

WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE FOR SALVATION?

By Brother Mike Sutherland

I want to start out saying that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ said in *John 14:6*: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. We call the Lord Jesus Christ Lord because he is God manifested in the flesh. If you hear me preach or teach very long you will hear me refer to the Lord Jesus Christ as the eternal God-Man. That is a unique title that can only be applied to him because he is the only individual to ever walk this earth who is God manifested in flesh. We call him Jesus because he is the Saviour of the world. Jesus means Jehovah saves. We call him Christ because he is the anointed one that will rule and reign as the Jewish Messiah and King of the world in the literal city of Jerusalem upon the literal throne of David.

George Whitefield , some say John Wesley, was once asked “Why do you preach so much on Ye must be born again”? His answer was that “Because ye must be born again”. Since men must be born again, why are we not preaching and teaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ from the pulpits of our Baptist Churches. The reason that I know that a scriptural doctrine of salvation is not being proclaimed from our pulpits is that our Baptist Churches are full of unbelieving, unregenerate reprobates that are lost and dying and on their way to HELL. Another reason that I know that a scriptural doctrine of salvation is not being preached from our pulpits is that there is no power in most of our Baptist churches even in so called Independent, Fundamental Baptist Churches. They are grave yard dead. WHY? Because they are whited sepulchres full of dead men’s bones! Still yet another reason that I know that a scriptural doctrine of salvation is not being preached from our pulpits is that our churches are full of rebels that are in open rebellion against God and everything that is commanded in our Bibles. The man or woman that is a rebel is not acting like a sheep. The new birth through the Lord Jesus Christ is not being preached anymore like it once was because apostate Christianity does not believe that he is the only way to salvation. The question for you today is, “What does God require for salvation?”. A short answer would be that God requires conviction, faith, repentance, regeneration, and confession. What does that entail?

CONVICTION is the ministry of the Holy Ghost that convicts , or reproveth, a lost sinner or the sinning Christian. Conviction leads the lost sinner to that knowledge that they are a sinner in the eyes of a holy God and that they are on the way to hell (judgement). **THERE CAN BE NO SALVATION WITHOUT THE CONVICTION OF THE HOLY GHOST.** *John 16:7-9* says:

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; *John 16:7-9*

Conviction is used in conjunction with the drawing of the heart to God. *John 6:44* says:

⁴⁴No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. *John 6:44*

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The Lord Jesus Christ said in *John 12:32* that if he be lifted up, he would draw all men unto him. That lifting up refers to both the crucifixion and giving the Lord Jesus Christ the glory due to his name.

FAITH - In the words of Pastor Robert Sargent faith is: “Forgetting All Impossibilities Trusting Him”. There are probably many definitions of faith that we could give. In the Bible, faith is always a word that relates to action. The apostle James said that faith without works is dead. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the wellspring of our Christians beliefs. Faith is the substance of things hoped for and evidence of things not seen. Note that faith is evidenced by substance. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. Faith is also related to impossibilities. It is impossible to touch faith, but it is possible to see faith’s results just as it is impossible to see God the Holy Ghost, but it is possible to see the results of a Spirit filled Christian exercising faith that is the result of yielding to the Holy Ghost. *Hebrews 11:6* says: But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. *Ephesians 2:8-9* says:

⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast. *Ephesians 2:8-9*

The subject of verse 8 is the word “saved”. The phrase “through faith” tells us how we get salvation. It is the salvation of verse 8 that the phrase “it is the gift of God” is referring to. Salvation is the gift of God: not faith. Faith is the only hand through which we can receive the gift of salvation.

REPENTANCE - Repentance is a change of heart that results in a change of attitude toward God that results in a change of action toward God. Repentance is firstly toward God, but then its fruits will manifest themselves toward man and provide evidence to your fellow man that you are indeed a child of God. Repentance is not an outward reformation. Repentance is an inward reformation that allows the Holy Ghost to publicly manifest the Lord Jesus Christ through your life. It is something that takes place in the heart of the believer that permanently changes the relationship between God and the believer. It is a change that results in reconciliation of the sinner to God. For lost sinners, faith and repentance create an everlasting relationship that cannot be annulled because it is in the fullest sense of the word an adoption by God into the family of God. Both legally and by definition adoption creates a relationship that cannot be broken by disowning the child. The adoption also refers to the redemption of the body at the rapture in Romans. For saved sinners, repentance restores fellowship. Repentance is the fruit of the tree of life that is grounded and rooted in the seed of faith. If there is no fruit in the life of a professing believer, then there is no root of faith in that individual. Simply put, if there is no fruit there is no root. Repentance is the result of the Holy Ghost working in and through an individual. Repentance is also the evidence of saving faith. If you have not repented then you are not saved. Repentance is not a work of the human will. Repentance is the work of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of lost and saved sinners. Repentance is not worldly sorrow or remorse over having been caught. In *2 Corinthians 7:8-10* we see the nature of true repentance and *2 Corinthians 5:14-19* we see the results, or end state, of repentance. Repentance always comes after

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conviction. Repentance is absolutely necessary for salvation. The Bible says in *2 Corinthians 7:8-10*:

⁸ For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. ⁹ Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. ¹⁰ For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. *2 Corinthians 7:8-10*

What a contrast between Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation. Worldly sorrow worketh death. Worldly sorrow worketh the second death that leads to the lake of fire. The Bible says in *2 Corinthians 5:17*:

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

The whole point of *2 Corinthians 5:17* is that salvation changes people. God is not going to save you and leave you in the same lifestyle you were in before he saved you. God the Holy Ghost expressed the same sentiment in *1 Corinthians 6:9-11* but used more specific terms:

⁹ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. *1 Corinthians 6:9-11*

There are many wicked and vile sins identified in this passage, but notice that the Holy Ghost said “SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU”. What had happened? Old things had passed away and all things had become new. Note in *1 Corinthians 6:11* the phrase “but ye are washed”. You would ask washed in what? We are washed in the blood of the Lamb of God. The apostle John said in *Revelation 1:5*:

⁵ And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, *Revelation 1:5*

John the Baptist said: “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. It is the blood of the perfect and sinless Lamb of God that paid the penalty for our sins. Without the shedding of the blood of the Lamb of God there is no remission. From the Scriptures, we can identify at least seven things that the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ does for the born again believer. They are:

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1. **Saved by the Blood of His Cross:**

Leviticus 17:11, Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, Acts 20:28, Romans 3:24-25, Romans 5:9-10, Ephesians 1:7, Ephesian 2:13, Colossians 1:13-14, Colossians 1:20, Hebrews 9:11-12, Hebrews 9:14, Hebrews 9:22, Hebrews 10:19, Hebrews 13:12, Hebrews 13:20, 1 Peter 1:18-19, 1 John 1:6-7, Revelation 1:5, Revelation 5:9, Revelation 7:14, and Revelation 12:11

2. **Justified by the Blood of His Cross:** *Romans 5:8-9.*

⁸ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. *Romans 5:8-9*

3. **Redeemed by the Blood of His Cross:** *Revelation 5:9 and Colossians 1:14.*

⁹ And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; *Revelation 5:9*

¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins: *Colossians 1:14*

4. **Forgiven by the Blood of His Cross:** *Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:14.*

⁷ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; *Ephesians 1:7*

¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins: *Colossians 1:14*

5. **Made Nigh by the Blood of His Cross:** *Ephesians 2:13.*

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. *Ephesians 2:13*

6. **Cleansed by the Blood of His Cross;** *Revelation 7:14.*

¹⁴ And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These

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are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. *Revelation 7:14*

7. Victorious by the Blood of His Cross: *Revelation 12:11.*

¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. *Revelation 12:11*

I would remind again you that the Lamb of God is the perfect, sinless Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father required sinless blood to pay the price for our sins. There has only been one perfect, sinless man to ever live on the face of this earth, and that man was the man Christ Jesus. The Bible declares three different times that the Lord Jesus Christ is sinless. We see those declarations in *2 Corinthians 5:21*, *Hebrews 4:15*, and *Hebrews 9:28*:

²¹ For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. *2 Corinthians 5:21*

¹⁵ For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. *Hebrews 4:15*

²⁸ So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. *Hebrews 9:28*

Now let us talk about regeneration.

REGENERATION - The term regeneration means to be reborn spiritually of the Holy Ghost. Regeneration NEVER, EVER comes before faith. If anyone ever tells you that you have to be regenerated before you can exercise saving faith, you had better run from them like a scalded dog because that is the heresy of Calvinism. The Holy Ghost that physically raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead is the same Holy Ghost that raises the unbeliever from spiritual death. The Bible says in *Isaiah 53:10-12*:

¹⁰ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹ He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin

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of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. *Isaiah 53:10-12*

Faith and repentance always precede regeneration. Regeneration is referred to as being “born again” or to be “born from above”. The result of regeneration is spiritual renewal by the Holy Ghost unto a new life. It is this regeneration and the resulting indwelling of the Holy Ghost that gives us the power to live sanctified and holy lives. Regeneration is best described in *John 3:3-8* and briefly in *Titus 3:5*:

³ Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴ Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? ⁵ 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. ⁸ The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. *John 3:3-8*

⁵ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; *Titus 3:5*

Have you been born again? We refer to being born again as salvation. So, what is salvation?

SALVATION - Put simply, salvation is the redemption from the penalty of sin through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though salvation is sometimes referred to as a process, for the unbeliever salvation comes the moment they exercise faith and they turn from their sin to God. It is a process only in the sense that God has established the plan (or the process) through which salvation takes place. Unlike what one Bible perversion reads, we are not being saved. At any specific point in time, we either are 100% saved or we are 100% lost. From the moment of faith, salvation is instantaneous. Salvation brings instant everlasting deliverance from the eternal flames of hell. Salvation gives us instant everlasting life.

CONFESSION - is an action that takes place with the mouth. Once we are convicted of our sin, exercise faith unto salvation, and come to repentance in our hearts, we are to confess our sin of unbelief before God and man. *Matthew 10:32-33* states:

³² Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. ³³ But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. *Matthew 10:32-33*

Note also what *Romans 10:8-14* states:

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⁸ But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; ⁹ That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. ¹² For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. ¹³ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ¹⁴ How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? *Romans 10:8-14*

A word of warning is in order here. It is not just saying some words that saves you. Verse 13 says that “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”, but verse 14 says you cannot call upon him for salvation unless you have believed. That belief is called faith. A faithless “sinner’s prayer” cannot save you.

There are four evidences of salvation and five birthmarks of a believer.

The four evidences of salvation are:

- (1) a new relationship with and a new attitude toward God
- (2) a love for God’s Word.
- (3) a love for and a desire to be with God’s people.
- (4) a love for God’s ways.

The five birthmarks of a believer are:

(1) Obedience: *1 John 2:3-6.*

³ And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴ He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. ⁶ He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. *1 John 2:3-6*

(2) Love: *1 John 3:14-19.*

¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. ¹⁵ Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. ¹⁶ Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to

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lay down *our* lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? ¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. ¹⁹ And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. *1 John 3:14-19*

(3) **Truth: 1 John 4:1-6.**

¹ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. ² Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: ³ And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. ⁴ Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. ⁵ They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. ⁶ We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. *1 John 4:1-6*

(4) **The Witness of the Holy Spirit: 1 John 4:13 (See also Romans 8:16).**

¹³ Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. *1 John 4:13*

¹⁶ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: *Romans 8:16*

(5) **The Witness Within: 1 John 5:9-13.**

⁹ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. ¹⁰ He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. ¹¹ And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. ¹³ These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. *1 John 5:9-13*