

Salvation Matters

THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION

Becoming a Christian, getting into a proper relationship with God and becoming saved all mean exactly the same thing. The Bible has a number of other terms as well, each of which emphasize certain aspects of a person's relationship with God. In Acts 2 we read about the start of the church and the first Christian converts. They heard a stirring speech regarding Jesus Christ and how many of them had been contributors to His crucifixion. This speech hit home and they realized their need for God's forgiveness. They responded with the question "what must we do to be saved?" This is arguably the most important question any of us can ask because our right standing with God and our eternal destiny depend on receiving the correct answer (God's answer) to this crucial question.... "What must I do to be saved?"



SOME COMMON WRONG ANSWERS

1. "You can do nothing, just have faith in Jesus Christ"

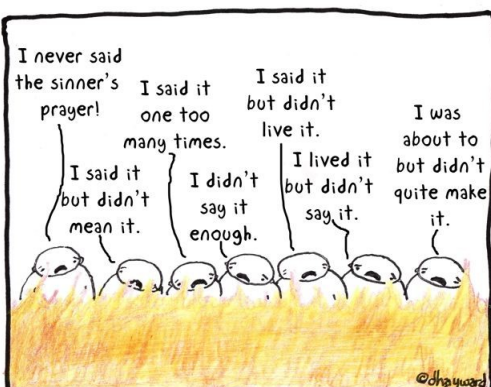
We see and hear this one quite often, however the logic is faulty and the answer is wrong. It is absolutely true that the Bible teaches that we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ [Acts 16:31; Eph 2:8; John 3:16]. However it never teaches that we are saved by faith 'alone'. It never teaches that "the instant you believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God you are saved" [Jas 2:19].



The New Testament concept of being saved by faith is a journey of several stages or steps. Suppose you wanted to travel to a country on the other side of the world. You might ask "what is the quickest and most cost effective way to get there?" If you were given the answer "go by plane", would you be naive enough to think that all you have to do is find the nearest plane and sit in it? Of course not! The answer is correct as the general description of how you must travel, but you are still required to obtain a passport, purchase a ticket, travel to the airport, board the correct plane, endure the trip, de-plane and travel to your destination. The answer "go by plane" implies all these individual steps. As we shall see, in the same way, the Bible answer "have faith in Jesus Christ" implies several steps in a journey that needs to be taken.

If your answer to the question "What must I do to be saved?" is "The only thing you have to do is believe in Jesus Christ", then you need to reconsider your answer now.

2. "Make a decision to believe in Jesus Christ and say "the sinner's prayer"



We see and hear this one all the time, however the answer is entirely unbiblical. It might sound nice, the people telling you this might even be sincere, but this answer does not come from God. If "What must I do to be saved?" is our most important question, surely God would give a clear answer to anyone who asks. Here is a simple important fact: NO PERSON IN THE BIBLE WAS EVER GIVEN THE SINNER'S PRAYER AS THE ANSWER. This answer has been made up by people as a sugar coated 'nobody will disagree with it' type of response.

If this is your answer to the question "What must I do to be saved?" then you need to seriously and urgently reconsider.

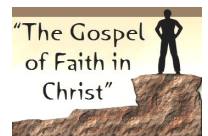
Salvation Matters

THE CORRECT ANSWER IS THE BIBLE ANSWER

The New Testament describes salvation in terms of the active part God plays (the death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, grace, mercy, forgiveness and love are key aspects) and the active part that we humans are to play in response to God's offer of salvation. James 2:17 tells us that a passive faith (i.e. without the proper action on our part) is a useless faith and it will not save us. The New Testament way of becoming a Christian is an acceptance of God's grace through an obedient faith.

The New Testament describes the process of salvation (becoming a Christian) like a journey. There is a starting point and an arrival point. Wherever a person is on that salvation journey, the answer to the question "what must I do to be saved"? is: "complete the following faith journey!"

Hearing the gospel message [Rom 10:14]. This is not a passive response on your part. You have many competing thoughts inside your head and you will need to concentrate and actively open up your mind in order to be receptive to the Gospel salvation message.



Developing a belief in Jesus Christ [Acts 8:35-37; Heb 11:6]. Through Jesus Christ, God did something special for us all when Jesus died, was buried and was resurrected. You need to reach the point where this action on God's part becomes personal for you and you become willing to receive the salvation that God offers you through Jesus Christ.



Deciding to change your life in God's direction (this is called repentance) [Rom 3:23; Acts 3:19; 2 Cor 7:10; Luk 13:3; Acts 17:30]. It is at this point in the journey that you begin to realise and feel the full weight of your sins before God. You realise that your life is not perfect before a Perfect God. You wish to do something about it and to really change the direction of your life. The Bible calls this change of heart and mind 'repentance'.



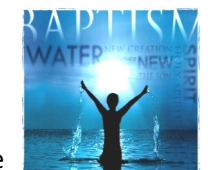
Going public with your belief (confessing your faith) [Rom 10:9; Acts 8:37; Mat 10:32].

Becoming a Christian is not done in secret or alone. You need assistance to reach your arrival point. God expects you to actively announce your belief in Jesus Christ. This 'confession' announces the change that you want in your life, and tells others that you are ready to receive God's forgiveness.



Being baptised into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins [Acts 2:38; Rom 6:2-6; ; 1 Pet 3:21].

Jesus Christ died, was buried and was resurrected. In the simple physical act of being immersed under water and coming back out, you can symbolize your willingness to follow Jesus Christ as your Spiritual Leader. Your baptism symbolizes the death and burial of the sinful person you used to be, and the coming to life of the new you in Jesus Christ as God 'wipes your slate clean' and your sins are forgiven.



At this arrival point a person is truly forgiven of past sins [Acts 22:16], is in a right relationship with God [2 Cor 5:17], has become a Christian [Gal 3:27], is added by Jesus Christ to His church [Acts 2:42], and is ready to begin living a life of faith [1 John 1:7]. **To complete the full salvation journey to its final destination**, you need to continue living the rest of your life as a faithful Christian in accordance with Jesus Christ's New Testament principles and commands [Heb 3:14, Col 1:23].



SALVATION MATTERS!

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Your salvation matters a great deal. Isn't it time you asked the question "What must I do to be saved" and give proper attention to what the Bible has to say rather than ignoring it or accepting an answer that somebody has just made up?