

LESSON 4

Teacher Key to Religious Terms

Baptism – The word “baptism” in Jewish usage first appears in the Mosaic laws of purification (Exodus 30:17-21; Leviticus 11:25), where it means washing or cleansing. Jews baptized proselytes. John's baptism was connected with repentance so that Jews might be spiritually prepared to recognize and receive the Messiah, and it differed from the baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:16; John 1:26). Christian baptism symbolizes union with Christ (Galatians 3:26, 27) remission of sins (Acts 2:38), identification with Christ in His death to sin and resurrection to new life (Romans 6:3-5), and becoming a member of the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). The blessings of baptism are received by faith (Romans 6:8-11).

Calvary – a place not far from the walls of Jerusalem where Christ was crucified and near which He was buried (Luke 23:33). The Latin **calvaria** is a rendering of the Greek **kranion** (skull) which renders the Hebrew **Gulgoleth** and the Aramaic **Gulgulta**. The common explanation is that the name was due to the cranial shape of the hill.

Christian – the biblical meaning is “adherent of Christ.” The disciples were formally called Christians first in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Agrippa recognized that to believe what Paul preached would make him a Christian (Acts 26:28). Peter accepted the name as in itself basis for persecution (I Peter 4:16). The apostles wrote of themselves as servants (slaves) of Christ (Romans 1:1; James 1:1; II Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1; Revelation 1:1).

Conversion – a turning, which may be literal or figurative, ethical or religious, either from God, or, more often, to God. It implies a turning from something and a turning to something, and usually is associated with repentance (Acts 3:19; 26:20) and faith (Acts 11:21). On its negative side it is turning from sin, and on its positive side, it is faith in Christ (Acts 20:21). Although it is an act of man, it is done by the power of God (Acts 3:26). In the process of salvation, it is the first step in the transition from sin to God.

Holiness – is translated from a Hebrew root meaning **separateness** or **withdrawal**. It is first applied to God, and is early associated with ideas of purity and righteousness. The words “holiness, holy” do not occur in Genesis, though implied in the dread which the presence of God inspires (Genesis 28:16,17), but from Exodus 3:5 on, where God reveals His name and nature, holiness is constantly stressed. A few of the many Biblical references:

God is “glorious in holiness” (Exodus 15:11).

He acts with “His holy arm” (Isaiah 52:10).

His words and promises are holy (Jeremiah 23:9; Psalm 105:42).

His name is holy (Leviticus 20:3; I Chronicles 29:16).

His Spirit is holy (Isaiah 63:10-11; Psalm 51:10).

The holiness of Jesus Christ is specifically stressed. Evil spirits recognized Him as “the holy one of God” who had come to destroy them (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34). Jesus is holy because of His wondrous birth (Luke 1:35). The Father “hath sanctified” Him, declared Him and made Him holy (John 10:36). He is “holy and true” (Revelation 3:7).

The idea of holiness originates in the revealed character of God and is communicated to things, places, times and persons engaged in His service. Its ethical nature grows clearer as revelation unfolds, until the holiness of God, the church as a body, and of individual members of that body, fills the New Testament horizon. Holiness is interwoven with righteousness and purity. To seek holiness apart from the other qualities of a Christ-like life, is to wander from the way of holiness itself.

Regeneration – “to be born again” or “to be restored.” Though the word is only actually used twice in the New Testament (Matthew 19:28; Titus 3:5), many synonymous passages suggest its basic meaning. Related terms are:

Born again—John 3:3, 5, 7.

Born of God—John 1:13; I John 3:9.

Quickened—Ephesians 2:1, 5.

Renewed—Titus 3:5; Romans 12:2.

Regeneration is, therefore, the spiritual change wrought in the heart of man by an act of God in which his sinful nature is changed and by which he is enabled to respond to God in faith. Regeneration involves an illumination of the mind, a change in the will, and a renewed nature. It extends to the total nature of man, irrevocably altering his governing disposition, and restoring him to a true experiential knowledge in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4). It is a partaking of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4), a principle of spiritual life implanted in the heart.

The efficient cause of regeneration is God (I John 3:9) acting in love through mercy (Ephesians 2:4, 5) to secure the new life in man through the instrument of His Word (I Peter 1:23).

Redemption – rooted in the secular usage of the word, the New Testament doctrine of redemption draws its meaning from a parallel with the market-place concept “to buy back,” and thus describes the specific means by which the larger salvation concepts may be gathered.

Originally restricted to its commercial usage, the word is used in the New Testament to contain both the *idea* of deliverance and the *price* of that deliverance, or *ransom*. Both ideas are in Romans 3:24 where it is asserted that man is freely justified by grace “through redemption that is in Christ Jesus”; in I Corinthians 6:20 where redemption is viewed as being “bought with a price”; and in Galatians 3:13 where Christ is said to have redeemed us “from the curse of the law being made a curse for us” (Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:18, 19; Revelation 5:9).

Redemptiveness connotes deliverance from the enslavement of sin and release to a new freedom. This new freedom is presented in Scripture as always residing in Christ. Man is redeemed from sin to a new life in Christ (Romans 6:4). The fundamental idea of the word is a dual one: redemption **from** and redemption **to**. Redemption is from the law; from the penalty of the law; from sin; from Satan and from all evil. Redemption is to a new freedom from sin; a new relationship to God, and a new life in Christ.

Redemption rests in Christ's satisfaction of the requirements for ransom. He took our sinful nature upon Himself in order that He might satisfy the demands of the law by assuming our guilt. Voluntarily exercising His will so to do, He achieved the ransom within Himself in order that He might deliver us from the bondage of sin. ***“Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit”*** (I Peter 3:18).

Righteousness – the quality of rightness or justice. In the most frequent and most important biblical usage, righteousness is conceived as judged by the standard of God's holy law, which is derived from His holy character, and “summarily comprehended” in the Decalogue (Exodus 20:1-17).

Throughout the Bible, mankind is considered to be corrupt and lacking in righteousness (Romans 3:23) on account of the representative, self-corrupting act of our original progenitor (Romans 5:12-21). Man is held to be totally incapable of making himself righteous (Romans 3:19, 20).

Only through the atoning work of Christ can man be given righteousness. (Isaiah 54:17, “Their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.”)

This imparting of righteousness is in two distinguishable but inseparable phases. In justification by faith man is forensically made right with the demands of the law by the atonement of Christ (II Corinthians 5:21). In sanctification he is progressively made righteous in character and conduct (I John 1:7-9).

Salvation – not necessarily a technical theological term, but simply denotes “deliverance” from almost any kind of evil, whether material or spiritual. Theologically, however, it denotes:

1. The whole process by which man is delivered from all that interferes with the enjoyment of God's highest blessings.
2. The actual enjoyment of those blessings.

The root idea in salvation is **deliverance** from some danger or evil. This deliverance may be from:

Defeat in battle (Exodus 15:2).

Trouble (Psalm 34:6).

Any enemy (I I Samuel 3:10).

Violence (I I Samuel 22:3).

Reproach (Psalm 57:3).

Exile (Psalm 106:47).

Death (Psalm 6:4).

Sin (Ezekiel 36:29).

The outstanding instance of divine salvation in the early history of Israel was the deliverance from Egypt. Since it is God who provides the deliverance, He is often spoken of as Saviour (Isaiah 43:3,11; Jeremiah 14:5), a title which in the New Testament is usually applied to Jesus Christ. At first the conception of salvation is primarily national, but gradually the prophetic horizon broadens and salvation is seen to include Gentiles as well as Jews (Isaiah 49:5, 7; 55:1-5). There is also increasing stress upon the individual. Salvation is not necessarily for the nation as a whole, but for the righteous remnant. It includes, moreover, deliverance from sin itself as well as from the various evils which are the consequence of sin (Psalm 51; Jeremiah 31:31-35; Ezekiel 36:25-29). With the development of the Messianic idea the word *salvation* comes to be used in the technical theological sense of the deliverance, especially from sin, to be brought in with the Messianic age.

In the Old Testament, complete trust in God was the most important of the human conditions for salvation. Next in importance, and following naturally from the first, was obedience to God's moral law as expressed in the various codes of law. God, however, was not satisfied with a mere legalistic fulfillment of the letter of the law. Forgiveness of sins was conditioned upon repentance. Most sins also required a ritual sacrifice as part of the act of repentance.

The central theme of the entire Apostolic age is the salvation brought by Jesus. Salvation is represented primarily as deliverance from sin. The whole New Testament lays stress upon the sufferings and death of Christ as mediating salvation (Ephesians 2:13-18). As in the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 9:22) salvation throughout the New Testament is regarded as a present experience, but it is eschatological as well. Indeed, the blessings of salvation the believer has now are only a foretaste of what are to be his in the coming age, after Christ comes. The salvation Christ brings is not merely deliverance from future punishment, but also from sin as a present power (Romans 6). It includes all the redemptive blessings we have in Christ, chiefly conversion, regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. It provides a solution for the whole problem of sin, in all its many aspects. In some sense, the doctrine of salvation extends beyond man so as to affect the universe. Eventually all things are to be subjected unto the Son (I Corinthians 15:28), and all things in heaven and on earth will be summed up in Christ (Ephesians 1:10).

All definitions taken from the Zondervan Compact Bible Dictionary – Zondervan Reference Library, (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994) pp. 69, 99, 108, 116, 230, 492, 493-93, 502, 516-17.