

Salvation in Romans

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INTRODUCTION

Despite its complexity and depth, the book of Romans addresses basic themes: man's need and God's provision. Accordingly, let us focus upon the question, "*What must I do to be saved?*" The New Testament provides a clear answer, which we will broadly consider, while giving special emphasis to relevant passages from Paul's epistle to the Romans.

"What must I do to be saved?" First of all, what is salvation? Why is it important? Why should I be concerned with this question?

Occurrences and Meaning

The Greek word *sōtēria*, which communicates the idea of "deliverance" or "salvation," occurs 5x in this epistle (Rom. 1:16; 10:1, 10; 11:11; 13:11). In like manner, the Greek word *sōzō*, meaning "to save," occurs 8 times (Rom. 5:9, 10; 8:24; 9:27; 10:9, 13; 11:14, 26).

Summary and Application

Man's hope of salvation is found through the person of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16; 5:9, 10). Salvation is a blessing to be shared (Rom. 10:1; 11:11, 14). It is a point-in-time experience, involving specific acts of obedience, and also an ongoing process, bringing present blessings and future hope (Rom. 10:9, 10, 13; 8:24; 13:11). While salvation is extended to all, not everyone takes advantage of the opportunity; we must comply with God's pattern if we are to share in His promises (Rom. 9:27; 11:26).

What must I do to be saved? From a New Testament standpoint, five essential steps are involved: We must hear, believe, repent, confess and be baptized. Finally, we are raised to walk in newness of life. Let us look first at the Book of Romans, and then give broader consideration to the Gospels, the book of Acts, and the Epistles.

HEARING AND BELIEVING

Hearing

Occurrences and Meaning

The Greek verb *akouō*, which means “to hear” or “to listen,” occurs 5x in this epistle (Rom. 10:14, 18; 11:8; 15:21). In like manner, the related Greek word *akoē*, which refers to “hearing” or “the sense of hearing,” occurs 2x in this epistle (Rom. 10:16, 17).

Summary and Application

God chose to save lost mankind through the agency of preaching (Rom. 10:14, 17, 18). The message of salvation is universal, for Jew and Gentile alike (Rom. 15:21). However, not all heed heaven’s call (Rom. 10:16; 11:8).

The Word of God

The Word of God was communicated through Sacred Scripture, i.e., the writings of Moses and the Old Testament prophets (Rom. 1:2; 4:3; 9:6, 9, 17, 28; 10:11; 11:2; 15:4; 16:26). In the gospel age, the Word of God is communicated through the teachings of Christ and the inspired apostles and prophets of the New Testament (Rom. 10:8, 17, 18).

Believing

Occurrences and Meaning

The Greek word *pistis*, translated “faith” or “faithfulness,” occurs 40x in 35 verses in this epistle (Rom. 1:5, 8, 12, 17; 3:3, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31; 4:5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20; 5:1, 2; 9:30, 32; 10:6, 8, 17; 11:20; 12:3, 6; 14:1, 22, 23; 16:26).

Summary and Application

Saving faith is rooted in divine revelation, and our proper response to the same (Rom. 1:17; 10:6, 8, 17). Salvation does not come through the Law, or meritorious works, but through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:27, 28; 4:5). Saving faith results in obedience (Rom. 1:5; 16:26).

REPENTING AND CONFESSING

Repenting

Occurrences and Meaning

The Greek word *metanoia*, meaning “change of mind,” “a turning about,” or “repentance,” occurs once in this epistle (Rom. 2:4). The Greek word *ametanoētos*, meaning “impenitent” or “unrepentant,” also occurs once (Rom. 2:5).

Summary and Application

Genuine repentance is required by the gospel. Consider the preaching of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:8, 11; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3, 8; Acts 13:24; 19:4). Consider the preaching of the Lord Jesus (Luke 5:32; 24:47; cf. 13:1-5). Consider the preaching of the inspired apostles (Acts 5:31; 20:21; cf. 2:38). Consider the preaching of faithful evangelists (2 Tim. 2:25). True repentance is preceded by godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:9, 10). True repentance results in dramatic life changes (Luke 15:7; Acts 11:18; 26:20; Heb. 6:1). Genuine repentance may be hindered by sinful attitudes and actions (Heb. 6:6; 12:17). God lovingly provides us with an opportunity for repentance, but will judge us based upon our response (Rom. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

Confessing

Occurrences and Meaning

The Greek word *homologeō*, meaning “to speak the same” or “to agree,” occurs 2x in this epistle (Rom. 10:9, 10).

Summary and Application

We must confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God (1 John 4:15). We must also confess other truths, namely, that we are strangers (Heb. 11:13), that we are sinners (1 John 1:9), that Jesus Christ came in the flesh (1 John 4:2, 3; 2 John 7), and that we accept Biblical truth on a variety of other subjects (Acts 23:8). Our confession must be an open and public affirmation of faith (Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8; 1 Tim. 6:12).

True confession requires courage and consistency (John 9:22; 12:42; Acts 24:14; Titus 1:16). Consider the wonderful consequences of confession and obedience (Rom. 10:9, 10; Rev. 3:5). Tremble before the terrible consequences of denial and disobedience (1 John 2:23; Matt. 7:23).

BEING BAPTIZED

Occurrences and Meaning

The Greek verb *baptizō*, meaning “to immerse, dip, or plunge,” occurs 2x in this epistle (Rom. 6:3). The Greek noun *baptisma*, meaning “an immersion, a dipping, or a plunging,” occurs once (Rom. 6:4).

Summary and Application

The concepts associated with baptism, involving deliverance (from danger, death, and disease), occur repeatedly through the Scriptures. Noah’s deliverance from the corrupt Antediluvian world was accomplished by the waters of the flood (Gen. 6:5-8, 13-22; 7:1-24; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:20-22; 2 Pet. 2:4-9). Israel’s deliverance from the servitude of Egypt was accomplished by the

waters of the Red Sea (Exod. 14:13-31; 15:1-19; Psa. 136:13-15; 1 Cor. 10:1-5). Naaman's deliverance from the curse of leprosy was accomplished by dipping in the waters of the Jordan (2 Kings 5:1-14).

Baptism is a symbolic representation of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, delivering us from a state of alienation, and bringing us into fellowship with the Lord (Rom. 6:1-7; Gal. 3:26-27).

CONCLUSION

Salvation is extended to those who die to the old man of sin, are buried with Christ in baptism, and raised to walk in newness of life. Do you recognize that penitent believers are commanded to be baptized (Acts 2:37-42; 10:48; 22:16)? Will you enjoy the blessings that are associated with obedience (Acts 2:43-47; Col. 2:9-13)?