

The Sinner's Prayer

A Way to Salvation?

Opening passages to consider...

- Our Scripture Reading – Romans 10:1-3

Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

- Updated New American Standard Bible

- Matthew – 21:25

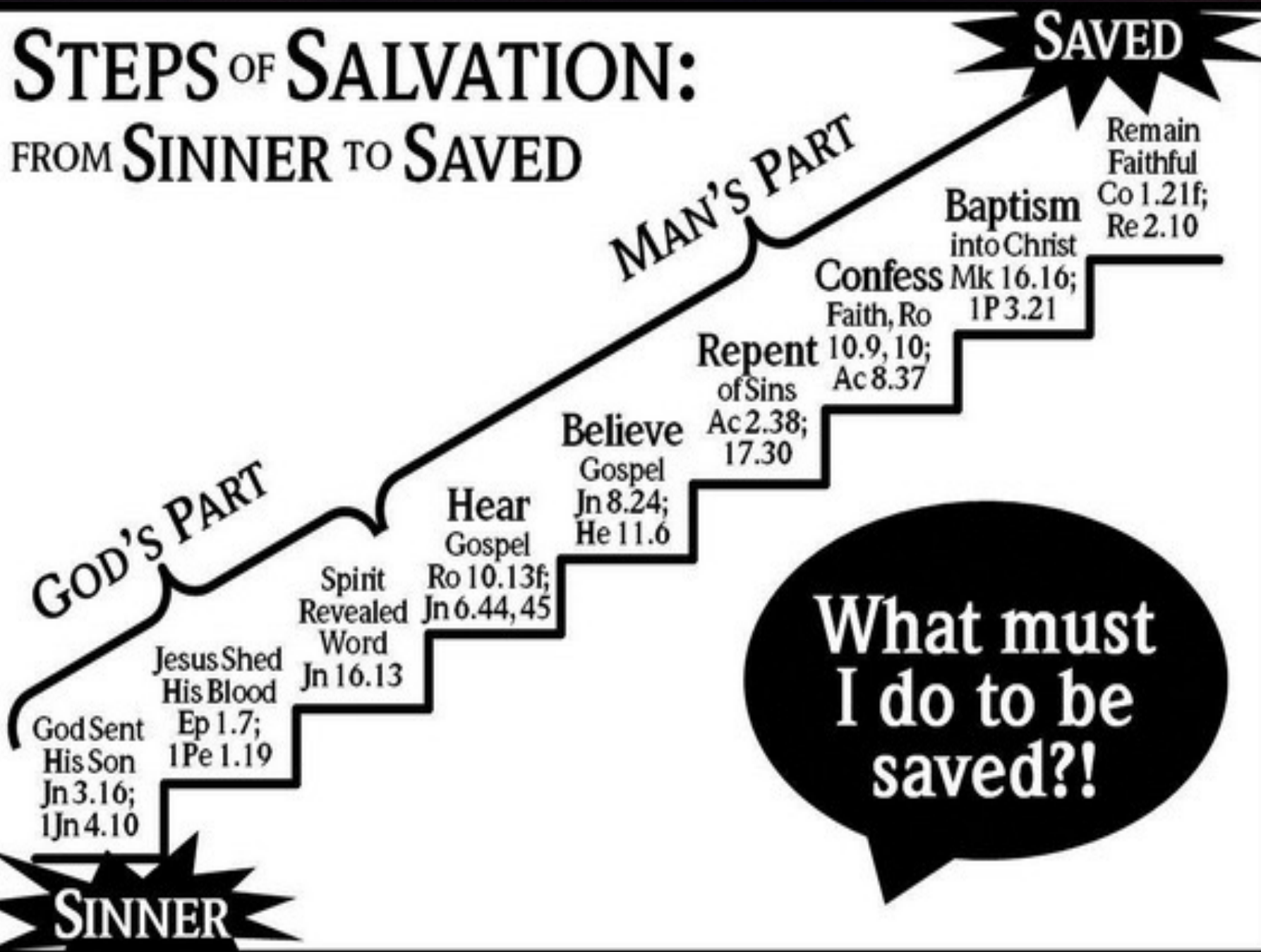
“The baptism of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?”.

The Most Important Question We
Can Ever Ask...

“What must I do to be saved?”

STEPS OF SALVATION:

FROM **SINNER** TO **SAVED**



The Bible Answers - by commands and many examples...

Matthew 28.18-19		Examples of Conversion				Mark 16.15-16
Preaching	Believed	Repented	Confessed	Baptized	Saved	
Pentecost Acts 2.14-41	Believed Acts 2.36	Repented Acts 2.37-38	Confessed Acts 2.47	Baptized Acts 2.38-41	Remission of Sins Acts 2.38-47	
Samaritans Acts 8.5-13	Believed Acts 8.12	Repented Acts 8.9-10	Confessed Acts 8.10, 12	Baptized Acts 8.12-13	Remission of Sins Acts 8.16 (2.38)	
Eunuch Acts 8.35-39	Believed Acts 8.36-37	Repented Acts 8.36	Confessed Acts 8.37	Baptized Acts 8.38	Rejoiced Acts 8.39	
Saul Acts 9.17-18	Believed Acts 22.10	Repented Acts 9.9	Confessed Rom 10.9-10	Baptized Acts 9.18	Sins Washed Away Acts 22.16	
Cornelius Acts 10.34-48	Believed Acts 10.43	Repented Acts 11.18	Confessed Acts 10.46	Baptized Acts 10.48	Remission of Sins Acts 10.43, 48	
Lydia Acts 16.13-15	Believed Acts 16.14			Baptized Acts 16.15	Faithful Acts 16.15	
The Jailer Acts 16.30-34	Believed Acts 16.31, 34	Repented Acts 16.33		Baptized Acts 16.33	Rejoiced Acts 16.34	
Corinthians Acts 18.1-8	Believed Acts 18.8	Repented 1 Cor. 6.9-11		Baptized Acts 18.8	Sanctified 1 Cor. 6.11	
Ephesians Acts 19.1-7ff	Believed Ep. 1.13; Ac. 19.5,18	Repented Acts 19.18; 20.21		Baptized Acts 19.5 (2.38)	Saved Eph. 2.8-9	
Preaching Romans 10.14	+ Faith John 8.24	+ Repentance Luke 13.3	+ Confession Romans 10.9-10	+ Baptism Galatians 3.26-27	= Salvation 2 Timothy 2.10	

Other Popular – *But Non-Biblical* – Answers

- “We are saved by faith alone”
- “Accept Jesus into your heart”
- “Ask Jesus to be your personal savior”
- “Invite Christ into your life”
- leading to...

“Recite a ‘Sinner’s Prayer’”

Versions of the “Sinner’s Prayer” ...

The Billy Graham version –

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. In Your Name.

Amen

Reciting a “Sinner’s Prayer”

- The idea – being saved by reciting a scripted prayer.
- Denies the necessity to be baptized into Christ.
- Though some form of “baptism” may be “encouraged” ...
 - done sometime after being “saved”
 - as a “symbol”, “an outward sign of an inward change”
 - like a “wedding ring”
- Again, with that “inward change” being by the person who is already “saved”, by having “accepted Christ”, such as through a “Sinner’s Prayer”.
- No example anywhere in the Bible of an “already saved” person being baptized, for any reason.

Scriptural Baptism Hymns

- 487 - A New Creature - Thomas O. Chisholm, 1935
 - “buried with Christ my blessed redeemer...”
 - “risen with Him from the doom of the grave...”
 - “walking in newness of life I am free”
- 423 - ‘Tis So Sweet To Trust in Jesus - Louisa M. R. Stead, 1880
 - “just to trust his cleansing blood, just in simple faith to plunge me ‘Neath the healing cleansing flood”
- 307 - Are You Washed In The Blood? - Elisha A. Hoffman, 1878
 - “Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? Are you washed in the blood of the lamb?...”
 - “Lay aside the garments that are stained with sin, And be washed in the blood of the lamb...”
 - “There’s a fountain flowing for the soul unclean, O be washed in the blood of the lamb”
- 8 - Glory To His Name - Elisha A. Hoffman, 1878
 - “Down where for cleansing from sin I cried, There to my heart was the blood applied...”
 - “Oh precious fountain that saves from sin, I am so glad that I entered in; There Jesus saves me and keeps me clean”.
- 314 - “There Is A Fountain”, William Cowper, 1771
 - “There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel’s veins; and sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains”

The Origins of Change Since These Hymns Were Written

- Edward Kimball
- Dwight Moody
- Billy Graham
- Campus Crusade For Christ
- Televangelists
- Common denominational acceptance

From the First Century to now...

- *It is most likely that in the Apostolic Age (the first century) when there was but “one Lord, one faith, and one baptism” (Eph 4:1-6) and no differing denominations existed, the baptism of a convert by that very act constituted him a member of the church, and at once endowed him with all the rights and privileges of full membership. In that sense, “baptism was a door into the church”.*

Now it is different...

- “The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches”, by Edward T. Hiscox

Authentic Conversions?

The absence of any specific examples of people praying the "Sinner's Prayer" in the Bible is also used by some to argue against it.

There are also no examples of conversions in the Bible with people praying such a prayer. Though a more prominent concern is voiced by those who say it creates within the sinner a false sense of security.

Quote - *"Many assume they are saved simply because of a prayer they prayed. It's not that praying a prayer in and of itself is bad—but the question...is what kind of faith are we calling people to?" ... the emphasis on the Sinner's Prayer is "unbiblical and damning." - David Platt*

Authentic Conversions? Continued...

"I'm convinced that many people in our churches are simply missing the life of Christ, and a lot of it has to do with what we've sold them as the gospel, i.e. pray this prayer, accept Jesus into your heart, invite Christ into your life.

Should it not concern us that there is no such superstitious prayer in the New Testament? Should it not concern us that the Bible never uses the phrase, 'accept Jesus into your heart' or 'invite Christ into your life'?

It's not the gospel we see being preached, it's modern evangelism built on sinking sand. And it runs the risk of disillusioning millions of souls."

David Platt

Romans 10:1-3

- Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved. I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law.

New Living Translation

Note...

- “Misdirected zeal”
- “they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself”
- “Refusing to accept God's way”
- “they cling to their own way of getting right with God”

Actual, Biblical, Conversions

- Acts 2:36-47 – those who crucified Jesus...
 - V37 – “pierced to the heart” ... “what shall we do?”
 - V38 – “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins”.
- Acts 16:25-34 – Philippian Jailor...
 - V30 – “what must I do to be saved?”
 - V33 – “immediately he was baptized, he and all his family”
- Acts 8:25-39 – Ethiopian Eunuch...
 - V35 – “preached Jesus to him”
 - V38 – Phillip “baptized him”
- Acts 22:1-16 – Paul himself...
 - V10 – “What shall I do, Lord?”
 - V16 – “get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins”

Conclusion

- A “Sinner’s Prayer” is not found in the Bible.
- We only have hope in the things that God has promised us...
 - He never promised anyone would be saved by reciting a man-made “Sinner’s Prayer”.
- We can’t “pray our way to heaven” ...
 - Cornelius – Acts 10:2 - “a devout man...who feared God...and gave many alms... and prayed to God continually”.
 - Still needed to hear the gospel - 10:22; had not yet heard “the words by which you will be saved” – 11:14.
 - Not saved until preached to and baptized in water - 10:34-48.
- Doing things our way instead of God’s way is not “faith”.
- We must believe and obey His plan of salvation...not a convenient man-made substitute.
- We must “repent and be baptized for the remission of sins”, to “wash away our sins”, to be “in Christ”.
 - Acts 2:38; 22:16, Mark 16:16, Rom 6:3-11, Col 2:12-13, Gal 3:26-27.

A Warning From The Word...

Matthew 7:21-23 –

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’”