

# What Saves a Person?

Since, "*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance*" (II Peter 3:9), it would be sensible to understand that in order to get people saved, God would tell them what they need to do.

We also need to understand that a partial answer to the question won't be an honest answer. "*The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever*" (Psalm 119:160). Falsehood can be spread through outright contradictions to God's teaching and by only teaching a part of what God has said.

When you ask how to be saved, it is important to understand what you are being saved from. In announcing the birth of the Messiah, Joseph was told, "*And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins*" (Matthew 1:21). Therein is the core problem: People have mired themselves in sins from which they cannot get away without help.

God tells us a number of things all come together to bring about the salvation of people.

## Who Gives Salvation?

**God, the Father:** It is God who wants us saved, and it is God who works toward our salvation (Titus 3:4-7; Romans 6:23; I Timothy 2:3-4).

**Jesus Christ:** It was the Son of God, Jesus, who took action to bring about a means by which we might be saved (I Timothy 1:15; Hebrews 5:8-9; Luke 19:10).

**The Holy Spirit:** This effort would be for naught if people did not know what

happened. It is through the efforts of the Holy Spirit that the message of salvation was brought to the dying world. Through His words we are promised salvation (John 16:7-15; Ephesians 6:17; Ephesians 1:13-14).

## The Motivation for Giving Salvation

**Grace:** God gives salvation freely, not because it is owed or earned but because God gifts it to men (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 2:11).

**Love:** God gives salvation because He loves all people (John 3:16; I John 4:9-10).

**Mercy:** God's mercy balances His justice. He can give us less than what we deserve because of His great mercy (Titus 3:5).

## The Means by Which Salvation is Extended

**The Death of Christ on the Cross** (Galatians 6:14).

**The Suffering of Christ** (Hebrews 2:9-10, 17-18).

**The Blood of Christ Shed on the Cross** (Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7).

**The Life of Christ** (Romans 5:10; I Corinthians 15:16-17; Colossians 2:13).

**The Authority of Christ (His Name)** (John 20:30-31; Acts 4:12).

## The Notification that Salvation is Available

**The Message of Christ (the Gospel)** (Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 1:18).

**The Accuracy of the Message (the Truth)** (John 8:31-32; II Thessalonians 2:10).

**The Messengers of the Gospel (Preachers)** (I Corinthians 1:21; II Thessalonians 2:14).

## Responding to the Offer of Salvation

**Hear:** The message of the Gospel cannot save a person if he refuses to listen to the message (Romans 10:14-17; II Thessalonians 2:10).

**Faith:** The message heard does a person no good if he doesn't believe it (John 8:24; Romans 5:1-2).

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402-339-1318

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**Call on His Name (Christ's Authority):** Faith doesn't do anyone any good if it doesn't motivate a person to want to accept Jesus' authority over his life (Romans 10:12-13).

**Repentance:** You can't claim to accept Christ's authority over your life if you don't change your life to conform to His will (Acts 3:19; II Corinthians 7:10-11).

**Confession:** A claimed belief is not real if you aren't willing to admit that you have it (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:8-10).

**Be Baptized:** God selected a simple method by which we demonstrate and declare our acceptance of His offer of salvation -- immersion in water. It is a physical act that symbolically represents what salvation is all about (Romans 6:3-7; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 10:47-48; Acts 22:16; I Peter 3:21).

**Hope:** If we didn't expect God to save us, why would we bother to do His Will? (Romans 8:24).

**Obedience:** It would be meaningless to accept Christ's authority over our life if we refused to do what he commands of us (Hebrews 5:9; Luke 6:46).

**Works:** Not man-created works, but doing the works of God. Obedience doesn't exist if no effort is put into doing what God commands of us (Ephesians 2:10; James 2:20-26).

### Who Must Respond to the Offer of Salvation?

**Yourself:** No one can respond to God's offer on your behalf. You must choose to accept God's offer (Acts 2:40-41; Philippians 2:12).

## Can Any be Left Out?

Which of these can be left out and a person expects to be saved? Can a person be taught they are saved by grace alone without mentioning the involvement of any of the other things connected to their salvation? Would you contradict James 2:24 and declare that salvation is by faith alone and leave out any of the other things listed above?

Why would anyone say that salvation is by anything *alone* when the Bible clearly says a number of specific factors act in concert to produce salvation? A person is saved when all that God has done for a person connects with all that God commands of a person (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

## The Gospel Re-enacted

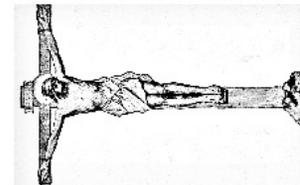
I Corinthians 15:3-4  
Romans 6:3-7



We are raised in a likeness of his resurrection to walk in newness of life



We are united with him in his death being buried with him



We die to sin; our old self being crucified with him



“Baptism is just a symbol,” we’re sometimes told and it is true that baptism does represent many things to the person who has faith in God, just like the Lord’s Supper has symbolic meaning to the partakers (I Corinthians 10:16). But does the fact that it represents other things make it less essential to be done? Or, does it become important for the believer to participate in what is being symbolized?

It is God who commands baptism (Acts 2:38) and we must do the works of God (Ephesians 2:10). It is God who states that baptism washes away our sins (Acts 22:16) and saves us (I Peter 3:21). Such can be seen through what God says baptism represents. So why do you delay? “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (II Corinthians 6:2).