

Is it the profession
of faith that saves?
OR
Is it the possession
of faith that saves?

Most people in America profess to be Christians. However, what do we see? In our nation, we are seeing an increase in murders, rapes, kidnappings, and thefts. Would you agree there's a lot of corruption in our government and society? Would you agree there are a lot of broken families and divorces even in the professing church? Would you agree that the church has become more about buildings, programs, and money than meeting people's greatest need?

Do we see the world becoming more like the church, or is the church becoming more like the world? With the increase of crusades, altar calls, bible studies, prayer meetings, seminars, Christian concerts, Christian movies, and so many people making professions of faith, why is our nation deteriorating so rapidly? How did we get here?

We are taught in churches today that we are saved by a profession of faith, for example, by the altar call, the raising of the hand, the walking of the aisle, the sinner's prayer, or accepting Jesus into our hearts. We see this working to fill so many churches, but are people truly being saved?

If a profession of faith is what brings salvation, then shouldn't we be able to find examples in Scripture? Typically three verses are used to support these methods.

1) John 1:12, *"To as many as received Him, He gave the right to become children of God."*

This verse is used to assert that we must 'accept Jesus into our hearts'. But in the context of John 1:1-14 we see the Word (Jesus Christ), who is God, having come in human flesh. So, to receive Christ is to receive His Word.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1

"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." John 1:14

Also, *"He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God."* Rev. 19:13

Here we see the living Word and the written Word are inseparable. So, if we have a relationship with Christ we will have a relationship with His Word.

If we say that we obey Christ, we will obey His Word.

“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

John 17:3

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.” Acts 2:41

(Must also see: Acts 4:4, Acts 10:44, Acts 11:1, Acts 17:10-12, Luke 8:21, John 5:24, John 5:38-40, John 8:31-32, John 12:48, John 14:22-24, 1 Thess. 1:6-7, 1 Thess. 2:13, 1 Peter 1:22-23.)

So, to receive Christ is to receive His Word. If we reject God’s Word we are rejecting Jesus Christ.

2) Romans 10:9, *“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.”*

Are we permitted to take this verse or any other verse in isolation? Rom. 10:8 reads, *“But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach).”* We see that Rom. 10:9, in its correct context, does not support salvation by a mere profession of faith. If one is truly saved a confession will be made, as it says in Rom. 10:10, *“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* So then, confession is an outward evidence of one’s salvation, but it does not produce the salvation. This is made absolutely clear in Rom. 10:17, *“So then Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”* We cannot build our understanding of salvation on one verse.

3) Revelation 3:20, *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and him with Me.”*

Why do we use this verse to encourage a profession of faith? Many preachers know that Rev. 3:20 is not speaking of the heart of man, but Jesus is knocking outside the church because the church in Laodicea had a profession of faith but not a possession of faith.

Rev. 3:17, *“Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing-and do not know you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.’”*

Many preachers use verse 20 in isolation because they say it works to get someone to make a profession of faith. But are we permitted to take Scripture out of context merely because it ‘works’?

Many of us desire to see people saved, but are we creating our own methods by taking Scripture out of context and twisting God's Word to get people to profess Christ? Is a simple profession the goal? Or is our desire to see them come to a **possession of saving faith that only God can give through the power of the Gospel?**

"Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:13

We see in Scripture that many will have a profession of faith. However, does a profession guarantee salvation?

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" Matthew 7:21-23

"They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work." Titus 1:16

What is a possession of faith? Possession of saving faith is having or holding onto the promises of God; trusting in the certainty of the fulfillment of His written Word. It is letting go of our righteousness, our goodness, and laying hold of Christ the Word.

"In Him you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation in whom, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession to the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:13-14

Therefore we see that our faith has an object.

Is our faith in faith itself? Is our faith in our church? Is our faith in our baptism? Is our faith in our experience, our prayers, or our tears? The Object of saving faith is the Person and work of Christ as revealed in His Word.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the Gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you were saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you-unless you believed in vain." 1 Cor. 15:1-2

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder to those who diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11:6. The way we seek Him is through His Word.

If Christ is our Lord, how then does He exercise His Lordship in our lives? There is only one correct answer to this question: through His Word by faith.

"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in Him. By this we know that we are in Him." 1 John 2:3-5

What is the fruit of a possession of saving faith? Faith-based obedience to the Word of God. Salvation produces godly character (Gal. 5:22-24). In the early church, people had the fear of God, they had assurance of their salvation (1 Thess. 1:5), and they had boldness. They were turning the world upside down (Acts 17:6). Today it would look like the church fearing God, set apart from the world, proclaiming the Gospel to the lost with boldness. In Acts 4:29 the apostles prayed, *“Now Lord, look on their threats and grant your servants that with all boldness they may speak your word.”*

If Christ is the Living Word, inseparable from the written Word, is leading someone to Christ leading them to recite a mystical prayer, or is it leading them to trust God’s Word?

Why are we giving people false assurance of their salvation? God does not call men to make Jesus their Lord (He is Lord of all), but to live in submission to the Word. The truly saved person does not receive the Gospel as an addition to their life, but in exchange for it. To receive the Gospel is to lose your life.

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.” Matthew 16:24-25

Our hearts go out to the church because judgment has come upon our nation. It is not judgment because of the lost. The lost have always lived according to the dictates of their own will as lovers of this world, rather than lovers of God.

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” John 2:15-17

This judgment we see has come because the church is not separate from the world. We are not united in the Gospel; we have compromised the Biblical Gospel. We **must** repent and turn back to the authority of God’s Word. ***“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the Gospel of God?”*** 1 Peter 4:17

www.RealAnswersAZ.org