

The Steps of Salvation

The Bible teaches that sin is a transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). All people who know the difference between right and wrong have sinned (Romans 3:23). Our sins separate us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). The punishment for sin is death (Romans 6:23). This is "the second death" which is "the lake that burns with fire" (Revelation 21:8).

God loves us. He does not want us to be punished for our sins. Therefore, He has provided a way for us to be forgiven (John 3:16). God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins (1 John 4:10). Jesus suffered the punishment which we should have received for our sins (Isaiah 53:4-6). He did not die for His own sins, for He had none (2 Corinthians 5:21). He suffered for our sins on the cross so that we can be forgiven (Romans 5:6-8; 1 Peter 2:24). In order for us to be forgiven of our sins, and therefore receive eternal life, we must accept the salvation which Christ has made possible. There are five steps which we must take to receive this salvation.

HEAR

First, we must hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). One is not a Christian because his parents are. Faith cannot be inherited (Ezekiel 18:20). Each person must believe in Jesus Christ for himself. Christianity is a religion of teaching (Matthew 28:19-20). Unless one has heard the Gospel and learned that Jesus Christ died for his sins, was buried, and arose from the dead, he cannot be saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The apostle Paul wrote: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14) One must first hear the Gospel before he can believe it.

BELIEVE

Second, one must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). Jesus said: "...except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). The jailor at Philippi asked Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They told him to "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:30-31). Jesus also said: "He that believes and is baptized will be saved; but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). One comes to believe in Jesus Christ when he hears the Gospel taught.

Faith comes only by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). This is the reason it is so important that the Gospel be preached to the whole world (Mark 16:15).

REPENT

Third, one must repent of his sins in order to be saved (Acts 17:30-31). Jesus commanded that “repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). Repentance is a result of being sorry for one’s sins (2 Corinthians 7:10). When the Jews on Pentecost Day learned from Peter that they had crucified the Son of God, they “were cut to the heart” (Acts 2:37). They wanted to be forgiven of their sins, so they asked, “What shall we do?” They were told “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...” (Acts 2:37-38). When one repents, he turns away from his sins (1 Thessalonians 1:9). He shows he has repented by doing good works (Matthew 3:8).

CONFESS

Fourth, one must confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). This great truth is the very foundation upon which the church of Christ is built (Matthew 16:18; Acts 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 3:11). Jesus said that we must be willing to confess Him before men if we want Him to confess us before the Father (Matthew 10:32-33). The apostle Paul wrote: “But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the word of faith, that we proclaim: because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:8-10). When Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, the eunuch asked, “what prevents me from being baptized?” Philip told him he could be baptized if he believed. The eunuch then confessed, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:35-38; some versions have verse 37 in the margin). We must make this important, yet simple confession also in order to be saved.

BE BAPTIZED

Fifth, one must be baptized in order to be saved. Jesus said: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16). Please note that baptism follows belief. One who does not believe the Gospel cannot be truly baptized. Therefore, babies cannot be baptized for they are too young to (1) have sin, (2) hear the Gospel, (3) repent of sins, and (4) confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of

God. Baptism also follows repentance. On Pentecost Day, Peter told those who asked what to do to be saved to “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...” (Acts 2:38). One cannot be truly baptized who has not truly repented.

Baptism is a burial in water and participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12). Therefore, sprinkling and pouring are not proper baptism. Baptism is required in order to be saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21). One is not saved before he is baptized! Baptism is “for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). Just as Jesus shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28), so we are baptized in order to receive the forgiveness of sins. In baptism, the sinner’s sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus (Acts 22:16).

What does one have to do to be forgiven of his sins? He/She must:

1. Hear the Gospel of Christ;
2. Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;
3. Repent of all his past sins;
4. Confess that Christ is God’s Son;
5. Be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.

When he does this, he is added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:41, 47). He is born again (John 3:3-5; 2 Corinthians 5:17). He is in Christ where all spiritual blessings are to be found. (Ephesians 1:3; Galatians 3:26-27). In short, he is a Christian (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16).

This is but the beginning of the Journey to become Christlike. We recognize that Jesus, in the Great Commission, commanded that the good news of salvation be taught to all people. (Matthew 28:19-20). Here we understand that we are called to be and to make Disciples of all people. A Disciple is a follower of Jesus, an apprentice, or a student. We recognize that for the remainder of our lives we are being transformed, with God’s help, into the image of His son. (Romans 12:1-2).

Are you saved from your sins? Have you taken these simple steps to salvation? If not, why not allow us to help you starting today?

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