

Frequently Asked Questions on

Salvation

Q1. What is there to be saved from?

In short, from SIN. Your sin is what separates you from God and His blessings. God's intention for man is that he can live enjoying peace and joy and a personal relationship with Him. The result of sin is that life has become complicated and tense with problems people are unable to handle. Every one of us has sinned - some in gross forms and others in forms people do not generally consider as sins but which are sins all the same. You need to be saved from the guilt of sin, its power that makes you sin, and the judgment and punishment for sin. The punishment for sin is spiritual separation from God which will take sinners finally to hell.

Q2. What is salvation?

Salvation is to be restored to the life and relationship God has planned for man. It has several parts to it. It begins with forgiveness of all our past sin. This can take place in a moment. This is what Christians usually (but not fully correctly) refer to as being 'saved'. 'Justification' refers to being declared 'righteous' by God who has forgiven all our sins, and being accepted by Him as holy and blameless 'just-as-if-I'd' never sinned. This is really another part of what happens when our sins are forgiven. But sometimes people do not realise this till later. This is followed by 'sanctification' which is a life long process by which we are increasingly set free from the power of sin and made more and more to be like God (or godly) in our character. 'Glorification' is the final stage which happens when we are in heaven when we will receive new, spiritual bodies instead of our physical bodies.

Q3. What shall I do to be saved?

This is the most important answer all men should know. There are three factors involved in coming to salvation.

1. Repentance. This is to feel sorry for our sins, and to turn away from them to God. Both our feelings and will are involved in this. Feeling bad for the way we have lived and grieved God is an indication that God is convicting us of sin. Listening to a message on salvation from a preacher or a friend, reading the Bible or a Christian writing, or thinking about life after death and the judgment of God can bring this conviction of sin. The correct response is to confess our sins and ask God for forgiveness. Making a decision to give up our sinful life is the other part of repentance. This is an expression of our desire not to sin again rather than a promise that we will never sin again. The question is whether we ‘like’ sin or we ‘hate’ it. If there is a true repentance, there will also be restitution -where we try our best to set things right with people whom we have wronged.

2. Faith. A genuine faith has two parts to it. The first part is to recognise in our heart that we are sinful people who deserve punishment from God and who do not deserve that God should forgive us. This is difficult for most people, because people generally think that all the ‘good’ things they have done deserve some recognition from God. They also think that they are not so bad as some of the others! This is why Jesus said that prostitutes and such gross sinners would enter the kingdom of God before self-righteous religious leaders, because gross sinners know they are sinners. But the fact is that in God’s sight gross sinners and respectable sinners are both sinners. A recognition of our hopelessness as sinners is absolutely necessary for salvation. The second part is to believe that God, in His great love and mercy, has made a way for sinners to be cleansed and made acceptable to Him. When Jesus died on the cross, He was suffering the punishment for our sins. He had never sinned, and it was our sins that crucified Him. It was we who should have been crucified. But He has died in our place. When Jesus rose from the dead it proved that God had accepted His sacrifice for our sins. It is when we accept this substitution and acknowledge Jesus as our risen Saviour, that God credits forgiveness to our account. This is the only way in which our sins can be forgiven.

3. The testimony of our mouth. When we know that our sins

have been born again but have not grown spiritually or have backslidden. That does not prove that there are no real Christians or that Christians cannot really live godly lives. We should not be turned away from Christ by the bad examples we may have seen in so-called Christians around us.

Q20. OK, I am convinced. But I think I will wait till I am old.

You never know what can happen tomorrow. How can you be sure that you will live till you are old? Is it not possible that if you neglect the conviction that God has given you now, that you may forget this as you get busy with various other things in life? Don’t play with chance and throw away your life. Turn to God right away.

Q21. I know I am a sinner, and I want to be saved. Can you please help me?

Talk to God in prayer right now in your own words. Tell Him how sorry you are about your sins. Confess to God any sin that comes to your mind as you pray. Decide to set things right as soon as possible with people you have wronged. Thank God for His love and mercy in sending Jesus to die for your sins in your place. Accept the forgiveness that God gives you.

If you have prayed honestly and sincerely, believe that God has heard and answered your prayer. Start telling other people about what God has done for you through Jesus Christ. Start reading the Bible to learn more about God and His ways. Join a church that will help you to grow in your Christian life along with the others.

For further assistance, please contact:

those who have been born again through faith in Jesus are Christians in God's sight.

Q16. I think God will not reject me because of all the good things I have done for others.

However many good things you have done, you have also sinned much. Perhaps your greatest sin is a pride in your goodness and a despising of others. You too need to repent and come to God in humility and faith.

Q17. I don't think I will be able to live a holy life.

God does not expect anyone to first live a holy life and then go to Him, because no one can. All of us can go to Him just as we are, only acknowledging our sins and trusting in His mercy. After we are born again, God will give us the Holy Spirit who will help us more and more to live a holy life.

Q18. I think the Christian life is too dull and hard.

A man who finds his Christian life dull and hard has not really become a Christian. A real Christian does face problems and difficulties like everyone else, but God supplies him with a joy and peace that no one else can have. The world's idea of joy and peace is that people have them when they have no problems, or they forget about problems and seek to 'enjoy' themselves. But this is unrealistic. But the joy and peace that a Christian enjoys are different because they sustain him even in the midst of problems. A Christian's life is exciting because every difficulty can draw him closer to God and to his fellow Christians and there he finds real and lasting enjoyment.

Q19. I have seen too many people who say they are 'born again' but who are just hypocrites.

It is true that there are many who deceiving themselves and others by claiming to be born again when they are not. There are also others who

have been forgiven, we tell others about it with our mouth - how we were sinners and how Jesus has forgiven us. This is not a condition for our salvation. But if this does not take place, it is doubtful if we have really been forgiven.

Q4. Is it a once for all experience?

As explained above, it has several phases. It is a grave mistake to think that we are 'saved' when our sins are forgiven, and treat it as if everything is complete.

Q5. Can I be sure I am saved?

Certainly. When God does a work of salvation in you, you will have an assurance about it in your heart. Some describe it as the burden of sin being taken away, and others as peace and joy filling their heart. Some simply believe that God has answered their prayer after they have repented and asked Jesus to forgive them and make them children of God. The important thing is not the particulars of the experience which may not be the same for everyone, but an assurance about God and our relationship with Him. If we have some lingering doubts about this, we can go to God and ask Him to give us this assurance.

Q6. How can I know that my sins have been forgiven?

By faith in God and His word. When God says that He will forgive our sins if we repent from our sins and believe in Jesus, we must believe that when we do our part He will do His part. When we receive this by faith, He will also give us an assurance in our heart. The Holy Spirit will give us a witness in our heart that we have become children of God.

Q7. Should I get baptised in order to be saved?

No. On the other hand all those who have come to Jesus and received forgiveness of sins must obey Jesus in getting baptised. Baptism is a public act Jesus has commanded where we testify that He has forgiven us our sins and taken us out of a life of sin and darkness into a

kingdom of light and life. We also indicate in baptism our desire to live as disciples of Jesus, putting away all sin and obeying Him in everything.

Q8. Should I become a member of a church in order to be saved?

Membership in a church cannot save us. It is only a personal repentance and faith in Jesus that can save us. However membership in a church can help us to grow in our Christian life, to enjoy fellowship with other children of God and to bear fruit for God in serving Him.

Q9. Can I lose my salvation?

Yes and no. It is possible to backslide from God so badly that we lose our relationship with Him totally. On the other hand, if we want to cling to God no one can take us away from Him.

Q10. How can you say that we can be saved only through Jesus Christ? I think there are many other good teachers.

Jesus said that no one could come to the Father except through Him. He was not just a good Teacher. No teacher has given his life for us as Jesus has done. No one has come back to life after he died as Jesus has done. His sinless life, His death for our sins and His resurrection, all the prophecies that were fulfilled concerning His life - all prove that He is God. Jesus Himself claimed that He was God. If any man makes such claims, we would not acknowledge him even as a 'good' teacher. Perhaps the greatest 'practical' proof that Jesus is the only way is the number of hopeless sinners whose lives are changed miraculously when they come to Him in repentance.

Q11. All religions tell us to be good and not to be bad. Does it matter which one I follow, because all roads will finally reach the same place.

Salvation is not based on our being good. We have to first settle accounts with God for all our past sins. No penance or sacrifice can pay for our sins which deserve the death penalty. There is no other way which

starts at this point except that which begins at the cross where Jesus died for our sins.

This is the most important issue in our life. We cannot afford to take some theory or philosophy that we like and assume that it will be all right. Jesus is the Way which God Himself has given to mankind.

Q12. What about all those people who have never heard about Jesus? How can God be so unfair as to send good people to hell just because they don't accept Jesus?

There is much about the future judgment that we cannot explain fully. But we know two things: (1) that God will be perfectly fair; (2) that salvation will only be on the basis of Christ's death and resurrection. Without wasting our time speculating, we can proclaim salvation through Jesus so that more and more people can come to salvation.

Q13. I think I have sinned too much. I don't think God will forgive me.

You have not understood the largeness of God's love and mercy. However terribly you have sinned, He is willing to receive you back and give you a new start. All you need to do is to go to Him in repentance, confess your sins and receive forgiveness.

Q14. I think I am OK because I am not a big sinner.

Big sinners and small sinners are all sinners who deserve death for their sins. All of us have to go to God in the same way, acknowledging our hopeless condition and asking Him for mercy.

Q15. I think I am a good Christian because I was born and brought up in the church.

Even as one growing up in the church, you have sinned many times. You are in the same condition as one who never knew any church - both deserve death and both need salvation. Nobody is a Christian because he was born in a Christian family or is a member of a church. Only