

## **The Great Rescue**

NASA's rescue of the doomed Apollo 13 crew in 1970 will go down in history as one of the all-time greatest feats. So will the genius of Sir Ernest Shackleton, who brought home all 28 British sailors after his Antarctica Expedition was trapped in ice (1914-1916).

The miracle at Dunkirk (1940) will be featured in a movie to be released this summer. 338,000 Allied soldiers escaped the shores of France after the British sent 861 vessels to rescue them from Nazi entrapment. But the greatest rescue of all was initiated by Jesus Christ when he was born in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. It's a rescue every single person needs.

## **Why Do I Need to be Rescued?**

- a. God's pristine creation began to unravel when a snake entered the garden. *"He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"* Genesis 3:1. The snake was inhabited by Lucifer (or Satan), an archangel who rebelled against God.
- b. Adam and Eve were warned about joining Lucifer's rebellion. *"When you eat of [the tree], you will surely die."* Genesis 2:17. They fell to temptation, ensnared by four great enemies: Satan, sin, death, and separation from God. Every person since the garden has been impacted by Adam and Eve's fall, and we face the same four enemies.
- c. Have you ever thought, "Is this all there is?" Even if all your dreams come true, you will still die, soon to be forgotten. Jesus came to rescue us from selfishness, meaningless and hopelessness. *"Jesus died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf."* II Corinthians 5:15.

## **How Does Jesus Rescue Us?**

- a. The book of Romans was written to answer this question. It is summarized in Romans 1:16-17, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'"*
- b. Baby Jesus was given myrrh by the Magi, foreshadowing his death. *"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."* John 15:13. The sacrificial death of Jesus is unique, as he is the Son of God who lived a sinless life. Only Jesus is qualified to offer you a trade: He will take upon himself your sin and give you his innocence.

## **What Do I Have to Do?**

- a. *“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of god for the salvation of everyone who believes.” Romans 1:16. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Hebrews 11:6. To believe or have faith, we must make the same type of commitment to God that we make to our spouse when we marry – an “all in” commitment!*
- b. *Although marriage is celebrated at a point in time, it is a lifelong commitment. “The righteous shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17. We can have our sins washed away and God’s purity (righteousness) imparted to us only by faith, not by works. When Martin Luther understood this he said, “I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise.”*
- c. *When John Wesley understood this he said, “I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation and an assurance was given me that he had taken my sins, even mine, and saved me.” When Augustine understood this he said, “Instantly, by a light, as it were, all gloom of doubt vanished away.”*

***“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.” I John 5:13. Do you know that you have eternal life? Pray and ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins. Ask him to come into your life. Believe, and live with confidence.***

# Discussion Questions

## The Great Rescue

1. What is your favorite rescue story from history or current events? What is your favorite personal rescue story? What was so amazing about the miracle at Dunkirk? Why is Jesus the greatest rescuer of all?
2. What was the world like at the end of Genesis 2? How did everything start to unravel in Genesis 3? How did Lucifer seek to entrap Adam and Eve? What warning were Adam and Eve given in Genesis 2:17? What are the four great enemies that Adam and Eve faced in Genesis 3? How do we face these same four enemies today? Have you ever thought to yourself, 'Is this all there is?' When? Where? Why? Do you think an unbeliever would still be tempted to ask this question even if he lived a pain-free, worry-free life for a hundred years? Have you ever struggled with selfishness? Meaninglessness? Hopelessness? What was going on in your life at the time? What is taught in II Corinthians 5:15?
3. Look at Romans 1:16-17. What is the main point in these verses? Why do you think this is an appropriate summary of the entire book of Romans? What gifts were given to Jesus at birth by the Magi? Why was he given myrrh? What is taught in John 15:13? Do you know of anyone who sacrificed his or her life for someone else? In what ways is the death of Jesus unique? Why is Jesus alone qualified to rescue us from sin? What is the trade that Jesus offers to every person? Have you ever heard that Al Quie offered to serve Chuck Colson's prison sentence? How is this like the sacrifice that Jesus offers us? How is it different?
4. According to Romans 1:16, what do I have to do to be saved? According to Hebrews 11:6, what do I have to do to please God? How is commitment we make in marriage a good analogy to the commitment we make to Christ? What does "the righteous shall live by faith" mean? What is meant by "righteousness" in Romans 1:17? How do we have our sins forgiven? How do we attain God's righteousness? What did Luther say when he comprehended how to be saved? What did Wesley say? What did Augustine say? What can we learn from these Christian leaders?
5. What is taught in I John 5:13? Do you believe we can know beyond the shadow of a doubt that we are a true Christian? Why do you think God wants us to have this assurance? Do you have this assurance? Why or why not?