

Captive's Corner



"Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"

2 Corinthians 10:5

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The Sinner Who Believes Is Saved

Sadly, God's plan for man to be saved is often miscommunicated because one or two verses of Scripture are taken out of their context and used independently of the rest of God's word to say something they were never intended to say. Romans 10:9-13 is such an example of a passage. When used by itself out of its context, it can be easily misunderstood and miscommunicated to mean that man must do more than believe on Christ to be saved. When Romans 10:9-13 is used to say, "believe,

The following is a sample of at least 150 New testament passages which make it crystal clear that our only obligation for receiving salvation is believing on Christ: John 3:14-18, 36; 6:28-29, 40, 47; 11:25-27; Acts 16:30-31; Romans 1:16; 5:1; 1 Corinthians: 1:18 with Ephesians 1:13 and 2:8-9.

confess, and call on the Lord to be saved," the confusion is obvious in that this comment seems to communicate that there are three things that man must do in order to be saved. The New Testament has over 150 passages which very clearly communicate that salvation is received by faith or believing in the Lord Jesus. The Scriptures everywhere harmonize with this overwhelming body of truth. The fruitful walk in Christ of obedience to God, which includes confessing, water baptism, etc., follows believing the gospel of Jesus Christ - Romans 10:14, 15:18, 16:25-27, Romans 8:14 and 2Corinthians 10:5. The confusion from Romans 10:9-13 can be easily avoided by applying one of the most fundamental rules of interpreting Scripture. This rule is to interpret the cloudy or seemingly difficult to understand passages by viewing them in the context of other Scripture which is very clear. God's Word is a lamp or a light which illuminates more than how we are to walk (Psalms 119:105). Scripture also illuminates Scripture so we can clearly see its intended meaning. This illumination takes place when we "compare spiritual words with spiritual words" - 1 Corinthians 2:13. So let's shine the light of Scripture on Romans 10:9-13.

In chapters 1-5 of Romans, Paul in detail explains that God's righteousness is given freely to everyone who places their faith in Christ. In Chapter 10 of Romans he then explains that the Jews did not have the righteousness of God, their salvation, because they simply did not believe on Christ (10:1-5, 16-21). In verses 1-5 of chapter 10, although Paul greatly desired his fellow Jews to be saved, he makes it clear that their zeal will not save them and that their attempt to make their own righteousness by keeping the Law will not save them either. Only Christ could supply them and now supply us with the righteousness of God. In fact, the purpose of the Law is simply to point a person to Christ, our true righteousness, not to make a man righteous - Romans 3:20, Galatians 3:24, 1 Corinthians 1:30. Once a person believes on Christ, His righteousness is put to the believer's account, giving him a right standing before God - Genesis 15:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:1. Therefore, the Law's usefulness has come to its end or goal for the one who believes on Christ - Romans 7:1-4; Romans 10:4. Since it is Christ's righteousness which makes us acceptable to God, there is no requirement or need to do anything else after believing on Christ in order to be saved. When you believe, you are saved - Ephesians 1:6, Titus 2:13-14; 3:4-7. This good news actually begins in Genesis and continues clear through the New Testament. See Genesis

Believing is the opposite of doing anything. It is trusting in another to do what we cannot do. Therefore, God's message of grace is confused when salvation is made to depend on anything other than "believing."

15:6. The following is a sample of the at least 150 New Testament passages which proclaim this good news of salvation by believing in Christ alone: John 3:14-18, 36; 6:28-29, 40, 47; Acts 16:30-31; Romans 1:16; 5:1; 1 Corinthians 1:18 with Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 2:8-9. At least 115 of the 150 passages declare salvation depends on believing, while in the other 35 passages it is declared to depend on faith. So that there is no confusion between

the word "faith" and the word "believe," it is helpful to note that they are simply two different forms of the same Greek word *pistos*. "Faith" is the noun and "believe" is the verb form of *pistos*. So when you read in Scripture that we are saved by "faith" in Christ and also that we are saved when we "believe" in or on Christ it is the same thing. Romans 3:22 and 4:5 illustrate this well by using the words "believe" and "faith" interchangeably. The two most key words of the Gospel of John are "believe" and "life." The Gospel of John, which was written so that man might believe on Christ and that

Therefore, in Romans 10:9-13, "confessing" and "calling" are results of salvation, not 2 parts of a three-part formula to obtain it. Verse 14 as well as Scripture as a whole makes this clear.

by believing have life (John 20:31), uses the word "believe" 83 times. "Believe" is used 6 times in Romans 10 alone. John 1:12 tells us that to receive Christ is to believe in His Name. Many names are ascribed to Jesus in God's Word, such as Mighty God, Lord of Lords, Savior, Messiah, etc. - Isaiah 9:6; Titus 2:13; Revelation 17:14; 19:16; Hebrews 1:8; Matthew 1:21, 23; John 4:25. Each one tells us something about Who He is and the work He has done for us. Therefore, to "believe in His Name" simply means to believe on His Person and work for our salvation, that on the basis of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection He now guarantees our eternal destiny with Him apart from any works, deeds, confessions or merit on our part - Romans 3:21-28; 5:1, 6-11. This believing (faith) is a trustful dependence on the promise God has made to give us eternal life based on His Son's sacrifice (work). Believing is the opposite of doing anything. It is trusting in another to do what we cannot do - 2 Timothy 1:9-12; Romans 4:5. God the Father declared by resurrecting Jesus and giving Him the highest place of honor in glory that He is entirely satisfied with His redemptive work and also entirely satisfied with those who are in union with His Son by faith - Ephesians 1:6; 19-23; Romans 5:1. Surrendering to God's only way of salvation commits us to the very One Who has saved us. Since God is satisfied with His Son's sacrifice, we should be also and rest in it, content to not add anything to it. This is why God's message of grace is confused when salvation is made to depend on anything other than "believing." God's plan of salvation is not "believe and ask," "believe and confess sin," "believe and confess Christ," "believe and be baptized," or "believe and call." These are five additional subjects which have their full intended meaning in Scripture, but if they were essential to salvation, they would not be omitted from any passage wherein the way to be saved is stated. So it is clear that the only condition for receiving salvation is believing on Jesus. His promise is to all, and it is impossible for God to lie - Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2. Therefore, it is critical that we do not add anything to faith in order to be saved. If we do add conditions such as confessing with the mouth to be saved, we are saying that Christ's death is not sufficient to pay our sin debt, God the Father is not satisfied with His Son's work, that more work must be done, and that it is up to us to do it.

Of course, this would be impossible for us since our works are valueless. Our works are the very thing that condemns us, for they are tainted with sin and the product of a nature that is at enmity with God - Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 17:9; Ephesians 2:3. Thankfully, the weakest faith in Christ alone saves. He has done it!

In verses 6-8 of Romans 10 Paul further explains Israel's unbelief. They, as well as us, have no excuse for unbelief because the gospel is not far away in Heaven or Hades. It is so close and accessible that it was actually "in their heart and mouth." Paul would go into the synagogue and proclaim the gospel when he visited a city - Acts 17:1-3. Romans 10:9 tells us that Paul preached the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Sadly though, although the Jews "tasted the good work of God" - Hebrews 6:5, they did not believe, causing Paul to echo the words of the prophet Isaiah in Romans 10:16. See Isaiah 53:1. God looks at the heart for belief or unbelief, not the mouth or the outward appearance - 1 Samuel 16:7; Luke 16:15. Yet, it is out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. If our heart has believed on Christ and is now occupied with or filled up with Christ, it is Him who will be confessed by our life and lips - Matthew 12:34; 5:16; Romans 10:14; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 John 4:13-15; 1 John 4:1-6; Romans 8:16. So, Scripture is also crystal clear that confessing Christ with our life and lips follows salvation. Therefore, "confess" and "call" in verses 9, 10,

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and 13 of Romans 10 are results of salvation, not two parts of a three-part formula to obtain it. If we are to communicate to others the relationship between believing, salvation, and confessing Christ, we should be extremely clear, as clear as Scripture as a whole is, that man is saved by believing on Christ alone. Confessing Him with our life and lips follows or results from our salvation. If we are trying to communicate how one is to be

saved, there are many verses in this paper which are much clearer and plainer than Romans 10:9-13 is by itself. If Romans 10:9-13 is used, then verse 14 should always be included to make it evident that confessing does not precede salvation but rather follows it.

Here is a great comment in closing regarding the relationship between believing, salvation, and confessing: **"The sinner who believes is free and can now confess, 'Jesus, my Savior, died for me'"** Hallelujah! that's good news to tell others about so that they too can be Set Free! - Romans 10:15, 17.

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