

## HOW TO KNOW IF YOU ARE REALLY SAVED

*"I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture." John 10:9 ESV*

One of the most important questions we must answer in this life is, "Are we saved or lost?" Our eternal destiny depends on it! In her 1431 trial for heresy, Joan of Arc was asked if she was "in God's grace", that is, did she know if she was saved. She replied,

*"If I am not, may God place me there; if I am, may God so keep me. I should be the saddest in all the world if I knew that I were not in the grace of God."* When the English burned her at the stake, Joan of Arc died saying only one word over and over, "Jesus!"

If this saint, who reportedly heard plainly the voice of God, did not know definitively whether or not she was saved, is it not surprising that many professing Christians also do not know if they are saved? It is actually a worse situation that many who believe they are saved may actually not be saved! Since God is sovereign, only He truly knows on a case by case basis. Yet, do we have to wait until Judgement Day, when it is too late to change, to know? That is a frightening prospect! Well, the Scriptures do give us the criteria and the statistics are actually known.

For in 1995 I was killed in a gas explosion and subsequently healed and resurrected by the Lord. In the interim, He showed me the overall history of mankind and through that I saw that only 2.5% of the general population goes to heaven at death. This number has been verified by multiple other people in other ways. For example, Howard Pittman in his book about his NDE "Placebo" gives the same number. Dr. Kevin Zadai, who also had an NDE in 1992, verifies this. Prophetic minister, Jeremy Nelson, confirmed it too, as have other reputable Christian leaders. This is very tragic when we realize that salvation is available to everyone<sup>1</sup>, especially if you do the math.

If you deduct children under the age of accountability and adults who lack mental competence, professing Christians make up roughly 1/3 or 33% of the remaining general population. If you divide 2.5/33 the result tells you that only approximately 8% of professing Christians are actually saved. That means if you have 100 people in a church, on average only eight of them will make it to heaven! Why is that? I tell you it is because they neither know nor meet the criteria for salvation! What most of us have been taught is the basis for salvation is not accurate. For example many evangelists assert that we are saved if we simply confess Jesus Christ as Lord. If any more is required, they say, we should confess and repent of our sins and be baptized.

Confessing sin, repenting of sin and baptism are all certainly necessary conditions for salvation, but according to Scripture they are not sufficient.

### NECESSARY MAY NOT BE SUFFICIENT

A common mistake in logic is to confuse a Necessary Condition with a Sufficient Condition. It is a fallacy when a person assumes that a necessary condition for a result is sufficient for the result to occur. A necessary condition is a condition that must be present for a result to be realized. However, there may be more than one necessary condition to create a sufficient condition. A sufficient condition is a

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<sup>1</sup> || Peter 3:9

condition or complete set of necessary conditions that will produce the result. A necessary condition must be there, but it alone does not provide sufficient cause for the realization of the result. Only when the full set of conditions is sufficient, will the result be realized. In other words, all of the necessary elements must be there before the result is realized. That is to be saved, a person must meet *all* the criteria for salvation, not just some of them. "Feeling saved" is not even one of the criteria for being saved, so it is of no value in answering this question.

**Example:** to create a fire, three things are necessary: fuel, an oxidizer and heat. If any one of these three is absent, no amount of the other two will create a flame. If a flame is burning, removing any one of the three will extinguish the flame. The same applies for salvation. All necessary criteria must be present to assure salvation, *and removing any one of them cancels it.*

To find all the necessary conditions for salvation we must examine the whole of scripture, not just a few select parts. This means, to understand the scriptural criteria for salvation we cannot cherry pick portions of scripture, but must examine the whole.

We must also interpret what we find correctly.

In Ivan Panin's nine canons (rules) for interpreting scripture, Canon IV reads:

**CANON IV.** *"A clear Statement in one part of the Bible is to be held to against others not so clear in other parts. The light from the clear to be thrown on the obscure, rather than the obscure to darken the light. A mere difficulty is not to annul a certainty."*

When all the related scriptures are studied together, eleven criteria for salvation become apparent:

1. Belief in God (I Kings 8:33, Habakkuk 2:4, Luke 7:50, James 2:19)
2. Confession of sin (Leviticus 5:5, 26:40, James 5:16, I John 1:9)
3. Repentance of sin (II Chronicles 7:14, Acts 2:38, II Corinthians 7:10 James 2:17, 2:20, 21, 2:26)
4. Pay debts, taxes and restitution for wrongs (Numbers 5:6, 7, Matthew 5:22-26, Romans 13:7, 8)
5. Keeping the Lord's commandments (Psalm 50:23, Isaiah 56:1) and obeying His voice (Psalm 149:4)
6. Forgiving others (Mark 11:25, Matthew 6:14, 15, 18:35, Luke 6:37, 38, 11:3, 4, II Corinthians 2:10, Colossians 2:10, 11)
7. Declaring Jesus Christ as Savior (John 6:28, 29, 10:9, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:8-11)
8. Baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and calling on the Lord to be saved (Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, 22:16, Romans 6:4, 5, Colossians 2:11, 12, I Peter 3:21,22)
9. Taking communion (John 6:53-58)
10. Receiving the love of absolute spiritual truth. (II Thessalonians 2:9-19)
11. Enduring to the end (II Timothy 2:8-13), even to conquer the enemy (Matthew 24:9-13, Revelation 3:5)

*"The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels." Revelation 3:5 ESV*

At this point, a pertinent question to ask is "If salvation is this simple, why do so many still fail?"

Believing in Christ delivers us from the burden of keeping the rituals of the Royal Law and being Baptized, the believer (Jew and Gentile) puts on Christ and becomes an heir to the patriarchal promises. However, it still remains to be baptized in Holy Spirit to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (John 3:1-36) and,

*"But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."* Galatians 3:25-29 ESV

*"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."* Galatians 5:16-18 ESV

While inviting the Trinity into one's heart is not required for salvation, but it is the means by which we are empowered to do the miraculous, supernatural works of God. The simple fact is we cannot meet the Lord's requirements unless we live in His strength, guided by His wisdom, through the indwelling of Holy Spirit. That is, even if we mentally agree to the above criteria, we will find it impossible to meet them in practice without a full, uncompromised partnership with the Lord.

Another issue is that there are many dangerous heresies which are commonly believed. If they are believed, one may fail to qualify for salvation. I will address two of the primary ones here.

#### HERESY No. 1 – ONCE SAVED ALWAYS SAVED

The first common primary heresy is the "Once saved always saved" doctrine. That is once you have met the criteria for salvation, you cannot lose it, no matter what you think, say or do. Criteria no. 11 answers this right away. Matthew records the words of Christ saying to be saved we must endure to the end. John even records Christ saying a person must *conquer* to receive a white robe and *not* be blotted out from the book of life! A person could meet all eleven criteria at one point in life and yet deny Christ at a latter point. It is very likely that such a person loses their salvation. For Christ will deny them before the Father, and they are blotted out of the book of life.<sup>2</sup>

The words of Christ are unequivocal too, *"So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven."* Matthew 10:32, 33 ESV

It doesn't add a clause where "If they acknowledged Me first, they can deny Me later without consequence." Actually, the latter case follows the former, not vice versa.

Two cases from scripture illustrate two possible outcomes to denying Christ. First, Judas denied Christ by betraying Him. Presumably Judas was frustrated that Jesus did not confront the Roman occupiers and their puppet king, Herod Antipas. (In fact, Christ never confronted anyone in official authority.) Likely Judas did this to try to manipulate Christ to use supernatural force to assert His kingship over the Jews. That is, when, after the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, Judas became impatient and was frustrated

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<sup>2</sup> Psalm 69:28

because Jesus did not immediately overthrow the Romans and Herodians. Instead, Christ just continued His ministry of teaching, healing and deliverance. Therefore Judas schemed to force a confrontation. For it is evident that Judas hoped to be given a high office in the kingdom that he expected Christ would establish from the throne in Jerusalem. However, when this plot failed and Christ was crucified instead, Judas, out of favor with both the other Apostles and the Pharisees, surrendered to despair and hanged himself. It is reasonable to conclude that Judas, once a disciple of Christ and an Apostle – the highest office in the church - is now in hell for eternity.

Another Apostle, Peter, tried to defend Christ from the mob that came to arrest Jesus; but the Prince of Peace rebuked Peter and surrendered to the mob. Cowed but curious, Peter followed his Master to Caiaphas' house to see what happened and he ended up denying Christ three times in a vain attempt to try to conceal his identity. (This was entirely unnecessary when it is realized that John was there too, and John made no attempt to disguise himself.) Realizing his mistake, Peter repented in tears and later reconciled to Jesus after the resurrection. Peter went on to continue in the office of Apostle, was martyred for Christ and we can expect to see him in heaven one day. So, if a person denies Christ, they lose their salvation. However, they can repent of denying Him and regain their salvation. The key point is, they must repent for denying Christ, or the lost status remains in effect.

#### HERESY No. 2 – IT IS ENOUGH TO SAY A SINNER'S PRAYER TO BE SAVED

It appears to me that this doctrine may be derived from the story of the thief who was crucified on the cross next to Jesus. The account reads like this:

*"Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' And they cast lots to divide his garments.*

*And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!'*

*The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!'*

*There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.'*

*One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!'*

*But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.' And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And he said to him, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.'" Luke 23:32-43 ESV*

Of the eleven criteria listed above, the thief only clearly meets 1, 2, 3, 7, & 11. Though he evidently repented for his crime, obviously the thief had no opportunity to make restitution, be baptized or take communion once he was nailed to a cross. The rest, not explicitly stated, is unknown. It could be he was a backslidden believer who was previously baptized, but the scriptures do not say. Christ had just instituted the Lord's Supper the previous night, so no. 9 is highly unlikely. In such a case we declare Canon IV applies and we do not allow this exceptional and incompletely explained case to detract from what is clearly stated elsewhere. Furthermore, God is sovereign. He can make exceptions where it is patently obvious that an otherwise necessary requirement cannot be met, even if the person was willing.

## A PERSON MAY ALSO COMMIT THE UNFORGIVABLE SIN AND LOSE THEIR SALVATION

*“Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”* Matthew 12:31, 32 ESV

This explains how Peter’s salvation was both lost and restored. Ordinarily blasphemy, in this case even an extremely severe form of it: denying Christ, is forgivable. Peter did not deny Holy Spirit, which is unforgivable. This is why there is little hope for those in cults like the Watchtower Society which has an official, openly published and widely taught doctrine denying that Holy Spirit is a person in the Godhead. In fact, they very incorrectly deny that He is a person at all! Those who deny the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit are also in grave danger because these are signs, evidence, of His divinely appointed role in the body of Christ.

## WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE OF SALVATION?

The last words of Jesus recorded by Mark are *“And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”* Mark 16:17, 18 ESV

Here are five supernatural signs that a person is saved: In the Name of Jesus Christ they will:

1. cast out demons
2. speak in new tongues (a spiritual language), glossolalia
3. handle venomous snakes without suffering harm
4. ingest toxic substances without harm
5. heal the sick by the laying on of hands.

This is because the state of salvation allows Holy Spirit to work in believers. *“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”* Ephesians 1:13, 14 ESV

So, Holy Spirit is the “seal” of our salvation and these signs are for the praise and glory of the Father.<sup>3</sup> If a person does not demonstrate supernatural spiritual gifts with power, they may not be saved.

Here is a good opportunity to test a person’s status, saved or lost? If one of these five signs is consistently evident in a believer, it is probable that they are saved. If none of them are evident, it is probable they are lost. Which is the most useful test?

1 & 2 are difficult to measure without the gift of spiritual discernment because demons are intangible and an unknown tongue is relatively easy to counterfeit either naturally or with witchcraft. 3 & 4 are not

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<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 1:3

recommended because a failed test could be injurious or fatal. 5 is useful because any believer should be able to minister healing (John 14:12) and it is medically verifiable. No real harm is done if the attempt fails, even with repeated attempts. To be meaningful, the sign of healing should be clearly supernatural, and not likely to have occurred through a natural healing process, placebo effect or medical intervention. Supernatural healing can also be counterfeited using witchcraft, but in such cases typically comes with complications such as mental illness or other negative side effects.

#### EVIDENCE OF SALVATION – UNITY WITH OTHER TRUE BELIEVERS

Another evidence that a person is saved is that they are consistently in unity with other true believers, boldly promoting the gospel and not afraid of the opposition.

*“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.” Philippians 1:27, 28 ESV*

This does not mean they are necessarily in unity with everyone who professes to be a Christian (as demonstrated above, the large majority of these are in fact not saved). However, they will be in unity with the redeemed, those already demonstrably among the saved through the seal of the Holy Spirit. Conversely, those who are at odds with true believers are very likely among the lost, no matter what they profess or how they behave otherwise. Material wealth, attractiveness, intelligence, institutional credentials and social status are *not* evidence of salvation.

#### SYMPTOMS OF SALVATION

The presence of “symptoms” of salvation are not required or uniquely associated with salvation therefore are not actual necessary criteria or evidence, but their absence should bring into question whether a person is in a right relationship with the Lord and initiate an examination of the validity of the ten criteria and five evidences listed above.

Rejoicing and declaring “Great is the Lord!” - I Samuel 2:1 implies that the redeemed will rejoice (Habakkuk 3:18, Zechariah 9:9) in their salvation by saying (Psalm 40:16 & Psalm 70:4) “Great is the LORD!”

Telling others about salvation - I Chronicles 16:23 implies that the redeemed will broadly tell others about their salvation.

Praising the Lord - Psalms 9:14 & 118:15 imply that the redeemed will praise the Lord.

Exalting the Lord - Psalm 18:46 implies that the redeemed will bless and exalt the Lord. Psalm 20:5 implies that the redeemed will shout for joy about their salvation.

Exulting in salvation - Psalm 21:1 & Psalm 35:9 imply that the redeemed will exult in their salvation.

Singing of the righteousness of the Lord - Psalm 51:14 implies the redeemed will sing of the righteousness of the Lord.

Confidence in salvation - Psalm 62:2 & 6 implies that the redeemed will be confident that they are saved. This is not “feeling” saved, but possessing a “knowledge” that they are saved.

Living a sanctified life - Matthew 16:24 implies that the redeemed will live a sanctified life, denying oneself and living for Christ. Living unapologetically in a known sin is a contraindication of salvation.

Rightly dividing the Word (II Timothy 2:15) - II Timothy 3:15 & I Peter 1:10 imply that the redeemed will become wise through studying the scriptures. This is also evidence of *divine approval*.

If few or none of these are evident in a person's life, their salvation is questionable. Salvation is not proved by checking off a list though, but by a divine transformation of the person's life.

## WHO IS SALVATION FOR?

Salvation is for the nation of Israel first, but also for the gentiles, the other nations.

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Romans 1:16 ESV*

*“Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.” Acts 28:28 ESV*

In other words, salvation is for every natural born person. It is not other species or other spiritual entities. I.e. there is no grace for demons or fallen angels.

## DOES GENDER MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Yes. The Apostle Paul wrote, *“Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. **Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.**” I Timothy 2:11-15 ESV*

That is, if a married, fertile woman refuses to bear children, especially if she is willingly and knowingly sterilized, she may compromise her salvation. If she aborts her own child, she may lose it. This is because the Lord commanded Adam and Eve (and their descendants) to multiply (Genesis 1:28). This command was renewed to Noah and his family (Genesis 9:1). Those are commandments of the Lord and they have not been revised since then.

A woman who is unjustifiably domineering towards men, especially her husband, or takes it upon herself to reprove and correct adult males without the collaboration of a male authority may compromise her salvation.

A Christian woman must also demonstrate self-control with three qualities in her character:

- faith
- love
- holiness

A woman who professes Christ as Savior and Lord, but lacks self-control and practices unbelief, selfishness and sin is surely lost.

## IS SALVATION AVAILABLE FROM ANOTHER SOURCE?

No, *“But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!” Jonah 2:9 ESV*

*“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12*



## IS SALVATION ETERNAL?

Yes, *“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed.”* Isaiah 51:6 ESV

## WHY ARE WE SAVED?

It's really not about us, but for the glory of the Lord.

*“I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay; I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.”* Isaiah 46:13 ESV See also Ephesian 1:3

## CONCLUSION

Anyone can be saved, but it is not automatic. People believe because the gospel is preached to them.

*“For the Scripture says, ‘Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for ‘Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.”* Romans 10:11 ESV

Notice pattern here:

1. A preacher is sent to preach the gospel
2. The gospel is preached and people hear it
3. The hearers believe, call on the Lord and are saved

The process is two way though. They believe and come to Jesus because God the Father calls them and they are drawn to the Son.

*“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.”* John 6:44-47 ESV

Those that are drawn by the Father come to Christ >> << Those that hear and learn from the Father come to Christ

That is, our part is to preach the gospel and learn to hear the voice of God (the gift of prophesy) and hearing His voice, learn from Him. On God's part, He, foreknowing when and if our hearts are sincere, will call to Christ those who are ready to believe and live the gospel.

Once they come to Christ, believers will not be rejected or arbitrarily dismissed.

*"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out." John 6:37 ESV*

Note: Free will being an important matter to the Lord, believers can still reject Christ's atonement and salvation.

Those that give their lives to Jesus Christ are accepted and not rejected. Those that receive Christ and keep His commandments to the end will be saved.

#### THE STATISTICAL FACTS

Only about 16% of those not raised in church attend church as adults. Only about 33% (1/3) of those raised as an adolescent in an evangelical Christian home are still attending church in their twenties. Only about 33% (1/3) leave the church as adults when both parents actively teach the faith to them. About 90% of children of parents actively engaged in evangelism (sharing the gospel) stay in the church as adults.

Therefore, if they care about their children's salvation, Christian parents should both be engaged in the education in the faith of their children and set a personal example in regularly sharing the gospel with the lost. When appropriate, parents should train and include their children in evangelism.