

4

God's Living Word Saves



*When have you had big news
you couldn't wait to share?*

QUESTION 1

#BSFLspoken

Jesus is the ultimate Word from God who brings salvation.

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Ever had a brush with someone famous?

- » A backstage pass to meet a singer
- » A quick handshake at a political rally
- » A celebrity spotting at the airport

You'll know if a friend has such an encounter—because he'll post it on Twitter® or Instagram®. Something as significant as meeting a celebrity will definitely rate a picture and catchy line on social media. After all, something like that doesn't just happen every day!

Jesus Christ is no mere celebrity. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, who came to earth and made it possible for every one of us to have more than just a passing encounter with Him. Running into a star at the airport or meeting someone famous *is* a memorable experience, but it doesn't compare to a personal encounter with Jesus.

Psalms 119 and Luke 1 tell of Jesus' birth and our only hope for salvation. The good news is that we don't have to wait for unexpected chances to bump into Him. No, we're offered a real relationship with the Son of God.



WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Psalm 119:41 (HCSB)

⁴¹ Let Your faithful love come to me, LORD, Your salvation, as You promised.

In verse 41, the psalmist prayed, “Let Your faithful love come to me, LORD.” The Hebrew term (*hesed*) for God’s faithful love is used about 250 times in the Old Testament. *Hesed* refers to the faithful, covenant love of God. It is His loyal love, a love that is unconditional, unchanging, and unending.

The psalmist revealed why he needed God’s love to come to him: salvation. In the Old Testament, the word “salvation” has a much broader meaning than it does in the New Testament. The Old Testament writers used it primarily to speak of rescue from trouble or deliverance from distress. The psalmist used it in this sense here. The psalmist faced difficult circumstances because of his devotion to the Word of God. He responded to those troubles by praying that God, out of His loyal love, would rescue and deliver him from his burdensome situation.

The psalmist was not necessarily looking for a miraculous touch, a new revelation, or a supernatural experience. He simply asked God to help him “as You promised” (v. 41)—according to the faithful promises He had already given. What God promises—whatever He says—will happen.

God’s promise to save is ultimately about His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God promises to save sinners from eternal punishment through faith in His Son. John wrote: “For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world that He might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:16-17). This is what the Word of God is all about.

What comes to mind when you hear the word “salvation”?

QUESTION 2

The Bible contains 66 books, written by more than 40 men over the course of multiple centuries. Yet, the Bible is about only one thing: the message of salvation. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus made this clear to two disciples who were traveling from Jerusalem with heavy hearts: “Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted for them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27). The Bible—God’s Word—is all about Jesus, who is heaven’s wonder, hell’s worry, and humanity’s way out from sin and death into the presence of God.

Luke 1:30-33 (HCSB)

³⁰ Then the angel told her: “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will call His name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”

Psalm 119:41 alludes to the personal difficulties the psalmist faced. But it points to the greater truth: God has promised to save. The great promise of salvation is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Hundreds of years after the psalmist wrote Psalm 119, God chose to send Jesus to humanity through the life of a young woman named Mary. This virgin would give birth to a son, who would be the Savior of the world. The angel Gabriel announced to Mary God’s plan and her role in it.

Why is it important that Jesus is fully human?

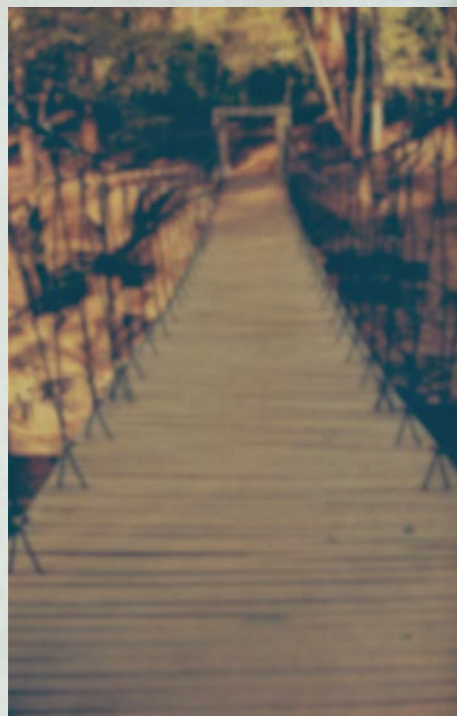
QUESTION 3

This angelic statement is clear that Mary's son would be divine—the Son of the living God. Yet, it is also significant that Gabriel made this statement to Mary about a child she would bear. It emphasizes that this child also would be fully human. Jesus became one of us. He was born and lived and died as a human being. Hebrews 4:15 assures us, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin.” Jesus knows how we feel when we bear life's tests, trials, and temptations—yet He never sinned.

Jesus experienced every aspect of our human nature except our sin nature. If Jesus had committed any sin, he would not be qualified to be our Savior. Jesus is the only true Savior because He lived the perfect life we should have lived before God.

The eternal Son of God became human to be our representative before God. Paul wrote, “There is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, Himself human, who gave Himself—a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time” (1 Timothy 2:5-6). Salvation is found in no one else (Acts 4:12). Jesus declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

God promised salvation, and He brought it to us when He came to earth as a human baby born to Mary.



THE POINT

Jesus is the ultimate Word from God who brings salvation.

"The Word became flesh and took up residence among us."

JOHN 1:14A

Why is it important that Jesus is fully divine?

QUESTION 4

GIVEN FOR ALL MEN



Listen to the song "Born in Bethlehem" by Third Day.

What phrases or images most stand out to you from this song?

Jesus was given to bring us salvation. In the space below, write out a brief prayer in response.

Luke 1:34-35 (HCSB)

³⁴ Mary asked the angel, “How can this be, since I have not been intimate with a man?” ³⁵ The angel replied to her: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.”

When the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would have a child, she was understandably confused. She was a virgin. “How can this be, since I have not been intimate with a man?” (v. 34). Mary didn’t doubt, but she could not fathom how God would accomplish this, so the angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy One to be born will be called the Son of God” (v. 35).

The birth of Mary’s child clearly would not be a normal birth. She would conceive the child she would bear by “the Holy Spirit” and “the power of the Most High.” The child therefore would be called the Son of God because He would be the Incarnation of the living God. Jesus truly would be God in the flesh.

This unmistakable claim to Deity permits no middle ground. Jesus was either a liar who intentionally deceived people, or a lunatic who sincerely but mistakenly believed He was God. *Or He is exactly who He claimed to be: Lord of all.* This is the One we proclaim: Jesus, who is fully man and fully God.

Jesus is infinitely more than just a sweet little baby in a manger whom we celebrate at Christmas. That fully human child was also fully God, and He grew to be a man who brought the ultimate salvation promised in the Old Testament. This salvation is not a work of human achievement; it is a work of divine accomplishment—and a gift to us from God.

Look back to the prayer offered in Psalm 119:41: “Let Your faithful love come to me, LORD, Your salvation, as You promised.” God’s faithful love has come to us in the birth of a child, and Jesus has given us His promised salvation.



How did you come to understand who Jesus is?

QUESTION 5

LIVE IT OUT

What will you do this week with the truth that Jesus is the Word who brings us salvation?

- » **Accept the gift.** Jesus is God who came to earth to give you life. Believe that truth and trust your life in His hands. To know more about how to become a Christ-follower, read the inside front cover of this book and talk to your Bible study leader.
- » **Live the gift.** A life in Christ is a changed life. Pray daily that Jesus would make you more and more like Him.
- » **Share the gift.** Many people are aware of the basics of the story of Jesus' birth. Make it your goal to tell them the significance of that event—God came to earth as a man to save us. Identify one person you know who might not know Jesus as Savior. Pray, ask for God's favor, and share the hope of Christ.

Musicians, government leaders, and celebrities will come and go; none compare to Jesus. **God's great promise of salvation is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.**



My thoughts