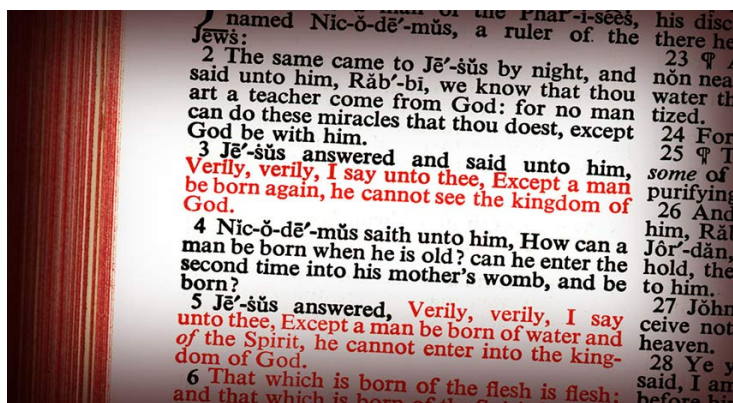


## The Essentials of Salvation



### A Bible Study by Jack Kelley

What is Salvation and what does it take to get it?

The Greek word translated salvation literally means to heal, preserve, or make whole. It's always used in connection with the judgment coming at the end of our lives as our Righteous God requires recompense for our sins. The penalty for sin is to be banished to a place of torment and eternal separation from God: a place of solitary confinement with no hope of release ever.

The Bible describes salvation as an event that immediately and irrevocably changes our destiny from this eternal separation to eternal life in God's presence. It happens the moment we ask for it in faith, and is made possible through a pardon purchased for us with the blood of God's son, our Lord Jesus.

Ephe 1:13-14 is especially clear in explaining this. ?And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed you were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit Who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance...?

We hear and believe and immediately the Lord marks us with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, and guarantees our place in His Eternal Kingdom. The Greek word translated ?deposit? means the Lord has entered into a legally binding obligation to save us, and has given us the Holy Spirit to guarantee it. It's similar to an earnest money deposit, used in the real estate industry to legally bind a buyer to follow through on his agreement to purchase property.

What About Those Who Hear But Don't Believe?

Nowhere in Scripture have I found a verse that promises salvation even to those who have heard the Gospel but don't believe and therefore don't ask for it. Quite the contrary in fact. In John 3:3 we read ?...no one can see the Kingdom of Heaven unless he is born again.? And Romans 10:9-10 says, ?if you confess with your mouth ?Jesus is Lord? and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified (regarded as though innocent) and with your mouth that you confess and are saved (delivered from judgment)."

Asking God for salvation is the confirmation that you believe He can and will grant it. John 3:18 states plainly that those who don't believe stand condemned. 2 Thes 2:10 agrees. ?They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.? So much for those who hear but don't ask. Our need for a Savior to deliver us from judgment is so self-evident that the Bible actually uses the same Greek word for disobedience as it uses for unbelief.

What About Those Who Don't Hear And Don't Ask

Our responsibility to know about God is described in Romans 1:18-20 where man is left without excuse. Anyone who looks at the creation should be able to comprehend that there is a God. But a study of the nature and character of God will lead us to conclude that He will not require something of us that we are not intellectually capable of understanding. Therefore the mentally incompetent and underage children are not accountable. In the case of children, they all belong to God (Matt 18:10-11) and have eternal life (Romans 7:9). But after reaching the age of accountability each one must consciously choose to be saved, or they too will be lost.

Since asking is such a simple thing, and since all who ask receive, it's an enormous victory for Satan to have convinced so many that they needn't do so. If we find out we didn't need to ask and did so anyway, what have we risked? But if we find out that we needed to and didn't, then what? Remember, asking confirms belief.

### Salvation and Sanctification

By the way, don't confuse salvation with sanctification like some do. While Salvation is an event that immediately changes our destiny, Sanctification is a life long process by which we are conformed to the likeness of our Lord. It's really only complete at our resurrection. Note the comparison of the two in Hebrews 10:14, "Because by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever (salvation) those who are being made holy (sanctification)." In the grand scheme of things, the two are actually meant to go in tandem. First comes Salvation, a gift given freely and irrevocably to all who ask in faith, assuring Eternal Life with God. Then comes Sanctification, the process of living our lives in submission to the indwelling Holy Spirit here on Earth.

Obedience to the Spirit's guidance brings the dual rewards of a more fulfilling life here and the promise of special rewards in Eternity. Believers are admonished to live a life pleasing to God as a show of gratitude for what we've been given. Failure to do so can trigger earthly consequences and the loss of rewards in eternity, but does not put the believer's salvation at risk (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

### Who's Your Daddy?

Look at it this way. Salvation brings adoption into God's family (John 1:12-13 & Gal 4:4), and once we're His children we're His children forever. Through our behavior we can put a strain on our relationship with God just we can with our earthly parents. This can cause us to miss out on blessings we might have otherwise received, and even our ability to communicate with Him can be disrupted. (This is called being out of fellowship with God.) With our earthly parents, the relationship can remain strained for years, and in some cases may never be healed, but even so we'll always be their children. So it is with God. We'll always be His children, no matter what.

But unlike our earthly parents, confession always brings God's immediate forgiveness. It restores our sanctification (1 John 1:9-10) and it's as if the strain in our relationship never happened. And sometimes He will even turn the episode into a great blessing once we've come to our senses and repented. For God works everything together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). These are the essentials of salvation.

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