

Salvation and the Sinner's Prayer

What Does the Bible Teach?

- Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)
- "But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts 8:12)

What Does the Bible Teach?

- And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"... And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing."
(Acts 8:36, 38 – 39)

What Does the Bible Teach?

- And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. 33 And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. 34 And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household." (Acts 16:31 – 34)

What Does the Bible Teach?

- “And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.” (Acts 18:8)
- “And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.” (Acts 22:16)

Summary:

- Hear the word of God
- Believe in the Lord and make Him your Lord.
- Repent of past sins
- Confess the Christ as your Lord (Rom. 10:9-10)
- Be Baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins.

Conclusion?

- Baptism is mentioned more frequently in these cases of conversion than repentance.
- It is “for the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 2:38)
- It was done immediately in response to gospel teaching (cf. Acts 2, 8, 16, 22)
- People rejoiced because through baptism their sins were forgiven and they now had a relationship with God through Christ.

“Power of God”

- Col 2:11 – 12 “and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of (by) Christ;
- 2:12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” (NASB)
- ESV “Faith in the powerful working of God”

Where is the “Sinner’s Prayer”?

- Absent from the Scriptures
 - “Pray the sinners prayer. Accept Jesus into your heart. Invite Christ into your life.”
 - “Should it not concern you that there is no such superstitious prayer in the New Testament?” (David Platt, Ph.D from Baptist Seminary)
 - Mr. Platt goes on to say “It is a very dangerous thing to lead people to think that they are a Christian when they have not Biblically responded to the gospel.”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPhEEzjU8xQ>

Where is the “Sinner’s Prayer”?

- Francis Chan:
 - If all you had was the Bible would you come to the conclusion that to become a Christian you should “Pray a prayer and ask Jesus into your heart”?
 - “Is that really what you find in the Bible?”
 - “Or would you find that you need to repent and be baptized and be filled with the Holy Spirit?”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ls8QnxviOI>
 - Crazy Love, Ch. 5 Are Your Beliefs Biblical?

2nd and 3rd Century Writers

- “We descend into the water full of sins and uncleanness, and we ascend bearing reverence in our heart and having hope in Jesus in our spirit.” (*Epistle of Barnabas*, 11:11)
- “I have heard, Sir, from some teachers that there is no other repentance except that one when we descended into water and received the forgiveness of our former sins.” He said to me, “You heard correctly, for it is so.” (*Shepherd of Hermas*, Mandate 4.3.1)

2nd and 3rd Century Writers

- "...Then they are led by us to where there is water, and in the manner of the regeneration by which we ourselves were regenerated they are regenerated. For at that time they obtain for themselves the washing in water in the name of God the Master of all and Father, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christ also said, "Unless you are regenerated you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven..."
(Justin Martyr, *Apology* 1.61)

2nd and 3rd Century Writers

- “It has assuredly been ordained that no one can attain knowledge of salvation without baptism. This comes especially from the pronouncement of the Lord, who says, “Except one be born of water he does not have life.” (Tertullian, *On Baptism* 12)

Departures from Scripture

- Baptism became a *Sacrament*
 - Infants were *baptized* in light of the false idea that somehow they were born in sin and needed to be cleansed.
 - Sprinkling replaced immersion as the mode of baptism.



Camp Meeting Revivals - 1800's

- In this context the “altar call” became popular with the preaching of Charles Finney - 1830.
 - What he called the “anxious seat” came to be called the “mourner’s bench.”
- In the 20th century crusades the version of the “altar call” was the invitation to come down and say the “sinner’s prayer” - “receiving Christ into your heart.”

Altar Call

- Fred Zaspel said of the altar call “first arose more than eighteen centuries after Christ.”
- David Bercot, “The altar call and associate prayers are a product of the revival movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and they were unknown to any Christians before that time.”



Salvation by Obedience

- “But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became **obedient from the heart** to that form of teaching to which you were committed,” (Rom. 6:17).
- “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?
- 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”
- Romans 6:3 - 4

Are You in Christ?