

Do I *Really* Need to Confess?



by L. M. Fontaine

Is Confession Necessary for Salvation?



The Apostle Paul was asked, “What must I do to be saved?” His answer was, “**Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31). If there ever were an opportunity to express that confession or anything else was necessary to obtain eternal salvation, this would be it. But the simple answer is that believing alone in Jesus is the only requirement to be saved.

Since the Bible is the only source of truth concerning this matter, let’s look at several of the many clear verses that discuss the all-important topic of salvation, showing us specifically how to have eternal life.

Jesus said, “He who **believes** in Me has everlasting life” (John 6:47). The Apostle Peter explained he was commanded to preach the message, “that through His Name, whoever **believes** in Him will receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43). The very next verse records that while the people were listening to this message, they received the Holy Spirit, which means they had believed in Christ alone to save them.

Years later, Peter refers to this same event as proof that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. He said, “...you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel and **believe**. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by **faith**... we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they” (Acts 15:7-11).

Do you know what Abraham did to have eternal life? Romans 4:3 says, “For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham **believed** God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’” What did King David do? Romans 4:6 says, “just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works.”

The Apostle Paul beautifully summed it up when he wrote, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who **believes**” (Roman 10:4). In another one of his letters, Paul wrote, “For by grace you have been saved through **faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). And in the preceding chapter, he explained that upon trusting Christ a person is sealed with the Holy Spirit, which guarantees one’s eternal redemption. It says, “In Him you also **trusted**, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also, having **believed**, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:12-14).

Since the preceding verses clearly show we are assured of eternal life apart from confession, why do many people think it is an added requirement? I think I can prove to your satisfaction that the verses used to support that position have nothing to do with one’s eternal salvation.

Confession of Sin

First John 1:9, says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Unlike the Gospel of John, which was written primarily to unbelievers so they could believe in Jesus for eternal life (John 20:31), this letter of John was primarily written to believers so his readers could know how to have a friendship with God. He wrote, “And these things we write to you that your joy may be full” (First John 1:4).

He then went on to explain that our fellowship with God is conditioned upon our walking in the light and part of what is required to walk in the light is confession of our sins. This is an ongoing activity because there is no such thing as sinless perfection on this side of heaven. Therefore confession of sin will be a continuous practice for those who want to be close to God.

And please note, this forgiveness is **NOT** from the eternal penalty of our sins, which is what we need to go to heaven. That forgiveness comes by faith in Christ alone as noted in Acts 13:38-39, which say, “Therefore let it be known to you brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him everyone who **believes** is **justified from all things** from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

As unbelievers we stand before God as a Judge in need of an eternal forgiveness for our sins. Once we have believed in Jesus and have received this forgiveness, we become children of God. From that point on, as children of God, when we sin, we stand in need of forgiveness from our heavenly Father so we can remain in unbroken fellowship with Him. Confession of sin affects our joy, not our eternal relationship with God. It affects our friendship with Him here on earth. It is impossible to be close to God without confessing our sins to Him.

Confession Before Men

Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew, “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32). Was Jesus speaking of confessing someone as His child or was He speaking of confessing someone as His faithful servant, (which could apply only to one who was already His child)? Is the Lord speaking to unbelievers and laying down a condition to get to heaven or is He speaking to believers telling them how to get rewards in heaven?

Let’s look at the next verse. Jesus went on to say, “But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:33). If this passage is speaking of one’s eternal salvation, then no one could know for sure if he were going to heaven because the possibility always exists that at some point in a person’s life he could deny the Lord.

John totally refutes this because he wrote, “These things have I written unto you who **believe** in the Name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life” (First John 5:13).

People will be in hell, not because they denied Christ, but because they never trusted Him alone for their salvation. Jesus explained in John 3:18, “He who **believes** in Him is not condemned; but he who does not **believe** is condemned already, because he has not **believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Could that be clearer? What unfaithful believers will be denied someday are rewards in heaven because rewards are based on performance. Jesus said, “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...” (Matthew 6:20). He didn’t say to lay up heaven as a treasure. Eternal life is promised to those who believe, not to those who behave, since eternal life is a gift, not a reward.

Jesus ended His discourse in this passage about confessing Him before men by saying, “And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward” (Matthew 10:42). Please ponder what you just read. Jesus said it is impossible to lose a reward for even the smallest action. Clearly, eternal rewards are at issue here, not one’s eternal destiny. And think about it, what is harder – giving someone a cup of cold water or confessing Christ publicly? Do you have any idea what a public confession can mean for some believers? In the first century, as in many parts of the world right now, it can cost you your life. That is a high price to pay, wouldn’t you agree?

But do we get to heaven because of the high price we pay or the high price He paid? And if serving the Lord entails suffering and even death, the Bible clearly teaches the price is worth it. Paul wrote, “If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful: He cannot deny Himself” (Second Timothy 2:12-13).

There are crowns and positions of rulership awaiting those believers who endure for Christ. But even though the unfaithful believer will be denied rewards, he will never be denied heaven. Paul just wrote that ‘He cannot deny Himself.’ Every believer becomes part of the body of Christ upon believing (First Corinthians 12:13) and Jesus promised, “him that comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (John 6:37).

And as further proof that confession before men is not a condition for receiving eternal life, John indicated that there were those who believed in Jesus but never confessed Him. John wrote, “Nevertheless even among the rulers many **believed** in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:43-44).

Now some may insist that these people won’t be in heaven because they didn’t confess Christ. But to think such a thing is to totally disregard the nearly one hundred uses of the words “believe/faith” in John’s Gospel account, coupled with the fact that he never once added confession as a requirement to go to heaven. John explained that the primary purpose for his Gospel account was so that people could have eternal life by believing in Jesus. He wrote, “But these are written that you may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that **believing** you may have life in His name” (John 20:31). Please read his Gospel account and you’ll see for yourself that there is no other condition besides faith in Jesus to receive everlasting life.

Confession with the Mouth

So how does this fit with Romans 10:9, which says, “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and **believe** in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved”?

Unfortunately, many use this verse to teach that it supports the idea you must ask Jesus into your heart to be saved. But asking and confessing are two different things. The concept of asking Jesus into your heart is never taught in the Bible. The expression comes from a song written over 200 years ago. The Bible teaches that the moment a person puts his trust in Christ alone to save him, God does come into his heart (Acts 10:43-44; Ephesians 1:13-14), so why ask?

In Romans 10:9, when Paul wrote about confessing with your mouth, was he adding a new condition in order to have eternal life?

He had already explained numerous times previously that we are accounted righteous by faith alone. Did Abraham confess with his mouth to receive eternal life? Did David? Did the people listening to Peter confess Jesus as Lord in order to receive forgiveness of sin? The obvious answer is **no**. Confession is for the purpose of others believing the Gospel. Paul had already explained in the preceding verse what confession with the mouth is referring to. It is "...the word of **faith** which we preach" (Romans 10:8). The word he preached was the message of the Gospel.

Paul goes on to write, in Romans 10:14, "...And how shall they **believe** in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" He draws the conclusion in Romans 10:17, "So **faith** comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Paul is expressing the fact that God intends for those who believe the Gospel to share that message. Just as Peter had said in Acts 15, it was by his mouth his audience heard the Gospel and believed.

That is how God ordained the message to get out. Confessing the Lord Jesus with the mouth is so others can believe the Gospel. So, getting back to Romans 10:9, if the believer who confesses the Lord Jesus with his mouth will be saved, then let's ask the question – what is it that he will be saved from? As a believer, we can be saved from many things, such as being out of fellowship with the Lord, facing a loss of rewards in heaven and being deprived of the many other blessings the Lord has in store for His faithful servants.

The word saved means to be delivered. It can refer to both things physical and spiritual. For instance, Paul told the centurion that the soldiers who were planning on jumping overboard, from what they considered a doomed ship, would lose their lives if they didn't stay on board. He said, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved" (Acts 27:31).

We speak the same way. If I told you someone saved my life you wouldn't be thinking I was speaking of my eternal salvation. We must be careful when reading the Bible to always read things

in context and not to jump to conclusions. Every time you read the word **saved**, don't think it has to be talking about salvation from hell. Most scriptures dealing with being saved are speaking of being delivered from something other than hell. And this passage in Romans is no exception.

So what else is a believer who confesses Christ saved from? One thing is shame. Jesus said, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). Another thing a believer who serves the Lord is saved from is a life that amounts to nothing. Jesus said, "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:35).

If a believer lives for this world, his life has no eternal value, but if he lives his life for Christ and spreading the Gospel, his life is an investment in eternity. There are eternal rewards and crowns awaiting believers who are obedient to God. Someday faithful believers will be ruling and reigning with Christ (Second Timothy 2:12).

Calling on the Name of the Lord

In Romans 10:13, we see another reference to being saved, this time as a result of 'calling.' Romans 10:12-13 say, "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Before we consider what being saved is referring to here, you will note that calling on the Lord is not the same thing as believing. This can easily be proven by the next verse, which says, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not **believed**?" (Romans 10:14). So, what does it mean to call upon the Name of the Lord?

In Israel's history, at the time of Elijah, many Israelites had become worshipers of the false god, Baal. To demonstrate to Israel the true and living God was the LORD, not Baal, Elijah

told Baal's prophets to prepare a sacrifice, but not set it on fire. Elijah, likewise, prepared a sacrifice. The prophets of Baal were then instructed to call upon their gods to set it on fire and Elijah would call upon the name of his God. He said, "Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God" (First Kings 18:24).

As we know, the cries of Baal's prophets went unanswered; Elijah then doused his sacrifice with water, called on the Lord and the Lord answered him with fire from heaven, consuming his sacrifice. Elijah called; the Lord heard!

Let's look at some verses from Psalm 145, so you can see how they compare to what Paul wrote in Romans 10:12-13.

Psalm 145:16-20 say, ***"You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works. The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him: He also will hear their cry and save them. The Lord preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy."***

You can see that calling on His name is simply going to God in prayer for whatever circumstances you may face in life. And as a faithful believer, you can have confidence that your prayers will be answered. You can also see that clearly there are different kinds of salvation. Salvation from hell is a gift of God based on the work of Christ on the cross on our behalf. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes** in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." On the other hand, salvation for the believer is to be determined based on context.

In Conclusion

I hope you can see that confession has nothing to do with one's eternal destiny, but that it does affect one's friendship with the Lord while he is here on earth and one's eternal rewards in the future. The very fact that the Bible says there will be believers in heaven without any rewards shows there are believers who never did anything for the Lord, and that would include confessing Him to others (First Corinthians 3:15).

I plead with you to put your faith in the only One capable of saving you from hell, the Lord Jesus Christ. If someone thinks he must do anything more than believe in Jesus alone for his salvation, he is putting trust in something he is doing rather than what Jesus alone already accomplished. Jesus did not come to partner with us; He came to be our Savior. There is no prayer, no calling, no confession required of us. Jesus said, "that whoever **believes** in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:15).

It couldn't be clearer or simpler. And if you have believed, please use your voice to share this glorious good news so that you will be able to say like Paul,

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes." (Romans 1:16)

Romans 3

- 19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.
- 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

God's Righteousness Through Faith

- 21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
- 22 even the righteousness of God, through **faith** in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who **believe**. For there is no difference;
- 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
- 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,
- 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through **faith**, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,
- 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has **faith** in Jesus.

Boasting Excluded

- 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of **faith**.
- 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by **faith** apart from the deeds of the law.
- 29 Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,
- 30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by **faith** and the uncircumcised through **faith**.
- 31 Do we then make void the law through **faith**? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

Abraham Justified by Faith

Romans 4

- 1 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?
- 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.
- 3 For what does the Scripture say? ***“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”***
- 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.
- 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

David Celebrates the Same Truth

- 6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:
- 7 ***“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
And whose sins are covered;
Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.”***

Abraham Justified Before Circumcision

- 9 Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.
- 10 How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.
- 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,
- 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

The Promise Granted Through Faith

- 13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of **faith**.
- 14 For if those who are of the law are heirs, **faith** is made void and the promise made of no effect,
- 15 because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.
- 16 Therefore it is of **faith** that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the **faith** of Abraham, who is the father of us all
- 17 (as it is written, ***“I have made you a father of many nations”***) in the presence of Him whom he **believed**--God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;
- 18 who, contrary to hope, in hope **believed**, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, ***“So shall your descendants be.”***
- 19 And not being weak in **faith**, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.
- 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in **faith**, giving glory to God,
- 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.
- 22 And therefore ***“it was accounted to him for righteousness.”***
- 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him,
- 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who **believe** in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,
- 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Romans 5

- 1 Therefore, having been justified by **faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

**Published by
TEL-A-WORLD, INC.
P.O. Box 555
Pompano Beach, FL 33061**

www.greatestnews.org