

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

“What must I do to be saved?” is the most important question anyone can ask. This very question was asked by a jailer in Philippi almost two thousand years ago (Acts 16:30). Similarly, in response to the gospel message proclaimed to them that day, some among the multitude gathered on Pentecost shortly after our Lord’s death, burial, resurrection and ascension back to Heaven asked *“what shall we do?”* (Acts 2:37). There is no subject that is more important, more relevant or more profound to any individual than learning how to come to eternal salvation.

In order to arrive at the correct answer, we must first understand where to look. The Bible, *God’s word*, is the only authoritative source from which to learn how a person can be saved. The apostle Paul reminded Timothy, *“and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”* (2 Timothy 3:15). Only the word of God can give us the true answer to the question *“What must I do to be saved?”* Let’s look closely, then, at what the scriptures teach us as to how to be saved.

First, we need to understand that it is only *by God’s grace* that we can be saved. *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast”* (Ephesians 2:8-9). There is nothing that we can do to save ourselves, *by ourselves*. There is no amount of good deeds that we can perform that would be weighty enough to obligate God to save us. We are totally at His mercy, and our only hope for salvation is *His grace!*

But, God expects us to respond in specific ways to His offer of grace. Our first, most basic response is *faith!* *“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 of those who diligently seek Him”* (Hebrews 11:6). In addition to believing in God, we must also believe in Jesus Christ as God’s Son and our Lord and savior. Jesus said, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). In addition, He stated, *“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins”* (John 8:24). We must have faith in God and in Christ in order to be saved.

Our faith must lead us to turn away from sinfulness. This is called *repentance*. Jesus emphasized that repentance is essential when He said, *“but unless you repent you will all likewise perish”* (Luke 13:3, 5). The apostle Peter instructed, *“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...”* (Acts 3:19). Since *“the wages of sin is death”* (Romans 6:23), it is obvious that we must repent of our sins in order to be saved.

Jesus also taught that we must openly *confess our faith in Him*: *“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father Who is in Heaven”* (Matthew 10:32). Paul expressed that *confessing Christ* must go with *faith in Christ*: *“that 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. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”* (Romans 10:9-10). The scriptures are clear; we must confess our faith in Christ in order to be saved.

Salvation is only *“in Christ Jesus”* (2 Timothy 2:10; 3:15). A person can believe in Christ, believe that he must repent of his sins and confess his faith in Christ, but he is still not *“in Christ,”* where salvation is found. The only way God’s word teaches as to how to come *“into Christ”* is through *baptism!* There is no other way taught in scripture. *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?”* (Romans 6:3). Similarly, *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ”* (Galatians 3:27).

Baptism is pivotal. Not only is it through baptism that a person comes *“into Christ,”* but it is also at baptism that a person is forgiven of his sins. *“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (Acts 22:16). On Pentecost, in response to the question *“What shall we do?”*, Peter responded *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized 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). Jesus said that a person comes to salvation *at baptism*. *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”* (Mark 16:15-16).

While most churches that profess Christianity practice baptism in some form, most do not practice baptism as taught in the New Testament. First, many churches practice *sprinkling* or *pouring* as baptism. The very word that is translated from Greek, the language in which the New Testament was originally written, into English as *“baptize”* means *“to immerse, bury, dip, plunge, submerge.”* Sprinkling and pouring are innovations of man and have no support in scripture.

Second, most churches teach that a person is baptized for some reason other than to come *“into Christ,”* to receive forgiveness of their sins and to come to salvation. They teach that a person *should* be baptized, but that it is not *necessary* for salvation. But, the scriptures are plain, easy to understand and repetitive in emphasizing just the opposite. The only way the scriptures teach that a person comes *“into Christ”* is *through baptism*. The scriptures plainly teach that forgiveness is received *at baptism*. The scriptures could not be more plain in teaching that it is *at baptism* that a person comes to salvation. Truly, somebody has to work to misunderstand what God’s word teaches on the necessity of baptism.

Coming to salvation is just the beginning. Once a person has been saved, then he begins a new life as a *Christian*. It is a life lived in *faithfulness to God and Christ*. Jesus instructed, *“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life”* (Revelation 2:10). Eternal salvation in Heaven is offered to everyone, *to you!* But, God will not force you to be saved. He has demonstrated His love for you by sending His Son to pay the debt for your sins on the cross (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). His desire is that you, *in response to His love for you*, will love Him enough to obey Him. But, *He leaves the choice up to you!* If you would like to study in more detail as to what you need to do to be saved, please click here and enroll in a *FREE* Bible study that we will send to you through the mail. If you have specific questions, please email us at: info@moorevillechurchofchrist.org