memorise is John 1:12. We will ask one another questions in order to help us to meditate on the truths written in the Bible. Let me read John 1:9-13.

John 1:9-13. "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."

The memorisation verse is: Salvation by faith. John 1:12. "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12.

(T) **First. Salvation is not universal.**

(S) John 1:9 says, "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world." Does this verse mean that every single person in the world will receive that light? Does it mean that everyone will be saved?

(T) This verse needs careful consideration. There are basically two views:

The first view is that illumination leads to salvation. According to this view, Christ came "to give light or spiritual illumination" in its highest and fullest sense, to every human being dwelling on earth, without exception. People, who hold this view, teach that everybody will be saved. They base their view on the following Bible passages. One. 1 Timothy 2:4, which says, "God our saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of truth." Two. 1 Timothy 4:10, which says, "We have put our hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, and especially of those who believe." Three. Titus 2:11, which says, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men." And four. 2 Peter 3:9, which says, "The Lord is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." These five Bible verses cannot be explained today, due to shortage of time. However, when they are studied in their contexts, none of them teach universal salvation! The universal view of salvation is not correct.

The second view is that illumination does not necessarily lead to salvation. This view is correct. According to this view, Christ came "to give light or spiritual illumination" to every person who hears the gospel. Christ gives a degree of understanding concerning spiritual matters to all those who hear the message of salvation. However, many of those who hear the gospel, do not respond favourably. Many who have received this light, still prefer the darkness. They see the light, but do not come to the light.

Jesus came with the purpose to save people from darkness. In John 12:46, Jesus says, "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness." However, many people did not come into the light. John 3:19-20 says, "Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil, hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."

The correct interpretation is that Jesus gives illumination that does not necessarily lead to salvation, because both the preceding context and succeeding context refer to a wider circle of people to whom Christ came and a more restricted circle of people who responded positively. In John 1:4-5, Jesus Christ was the light of men, yet those people who are represented by darkness did not understand him and did not take possession of him. And in John 1:10-12, Jesus Christ came to the world and to Israel, but he gave the right to become children of God only to those who received him.

The teaching that spiritual illumination does not necessarily lead to salvation is also the teaching in Hebrews 6:4-8. The same verb "to give light or to illumine" is used. It says, that another human cannot bring those people, who have once in their lives been enlightened and afterwards fall away, back to repentance.

Conclusion. Both the context in John chapter 1 as well as parallel teaching in the New Testament clearly teaches that there is a spiritual illumination, which does not necessarily lead to salvation. Jesus Christ came "to give light

about spiritual matters” to every person who hears the gospel. But only those people who come into the light are saved. The gospel of John does not teach universal salvation, but teaches a limited atonement. Not everyone is saved. But according to John 10:28, everyone that is saved remains saved!

**(S) Second. Salvation must be received, that is believed.**

John 1:12 says, “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” Actually, the verse literally says, “As many as received him, ... to them he gave the right to become children of God.” While the world and the Jewish race rejected the Saviour, Jesus Christ, individuals from both the Jews and the Gentiles accepted him. The expression “as many as” has the same meaning as the expression “whosoever”. It does not matter whether a person was a Jew or a Gentile. From now on, people receive the greatest spiritual gift of salvation without respect to nationality or physical descent!

**(T) What must a person do in order to be saved?**

**(S)** In order to be saved, a person must “*receive*” Jesus Christ. Verse 12 has several parallels in chapter 1. One. Verse 5 says, “The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.” The literal meaning is “but the darkness did not take possession of the light”. In order to be saved, a person must “*take possession of the light, Jesus Christ.*”

Two. Verse 10 says, “He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him.” The literal meaning is “but the world did not acknowledge him”. In order to be saved, a person must “*acknowledge Jesus Christ as his own.*”

Three. Verse 11 says, “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.” The literal meaning is “but his own people Israel did not welcome him.” In order to be saved, a person must “*welcome Jesus Christ into his life.*”

Four. Verse 12 says, “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” In order to be saved, a person must “*believe in the name of Jesus Christ.*”

**(T) What does it mean to believe in the name of Jesus Christ?**

**(S)** To believe in “the name” of Jesus Christ means to believe in Jesus Christ as he has revealed himself as Saviour in the Bible. We must not believe in the way other religious books or secular writings depict Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has many enemies and they will try very hard to pull people away from the Bible, because only what the Bible says about Jesus Christ is the truth! We must not believe in a different Jesus or a different gospel. To believe “in the name” of Jesus Christ means to believe in the Jesus Christ as he has revealed himself in the Bible. And it also means to believe in the merit of Jesus Christ, that is, to believe that his death on the cross made complete atonement for sins.

**(T) Third. Salvation makes one a child of God.**

**(S) What does it mean to give someone the right to become a child of God?**

**(T)** The Jews often boasted about their hereditary rights. They called themselves the “children of Abraham” (8:33). However the Bible clearly teaches that the natural descendants of Abraham are not the children of God. Only those people who receive Jesus Christ into their hearts and lives receive the right to become the children of God! People who receive Jesus Christ into their hearts and lives not only become the true children of Abraham, but also become the true children of God. The apostle John says in 1 John 3:1, “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called “children of God”! And that is what we are!”

**(S) What does it mean to be become a child of God?**

**(T)** Paul uses two different words to describe believers as children of God. He uses the word “sons” in Ephesians 1:5 and the word “children” in Romans 8:16. A believer in Jesus Christ becomes “a son” by adoption and “a child” by regeneration. For the apostles Paul and John, *salvation is regeneration*. In order to be saved, people must not merely join a religion, but *they must change!* They must be regenerated! They must receive a new heart and a new spiritual nature! Salvation in the Bible means that you are born again and become a new person. Salvation in the Bible means that you receive nothing less than God the Holy Spirit in your heart and mind and body. Salvation in the Bible happens when you are “born of God” and begin to be transformed into the likeness of God. Salvation in the Bible begins the very moment that you receive Jesus Christ or the Spirit of Jesus Christ into your heart and life. From that very moment the life from God enters your soul and body and you become a child of God. John 1:12-13 says that people who receive Jesus Christ become children of God and they are “children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” The apostle John teaches that God’s true children do not owe their new birth to “blood”, that is, to natural descent, for example, by being a descendent from Abraham. They do not owe their new birth to “the will of the flesh”, that is, to the carnal desire or sexual impulse of a man or woman. They do not owe their new birth to the “will of man”, that is, to the wish or free choice or decision of a man or woman (cf. Romans 9:16). The apostle John teaches that believers in Jesus Christ owe their new birth only to God. In no sense whatever do believers derive their new life or spiritual standing before God from physical or biological or human causes, as Nicodemus and most of the Jews believed.

(S) Why does he say, “to become a child of God” instead of “be a child of God”?

(T) According to John 1:13, a person only becomes a child of God by being born again of God, the Holy Spirit. According to 1 John 5:1, a person is born again of God when he believes that Jesus is the Christ. Thus, a person *begins* to be a child of God from the very moment he believes! From the very moment the life of God enters his soul, he becomes a child of God and enters the kingdom of God. When John 1:12 says that a person who receives Jesus Christ into his heart and life receives the right *to become* a child of God, he is not saying that he only becomes a child of God in the future. From the very moment that you believe in Jesus Christ as your Saviour, that is, from the very moment that you receive Jesus Christ into your heart and life, you are changed and are a child of God in the fullest sense, that is, God has given you a regenerated nature and the position of being his child, a member of his family. You have been *regenerated (born again)* and you have been *justified*, that is, God has declared you to be 100% righteous in his eyes and from now onwards he regards and treats you as 100% righteous.

However, God gives you much more! He gives you the right to believe that in the future you will *become* God’s child in the absolute perfect sense of the word, that is, you will *become* the child of God with a completely sanctified spirit and with a completely transformed body. Salvation in the Bible is not simply a point in history. Salvation in the Bible is *a process* that begins when you believe in Jesus Christ and is completed only when your spirit is completely sanctified and your physical body has been resurrected from the dead and has become perfectly transformed! Thus, the highest realisation of the goal to *become* a child of God is reserved for the future, namely, at the second coming of Christ. Throughout your life on earth as a believer in Jesus Christ you are sanctified and continually transformed *to become more and more what you already are in principle*. Only at the second coming of Christ will you be freed from every impurity and will the life of God, his holiness and his love, become completely manifest in you. The apostle John says this clearly in 1 John 3:2-3. “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and *what we will be* has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, *we shall be like him*, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.”

Conclusion. The transformation into a child of God is both *an instantaneous act* of God and *a gradual process*. We believers become children of God at the very moment the life from God enters our souls. However, this transformation is only completed in the future when we shall see Christ face to face. That is why the apostle John uses the words “to become children of God” instead of “to be the children of God”.

(S) **POINT 2. MEMORISATION OF THE NEW BIBLE VERSE**

Write the Bible verse on a card or in a notebook. The topic today is “Salvation by faith” and the reference is John 1:12. Let us memorise the Bible verse together.

(T+S) Salvation by faith. John 1:12. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name.

(T) Salvation by faith. John 1:12. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name.

(T+S) Salvation by faith. John 1:12. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:12.

(S) Salvation by faith. John 1:12. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:12.

(T) **POINT 3. REVIEW OF THE LAST BIBLE VERSES YOU HAVE MEMORISED**

Let us review the last 5 Bible verses that we have memorised without looking at our notebooks.

Series “The new life in Christ”, verse 5, and series “The gospel”, verses 1-4.

(S) Witnessing. Matthew 10:32. “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.” Matthew 10:32.

(T) Nature of sin. Romans 3:23. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23.

(S) Punishment of sin. Ecclesiastes 12:14. “For God will bring every deed into judgement, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:14.

(T) Atonement of sin. Romans 5:8. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8.

(S) Salvation is a gift. Ephesians 2:8-9. “For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast”. Ephesians 2:8-9.

(T) **POINT 4. ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Daily review the last five memorised Bible verses once every day for 5 weeks.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www etc.

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to “Discipleship training on the air”.