



ABOUT

SALVATION



QUESTIONS

30 DEVOTIONS FOR
KIDS, TEENS & FAMILIES

CHAMP THORNTON

FOREWORD BY PAUL DAVID TRIPP

“Nothing is more important to parents than the salvation of our children. Yet it can be difficult to have meaningful conversations about it with our kids. In this clear and concise book, Champ Thornton provides families with an engaging resource to talk about the need for salvation and the Savior who meets that need.”

Nancy Guthrie, author, *The One Year Praying through the Bible for Your Kids*

“It can be so difficult to know where to begin or what resources are available for family devotions. For that reason, I am so thankful for this excellent series for kids, teens, and families from Crossway! Champ Thornton’s volume, *10 Questions about Salvation*, is a wonderful starting place for any parents who want to have important spiritual conversations with their children. These warm and engaging devotions are the perfect length to help your family grow together as you talk about God’s gracious salvation for all who believe.”

Melissa Kruger, author; Vice President of Discipleship Programming, The Gospel Coalition

“*10 Questions about Salvation* provides upper elementary and older teens with a resource to help them understand the path to salvation in Christ. I love the prayers and reflections that follow each devotion, which call readers to consider their own lives and help them discern where they stand regarding the truth they just learned. Champ Thornton effectively explains difficult questions simply, with everyday illustrations kids will understand—a well-written youth discipleship and family resource.”

Marty Machowski, Executive Pastor, Covenant Fellowship Church, Glen Mills, Pennsylvania; author, *The Ology* and *The Redemption Tales*

"I cannot wait to put this volume in the hands of students! Champ Thornton communicates deep truths in a clear, accessible manner. He is pastoral in his approach, so any parent or pastor could place this in the hands of young students, knowing that they will be well cared for. He patiently explains terms and lingo, guarding from any assumptions about the reader. Everyone should stock their churches with copies of this book to hand out to anyone (young or old) seeking to know what true salvation is."

John Perritt, Director of Resources, Reformed Youth Ministries; author; father of five

"Champ Thornton has crafted a simple yet powerful resource that will benefit both parents and children of all ages. Through clear, Scripture-based answers and easy-to-grasp illustrations, this devotional beautifully unpacks the life-giving truths of salvation. Whether you are a parent seeking to present the gospel to your children or an individual of any age searching for answers, this book will be an invaluable guide on your spiritual journey."

Leslie Nunnery, Cofounder, Teach Them Diligently; author, *Teach Them Diligently* and *Heart School*

"Champ Thornton takes on the biggest, most important, and essential questions a family will ever have to face, and he's worked them into an approachable devotional guide. He equips parents to overcome all the intimidation of potentially daunting, critical topics of faith and salvation, and he's made it easy for us to have some beautiful family conversations about them. Every single Christian family needs this resource."

Adam Griffin, Lead Pastor, Eastside Community Church, Dallas, Texas; Host, *The Family Discipleship Podcast*; coauthor, *Family Discipleship*

“Champ Thornton has struck the right balance. Young families need both brevity and substance—and that can be hard to find. The question-and-answer format engaged our whole family, with kids ranging from ages seven to fourteen. These ten truths about salvation are too important to hope that they might simply be *caught* in a Christian home. Let’s make sure they are clearly *taught*. This book will help.”

David Mathis, Senior Teacher, *desiringGod.org*; Pastor, Cities Church, Saint Paul, Minnesota; author, *Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines*

“Sometimes, we feel like asking a ton of questions is dumb. But when it comes to God and salvation, asking questions is the smartest and best thing we can do! I love how Champ Thornton anticipates our questions and points us to Jesus and his word—the only source of perfect truth. Read on, and your faith in God’s Son will be strengthened!”

Kristen Wetherell, author, *Help for the Hungry Soul* and *What Makes You Beautiful*

“Clarity is always important, but there is no topic on which clarity is more critical than salvation. This book offers a clear, accessible explanation of the gospel and salvation in digestible bites. Filled with theological richness in easy-to-read, low-time-commitment installments, it functions as an achievable devotional tool for preteens and teenagers.”

Cameron Cole, Founding Chairman, Rooted Ministry

10
Questions
about
Salvation

10 Questions

Edited by Champ Thornton

10 Questions about Salvation, Champ Thornton

10 QUESTIONS ABOUT SALVATION

30 Devotions for Kids,
Teens, and Families

Champ Thornton

10 Questions about Salvation: 30 Devotions for Kids, Teens, and Families

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For Robben
Best friend, beloved wife, and
partner in the gospel of Christ

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Foreword

Every human desires to know and understand things because God hardwired that desire in us. When you were a toddler, you would ask your mom or dad endless *why* questions, and when they would give you an answer, you'd ask *why* to their answer. Because you seek to understand things, you are constantly asking questions—in your mind or out loud. And because you are asking questions all the time, you are always looking for answers.

Here's what's important to understand about people like you and me: We live our lives based not on what we have experienced but on how we have made sense of what we have experienced. You never leave anything in your life alone. You are constantly thinking about things, unpacking them in your mind, trying to understand them, and hoping things will make sense to you.

God knows you because he made you, so he understands your desire to make sense of your life. This is why he has given you his word, the Bible. In it, you find not only the best answers ever but also the best questions ever. You see, insightful people are not the people with the correct answers. Rather, they're the people with the proper questions—because you don't get the correct answers unless you ask proper questions. Within the brilliant questions the Bible asks and the brilliant answers it gives, you will find the greatest story ever told. It's the story of a perfect

world created by a loving God. It's the story of people made in God's image who turned their back on God, wanting their own way. It's the story of a world broken by sin and a God who sent his Son to fix everything sin had broken.

The Bible asks and answers the most critical questions: Why do we do bad things (sin), and where will we find forgiveness and the power for change (salvation)? This is what I love about *10 Questions about Salvation*. It looks to the Bible to ask and answer the most important questions you could ever ask in your life. Finding the correct answers in life is incredibly important—in fact, it is a matter of life and death. So open your heart and mind and read carefully, thoughtfully, and patiently. In this book are questions everybody should ask and answers everybody should seek and understand. And best of all, this book introduces you to the best thing to know. Actually, the best thing to know is not a “thing” at all but a person, and his name is Jesus. I hope this book helps you to know him. And in knowing him, come to trust him. And in trusting him, experience the wonderful life of rest, hope, and peace that only he can give. Jesus meets us in our weaknesses, failures, and sins with the best thing ever: grace. May this book help you to seek and celebrate his grace in new and fresh ways.

Paul David Tripp

OCTOBER 25, 2024

Series Preface

Jesus loved questions.

If you open your Bible and read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (the Gospels), you can count over three hundred places where Jesus asked questions and over one hundred times where he answered questions.

So if you bring questions to Jesus, you've come to the right place. The Lord invites all of us to pursue him with our questions, and he will answer. "For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened" (Matt. 7:8).

You may have tons of questions, but the ten questions in this book will get you started. The *answers* to those ten questions are given in three daily devotional readings—three days for each question. These readings take you to the Bible, the word of God, where you can find answers to your questions. And these answers are all listed at the end of the book.

You can use this book however you like. You can skip straight to the list at the end. Or you can devour all thirty devotional readings at once, though it might take a few hours. You can read through all ten questions in order—one reading per day. Or your family could read one devotion together, perhaps at breakfast before the day or in the evening after dinner.

Find a way that works for you. But what's most important is that you listen to God's word. Whatever question is on your mind, let Jesus provide the answer through his word. If you're going to find, you must seek.

Ask him, and he will answer.

Champ Thornton

Introduction

Why was this book written? To help answer questions you may have about salvation.

But why are you *reading* this book?

Maybe you're curious about salvation and want to figure out a few things. (Or maybe the person who gave you this book wants you to learn a few things.) That's all good. It's a huge and amazing topic.

You may wonder:

- Is Jesus the only way to salvation?
- Why doesn't God just save everybody?

These are great questions. And in the pages ahead, we'll seek answers for your mind. We'll explore facts from God's word and discover truths about salvation.

But maybe you're more than curious. You're *concerned* about salvation. You've got personal questions. And they're not really for your mind; they're more for your heart.

You may wonder:

- How can I be sure that I'm a Christian?
- What does it mean to really believe?
- Can I ever lose my salvation?

If you've got questions like these, you're not alone. Many people—including lots of kids and teens—have struggled with doubts or fears about their salvation. And they've asked the same kinds of questions you have.

But they've also found answers. God has given his word to teach his people how to be wise about salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). In fact, the whole Bible is about salvation. It begins with the promise of a Savior to come (Gen. 3:15) and ends with praise for the Savior who came (Rev. 5). And in between is the epic story of salvation—how God is restoring everything sin had ruined.

So, as you read, bring all your questions—questions for your mind, questions for your heart, easy questions, tough questions. God has the answers you seek. He's put them in his word. And nothing is too hard for him.

Question 1

What Is Salvation?

DAY 1

Rescue Mission

If you go to church, you'll probably hear people talk a lot about "salvation." You'll hear about "being saved" or even "saving grace." (And that may make you wonder, "Who is Grace and why does she need saving?") You might hear your friends say, "I asked Jesus into my heart when I was six," or "I accepted Christ last year," or "I prayed to receive Christ." What's all that have to do with salvation? Let's start with what the Bible says:

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. (1 Tim. 1:15)

First, salvation is just another way to speak of being rescued. For example, if your pet hamster got loose in your home and you found him squeaking and stuck under a pile of laundry being circled by the cat, you'd come to his rescue. You'd reach in and put him back where he belonged. You rescued him, delivered him, saved him. Those are all different ways to refer to his "salvation."

Second, salvation is the mighty work of the King. In our verse above, "Christ Jesus" is the one who does the saving. Christ is not his first name. *Christ* is actually a title, like in *President Lincoln* or

Salvation

Through Christ,
God rescues rebels
from the penalty,
power, and
presence of sin.

Principal Skinner. In the Bible, *Christ* means “anointed one.” And Jesus is the anointed King (see Luke 23:2).

In the Bible kings rescued their people and defeated their enemies. For example, King Saul should have saved his people from the giant Goliath, but the next king (David)

did it instead (1 Sam. 17). But this might raise a question: Who are the enemies that *we* need to be saved from?

Third, the Bible teaches that each of us is a sinner (Rom. 3:23). Did you ever see parents teaching their two-year-old how to say *no*? Of course not. We’ve always wanted to be rulers of our own lives. We want to do what we want, go where we want, and say what we want. We’ve all basically told the real King (Jesus) to get off the throne. And this rebellion deserves God’s judgment (Rom. 6:23). So, as sinners, we need to be saved from ourselves.

But the verse on the previous page says that Jesus “came into the world to save sinners.” So, fourth, salvation comes from the loving heart of God. This same King didn’t stay in heaven; he came down to earth. Not to kill sinners but to be killed for sinners—to rescue rebels from the penalty of their crimes.

So what is salvation? Here’s one answer (there’s another one in the box above): *Salvation is when King Jesus lovingly rescues people who’ve rebelled against God.*

PRAYER

Jesus, I'm so sorry that I've lived with myself as a pretend ruler of my own life. Forgive me and help me to trust you and live with you as my true King. In Jesus's name. Amen.

REFLECT

Have you ever felt like you needed rescuing from something you did wrong? How do you think Jesus feels about what you did?

DAY 2

New Heart

If your hamster got loose because you left the cage door open, you can fix that. You just have to make sure the door always gets shut. But what if your furry little escape artist does nothing but eat, drink, and dream up new ways to wriggle his way to freedom?

Well, you don't have a cage problem. You've got a hamster problem.

And the same is true with people. Our biggest problem is not around us; it's inside us. We are born as rebels on the inside. Thankfully, King Jesus came to rescue us even from ourselves!

For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. (2 Cor. 2:15)

First, the Bible teaches that our rescue is not something that King Jesus did only in the past; his salvation works in the present too. The verse above says that Christians "are being saved." Yes, he paid (in the past) the penalty for our rebellion (yesterday's reading). Yet he also delivers us from the power of sin (in the present). This started by God working in our hearts so that we don't *want* to rebel like we used to. The Bible calls this change of heart being "born again" (1 Pet. 1:3) or "regeneration" (Titus 3:5).

This is incredible news. Think about how powerless you are to change what you want. If you hate spinach, you can hold your nose and force yourself to gulp down some of that leafy green goodness. And perhaps I could help you by promising you an Xbox or a trip to Disney if you eat it. But

not even Minecraft or Mickey can actually change your taste. You can make yourself *eat* spinach, but you can never make yourself *like* it. But God can.

God can change your desires. And he does. If you're a Christian, his rescue reaches into your heart so that you become a new person (2 Cor. 5:17).

Second, King Jesus expects you to obey him. We've seen that kings rescue, but kings also rule. They're in charge. So our verse, 2 Corinthians 2:15, says that "we are the aroma of Christ." That means that just like a marshmallow-scented candle will fill a room with thoughts of campfires and s'mores, our lives should make people think of King Jesus. We should act like Jesus and do what our King says. And everyday, King Jesus delights to rescue you—not just from sin's penalty when you fail but also from its power when you're tempted.

So what is salvation? *Salvation is when King Jesus lovingly rescues people who've rebelled against God and he changes their hearts to love and obey their King.*

Regeneration

The work of God the Holy Spirit that gives new life to spiritually dead sinners.

DAY 3

Future Freedom

Did you know that some people who've been in jail a long time don't want to leave? It's hard to believe, but even if they were free, some people would rather stay behind bars. Perhaps they're afraid of doing something new. Or maybe they just like having three meals a day and a place to sleep.

But think about all they're missing! When you're free, there's so much waiting for you to enjoy. The same is true for salvation—you are free and an incredible future awaits.

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.
(1 Thess. 5:9–10)

This passage teaches that people who reject Jesus as King are destined to face the penalty for their sin forever: God's wrath. Yet others, through King Jesus, have a different destiny. They will, our verse says, "obtain salvation." That's not just in the past; that's also in the future.

This means, first, that salvation is way more than Jesus forgiving you (past) and helping you fight sin (present). One day, Christians will never face sin of any kind ever again. In the future, King

Glorification

The future work of salvation where believers are given new bodies and freed from all the effects of sin forever.

Jesus will rescue us—not just from the penalty and power of sin—but even from the *presence* of sin. All of it—gone.

You'll never be tempted to sin or feel its effects. You'll never get hurt, sad, or sick again (Rev. 21:4). King Jesus has won a salvation that will fix your heart and the entire universe—all of it!

Second, this salvation is all about God. The passage on the previous page says that obtaining salvation means that we will “live with him.” This King hasn't brought us into his kingdom so that we can sit in jail and eat moldy bread crusts.

No, the King has rescued us and brought us to himself. *Himself!* And in his kingdom, he'll spread a feast for us. Think of the best party you've ever attended—good friends, great food, the best of times. But that celebration—like a movie trailer—is just a sample, a tiny taste, a short preview of the great forever feast the King has prepared. And best of all, we'll be with him, our King, whose heart leaps to be with you!

So what is salvation? *Salvation is when King Jesus lovingly rescues people who've rebelled against God and he changes their hearts to love and obey their King and to enjoy him forever.*

