

THE PROCESS OF SALVATION

Most people who profess to believe and teach a biblically based worship system, teach that all one has to do in order to have be saved from eternal death and enter the kingdom of heaven is believe on Jesus Christ as one's personal savior and the deed is done and one has salvation and is assured of heavenly bliss for ever.

But is this true, or is there more to being saved from eternal death than just belief?

Just what is the procedure that one must follow in order to obtain salvation?

Does it really matter what a person believes, as long and one believes in God?

The answer from the Bible is, Yes, there is much more to obtaining salvation than a profession of belief. Salvation is a process which begins with a personal encounter with the Sovereign God of all that does exists.

On the festival of Pentecost, after the death and resurrection of the Messiah, the apostle Peter said to a group of people:

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call". Acts 2:38-39 (KJV).

Although Peter revealed a simple and easy to follow method concerning how to be saved from the second death in the Lake of Fire, millions of people who profess to believe in the Bible and follow the teachings of Jesus do not truly understand what Peter said or how to repent, how be properly baptized, or how receive the holy spirit.

SALVATION COMES FROM THE FATHER

The Creator God who became the Messiah said: "Look to me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa.45:22 KJV).

The message from the Sovereign God through the Messiah to humanity is about the fantastic future in store for humanity when God's government is brought to earth by his Son.

However, most of what people hear about the gospel is focused solely on Jesus Christ, and as a result, millions do not believe what Christ taught concerning how to obtain salvation. They only believe certain things about him and do not understand the message that he brought about salvation and the Kingdom of God. Because most people have been greatly deceived, concerning the Sovereign God's good news message, they simply do not believe what Jesus Christ said or the early church taught concerning the process of salvation and therefore many are the victims of a false conversion that does not lead to eternal life.

To Become an Immortal

God the Father offers much more than eternal life to those he calls to salvation in this age. The angels have eternal life and are sustained by God's life-giving power, yet they can be destroyed if they disobey him. The life God offers to the elect during this gospel age of salvation is immortal life, which can never be destroyed.

The quality of life promised by the Father is comparable to that which he himself has. God is a spirit-being who inherently possesses the highest form of life: immortality on the divine plane of existence. Immortal life springs forth from itself and is not dependent on any other source to sustain it, because it is self-sustaining:

The apostle Paul said this concerning immortal life:

"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true:

"Death has been swallowed up in victory" (1.Cor.15:51-54 NIV). See also Rom.2:7; 2.Tim.1:9-10; 1.Pet.4:6; Rev.20:6.

It is abundantly clear from studying the Bible that God the Father intends to share immortality with those he calls to repentance, baptism, and conversion prior to the first resurrection. It is the acquisition of immortality that allows a person to pass beyond this physical existence into the Family of God as a son of God.

If you want to know what the Bible actually says about immoral life and how to obtain it, get a copy of my book How to Become Immortal.

Although immortality represents the highest reward that is granted for faithfulness to God, there are many more rewards. The reward for being righteous is not to float around heaven playing harp music for eternity. God the Father and Jesus Christ have something far more spectacular in store for those who are worthy to take part in the first resurrection.

The following are some of these rewards:

- Becoming an immortal spirit-being
- Becoming a son of God
- Becoming a joint-heir with Christ
- Becoming a co-ruler with Christ
- Becoming a King and a Priest
- Inheriting the Kingdom of God
- Inheriting all things

These are only a few of the awesome rewards that are promised to those the Father calls to salvation through his message of the good news.

An Awesome Opportunity

The magnitude of the opportunities and rewards that God the Father offers to those called to salvation through repentance, baptism, and conversion during this age are almost beyond the ability of human comprehension. What God offers can only be obtained by those who are willing to repent and become obedient to his way of life:

HOW TO OBTAIN SALVATION

It is one thing to understand what salvation is; however, obtaining salvation is an entirely different matter. Obtaining salvation is a process that involves the following seven steps:

1. Being called to salvation by God the Father
2. Proving that God does exist and that the Bible is his written word put to print
3. Believing in Jesus Christ and his perfect sacrifice
4. Repenting of violating God's law and way of life
5. Asking for forgiveness of sin and being baptized
6. Receiving God's spirit that transforms a person into a son of God

7. Growing in the grace and knowledge of God's truth, while overcoming the temptations of the flesh

THE CALL TO SALVATION

The call to salvation during this age (just before Christ's return) is a truly unique and awesome opportunity. This opportunity is not pure chance, but has been carefully planned and directed by God the Father for a very special purpose: The Apostle Peter said:

"For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39 KJV). See also Rom.8:29-30, 1.Cor.1:9,23-28; Eph.1:5-9; 1.Thes.5:23-24; 2.Tim.1:8-9; Heb.9:14-15.

Only God the Father has the prerogative to call a person to salvation, and he gives everyone he calls the opportunity to either accept or reject his call. There can be no neutral response to the call of God, either a person becomes a son of God or they do not!

Jesus himself confirms that the call to salvation is only made by God the Father; Jesus said:

"No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draws him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn.6:44 KJV).

Paul also adds to the understanding of the uniqueness of the Father's call when he told timothy:

"Then do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner. But suffer hardship with the gospel, according to the power of God, he having saved us and having called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace given to us in Jesus Christ before eternal times" (2.Tim.1:8-9 Para.).

Paul was inspired to record that it is not because of a person's effort that the Father extends the call to sonship; it is because God the Father has a purpose for the one called. Notice that the Father made the decision to offer this opportunity to these specific individuals before they were born.

It is the Sovereign God who opens a person's conscious mind and begins to direct the thought process toward the physical and spiritual knowledge that will bring a person into an awareness of God and his Son and the

opportunity that is being offered:

The scriptures clearly show that God is not calling everyone to salvation at this time in history. Although many are called to salvation, only a comparative few of those called (past and present) are chosen to participate in the first resurrection. The people called prior to Christ's return have been selected for a special purpose before and after his return. On the surface, this may seem unfair but it is not. The God family has a plan for all humanity and is being extremely fair and logical in the execution of this plan.

If God the Father and Jesus Christ have been trying to save all of humanity from the time of Adam to this present age, they have failed, and the scriptures concerning the requirements for salvation cannot be reconciled with the facts of history or the rest of the Bible. This is not a very popular teaching, nonetheless it is true. Today, is not the only day of salvation. It is 'a' day of salvation.

The Bible clearly shows that God was not in the past, nor is he in this age, calling all of humanity to salvation. It is only the day of salvation for those called in this age for a special purpose. If you are interested in this topic write for my study paper entitled "A Day of Salvation".

God the Father personally calls each person to salvation, and then leads them to repentance. This process may take years or a very short time, and it requires that enough knowledge and understanding of God's truth is given to a person to enable them to understand the following:

- They are a sinner and under a death sentence.
- They have an opportunity to have their sins forgiven.
- they have been offered eternal life as a child of God

Jesus said: "Many be called, but few chosen" (Matt.20:16; 22:14 KJV).

Those who are called to repentance, baptism, and conversion during this age have not been called by chance, each person has been called for a reason.

One reason God is calling people in this age is to prepare a people for future responsibilities in his kingdom as kings and priests who will rule the earth and teach God's truth. Those called to the first resurrection are to be role-models, the leaders, and the teachers for

those who have never had an opportunity for salvation. See Rev.2:26; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6.

In order to obtain salvation and become a son of God, we must have our sins forgiven and our death sentence removed. And the only being who can forgive sins and remove the death sentence is God the Father, because he is the Sovereign of all that does exist and has the power to remove and forgive sin through the sacrificial blood of his Son Jesus Christ. See Rom.1:15-16.

If a person will truly believe in the Father and Jesus Christ and accept the opportunity that is offered, that person will be rewarded with eternal life. But if one rejects the opportunity that is offered, that person will be executed in the Lake of Fire and cease to exist for all eternity.

Many people believe that Jesus Christ existed. Many also acknowledge that he is the Savior of humanity, and many accept him as their personal Savior; however, there are very few who believe to the point that they are willing to follow his teachings and examples as a way of life. To those of shallow belief Jesus says, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do the things that I say?" (Lk.6:46 Para.).

History clearly shows that Jesus was neither a myth nor a legend. He did exist; he was a real human being. However, there is more to gaining salvation than just believing that Jesus Christ existed.

The apostle James said, "You believe that there is one God; thou do well: the devils also believe, and tremble" James 2:19 (KJV).

Believing is more than just an acknowledgment that Jesus did exist and was the Son of God. Belief in Jesus Christ is manifested in one's life through a deep commitment to God that is evidenced by the righteous fruit of that belief.

REPENTANCE, BAPTISM, AND CONVERSION

Anyone who wants to follow the example of Jesus Christ and become a son of God must do so through the redemptive process contained in the good news message concerning Jesus Christ, and the receiving of the holy spirit.

On the first festival of Pentecost, after the death and resurrection of Christ, the apostle Peter preached the gospel message to a great assembly of people:

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit" (Acts 2:37-38 KJV).

There can be little doubt that some of those whom Peter addressed understood that they had participated in the murder of their Messiah, Savior, and Redeemer just as the prophecies had foretold. In great fear and shame, they ask Peter, "What shall we do?"

There are four very important things to learn from these verses:

1. Peter began to fulfill the great commission to proclaim the good news message of the redemption and salvation of humanity through Jesus Christ.
2. Through the preaching of the gospel by Peter, God the Father revealed the prophetic significance of the Passover that had just been observed and the events that were happening at that moment in time.
3. Peter revealed the process whereby these people could have their sins forgiven and be transformed into sons of God:

Peter said:

Repent
Be baptized
Receive the holy spirit

4. On this festival day, through the proclaiming of the good news of Jesus Christ, the new process by which a person could be saved and obtain eternal life was formally announced.

What Peter was inspired to preach about repentance on the festival of Pentecost was nothing new, because God has always required repentance of sin in order for a person to be in harmony with him. What was new was the process through which one could establish and maintain a harmonious relationship with the Father for all eternity.

Many people feel that to repent means to feel sorry for being a sinner and ask God to forgive one's sins. Others feel repentance is just a matter of going through the ritual of baptism.

However, to truly repent is far more than just being sorry about the fact that you have violated God's law, feeling remorseful, saying a few words, and participating in a ritual.

True repentance is extremely important because it is the first step in the process of receiving salvation. If a person is not truly repentant, they will not receive God's spirit and will not be saved.

True repentance requires a total change in a person's life, a change that leads away from all aspects of evil, and leads toward that which is of God. True repentance also requires a total commitment and an unconditional surrender to the rule and authority of God.

But what of does one repent?

If a person does not first know and understand exactly of what to repent, how can they accomplish repentance? Obviously they cannot. Repentance involves knowledge and understanding. A person must know of what to repent and understand why they should repent.

Repent of Sin

God inspired the prophet Isaiah to encourage the people of Israel to repent of their sins so that he could bless them: God said through the prophet Isaiah:

"Wash yourselves, purify yourselves, put away the evil of your doings from my sight, stop doing evil. Learn to do good; seek justice; reprove the oppressor; judge the orphan; strive for the widow. Come and let us reason together, says the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing to hear, you shall eat the good of the land. But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken" (Isa.1:16-20 Para.).

Just what is sin?

Sin is the violation of the physical and spiritual law of God. Sin is any deviation from God's righteous laws, precepts, and principles that define how a person should live their life and worship God. It is this deviation from the law of God for which a person must ask forgiveness. See Rom.14:22-23; Jms.4:17; 1.Jn.3:4; 1.Jn.5:17.

A person cannot be a true child of God by the biblical definition unless they are in obedience to God's ten commandments and other laws, precepts, and principles.

A person cannot pick and choose which of God's laws they will or will not obey; all must be obeyed:

The apostle Paul said the following concerning God's law:

"For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom.2:13 KJV). See also Psa.119:172; 2.Jn.5-6.

Keep the Commandments

Just as the question of eternal life is on the minds of people today, it was on the minds of people during Jesus' day: A young man asked Jesus:

"Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if you will enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt.19:16-17 KJV).

Why did Jesus tell this young man to keep the Commandments? The answer is simple. The young man had a choice; he could either obey God's law and gain eternal life, or he could disobey and pay the penalty for disobedience (Rom.6:23), which is eternal death.

A Change of Heart

For a person to truly repent there must be an intense desire and effort to have a change of heart. This change of heart is a change in one's attitudes, state of mind, priorities, and lifestyle; a change that will lead away from the things that are against God and toward the things that are of God.

True repentance is much more than an emotional feeling of sorrow or remorse; a person who is truly repentant must not only regret having sinned but also no longer make a practice of sinning. True repentance requires a change of heart, mind, attitude, and physical actions.

Lip Service

Just saying one is sorry for violating God's laws and asking for forgiveness of one's sins is not enough. For a person to truly repent, there must be a change in one's life. True repentance is not just a fleeting emotional experience; true repentance requires a real change in a person's attitude, thought process, and lifestyle. Yes, words are important; however, words must be backed up with action:

Jesus said to the spiritual leaders of his day:

"Hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying, This people draws near to Me with their mouth, and with their lips honor me; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the ordinances of men" (Matt.15:7-9 Para.). See Isa.29:13; Ezk.33:31-32.

The overall plan of God for salvation has not changed from the foundation of the earth. Part of this plan is that humans must come into conformity with God's laws of worship and behavior. A fundamental teaching of both the Old and the New Testaments, is that, one must put forth a serious, heartfelt effort to change from disobedience to obedience before being granted salvation.

A CHANGE IN LIFESTYLE

Accepting Jesus Christ involves a change of heart, mind, attitude, and lifestyle; it involves a change in what we are, and it involves a change in the direction of our life.

The Creator God said through the prophet Isaiah: "For all those things has my hand made, and all those things have been, says the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word" (Isa.66:2 KJV).

Very few in today's world tremble at God's word. In fact, most people today ridicule God and his word. Many also say that his law has been done away and they simply do not believe the good news message that Jesus brought from the Sovereign God.

True repentance and conversion is an event of monumental proportions. It is not just a philosophical change and it is not only a change in attitude. It is a change in what a person is mentally.

Jesus said: "If any man comes to me, and does not love less his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk.14:25-26 KJV). See Matt.10:34-38.

Jesus says in order to follow him, a person must be willing to put him first above everything and everyone else. Nothing else can have a higher priority than obedience to God's way of life. Any person who considers anyone or anything, including their own physical life, more important than their commitment to

God, cannot be a son of God.

Once a person understands the good news message about the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ, God the Father requires a total commitment. There can be no turning back once a person commits to becoming a part of the God family. See Heb.2:1-3; 6:4-6;8; 10:26-29; 2.Pet.2:20-21; Ezk.18:24,26.

BAPTISM

Peter said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit" (Acts 2:38 KJV).

The baptismal ceremony with its various steps is the process by which the Father makes and ratifies an eternal agreement between an individual and himself. Upon completion of the final ritual of the baptismal ceremony, a person becomes a son of God the Father and a brother of Jesus Christ in the holy and divine Family of God.

Baptism is not only a symbolic representation of our death, burial, and resurrection to a new life in Christ, it is in fact a physical and spiritual transformation. Notice how Paul uses the baptismal ceremony in his exhortation to the elect at Rome to live a sinless life before God and man:

In Romans chapter 6 beginning in verse 1, Paul reminds the elect at Rome of their baptism and their sinless condition before God. Paul says:

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (vs.1-2).

As a person is submerged in the baptismal waters, their old life symbolically dies and is buried. The baptismal water symbolizes a grave and truly would become a grave if the person being baptized were held under the water for very long. Continuing in what Paul says:

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism to death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:" (vs.4-5).

When a person is raised out of the water, they are symbolically and literally raised to a new life. The repentant person is now pure and sinless, no longer under the penalty of death, because their spirit and body have been purged of all sin and defilement:

Paul Continues to say:

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him" (vs.6-9).

As Christ is dead to sin, so are those who have God's spirit dwelling within them. They are free from the penalty of sin and can look forward to being immortal spirit-beings that can never die:

Sins Washed Away

Baptism is much more than a symbol of a physical death and a resurrection. During this ceremony, the person being baptized is washed clean and purged of all sin by the power of God's spirit through the sacrifice of Christ. At that moment, the baptized person, devoid of sin, becomes righteous before God.

Under the first agreement with national Israel, washing with water as an act of purification was a part of the sacrificial system. The good news is that now, through the sacrificial blood of Jesus and through the baptismal ceremony, we are washed clean of all physical and spiritual defilement and forgiven of our sins that would otherwise prevent us from coming before the Sovereign Father.

Both the writer to the Hebrews and the apostle John spoke about the washing away of sin with pure water, the blood of Jesus, and the cleansing power of God's spirit. The writer to the Hebrews said:

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water"(Heb.10:22 KJV).

The apostle John said:

"To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"(Rev.1:5 KJV).

Receive the Holy Spirit

Receiving the holy spirit is the most important event that can ever happen to any human, because it is at this point in time that a person is transformed into a son of God and their body literally becomes a temple of the living God. However, as noted in Acts 5:32 the holy spirit is only given to those who obey God. Therefore, the biblical instructions and the process for repentance and baptism must be followed exactly or one can not receive the holy spirit.

The Continuing Process

In order to secure salvation, a person must truly believe the gospel message concerning God the Father and his son Jesus Christ; then, they must have their sins forgiven, their death sentence removed, and have the holy spirit and the laws of God placed within them.

After these things are accomplished by God the Father through the sacrificial blood of Christ, it is very important to understand that the process of salvation continues until one's physical death. This is because it takes physical effort as well as a righteous attitude to maintain a harmonious relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

In order to worship and please the Father as we should, one must study God's word, communicate with the Father, fellowship with those of like mind, if possible, and make and follow through on righteous decisions. It takes both faith and works in order to truly believe in and follow the way of God. It is through good works that we grow toward spiritual maturity and show the Father our faith in him and his Son.

Some falsely believe that all one has to do to obtain salvation is to have an intellectual belief in Christ, ask for repentance, and receive the holy spirit. This may sound good on the surface; however, it is not the kind of belief required for salvation. If one does no more than these things and does not follow through with the instructions given in the word of God for the manifestation of true belief in their life, that person does not truly believe. True belief is more than an intellectual exercise, true belief requires both faith and works.

The apostle James said the following about faith and works:

"But someone may well argue, "You say the way to God is by faith alone, plus nothing; well, I say that good works are important too, for without good works you can't prove whether you have faith or not; but anyone can see that I have faith by the way I act". Are there still some among you who hold that "only believing" is enough? Believing in one God? Well, remember that the devils believe this too—so strongly that they tremble in terror! Fool! When will you ever learn that "believing" is useless without doing what God wants you to? Faith that does not result in good deeds is not real faith" (Jms.2:18-20 LBP). Simply put, "Faith without works is dead."

James concludes that one is made righteous by what is done as well as by what is believed. It is important to understand what James says about faith and physical works. It takes physical effort as well as a right attitude to fulfill God's laws, precepts, and principles:

The apostle Paul said: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be declared righteous" (Rom.2:13 KJV).

And being a doer of the law includes the performance of the law that requires a person to repent of violating God's law, coming into conformity to that law, and being baptized by immersion before one can receive the gift of the holy spirit, and be transformed into a son of God and enter into the Family and Kingdom of God.

The extremely good news is that today, during the gospel age of salvation, is that, if anyone truly believes the Sovereign Father's good news message without reservation and performs the method that he has designed in order to be saved from eternal death, that person can be saved and enter into the Family and Kingdom of God as an immortal being.

I see that my time is up, if you want to know more about the subjects that I have briefly touched on in this broadcast, write to me at the address given in the following announcement. Until next time this is Bud Cocherell for Bible Research .org

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