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# EXPLAINING




## Salvation


DAVID PAWSON

BIBLE TEACHER

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This booklet is based on a talk. Originating as it does from the spoken word, its style will be found by many readers to be somewhat different from my usual written style. It is hoped that this will not detract from the substance of the biblical teaching found here.

As always, I ask the reader to compare everything I say or write with what is written in the Bible and, if at any point a conflict is found, always to rely upon the clear teaching of scripture.

**David Pawson**

# EXPLAINING Salvation



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DAVID PAWSON

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# EXPLAINING Salvation

When God sent his Son to this world, he came to save us and that is why he is called 'Jesus', which means: he will save his people from their sins. So I want to look at this word 'save'. What does it mean? There are two big questions which we will ask. Number one: why do we *need* to be saved? Number two: why does God save us – what did he have in mind? The first basic issue is: saved *from* what? Did he come to save us from fear, from depression, from uselessness? The answer is very specific in the Bible: he came to *save us from our sins*. And until we understand what sin is, we won't understand what the title 'Saviour' means.

Let us go right to the heart of it. God has written this world off. We have made such a mess of it; we have messed up our human relationships and our environment. The world is in a mess; anybody who won't agree with that is living with their eyes shut. So God has actually decided to make a brand new outer space and planet Earth, and he wants to put people in it, just as he wanted to put people in this one. But if he puts us in that new world as we are, we will have it polluted in no time. So the reason why he wants to save us is to prepare us for that new world. Frankly, that means more than just saving us from our sins, it means saving us from ourselves and making us such new people that we can go into that new world without ruining it. That is why salvation

is a *process*; it doesn't just happen in a moment like that. It takes a lifetime and more, and God actually *begins* to save us when we turn from our sin to him, in faith.

That is when it all starts but it is only a start; it is only the beginning; and the end is when we are absolutely perfect, and ready then for the new world. That is why God has come, or sent his Son, to save us – to make us perfect.

Now my wife has tremendous faith but there is one thing I teach that she has real difficulty believing, and that is when I tell her that one day her husband will be perfect. In fact, she said, 'If I built my faith on experience, I couldn't believe it,' but she also said, 'I'll try and base it on the promises of God.' God has not finished with me yet but that is the *end* of being saved – that we shall be perfectly restored to what God meant us to be when he made us: perfectly restored to his image or to the image of his Son; perfectly like Jesus. That is quite a target, but it is God's target and that is why he begins to save us right now. Then I have to believe that one day my wife will be perfect, but that is rather easier for me than it is for her to believe that I will be.

God has to start somewhere and if you let him he will start with *you* right now. That is the glorious news, and he starts with pretty bad people. In fact he doesn't mind what he starts with as long as we let him finish the job. That is another story, but it means that salvation is not automatic. It comes from co-operating with God from beginning to end, and if we stop co-operating with him, as we are perfectly free to, then the whole process of salvation stops and God is frustrated, having begun a good work in us and then we don't want to continue. So that is it.

So I don't believe in this cliché 'once saved, always saved'. No! Once we are really saved – which is still future for me – then I can say 'once saved, always saved', but not until then.

So how does it all start? Let us just look at that briefly.

It starts with something called *repentance*, which is not a popular word. But it means quite simply agreeing with God's verdict on your life, believing that he knows you better than anyone else – and he calls every one of us a sinner because we are just not what he wanted us to be. We have fallen far short of his ideal for us and he must be very disappointed with many of us. He knows what I could have been by now – and what I am not by now. Had I really co-operated with him all my life and made every decision according to his will, and really listened to him and obeyed him, I would be a very different person to the one I am now. So he must be disappointed. However, he still has hopes and God has hopes more than I have, but I now share his hope that one day I will be perfect and able to go into that new universe without ruining it – either for me or for other people or for him. But if I went as I am now I would spoil it very quickly.

So I am in the process of being saved, and that is why it is called in the Bible the *way of salvation* or the *road* of salvation. It is a process and once you get on that road it is an exciting road to travel but it is a tough road – a narrow road, as Jesus says – but it leads to life, whereas the broad road that most people are on leads to death. And it is better to be on a road that leads to life than a road that leads to death.

Well now, let us go back to the beginning. It begins when I have a good look at myself and realise how God sees me – not how other people see me but how *he* sees me, because he knows the truth, the whole truth, about us, whereas we manage to hide quite a lot from other people. We put a face on and we want people to think we are nice and good; and we compare ourselves with other people instead of comparing ourselves with Jesus. When you do that, you feel dirty, you feel ashamed. You want to say with one of his friends, Simon Peter, 'Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord' – I am not good enough for you.

Now that is the beginning of it all, when you realise that you are not good enough for God; you are not good enough to go into that new universe; you are not good enough to go to heaven. When you realise that, you repent, and that is not just saying sorry, it is turning away from everything that you know is spoiling your life for God – not for you, not for other people, but for *him*. And you deliberately stop doing the things that he doesn't like you doing, and you stop even *thinking* the things that he doesn't like you thinking, or even *feeling* the things he doesn't like you feeling. You realise that you have been living for what *you* thought was right, what *you* thought was good, but in his eyes it is just not good enough, and you turn from those things and you turn to him. You say: Lord I realise what I am, I realise where that will lead me unless something changes. Will you please start with me now; will you begin to save me right now?

That is repentance, and it can be quite a hard thing to do. It means giving up some things that are very precious to you. Having said that, it is always step number one. Step number two is to *believe* in the Lord – not just in God but in his Son Jesus Christ – and to believe that he has done everything he could to save us, and that he will do everything he can, provided we co-operate. In particular, you realise that Jesus actually was punished for all those things you have realised were wrong, and that he paid a heavy price for our salvation – that is how we talk – and he paid the price of his own blood. When you realise that somebody actually died for you, died in your place and then rose again to bring you new life, something happens that is quite revolutionary in your life. Jesus becomes *your* Saviour and *your* Lord, and from now on he is in charge; from now on it is *his* will, *his* pattern for your life. You find yourself with totally changed ambitions. It is what *he* wants you to do that you want to do now.

That is step number two, but of course you will never do

it on your own. If you try to be as good as you ought to be on your own, you will fail miserably. We need help, and here comes the third amazing thing. You now know God as your Father, you know Jesus as your Saviour, but you need more help than that. You need the Holy Spirit, and Jesus promised on the night before he died – he told the twelve friends he had – you need somebody else to come and stand by you, somebody else to come to help you, and that is the Holy Spirit. 'As soon as I get back to my Father in heaven, I'll pray to him and I'll ask him to send you the same power that I've had.' That is an remarkable promise and an amazing prayer – that you can have the same power that Jesus had, not just to do miracles but to *be* what God wants you to be. So he sends the Holy Spirit into your heart to live *in* you. Jesus is now in heaven on the right hand of God the Father, and from there he controls everything. But you need help down here, and it is the Holy Spirit who takes over from what Jesus was while he was on earth and, as Jesus said, he is another comforter or another standby, someone who can be with you and help you to do what Jesus helped his first disciples to do.

What do we do then? The answer is that you need two baptisms – one is in water and the other is in the Holy Spirit. Baptism in water is not something that gives a baby a name. It has nothing to do with that. Baptism in water is to be plunged right into water, covered over with it, buried in it, bathed in it. In fact it is a burial for someone who is now dead and it is a bath for someone who was dirty. From the very beginning, people have become Christians by being baptised in water in the name of Father Son and Holy Spirit. That is essential to this process of salvation. It begins it properly, gives you a clean start.

I remember when I baptised Cliff Richard and he said afterwards in his biography that I washed him, rinsed him, and hung him up to dry and that he never felt so clean in

his whole life as he did at that moment. He had experienced baptism as it ought to be. I know another young man who had a tattoo of the devil on his body and he got baptised in water as a believer, and when he came up out of the water the tattoo had been washed away. That is what it is about – to give you a clean start, set you free from the past. But it doesn't do anything for your future. It cleans up the past but you need another kind of baptism for the future, and that is what we call *baptism in the Holy Spirit* and that is to be so filled up with the Spirit that you overflow. That is how you tell when the petrol tank of your car is full to overflowing – it comes out of the hole. You have an overflow right underneath your nose! And when you are full of anything it comes out of your mouth. If you are full of happiness, you laugh; if you are full of anger, you shout; if you are full of fear, you scream. Whatever you are full of (Jesus said this), whatever the heart is full of comes out of your mouth. So, sure enough, when people get baptised in the Holy Spirit, they get so full of the Spirit that their mouth opens and something comes out. It may be praise, it may be a language that you have never learned. Have you ever heard of 'tongues'? Well, all it means is languages. It is not a funny word, it just means that you will be given a language that you never learned at school and you can speak fluently in this language to God. It is a new experience in prayer as well as praise.

Well now, those four things – repentance, faith in Jesus who died and rose again, baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit – are the four steps that I know of for getting into the kingdom of God – coming under his rule, living by his rules. That is what it means. 'Kingdom' means he reigns and rules, not like a constitutional monarch such as we have in our Queen, but somebody who actually *rules* as well as reigns, and that is what God does. That is what we mean by the 'kingdom of God'. So in these four ways you

have entered the kingdom of God, you have *started* on the way of salvation, and if you continue on that way, you will never stop until you arrive in a brand new heaven and a new earth – a new earth that is more wonderful than this world and has none of the dangers or disasters or sicknesses of this world. That is something to look forward to, and that is the dream that will become reality one day.

Well, that is roughly what I understand by salvation. It is something pretty big, and it is not just for you and me, it is for the whole world. It is for creation itself. Even nature is not what God intended it to be. It left his hand as something very good. Things have gone deeply wrong, but he wants to put it right. It is as simple as that – salvation is God putting things right.



# ABOUT DAVID PAWSON

A speaker and author with uncompromising faithfulness to the Holy Scriptures, David brings clarity and a message of urgency to Christians to uncover hidden treasures in God's Word.

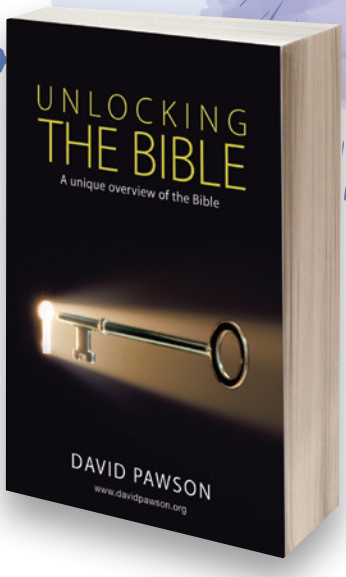
Born in England in 1930, David began his career with a degree in Agriculture from Durham University. When God intervened and called him to become a Minister, he completed an MA in Theology at Cambridge University and served as a Chaplain in the Royal Air Force for three years. He moved on to pastor several churches, including the Millmead Centre in Guildford, which became a model for many UK church leaders. In 1979, the Lord led him into an international ministry. His current itinerant ministry is predominantly to church leaders. David and his wife Enid currently reside in the county of Hampshire in the UK.

Over the years, he has written a large number of books, booklets, and daily reading notes. His extensive and very accessible overviews of the books of the Bible have been published and recorded in *Unlocking the Bible.* Millions of copies of his teachings have been distributed in more than 120 countries, providing a solid biblical foundation.

He is reputed to be the "most influential Western preacher in China" through the broadcast of his best-selling *Unlocking the Bible* series into every Chinese province by Good TV. In the UK, David's teachings are often broadcast on Revelation TV.

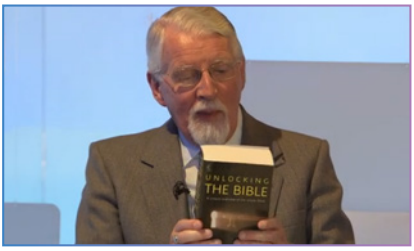
Countless believers worldwide have also benefited from his generous decision in 2011 to make available his extensive audio video teaching library free of charge at **www.davidpawson.org** and we have recently uploaded all of David's video to a dedicated channel on **www.youtube.com**

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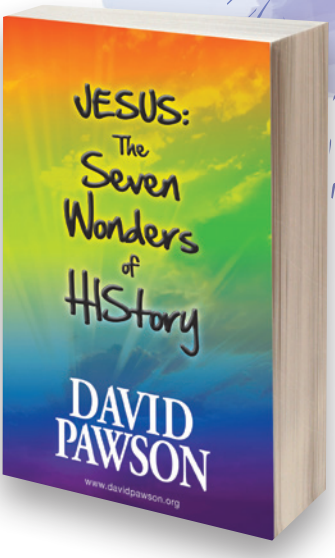
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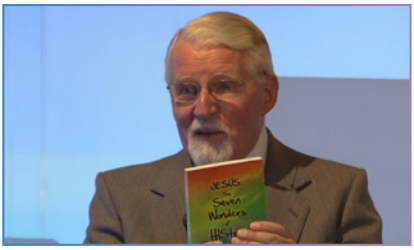



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David Pawson's vision is that his teaching library should be made available to as many people groups as possible around the world, in their own languages, for the lowest possible cost whilst maintaining the highest possible quality.

In 2011 the Trust started the work of transcribing and translating David's Teaching Library into other languages. Including Mandarin, Spanish, and Russian as well as many other international languages most recently we have started translating into Arabic, Portuguese, Bahasa Indonesian, Tamil, German and Polish and there is much more to do.

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