



## Chapter I

# Jesus the Saviour

André-Marie Ampère (1775-1836), a famous French Physicist, was once asked by a journalist: "Which is your biggest discovery?" The reporter who expected Ampere to speak about one of his achievements in the scientific field was surprised when he replied: "My biggest discovery is that Jesus of Nazareth is my Saviour". Though Ampère had many scientific achievements to his credit his greatest discovery was that he found his Saviour! This attitude of Ampère should inspire us too.

History is full of ever so many instances where people like A.M. Ampère accepted Christ as their Saviour and followed Him closely. St. Augustine was an intellectual and a famous orator. He was renowned for his knowledge and erudition. When he was thirty three, he accepted Jesus as his Saviour. Till then he was absorbed in worldly pursuits. But after encountering Jesus, his life changed. He began to bear witness to Jesus by leading a life based on and filled with faith. Like St. Augustine, there are numerous saints and martyrs who welcomed Jesus as their Saviour and bore witness to Him until their death. People from different countries and different times raise questions about Jesus: "Who is Jesus?" "What is the nature of the salvation he promises?" Answers to these questions will help us live a life of Faith.

### **Jesus the Son of God**

Who is Jesus? The first answer is that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:16). Upon this profession of faith Jesus said, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven" (Mt. 16:17). Thus Jesus revealed the truth that He is the Son of God.

## **Jesus the Son of God**

Who is Jesus? The first answer is that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:16). Upon this profession of faith Jesus said, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven" (Mt. 16:17). Thus Jesus revealed the truth that He is the Son of God.

We have many other evidences in the Gospels to show that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. Then a voice came from heaven which said "This is my Son, the Beloved with whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17). It was the testimony of the Father about His Son. Jesus himself had repeated many times that he was the Son of God. Jesus addressed God as His Father "The works that I do in my Father's name, testify to me;" (Jn 10: 25). "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn 20: 21). "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven, only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Mt. 7: 21). While dying on the cross Jesus prayed, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23: 46). These words testify that there exists a very strong father-son relation between Jesus and God the Father.

## **Jesus, the Saviour of the World**

God the Father sent his only begotten Son Jesus to the world to bring salvation to mankind. He became man to redeem us from the bondage of sin and to make us participators of divine life. Salvation is a divine gift. In order to attain salvation we should have a right understanding of the meaning of salvation brought through Jesus Christ.

By the word 'Salvation' we mean liberation. The salvation which Jesus offers us is the total liberation and it is basically a spiritual liberation from sin. Men enslaved to evil, need God's special intervention and help to ensure deliverance. Man cannot achieve this by his own effort. Salvation is possible only through the forgiveness of sin. Jesus came to this world as the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world (Jn.1: 29). Those who believe in Jesus will enjoy this redemption, forgiveness of sins and share in divine life. The salvation which Jesus brought not only sets us free from sin but also makes us participants of divine life.

There are many who have tried to reform the world through teachings and good deeds. But none of them could redeem man from the bondage of sin. There is only one who can absolve us of our sins. He is Jesus. Zacharias foretold that Jesus would give the salvation in the forgiveness of sins (Lk. 1:77). To prove that Son of Man has power in this world to forgive sins, Jesus cured the paralyzed man (Lk. 5: 24). Jesus, the Son of God, through His death on the cross delivered us from the slavery of Satan and made us inheritors of the kingdom of God.

The salvation that Jesus offers us is not restricted to a particular place, time or race. It is for the whole human race. So Jesus is called the Redeemer of the world. The message given to the shepherds by the angel was about the Redeemer of the world. The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid for see-I am bringing you good news of a great joy for all the people; to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the messiah the Lord”. (Lk. 2: 10-11). When the Infant Jesus was brought to be presented in the temple, Simon took the child in his arms and said, “My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples” (Lk 2: 30-31). The Samaritans realized that Jesus is the Saviour not only of the Jews but also of the Samaritans. (Jn. 4: 42). Jesus is the Saviour born for all – those before Him, those after Him and His contemporaries.

### **Jesus - the Only Saviour**

Jesus, the Savior of the world is the only Redeemer. There are many religions, founders of religions and leaders. All of them teach about God and salvation. Then what is the meaning of saying that Jesus is the only Saviour?

Jesus told His disciples, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn 14:6). Thus Jesus makes it clear that He Himself is the only way to salvation. St. Peter teaches, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortal by which we must be saved” (Acts 4: 12). St. Paul says, “For there is one God, there is also one mediator between God and humankind, christ Jesus, himself human,” (1 Tim. 2:5). It is through Jesus that all are redeemed.

St. Paul says, “For in him all things, in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers- all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross”. (Col 1: 16-20). In recent times, the documents of Second Vatican Council, and the teachings of St. Pope John Paul II like *Redeemer of Man*, *The Lord Jesus*, *Church in Asia* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* repeatedly assert that Jesus is the only Saviour and mediator for the salvation of humankind. We need the grace of God to understand rightly the perennial truth of these teachings.

In all religions, we can see that people expected a saviour to lead them to salvation. The rays of truth present in those religions account for this expectation can be considered as a preparation for the final revelation in Jesus. In the fullness of time, God revealed Himself through

Jesus (*Nostra Aetate*, no.2). In the letter to the Hebrews we read, "In many and various ways by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds" (Heb. 1: 1-2). So we should understand that we receive the full divine revelation through Jesus.

In all religions, we can see that people expected a saviour to lead them to salvation. The rays of truth present in those religions account for this expectation can be considered as a preparation for the final revelation in Jesus. In the fullness of time, God revealed Himself through Jesus (*Nostra Aetate*, no.2). In the letter to the Hebrews we read, "In many and various ways by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds" (Heb. 1: 1-2). So we should understand that we receive the full divine revelation through Jesus.

One who knows and imitates Christ in his life reaches in the experience of salvation. Those who do not have a chance to know the saviour are also saved by their good deeds. However redemption is only through Jesus Christ. Jesus says "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn: 14:6). People of other religions are also share the salvation offered by Jesus in a special way, because He shed His blood for the whole humanity.

### **Jesus-My Saviour**

Once Jesus asked His disciples; "Who do people say that the Son of Man is? And they said, some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. He said to them, But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:13-16). Now Jesus asks the same question to us "Who do you say that I am?" What will be our answer? Each individual should answer to it. We should be able to admit and answer that Jesus, the Son of God is our saviour. If so the salvation is ours.

Jesus said to Peter who proclaimed, You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God, "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven (Mt.16:17). It is the Father in heaven reveals Jesus as the savior and helps us to reach Him. So let us pray for the grace of heaven to learn, accept and proclaim Jesus as the savior and leader of our life.

It is not enough to know Jesus is our saviour, with our intelligent, but we should experience Him in our hearts. He should become the saviour for us personally. For that we believe in Jesus, obey His words and proclaim Him as our saviour. Then and there Jesus, the saviour of the world becomes saviour of each one of us. Jesus calls us to share and experience it. Let us answer to His call.

### **I. Let us discuss**

1. Discuss in your group the life history of one or two individuals who witnessed Jesus through their lives and received Jesus as the Saviour.
2. How can you lead a man, even though baptized, does not profess Jesus as the only saviour to the true faith in Jesus as the only saviour.

### **II. Let us find out the Answers**

1. What message does the statement of André Ampère who found Jesus as the Savior, gives us?
2. Give three quotations from the Bible where it is unequivocally stated that Jesus is the Son of God.
3. What is the meaning of the statement that Jesus is the Saviour of the world?
4. How can those who had no opportunity to know Jesus Christ be saved?
5. How does Jesus become "my Saviour"? Explain.

### **III. Activity**

Find out from the gospels a person who has accepted Jesus as the Saviour and explain his experiences.

### **IV. Let us Read and Reflect**

Acts of the Apostles 16: 25-34.