

# am i saved?

by Pastor James Keen

“Are you saved?” Has a Christian ever asked you this question? What is salvation and how do I know if I am saved? These are important questions to ask... the sooner the better.

## saved from what?

Sin... that's the problem. Man didn't start out separated from God. At creation, Adam and Eve were perfect, just like the world they lived in. Although tempted by Satan to ignore God's command, the choice to disobey was theirs. That choice changed their very nature and the nature of their children. They became sinners and were therefore separated from a sinless God.

If you think about it, their sin seems insignificant to us. They ate a fruit they were told to not eat. Far worse crimes are committed every day. In fact, we've all done worse. That is the point! Sin is a problem we inherited from our ancient parents. Sin runs rampant in our hearts, hurting ourselves and others. Sin is rebellion against God and the truth He revealed to us. Our good deeds don't erase sin's stain. Unless the problem of sin is solved it will eternally separate us from God in a place called hell. Sin is what we need to be saved from.



## what is salvation?

Salvation is bigger than a simple definition. Internally, salvation changes you from a sinner to a saint (though you still sin, you have been changed on the inside). Relationally, salvation frees you from service to Satan and makes you a child of God. Eternally, salvation rescues you from the punishment of hell and promises you a wonderful home with God forever. Salvation is only made possible through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Not everyone is saved. In fact, the bible says that, “the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.” (Matthew 7:14). How can you enter this small and narrow gate?

## have you met God's qualifications?

The Bible tells us what we must do to be saved. You must: hear the gospel message; be convicted of your sin by the Holy Spirit and drawn to God; repent of your sin, and believe (put your trust) in Jesus with all your heart. Let's discuss these in more detail:

*Have you heard the good news?*

Gospel means, “good news”. It is the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came to make a way for man to have a restored relationship with God and be saved from sin and eternal punishment. Jesus came and lived a sinless life and then took our place by dying the death we should die so we can have eternal life. After satisfying the demands of justice against our sin, He rose from the grave, having conquered sin and death. Jesus did all of this in love for you and I, despite our rebellion against Him and His Father.

It is impossible to receive a gift that you have never been offered. The same is true of salvation. You need to hear the message and God's offer of salvation. Romans 10:13-14 says in part, “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard?...” Have you heard this message? Has it really sunk in?

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*Have you been convicted?*

We aren't speaking of a federal crime. We are talking about the work of the Holy Spirit that personally convinces you that the gospel is more than a story. The work of conviction accomplishes two tasks. First, conviction allows you to see your need for salvation and feel the shame of your personal sin. The Bible describes a deep spiritual burden God places on us as we come to terms with our sin and our need to get our sins resolved with God (Psalm 32).

Conviction also draws us to God. Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him..." (John 6:44). The Holy Spirit won't leave you with a feeling of emptiness; He will lead you to the solution to your problems: Jesus Christ. He will help you seek Jesus.

*Have you repented of your sin?*

The conviction we just spoke of will create sorrow and shame over your sin that will lead you to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10). Godly sorrow means more than feeling sorry for yourself; it is sorrow over who you are and what you have done against God. You cannot perform enough good deeds to outweigh your sin. You need your debt to be forgiven. You need repentance.

Repentance means to change direction. It is more than changing your mind. Biblical repentance is a change of our heart, the very core of who we are. It is a change we cannot make alone. Can a leopard change its spots? It certainly cannot change them alone. You NEED God's help to repent of your sin. He will help you repent when you truly surrender to Him. This is where faith comes in.

*Have you believed in Christ?*

Christ is the source of salvation. In fact, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6). Faith (belief) in Christ is more than a factual knowledge of who He is; it is fully trusting that He is who He said He is (the Son of God) and that only He can save you. Repentance and faith are not distinct steps of salvation; they are two sides of the same coin. As you come face to face with your personal sin by the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, He will draw you to a place of surrender. Who will you surrender to? Only Christ can save you. As you turn from yourself (repent), you must turn to Jesus (faith). God will grant you both the faith and repentance you need when you seek Him with complete sincerity (Acts 11:18 and Ephesians 2:8).



a real salvation, a real experience

Scriptures teach us that some believe they are saved but are fooling themselves. Jesus says that on the Day of Judgment, many people will say, "... 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'" (Matthew 7:22-23)

How do you know if you are REALLY saved? How can you have assurance you won't be turned away at the

Judgment? As you read in the passage above, salvation is not about what you have done for God, but what God has done for you. Does He know you?

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Please understand, being saved from the judgment of God is not a gradual process. You are either saved or lost. God's Spirit, who draws you to salvation through that deep burden over your sin, comes to live within the individual who is saved. He cleanses our sin in an instant and replaces that deep burden with the peace of forgiveness. Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore, having been justified (*or saved*) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Everyone who is saved has heard the gospel of Jesus; they experienced the burden of their sin; and they were moved to turn from themselves and turn to Christ in surrender. They also experienced the relief of the burden when God took it away, forgiving them of their sins and placing the Holy Spirit within them. Have you experienced salvation?

## was there a change?

Salvation produces more than a onetime experience though; it changes your life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." What has changed? Everything!

The evidence of true repentance is a changed heart that results in a changed life. Your thoughts, attitudes and actions will become different. Although you are not above sin, your attitude toward sin and God will be changed by that work of God in your heart.

That same Holy Spirit who was convicting us now lives within us and leads us. God's Spirit provides direction (Acts 16:7), magnifies Jesus (John 16:13-14), opens our eyes us to truth (1 Corinthians 2:12), convicts us when we sin (Hebrews 12:8), produces new godly attitudes in us (Galatians 5:22-23) and will always agrees with the Bible (1 John 4:1).

Being saved doesn't mean you are free from sin, at least not yet. You will still battle sin in this life; but it is a battle you can win with God's help (1 Corinthians 10:13). Salvation changes you from the inside out. Has there been a change inside you?

## in summary

Salvation is more than a mental decision, repeating a prayer, an emotional experience, or a progressive work. It is a total change from the inside out, a change made possible by Jesus through the help of His Spirit. It is a change that will affect your entire life, both now and in eternity. Are you saved? If not, it is God's will that you turn to Him right now in repentance and faith. Seek Him until you find Him. Seek the assurance that only He can give you.

## more information?

This message may raise more questions in your mind. We'd like to point you to the answers God provided in His Word. The Anchor is a congregation meeting in South Anchorage on O'Malley Road, just North of the Alaska Zoo. For information on our meeting times and location, visit our website:

[www.anchormb.org](http://www.anchormb.org)

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