

What must I do to be **SAVED?**

“What must I do to be saved?” This is the most important of all questions. It is a question that has implications not only here and now but on into eternity. A million years after you die, the answer to this question will still matter.

But as important as the question is, it is answered wrongly on a daily basis. A person might ask five different people this question and receive five different answers. If we were talking about a less crucial subject, that might be all right. If we were asking, “Which football team is the greatest football team ever?” and got five different answers, that would be okay. If we were discussing which is the best fast food restaurant and received a variety of answers, that would be acceptable, and even expected.

But there is no room for error on the question of our present discussion, because the difference between a wrong answer and right answer is the difference between heaven and hell. What we have to do is go to the Bible, the only source for the right answer to this question.

One might pick up the phone, call a local denomination, and ask the preacher, “What must I do to be saved?” A common answer he might receive is “Say the Sinner’s Prayer.” Would you be surprised to learn that this so-called “Sinner’s Prayer” is not found anywhere in the pages of the Bible? Would you further be surprised to realize that of all the conversion accounts in the New Testament, not one person was saved by prayer? If we’re

SAVED?

going to be saved today, it is going to have to be the same way they were saved in the New Testament. God's plan of salvation has not changed.

What did God require people to do in New Testament times to be saved from their sins? When we read the New Testament, particularly the book of Acts (the book of conversions) we see absolute consistency. From Acts 2, the day the church began, and forward, everyone was saved the same way. They all went through the same steps. Sometimes we summarize those steps this way: hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized. Every person who was saved went through these same steps.

"What did God require people to do in the New Testament to obtain salvation from their sins?"

If we simply left the discussion with this summary though, we would be doing the reader a great disservice. Obviously more explanation is needed. In the next several pages, we will show what a person really needs to know to become a Christian and be saved from his sins.

HEAR

No man can be saved if he does not hear the gospel. Romans 10:13-14 says, "Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"

And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

ROMANS 10:14

This passage teaches that it is necessary to call on the name of the Lord in order to be saved; it is necessary to believe in order to call; it is necessary to hear in order to believe. And so, a man

who never hears the gospel cannot be saved. That is why the verse goes on to say, "And how shall they hear without a preacher?" In other words, those who are already Christians had better spread the gospel or else people will be lost!

SAVED?

Someone asks, “What about those who never hear the gospel? Will they still be condemned even though they were ignorant of the truth?” Acts 17:30 says, “Truly, these times of **ignorance** God overlooked, but now commands **all men everywhere** to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world.”

The point is that ignorance is not an excuse. Someone might protest, “Are you saying that people are going to be lost because of ignorance?” No, people are going to be lost because of sin. The problem is that ignorance cannot wash away sins; only the blood of Christ can do that. And so, if a person is going to be saved, the process must begin with him hearing about the blood of Christ. If a man doesn’t hear the gospel, he may go through life never knowing that his sins have caused him to lose his soul. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death (eternal death), but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” A man may never know he is destined for eternity in hell, and by not knowing, he is certainly not going to do anything about his situation. Thus, he must hear about the problem. Once he’s realized the problem, he certainly needs to hear the remedy also. It does no good for someone to know he is lost unless he knows what to do about it, so he must hear the remedy.

When God created man in the Garden of Eden, man was sinless and in perfect fellowship with God. But it wasn’t long until mankind sinned. This created a very serious problem because inherent in the nature of God is **justice**. Psalm 89:14 says, “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne.” Perhaps one of the greatest misunderstandings people have of God is the belief that He can simply choose to overlook sin if He so desires. Sometimes people say, “God won’t let that lone person in the jungles of South America who has never heard the gospel be lost! Surely He’ll save them anyway!” The truth however is that God cannot simply choose to overlook sin. In fact, if God were to ignore even one single sin, He would at

For the wages of sin is death,
but the gift of God is eternal
life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 6:23

SAVED?

that point cease to be a just God. He would no longer be a God of righteousness and perfection.

Leviticus 24:17-20 lays down the principle of justice: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a breach for a breach, and a life for a life. Justice requires a life for a life. The very nature of God demands it. This is not an optional matter. Justice has to be served. The penalty for sin has to be paid. Now, God could have allowed man to pay the penalty himself and die, but His love for us longed for another way. There was only one other way, and that was for God Himself to pay it. Thus God arranged a plan to pay that price for every person. He sent Christ—a member of the godhead—to become a human being, born of a virgin, to live a perfect life and die in our place. Isaiah 53:5 says, “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”

A individual cannot be saved if he doesn't hear these things. Every person in the Bible who became a Christian first heard the gospel. No hearing equals no hope.

BELIEVE

Upon hearing the gospel, a man must believe it. Specifically, what must the sinner believe? He must believe what he has heard! Mark 16:15-16 says, “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who **believes** and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not **believe** will be condemned.’” Clearly the Bible states that an individual must believe in order to be saved, but what does this entail? First, a man must understand **that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God**. In John 8:24, Jesus said, “If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” Man must understand that He, Jesus, is deity. John 1:14 tells us, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Secondly, a man must believe in the **death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ**; that while we were yet sinners

SAVED?

Christ died for us (Romans 5:8) and then arose from the grave, defeating death (1 Corinthians 15:54-55). Romans 10:9 says, “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

It is also crucial that we believe and understand **the body of Christ**. The Bible teaches that salvation is found only in Christ’s body. Second Timothy 2:10 says that salvation is in Christ, and 1 John 5:11 says, “God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” Sometimes there exist people who have been baptized into Christ, but they still seem to think that one church is as good as another. They will come out of the watery grave of baptism and be offended at the idea that denominationalism is sinful. When this happens, clearly they have failed to receive essential information.

The Bible plainly teaches that salvation is found only in the “one body” of Christ (Ephesians 4:4), and it is vital that every person understands that fact in order to be saved. How can one be saved in the one body of Christ if he has never been taught about that one body?

In Acts 8 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached the gospel. Verse 12 says, “But when they believed Philip as he preached the things **concerning the kingdom** of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.” Note this: Philip taught those people about the kingdom of God, which is the one church of the Bible. Philip taught them, and when they believed what they heard, they were baptized. Belief in the one body of Christ is an essential part of the plan.

As a side note, the text says, men and women were baptized. Never in the Bible do we read about little children being baptized, and indeed they don’t need to be. Those who are accountable in the eyes of God are those who have reached a certain level of mental development. They must be old enough to believe.

First Corinthians 12:12-13 say, “For as the body is **one**, and hath many members, and all the members of that **one body**, being

Salvation

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SAVED?

many, are **one body**, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into **one body**.” This passage teaches that there is one body. (Ephesians 1:22-23 says the body is the church.) We are therefore baptized into the one body of Christ, which is His one church. How could a person be taught the gospel without being informed of that fundamental truth?

This is the second step of the plan of salvation. A person must believe in the deity of Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection and the one body wherein are the saved.

REPENT

This third step in gospel plan of salvation was first taught in the Christian Age in Acts 2. Those present on the day of Pentecost wanted to know the answer to the very question we are discussing, “What must I do to be saved?” Verse 37 says, “They cried out, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’” Peter answers them in verse 38, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”

Repentance includes three things. First, it is a **change of mind**. Matthew 21:28-29 illustrates repentance very well. It says, “But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he **repented** [regretted] and went.” The son had a change of mind. This is repentance.

Some think *repentance* simply means “to stop sinning,” but there are a couple of problems with that idea. First, the discontinuation of the sin follows repentance (the change of mind), it is not the repentance itself. Secondly, a person could stop sinning without ever repenting if he stopped for the wrong reason.

This brings us to the second aspect of repentance: **godly sorrow**. Second Corinthians 7:10 says, “For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.” What causes that change of mind known as repentance? Godly sorrow; sorrow for sinning against God and jeopardizing one’s eternal soul.

SAVED?

Thirdly, repentance involves a **change of life**. Sometimes this is called the “fruit of repentance.” In other words, if an individual has repented in his mind, others should be able to see that repentance in his life. For example, if godly sorrow causes someone to repent of stealing, that person will not be stealing anymore. He has had a change of life. Repentance is a change of mind produced by godly sorrow, resulting in a change of life. Acts 17:30 says, “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”

CONFESS

Fourth, confession is necessary for salvation. Romans 10:10 says, “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth **confession is made unto salvation**.” In Acts 8, as Philip was teaching the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch, he said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Philip responded, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And the eunuch answered, “**I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God**” (Acts 8:37). With his mouth, he made the good confession. This is the confession we are talking about; confession of what one believes.

Sometimes people mistakenly think that they have to confess all their sins when they become Christians. Imagine how much confessing a 40-year-old would have to do to become a Christian. That’s a lot of confessing! No one could do it.

The steps of the plan of salvation are a very natural progression. One must hear the gospel, and believe it, which leads to changing one’s mind (or repenting). Then the person verbalizes (confesses) that he believes what he has heard.

Occasionally when talking about the confession, people reference Matthew 10:32-33 where Jesus said, “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, Him I will also confess before My Father Who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father Who is

SAVED?

in heaven.” This is not really a proper verse to use to teach confession as a step of the plan of salvation. Although the principle of confession is here, this verse is not specifically talking about the good confession; This was said to the apostles in what we call the Limited Commission. It was said to encourage them as they went out to preach.

BE BAPTIZED

Finally, in order to be saved one must be baptized to have his sins washed away. In Acts 22:16, Ananias said to Saul, “And now why are you waiting? Arise and **be baptized**, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

A person cannot be saved until his sins are washed away, and Acts 22:16 teaches that sins are washed away in baptism. This means one cannot be saved first and then baptized later, as is commonly taught by many in denominations. Acts 2:38 says, “Repent, and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” One cannot have his sins remitted before he is baptized; therefore, one is not saved until he is baptized.

What washes sins away? The blood of Jesus Christ! In Matthew 26:28, Jesus said, “For this is my **blood** of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Revelation 1:5 says that Jesus Christ “loved us and washed us from our sins **with His own blood.**” A man cannot be saved until he has been washed in the blood of Jesus.

If we are saved by the blood of Jesus and our sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus, then what role does baptism play? It is in baptism that an individual contacts the blood of

Jesus. Jesus shed His blood in His death, and it is in death that we contact it. Romans 6:3-4 says, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus **were baptized into His death?** Therefore we were buried with Him **through baptism into death,**

Baptism

Every person in the Bible who became a Christian and was saved was baptized in order to do so.

SAVED?

that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Why is one raised to walk in newness life when he comes out of the water of baptism? The answer is, because he died to sin. In baptism, he is cleansed by the blood of Jesus.

When a person suggests that one may be saved without baptism, he is suggesting that he or she can be saved without the blood of Christ. The reason this is not true is **because baptism is where a man contacts the blood of Christ**. Every person in the Bible who we read about being saved and becoming a Christian was baptized in order to do so. Baptism is **specifically** mentioned in many of the conversion accounts.

- **Day of Pentecost:** Acts 2:38, “Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin.” Acts 2:41, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized.”
- **Ethiopian Eunuch:** Acts 8:36, the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Verse 38, “And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.”
- **People of Samaria:** Acts 8:5, “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.” Verse 12 says, “But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.”
- **Cornelius:** Acts 10:47 describes the conversion of Cornelius and his household, saying, “Peter asked, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized?’”
- **Lydia:** Acts 16 shows the account of Lydia and her conversion to Christ. Verse 15 says, “And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying...”
- **Philippian Jailer:** Acts 16 talks about the Philippian jailer and says in verse 33, “And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.”
- **Saul of Tarsus** Acts 22:16 relates the conversion of Saul: “Ananias said to him, ‘And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’”

SAVED?

The Gospel Enacted

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Jesus the Christ
His Death, Burial and Resurrection
For the Sins of Man



Death



Resurrection



Burial

Seeking for
TRUTH

SAVED?

The Gospel Re-enacted in Baptism

(Obeying The Gospel)

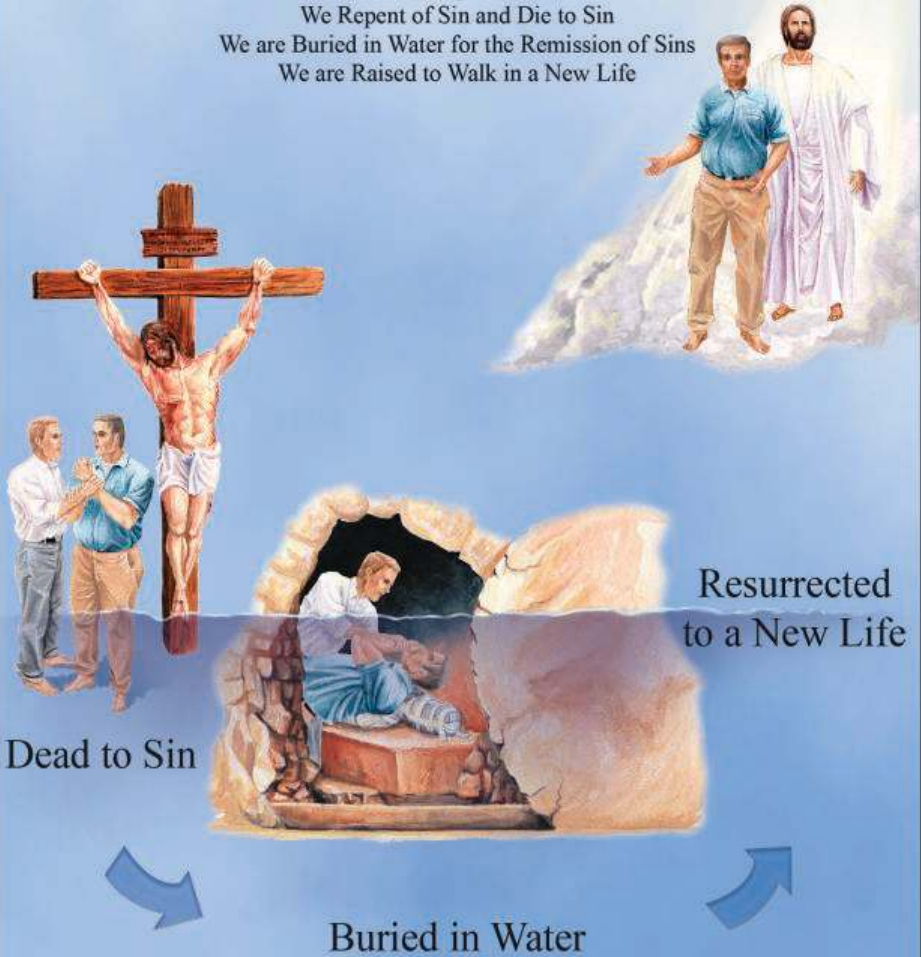
Romans 6:3-4

In Baptism

We Repent of Sin and Die to Sin

We are Buried in Water for the Remission of Sins

We are Raised to Walk in a New Life



SAVED?

Many in the religious world say baptism is not necessary, that a man is saved prior to baptism, and that baptism has nothing to do with salvation, but the Bible tells us in 1 Peter 3:21, “There is also an antitype **which now saves us, baptism** (not the removal of the filth from the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God).”

When discussing the plan of salvation, it’s interesting that many freely admit the necessity of hearing the gospel. Most will acknowledge that we must believe. Most also accept repentance. Few arguments are made over the need for confession. But many will deny that baptism is necessary. **Notice the conversion accounts chart on the next page.** Acts has nine accounts of people obeying the gospel and becoming Christians. It’s worthy of notice that all steps of the plan of salvation (hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized) are not specifically mentioned in each account. Even though confession is commanded by God in order to be saved, it is not specifically mentioned in most of the accounts of conversion. The same is true of repentance. Few would ever question the necessity of repentance, and certainly the Bible commands it, but it is not always specifically mentioned.

Now notice baptism. In each of these nine accounts, baptism is specifically mentioned. To help us appreciate the necessity and importance of baptism, envision in your mind a circle. Label the circle the “Body of Christ.” Next to that circle, envision a stick man. Draw him there in your mind. Second Timothy 2:10 says that salvation is in Christ, so write the word *salvation* in the circle. First John 5:11 says that eternal life is in Christ, so now write *eternal life* inside that circle as well. Now the question of the utmost importance: if salvation is inside that circle, and eternal life is inside that circle, how does one get into the circle? Galatians 3:27 gives us the answer, “For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ.”

Baptism is the doorway. It puts you into Christ, wherein is salvation.

SAVED?

Conversions in the book of Acts

	HEAR	BELIEVE	REPENT	CONFESS	BAPTISM/SAVED
PENTECOST	Acts 2:14ff	Implied (v.37,41)	Repent (v.37-38)		Taught (v.38) Baptized (v.41)
SAMARIA	Acts 8:5ff	Believed (v.12,13)			Baptized (v.12-13,16)
THE EUNUCH	Acts 8:35-39	Taught & Believed (v.37)		Confessed (v.37)	Baptized (v.38)
SAUL	Acts 9:22;26	Implied (9:6;22:10)	Implied (9:9,11)	Implied (9:6;22:10)	Taught (22:16) Baptized (9:18)
CORNELIUS	Acts 10-11	Taught (10:43)	Implied (11:18)		Commanded (10:47-48)
LYDIA	Acts 16:13	Implied (v.14)			Baptized (v.15)
THE JAILER	Acts 16:31ff	Taught (v.31)			Baptized (v.33)
CORINTHIANS	Acts 18:8	Believed (v.8)			Baptized (v.8)
EPHESIANS	Acts 19:1ff	Taught (v.4)			Baptized (v.5)

COUNTING THE COST

There is one more very important point to be made on this subject. When studying the gospel with someone, it is essential to discuss the cost of becoming a Christian. What is involved in being a Christian?

Many times a person is baptized on a Sunday morning but he doesn't come back to services on Sunday night. He will also be absent on Wednesday night and other times during the week when the church assembles.

SAVED?

At the point of baptism a person is washed from his sins and is saved. Acts 2:47 says that God adds that individual to the church. What about after that? The Bible teaches that every person must hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized, and **live faithfully**. When a person becomes a Christian, he is giving his life, his all. In Luke 14:27-33, Jesus said, “And whoever does not bear his cross [die to self] and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and **count the cost**, whether he has enough to finish it—lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ **So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.**”

Becoming a Christian is an absolute commitment. It is a commitment to attend, to give, to worship, to study, to teach. Until a person is ready to give God his all, he is not ready to become a Christian.

Video Resources

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?



The answer to this question has implications both now and for eternity. Sadly, wrong answers are being given all the time. With a question of this magnitude, you cannot afford to be wrong.

TheTruthAbout.net/video/Being-Saved

