



## DR. CAROLYN T. LONG

### Salvation, Being “Born Again,” or Becoming a Christian

Salvation, being born again, or becoming a Christian are words and phrases that all means the same thing. Perhaps these are all terms you have heard before, but you did not understand what they meant. When you don't understand something, it can cause confusion (I Corinthians. 14:33). It is therefore, important that you understand what it means to be saved, born again or what it means to become a Christian. But before describing what salvation is, I want to be sure you know what salvation is not.

Salvation is NOT a feeling. However, once you have repented of your sins, and have asked the Lord Jesus Christ to come into your heart, and have made a new decision to walk according to God's statutes and commandments, you will have feelings of joy, peace and serenity. The outward expressions are likely tears of joy and excitement and an eagerness to share your experience with others. Feelings however, are not the evidential proof that you are saved. Feelings are a by-product, but not the proof. Our feelings can quickly change with changing circumstances minute by minute, but the word of God will stand forever (Isaiah 40:8).

The evidence that you are saved is found in Roman 10: 9 & 10 that says *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.”* This is good for you to know, so when you don't *feel* saved, or if others ask you if you are saved, you will have the evidence of God's word that you are, in fact, saved. Others will leave you alone, and so will satan.

Salvation is NOT a work that you do or something that you earn. Salvation is given as a free gift. You cannot save yourself. And it is given on the basis of God's grace, or God's *unmerited favor* toward us. There is nothing you or I can do to earn God's salvation. He already completed the work before you and I were born. It is *“For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God, Not of works, lest any man should boast.”*(Ephesians 2:8). So as important as it is to do the work of the ministry – to work on the usher board; to sing in the choir; to assist the pastor through the pastor's aid; to feed the poor; to visit the prisons and rest homes; or whatever you believe God has called you to do, these works do not save you. As important as this service is (and God will judge this in the last day), it does not earn anyone salvation. Works must be coupled with faith. If one has the faith for salvation, the works will likely follow, but the Bible says we are to believe, repent and receive in order to be saved.



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Salvation is NOT a denomination. Maybe you're Baptist? Maybe you're Catholic? Maybe you're Methodist? Or Assemblies of God? Or Holiness? Or Presbyterian? Your title or church affiliation does not earn you salvation, or eternal life, even though some believe so. Being born again by the Spirit of God will get you eternal life. Besides, Jesus said *"And I will prepare a place you . . ."* and did not specify that there would be separate groups. He said that there is *"one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all"* (Ephesians 4: 4 – 6). He exhorts us to be unified in a bond of peace. I have not found a Scripture in the Bible contrary to the above, or that supports denominations. When you stand before God, he will not ask you what denominational church you attended while on earth. He will ask, "Did you receive my son while on earth (John 1:12)?" Is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life?" *"And whatsoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"* (Revelations 20:15).

Salvation is NOT inherited from mother or dad, or any other relative. Many times when you ask someone if they know Jesus, you might hear: "My dad is the pastor at \_\_\_\_\_ church." Or "My mother is a missionary." The Bible tells us that each one of us must individually be judged in the final day (Romans 14: 10-12). Each one of us must give an account of what we did, not what our parents did. *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (2 Corinthians 5:10). The answer one gives to this question often sounds as if they think they have some inherited right to the throne of God. But Jesus says, *"Ye must be born again."* We will be judged on our own merits, and not on the merits of our parents or other relatives. I have heard it said this way: "God does not have grandchildren, just children."

Similar to #2, Salvation is NOT cleaning yourself up and then coming to God. Many times people will say they need to stop drinking, sleeping around, running the streets, "get right" or a number of things before they get saved. Well, if you could have saved yourself, then Jesus would not have had to die on the cross to save you from your sins. The fact of the matter is that Jesus has already paid the penalty for your drinking, your sleeping around, your running the street, or for your not being "right." He "took the rap" for you and me. He said that it is *"by grace through faith that ye are saved, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God.* If something is a gift, there's nothing you have to do to earn it; just receive it.

Salvation is NOT just shaking the pastor's hand, going to church, going to the mourner's bench, joining the church, or getting your name on a church roll. However, after you are born again, then it is important that you find a Bible believing church to join



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so you can grow in your new relationship with Jesus Christ and with other believers, as well as being prepared to do the work of ministry, and help to bring others to the saving knowledge of Christ. Many times a person will respond to the appeal from the pulpit: “The doors of the church are now open . . .” but without the instruction that is needed to accompany this appeal, a person may become a member of a church without becoming a member of the body of Christ.

Salvation is NOT just believing, because the “*devils also believe, and tremble . . .*” (Jas 2:19). Romans, chapter 10 informs us that there is something we must do in addition to believing. It says we must RECEIVE the Lord Jesus as Lord and Savior, in addition to believing. Paul says “*REPENT (action) and BE BAPTIZED (action), every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall RECEIVE the gift of the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 2: 38). Receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost requires that one is already born again or saved since only the Christian can receive the Holy Ghost.

Salvation is NOT living by the 10 Commandments or the Golden Rule. There is no way you or I can keep all the commandments of God, and because if we fail in one, we have failed in all. Salvation is not MORALITY. Many persons, when asked about salvation, will say, “I’m a good person. I live by the Golden Rule. I don’t hurt nobody.” The summary of the matter is that without Jesus, that “good” person will spend eternity in damnation. Romans, chapter 3 makes it so beautifully clear; in the Living Bible, it says:

*Now do you see it? No one can ever be made right in God’s sight by doing what the law commands. For the more we know of God’s laws, the clearer it becomes that we aren’t obeying them; his laws serve only to make us see that we are sinners. But now God has shown us a different way to heaven – not by ‘being good enough’ and trying to keep his laws, but by a new way (though not new, really, for the Scriptures told of it long ago). Now God says he will ACCEPT and ACQUIT us- declare us “NOT GUILTY” – if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, by coming to Christ no matter who we are or what we have been like. Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God’s glorious ideal; yet now God declares us ‘not guilty’ of offending him IF WE TRUST JESUS, who in his kindness freely takes away our sins. For God sent Christ Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to end all God’s anger against us. He used CHRIST’S BLOOD, and our FAITH as a means of saving us from his wrath . . .” (Romans 3:20-25 LB).*

As above, salvation is also NOT being good or charitable. The Bible says, “*there is none righteous, no not one*” (Romans 3: 10). “*There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good, and sinneth not*” (Ecclesiastes 2:7). “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). And as we said earlier, “*Now God has shown*



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*us a different way to heaven – not by being ‘good enough’ and trying to keep his laws, but by a new way of trusting Jesus to take away our sins.”*

Salvation is NOT believing you were saved when you were born into the world. When you emerged out of your mother’s womb, you were physically born into this world. Being born again, is a spiritual experience. You were not born again or saved when you were christened, dedicated, sprinkled or baptized. God said, *“Except a man REPENT, he shall likewise PERISH”* (Luke 3:13). *“Except a man be born of the water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God . . . Marvel not that I said unto thee YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN”* (John 3:5,7).

Jesus talks about the flesh birth and about the NEW BIRTH. He said, *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6). A newborn baby is not able to REPENT, to make a decision to ACCEPT Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is good and in keeping with the Old Covenant that babies are brought before the pastor or priest and blessed or dedicated at a young age, but unless that child, when he reaches the age to know right from wrong, whether it’s 5, 15, 50 or 70, is born again, that child will *“likewise perish.”* The Bible tells us, *“Godly sorrow worketh (or causes) repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh (or causes) death.* A baby cannot know Godly sorrow. God has to cause us to become godly sorrowful for our sin. We will become godly sorrowful when we realize that sin hurts God.

Salvation is NOT “knowing the Bible.” Sometimes if you ask a person if he knows Jesus, or if he is born again, he’ll tell you *“Oh, I know the Bible; I have read the Bible through three times.”* That’s good, however, knowing the Bible doesn’t get you born again, if you don’t do what the Bible says regarding salvation. Many times such a person will impress you with how intellectual they really are – real scholars in their own right. They are brilliant in man’s eyes, but fools according to God, because in their search of the theologies, and philosophies, and theories, they have decided that there is no logical explanation for God. They see the Bible only as a piece of literature (and it is), and not the inspired word of God. Psalm 14:1 says this person is a fool because *“The fool has said in his heart, there is no God . . .”*

Salvation is NOT being baptized, or taking communion, even though once you are saved, you should be both baptized (Acts 2:38) and take communion (Luke 22:19) in remembrance of his death, burial and resurrection as commanded by Scripture. As a matter of fact, we are advised not to take communion unless we are sure we are in right standing with God and others, because to do so is to *“drink damnation to our souls.”* The sacraments themselves, however, do not save us.



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Salvation is an ongoing process, but there must be a starting point. The starting point is the NEW BIRTH or being BORN AGAIN. Salvation means to be healed, to be delivered or to be provided for. It is any act of God that delivers us from bondage or destruction. It is God's total redemptive purpose. Salvation is proof of God's love toward us. He said *"He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise, cast out"* (Romans 5:15-19). So this is God's showing his love toward us that he would allow his son to bleed and die on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins and mines.

Scriptural salvation is summarized below. It is not being "spiritual" or "religious," but it is according to the word shared below.

### **GOD LOVES YOU!**

John 3:16: - *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, That whoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

Romans 5:8 - *"But God commendeth (or demonstrated) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

### **"ALL HAVE SINNED . . ."**

Romans 3:10: *"There is non righteous, no, not one."*

Romans 3:23: *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

### **" . . . YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN."**

John 3: 5-7: *"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. [6] That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. [7] Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."*

### **SALVATION IS BASED ON TWO FACTS OF THE GOSPEL.**

CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS.

Romans 5:6: *"For when we were still without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly"*

Romans 5:8: *"But God commended (demonstrated) His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

CHRIST ROSE AGAIN.



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Romans 6:4: *“Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life.”*

Matthew 28: 2-6: *“He’s not here; for he is risen . . .”*

### **SIN HURTS GOD AND US AND OTHERS.**

SIN SEPARATES GOD FROM MAN.

Isaiah 59: 1-2: *“Behold the Lord’s hand is not shortened that it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear; But your iniquities have separated you from God; And your sins have hidden His face from you; So he will not hear.”*

Genesis 3: 8, 23- 24: *“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the Garden . . . Therefore the Lord God sent him out of the Garden of Eden . . . So he drove out the man . . .”* (from the Garden where they fellowshiped together).

SIN CAUSES DEATH.

Genesis 2:17: *“ . . . but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat it, for in the day you eat of it thereof, you shall surely die.”*

Romans 6:23: *“For the wages (or the pay –off) for sin is death, but the GIFT of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

### **SALVATION IS A GIFT THAT WE MUST CHOOSE TO RECEIVE.**

Ephesians. 2: 8-9: *“For by grace you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the GIFT of God.”*

Romans 5:15-19: *“But the free GIFT is not like the offense. For if by one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the GIFT by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ abounded to many.*

### **SALVATION INVOLVES THE COMPLETED WORK OF THE CROSS.**

THE CROSS MEETS SINNERS NEED.



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Colossians 1:20: *“And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”*

THE CROSS SATISFIES GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Romans 3: 21: *“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference.*

**SALVATION REQUIRES BELIEVING THE GOSPEL, IN HIS PERSON AND WORK.**

JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD.

Acts 16:31: *“ . . . Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”*

John 3: 15 – 16: *“That whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

John 3:36: *“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”*

I John 5:1: *“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.”*

JESUS IS THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD.

I Timothy. 1:15: *“ . . . Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners . . . “*  
Matthew 9:13: **He came to save sinners.** *“For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance “*

Hebrew. 10:12: **He is our sacrifice for sin.** *“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.”*

Romans 5: 6, 8: **He died on the cross.** *“ . . . Christ died for the ungodly. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

Romans 6:4, 9: **He rose from the dead.** *“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.”*



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Matthew 28: 2-6 *“He is not here; for He is risen, as He said . . .”*

**Ephesians 4:8 - He ascended to heaven and is at the right hand of God.**

*“When he ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.”*

Hebrew 12:2: *“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

Romans 8:34: *“Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God who also makes intercession (or prays for) us.”*

### **SALVATION REQUIRES REPENTANCE AND RECEIVING.**

#### REPENTANCE OF SINS

2 Corinthians 7:10: **Being godly sorry for your sins.**

*“For Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”*

Romans 2: 4: *“ . . . the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.”*

Acts 3:19: **Turning away from (doing an “about-face”) your sins, and going in a different direction.** *“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”*

#### RECEIVING THE FREE GIFT

Romans 10: 9-10: *“That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in you heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (NASB).*

Romans 10:13: *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

Acts 2:21 – *“And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

John 1:12: *“For as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name.”*

### **PRAYER OF SALVATION:**



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The prayer of salvation can simply be done in your own words. The prayer should be directed to God. It should include your believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He died, was buried, and rose again to save you from your sins. It should include your acceptance of yourself as a sinner, separated from God by your sin, and in need of a Savior. It should include that you are sorry for your sins, and that you choose to change your direction (repentance). It should include your receiving of Jesus Christ, into your heart as your Lord and Savior. It should include thanksgiving to God for His gift of salvation and your new life in Christ. Amen. In case you are having difficulty with all this, here is a model prayer:

**Model Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, I **believe** that Jesus Christ is your Son that He died on the cross to save me from my sins, that he was buried, and that he rose again on the third day, as the Scripture has said. I **confess** that I am sinner separated from you, and in need of a Savior. Today, I **repent** and turn away from my sins, and I turn to you Lord, and I ask you to come into my heart today. I **receive** you as my personal Lord and Savior. I **thank you** for coming into my heart today and saving me. I **am born again**. Amen.

**PRAYER OF RECOMMITMENT OR REDEDICATION:** Maybe you were once living as a Christian, and for whatever reason, you strayed away from God. Now is a good time to come back to him, ask him to forgive you, and he will, for he is married to you (Jeremiah 3:14).

1 John 1:9: *"If we confess our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

**NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST JESUS:**

2 Cor. 5:17: *"Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."*

You have just completed the most important step in your entire life. Now go onto Steps II through VI. As a newborn baby must feed upon mother's milk, formula, cereal and other baby food in order to grow, so you as a **NEWBORN SPIRITUAL BABE**, or a newly rededicated baby in Christ, must feed upon the word of God in order to grow spiritually. The word of God is your essential food. Feed upon it daily.

**STEP I: SALVATION**

**STEP II: FIND A BIBLE BELIEVING, BIBLE TEACHING, WORSHIPPING CHURCH AND ATTEND REGULARLY.** Pray and ask God to direct you to such a church.



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STEP III: READ YOUR BIBLE DAILY.

STEP IV: TALK TO GOD (PRAY) DAILY.

STEP V: FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS.

STEP VI: OBEY THE WORD OF GOD.