

What Must I Do to Be Saved?



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Have you ever asked yourself, "Where am I going to spend eternity?" Interestingly, many people make elaborate plans for their short life on earth, but sometimes fail to plan beyond the here and now. Yet planning for eternity is what accepting God's plan of salvation is all about.

Salvation represents the work of God to rescue humanity from eternal ruin and death caused by sin. It means dealing with the causes of our being "lost," or being separated from and out of contact with God because of sin.

Salvation leads to eternal life. It is the work of God to find lost humanity, and is free. When we take the few steps described in the Bible to receive this glorious gift of grace, we must never consider it our work instead of God's. Therefore, when we accept God's offer of salvation, we are accepting His gift of eternal life.

What, then, must we do to be saved?

Salvation Begins With Faith

The New Testament tells the good news of Jesus Christ, that salvation depends on believing in Christ and accepting Him as our Savior.

Salvation is made possible only through Jesus, the Son of God. These quotations from the New Testament illustrate this basic and important truth:

To all who received him [Jesus], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

We must express our belief in Jesus as God's Son and as the one who redeems us from our sins. Sin leads to death, but God sent Jesus into the world to deliver us from our sins and their penalty, the wrath of God:

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him (John 3:36).

The Gospel of John was written as a record of the many wonderful things that Jesus said and did, to give us a basis for believing in Him:

These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31).

Faith is confidence and trust in the existence of God and the work of salvation He has completed on our behalf through Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are called to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that by His death, burial, and resurrection from the dead, we are forgiven of our sins.

Can you believe this great truth? If so, you can be saved. The apostle Paul wrote:

If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9).

Faith Leads to Repentance and Baptism

In Acts 2, Peter, a disciple of Christ, called upon the people to believe in Jesus.

Acts 2:37 informs us that Peter's words brought conviction to the people's hearts. They cried out, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

In verse 38, Peter told them they must do two things: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."

In this one verse Peter listed two important responses necessary to receive eternal life. When we realize that God has worked out our salvation through His dear Son, we feel sorrow for our sins. This sorrow leads us to confess our sins to God. We can be sure He will forgive and purify us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

The process of feeling sorry for our sins and confessing them is called *repentance*. Genuine repentance always brings about change. Paul writes, "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regrets" (2 Corinthians 7:10a). In other words, God uses the sorrow we feel in recog-

nizing our sinfulness to lead us to a change of heart. Before we repent, we accept sin as a normal way of life. But when we see how serious sin is, that it brings death, we repent. Awareness of God's will for our lives goes beyond repentance. It spells out the right way to live in contrast to the former sinful life. This concept of repentance is supported by Paul, who preached to repentant sinners "that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds" (Acts 26:20).

Paul said repentance should bring about a change in us: obedience to the Word of God. Our deeds demonstrate that we have turned from our sinful ways to obey and serve God.

The next step after repentance is baptism in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38). We may express faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and our Savior; we may be sorry for our sins and confess that we are sinners; we may determine to obey God's Word. But until we are baptized in water in the name of Jesus, our response to God's offer of eternal life is incomplete.

Jesus taught that believers should be baptized. Just before His ascension to heaven, He told the apostles:

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19, 20).

In the New Testament, Christian baptism is described as a burial. Paul wrote,

[You have] been buried with him [Christ] in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12).

Baptism is an English word translated directly from a word used in the New Testament that means "immerse" or "put under." The Bible's symbolic picture of baptism as a burial is not mere coincidence. It describes the act of baptism as a complete immersion in water, symbolizing the believer's participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were buried into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life (Romans 6:3, 4).

Paul uses this symbolism to teach us the true significance of baptism. In Romans 6:5-7, he explains that through baptism, the believer illustrates the death of his sinful nature by burying it, then rising to live a new life in harmony with God's Word. Paul wrote:

If we have been united with him [Christ] like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with,

*that we should no longer be slaves to sin
— because anyone who has died has
been freed from sin.*

Accept God's Gift

If you have taken time to prepare for a long, happy life on earth, why not take the time and necessary steps to receive God's gift of eternal life? Through faith in Christ, repentance, and baptism, you can respond to God's offer of salvation.

We invite you to repeat the following prayer sincerely:

Lord Jesus, come into my heart right now. I confess that I am a sinner. As a believer, I ask Your forgiveness and acceptance. I commit my life to You and ask You to lead me and direct me in all my ways.

Thank You for accepting me and for forgiving my sin.

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