

The Five Six Steps to Salvation

God has provided a way for people to be forgiven, washed from their sins, and to be in His presence. But this rescue, this **salvation depends on people meeting certain conditions.**

Who will be saved? The one who ...

Hears the word of God, the gospel

Mark 16:15 [*Jesus said,*] Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Romans 10:17 Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Believes that Jesus is the Son of God

Hebrews 11:6 Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

John 3:16 God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Ephesians 2:8-9 By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Confesses this faith

Romans 10:10 With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Repents, that is, turns away from sin

Luke 13:3 [*Jesus said,*] Unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

Matthew 4:17 Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

2 Corinthians 7:10 Godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

And is baptized.

1 Peter 3:20-21 [*In the days of Noah*] the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.²¹ There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ....

Acts 22:16 [*Ananias, an inspired, miracle-working preacher, said,*] Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

There's more that could be said on each point, but **these passages are enough to show the necessity of each step.** A deeper study shows that **all** of these actions must occur. So let's ask again, **Who will be saved?**

Not everyone who simply hears. Hearing must be mixed with faith.

Hebrews 4:1-2 Since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.² For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*.

Not everyone who simply believes. Faith must be mixed with action.

James 2:19-20 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

Mark 16:15-16 [*Jesus said,*] Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

Not everyone who simply confesses. Confession must be mixed with obedience.

Matthew 7:21 [*Jesus said,*] Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Not everyone who simply repents. Repentance must be followed by baptism.

Acts 2:38 [*Peter preached,*] Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Not everyone who is simply baptized. Baptism must be based on faith in Jesus and done for the right reason.

Acts 19:1-5 Paul ... came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples ² he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” ³ And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.”

⁴ Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” ⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Romans 6:3-4 Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:17 God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

Acts 8:36-38 [*The Ethiopian said,*] See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”

³⁷ Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

³⁸ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

Our reason for being baptized is expressed in different ways in various passages. It is not what we hear some preachers say, for example, “to join a church,” “to show that you’ve been saved,” or “to re-dedicate yourself.” The Bible shows that the reason we are baptized is “for the forgiveness of sins,” to be “saved,” to be “baptized into Christ,” to be “baptized into His death,” to be “delivered” from sin, to “wash away sins,” etc. Baptism is the moment in which God “cuts away” our old sinful self and forgives us of our sins. See **Colossians 2:11-13**:

¹¹ In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

And a person must continue on this path. (This condition - a couple of the passages below even use the word “if”! - translates into many daily decisions, *many steps.*)

Hebrews 10:36, 39 You have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise. ... ³⁹ We are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

2 Peter 2:20-22 [*Speaking of false teachers who had been bought by the Lord, v. 1*]

If, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. ²¹ For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of

righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.²² But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

Hebrews 6:4-8, 11-12 *It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,* ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,⁶ if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.

⁷ For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God;⁸ but if it bears thorns and briars, *it is* rejected and near to being cursed, whose end *is* to be burned.

¹¹ We desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹² that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Colossians 1:21-23 You... He has reconciled²² ... to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard....

The ten examples of conversion in the book of Acts bear out the fact that all these steps are required conditions for salvation. For instance,

Comparing **Acts 9:1-18** with **Acts 22:6-16**, we see that Paul had already learned that Jesus is God’s anointed, risen and ascended and reigning from heaven. He had called Jesus ‘Lord’ and was ready to submit to His will. He had prayed and had fasted for three days. In other words, he had heard the gospel, had believed it, had confessed Jesus as Lord, and had shown his repentance. However, he still had sins to wash away!

Acts 22:16 Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

So he was not ready for his new mission until he appealed to God (that is, called on the name of the Lord) for cleansing through baptism.

The account of the jailer in the city of Philippi also shows that all the steps are necessary:

Acts 16:30-34 [*The jailer asked Paul and Silas,*] Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”³¹ So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.³⁴ Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

False teachers want you to stop reading after verse 31. (They even print editions of the Bible with only that verse underlined, then want you to change the subject and jump to another passage!) But when we read the whole account, which in this case is only the next three verses, we see that “having believed” included having heard the word preached, having shown his repentance, and having been baptized. Only after completing those actions did he *rejoice*.

Each action has a specific meaning defined by the Scriptures. **When each step is properly understood, we can meet God’s conditions for salvation.** These conditions are involved in the concepts that unite all Christians:

Ephesians 4:3-6 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.⁴ *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism;⁶ one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.