

Back to the Basics

Understanding My Salvation

Memory Verse:
Acts 4:11-12

My Birth

When you became a child of God, you did so because you understood it to be necessary for the eternal salvation of your soul. Someone taught you (from God's word) your need to be set free from sin. You realized the price Jesus paid for you and you made the decision to turn to Him. Based upon your belief in Jesus, you made the decision to repent of your sins, confess your belief before men, and then obey Jesus' command to be baptized. At that point you arose to walk in the newness of life, having now been born again. (cf. John 3:2-6)

With this lesson, we will go back to before you were born again. We will take a closer look at what you did in order to be saved. Each of the "steps of salvation" play a vital role in your salvation. Understanding the purpose and design of each step will help you to better understand your salvation and your service as a child of God.

The Purpose of My Belief

Your first step to becoming a child of God began with your belief in Jesus. At some point in your past, you began hearing about Jesus Christ, the son of God. You might have heard it from a preacher, from you parents, maybe from your spouse, or you may have begun studying the Bible on your own and eventually came to know the Truth. In any case, your belief began to develop when you began to hear about Jesus Christ. In Romans 10:17, we are taught that faith in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit comes by hearing the Word of God.

When your belief began to develop, it began to lead you in the direction of great revelations and subsequent changes in your life. For instance, when you began studying the Bible, you probably learned:

- q That through belief in Jesus you would not be condemned. (John 3:18)
- q That through belief in Jesus, you would have everlasting life. (John 3:36)
- q That through belief, you would have life through the name of Jesus. (John 20:31)
- q That through belief, you would be able to overcome the world and all of its sinful temptations. (1 John 5:4-5)
- q That without belief, it would be impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11:6)

As your study progressed, you undoubtedly saw many great examples of those who believed in God. For instance, consider the example of the eunuch. (Acts 8:36-37) Here was a man who, being taught the gospel by Philip, believed and obeyed the teachings of Jesus Christ. You may have also learned of the example set by Saul (who was later called Paul). (Acts 9:8-9, 11, 18) Saul was a man who, upon learning the Truth, had enough faith in Jesus Christ to turn himself to Jesus. Although this turning resulted in his being rejected by many of his peers, this turning resulted in Saul's salvation through his faith in Jesus Christ. Then there was the wonderful example of the faith of the Philippian jailor. (Acts 16:30-33)

Having developed a strong belief in Jesus Christ through the Word of God, you likely developed a desire and zeal to do whatever Jesus Christ, the Son of God, desired that you do. You had the growing desire to follow Him whom you had rejected for so long.

The purpose of your belief was to point you in the right direction. Your belief, which was based upon the Word of God, pointed you in the direction of obedience to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, and away from sin and worldliness.

The Purpose of My Repentance

Having had your belief build to a fever pitch, you may have asked yourself the following question, "What must I do to be saved?" If this is the question you asked, then you are not alone. Consider the example of the three thousand who were saved on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Beginning in verse 14, Peter began to preach to the people Jesus and Him crucified. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), Peter convicted the people of their sin of putting to death Jesus Christ, an innocent man. Once the people heard the truth about Jesus Christ, like you, they also believed. This belief directed the people to ask the question, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" That is to ask, "What shall we do about our sins? How shall we be saved from our transgressions?" To their question Peter replied, "*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 2:38, NKJV)

In Peter's reply, take notice that he stated first and foremost the need for the people to repent of their sins. This too was your next step after you had established your belief in Jesus Christ. You took the step of repenting of your sins because of what you had learned from your studies of God's Word. From your studies, you learned:

- Q That repentance was commanded by Jesus Christ and by God. (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30)
- Q That repentance brings about the remission of your sins. (Acts 2:38)
- Q That repentance would cause your sins to be blotted out. (Acts 3:19)
- Q That repentance would bring about your salvation. (2 Corinthians 7:10)
- Q That your repentance would cause great joy in Heaven. (Luke 15:7)

When you committed yourself to repentance, to what did you commit yourself? When you committed yourself to repentance, you committed yourself to the changing of your life, actions, and attitudes. Repenting of your sins is much more than walking down front and saying, "I am

sorry.” True repentance begins with the desire to stop sinning and start serving the Lord. It requires changes in your life.

Consider the parable in Matthew 21:28-31. In this parable, Jesus illustrated the simplicity of true repentance. In the parable, we find the first son choosing not to obey his father. However, at a later time, the son repented and did what his father had told him. This is true repentance. Another example of repentance was a man by the name of Simon. His story is told in Acts 8:18-24. In this story, Simon became guilty of sin. Peter rebuked Simon for his sin and instructed Simon to repent. Simon repented and turned himself from the error of his action.

The purpose of your repentance was to turn you away from sin and turn you to a life of service unto God. Now that you are a Christian, it is crucial that you keep your back turned to sin. If you learn that some practice in your life is wrong, then the repentant heart will drive you to begin working to overcome that sin. With a truly repentant heart, you will overcome the sin that existed within your life prior to your being saved.

The Purpose of My Confession

While your repentant change affected many areas of your life, the first act of your repentant heart was to make your belief known through obedience to the teachings of Jesus. In other words, you confessed your belief in Jesus Christ. As you think back to the moment you confessed your belief in Jesus Christ, you probably remember standing in front of some people and saying “Yes” to the question, “Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?” However, your confession actually began when you decided to act upon your belief in Jesus Christ and did not end with your baptism. The confession of your belief in Jesus began because you wanted to be saved and continued after you were saved.

Consider the example of one who confessed his belief in Jesus Christ prior to his being baptized. In Acts 8:26-39, we learn about the conversion of the eunuch. Beginning in verse 31, we see Philip beginning to teach the eunuch about Jesus Christ. When Philip and the eunuch came to some water, the eunuch, based upon Philip’s teachings regarding Jesus Christ, asked, “*See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?*” (v. 36) Philip replied, “*If you believe with all your heart, you may.*” To that, the eunuch replied, “*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*” (v. 37) After hearing of the eunuch’s belief in Jesus, Philip took him down into the water and baptized him. (v. 38-39)

Why did the eunuch confess his belief in Jesus? Was it because Philip said, “Ok, now that you believe, you must confess out loud your belief in Jesus?” I do not believe so. What we see with the eunuch is a natural step following one’s belief and repentant heart. Before anyone can be baptized into Jesus Christ, he has to believe. (Cf. Mark 16:16) How was Philip to know that the eunuch was ready to be baptized if the eunuch had not told him that he believed? When the eunuch stated his belief in Jesus Christ, he was simply confirming his belief in Jesus Christ.

The eunuch’s actions were in line with the teachings of the inspired teachers, such as the apostle Paul. Paul wrote in Romans 10:9-10, “*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.” (NKJV) The confessing of one’s belief is a natural response to belief and repentance.

Is it possible for a person to confess his belief in other ways? Most certainly. Every time a person takes a stand for the Truth and overcomes sin, he is showing his belief in Jesus Christ. In Acts 2:38, we see Peter saying nothing about confession. Are we to conclude that the three thousand people who were saved on the day of Pentecost did not confess their belief in Jesus Christ? Certainly not. The fact that they asked the question, “*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” revealed their belief in Jesus Christ. When they repented and were baptized, they were acting upon their obvious belief in Jesus Christ.

When you decided to become a child of God, you took the step of confessing your belief in Jesus Christ. This step may have been in specific words and / or in your obedience to Jesus’ command to be baptized. Your confession at that point should have set the precedence for the rest of your life. You must continue to confess Jesus Christ before men. Here are the benefits of confessing your belief in Jesus Christ.

- Q By confessing your belief in Jesus Christ, Jesus will confess you before His Father in Heaven. (Matthew 10:32)
- Q However, the reverse is just as true. If you cease to confess your belief in Jesus, then He will deny you to His Father. (Matthew 10:33)
- Q If you will continue to confess Jesus Christ before men, then God will continue to dwell in you. (1 John 4:14-15)

If you were to walk away from the Lord now, ceasing to confess your belief in Him, please understand that a day will come when you will confess the name of Jesus Christ. However, at that point, the confession will come too late to satisfy the needs of your soul. (Cf. Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:11)

The purpose of your confession was to set a precedence for the remainder of your life. Never fail to show your faith in Jesus Christ, whether it is in word or in action. (Cf. Colossians 3:17) A Christian is the perfect person to confess the name of Jesus Christ.

The Purpose of My Baptism

Having examined the purpose of your belief, repentance, and confession, we now move on to the purpose of your baptism. You would not have been baptized if you had not believed it necessary, as commanded by Jesus Christ. However, in your daily life as a Christian, it helps to remember what took place when you were baptized.

When you were baptized, here is what happened to you:

- Q You were saved. (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21)
- Q Your sins were forgiven. (Acts 2:38)
- Q You were baptized into Jesus Christ. (Galatians 3:26,27; 1 Corinthians 12:13)
- Q You were baptized into Jesus death. (Romans 6:3-4)
- Q Your sins were washed away. (Acts 22:16)

It is important to note that baptism alone did not save you. To say that baptism alone saved you would be like saying that faith alone saved you or that repentance alone saved you. Neither would be a scriptural claim. Your obedience to Jesus' command to be baptized worked with your belief, your repentant change and the confession of your faith to save you.

It is important at this time to elaborate some on your baptism into the death of Jesus Christ. (Please take the time to read Romans 6:1-11.) In this passage, the apostle Paul explains why a person is baptized. In verse 3, Paul said that when a person is baptized, he is baptized into the death of Jesus Christ. In verse 4, Paul explains that, just as Christ arose from the dead by the glory of the Father, the person who is baptized will rise up to walk in a newness of life. The newness of life is experienced by the individual putting to death the old man of sin. According to verse 6, the old man of sin was crucified through baptism so that sin should no longer be served. When you rose up from the "watery grave" of baptism, you arose to walk in a newness of life. This newness of life demands that you leave behind all actions of that "old man of sin."

Some people within the religious world view baptism as an outward sign of one's inward obedience or salvation. This is a mistaken concept which has led many people away from the proper understanding that baptism is necessary for salvation. When you study the Bible, you see that Bible baptism (the baptism of Jesus Christ) is always pictured as coming before salvation. Jesus said, "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*" (Mark 16:16, NKJV) Peter preached, "*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 2:38, NKJV)

Summary:

Here is a brief summary of your salvation.

- Q The purpose of your belief: To direct you to obey God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.
- Q The purpose of your repentance: To turn you to Jesus Christ and His teachings, turning away from your sinful activities of the past and staying away from them in the future.
- Q The purpose of your confession: To show that you were not (and are not) ashamed of Jesus Christ and your belief in Him.
- Q The purpose of your baptism: Baptism was the final act of your obedience so that you might be saved. It was that which put you into the body of Christ, the church. It resulted in the forgiveness of your sins. It was that from which you arose to walk in a newness of life, serving only the Lord.

Make certain that you are following up on the purpose of your salvation. Remember, you are to walk in a newness of life, serving only the Lord. Turn away from sin on a daily basis, saying no to any and all forms of temptations. Continue to build your faith in Jesus Christ and continue to proclaim that faith so that others might believe.

Ten Questions

1. What comes by the hearing of the Word of God? _____
2. Who taught the Philippian jailer about Jesus Christ? _____
3. What did Peter tell the people on the day of Pentecost to do in order to receive the remission of their sins? _____

4. With what does true repentance begin? _____

5. When the eunuch saw the water, what did he ask? _____

6. Other than a verbal confession, how else can a person make their belief in Jesus known to the world? _____
7. If you continue to confess Jesus Christ before men, who will dwell in you? _____
8. What happened when you believed and were baptized? _____
9. According to Acts 22:12-16, what did Ananias tell Saul to do? _____

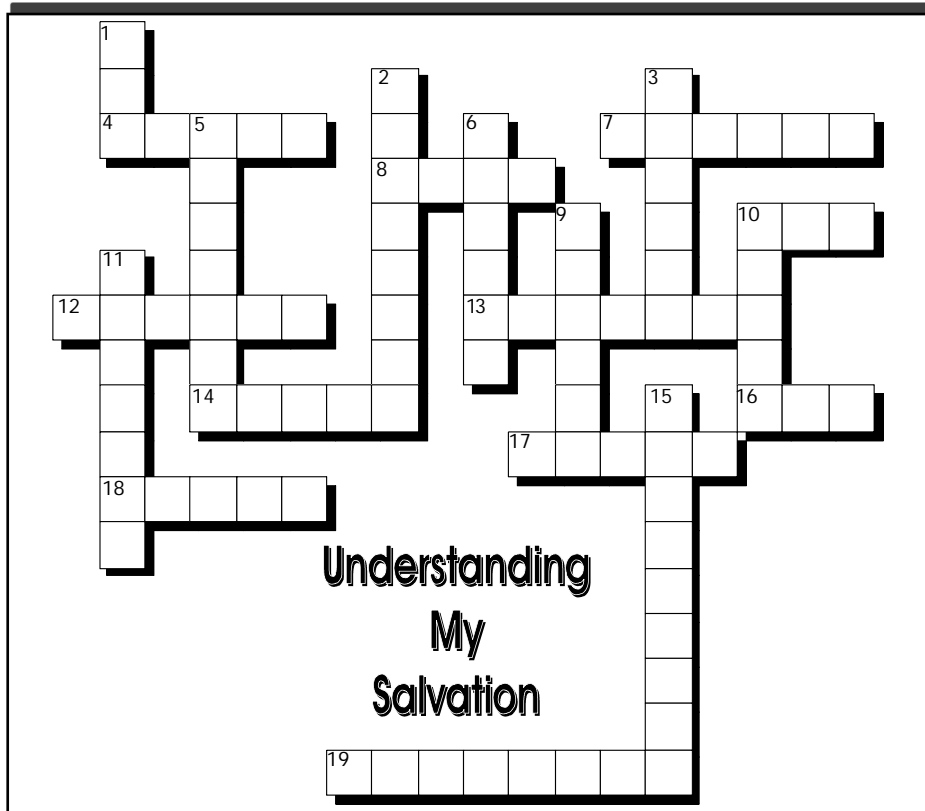
10. According to Romans 6, when a person is baptized, into what are they baptized? _____

True or False

1. T or F : A person can have everlasting life without believing in Jesus.
2. T or F : According to Acts 2, three thousand people were saved on the day of Pentecost.
3. T or F : Repentance plays a part in the blotting out of one's sins.
4. T or F : In Romans 10:10, Paul wrote, "For with the heart one believes unto salvation . . ."
5. T or F : If you confess Jesus before men, He will confess you before His Father in Heaven.
6. T or F : If you do not confess Jesus, He will confess you before His Father in Heaven.
7. T or F : A person arises to walk in a newness of life before being baptized.
8. T or F : The "old man of sin" is put to death when one is baptized into the death of Christ.
9. T or F : Baptism is an outward sign of one's inward salvation.
10. T or F : Mark 16:16 teaches the need to repent and be baptized.

A Little Fun

(Use the lesson text to answer these questions.)



Across

4. When you were baptized into Christ, you were baptized into His _____.
7. This man taught the eunuch about Jesus Christ.
8. This person taught that one must confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus.
10. Repentance causes this in Heaven.
12. The eunuch confessed his _____ in Jesus Christ.
13. If you will do this before men, Jesus will _____ you before the Father in Heaven.
14. This will happen to the person who believes and is baptized.
16. You are to put to death that "old man of _____."
17. This person told sinners, "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. . ."
18. This man's story of repentance is told in Acts 8:18-24.

19. In Acts 2, the people asked, "Men and _____, what shall we do?"

Down

1. Who will dwell in you if you confess your belief in Jesus Christ?
2. "He who believes and is _____ will be saved; . . ."
3. Repentance requires a _____ in your life.
5. Who told Saul to arise and be baptized?
6. This man said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
9. ". . . every _____ should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
10. Who taught that one must believe and be baptized in order to be saved?
11. After baptism, one arises to walk in a _____ of life.
15. "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the _____ of sins."

Passages in this Lesson

Matthew 10:32	pg 14	Acts 9:8-9,11,18	pg 12
Matthew 10:33	pg 14	Acts 16:30-33	pg 12
Matthew 21:28-31	pg 13	Acts 17:30	pg 12
Mark 16:16	pg 13,14,15	Acts 22:16	pg 14
Luke 13:3	pg 12	Romans 6:1-11	pg 15
Luke 15:7	pg 12	Romans 6:3-4	pg 14
John 3:2-6	pg 11	Romans 10:9-10	pg 13
John 3:18	pg 11	Romans 14:11	pg 14
John 3:36	pg 11	1 Corinthians 12:13	pg 14
John 20:31	pg 11	2 Corinthians 7:10	pg 12
Acts 2	pg 12	Galatians 3:26,27	pg 14
Acts 2:1-4	pg 12	Philippians 2:11	pg 14
Acts 2:38	pg 12,14,15	Colossians 3:17	pg 14
Acts 3:19	pg 12	Hebrews 11:6	pg 11
Acts 8:18-24	pg 13	1 Peter 3:21	pg 14
Acts 8:26-39	pg 13	1 John 4:14-15	pg 14
Acts 8:36-37	pg 12	1 John 5:4-5	pg 11