



August 27, 2021

Have You Been Saved?

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from our offices here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

We had an encouraging Sabbath just a few days ago. It was evident that God's Spirit abounded, and the peace and fellowship set the stage for the upcoming Sabbaths just prior to the Feast of Trumpets, Atonement, and then the Feast of Tabernacles and Eighth Day or Last Great Day.

I regularly receive phone calls or emails from what we call PM's or "perspective members". Those who wish to respond to the calling of God and be part of His body. Recently one person who reached out to us asked me almost immediately "Have you been saved pastor?"

Have you heard individuals say "I am saved" or "I have been saved?" Have you been asked if you have been saved? What about the assertion many believe "once saved, always saved!"

Salvation and conversion are the result of a lifetime investment by a true disciple and by God. Contrary to what many think and teach, conversion is not just a one-time event. Instead, the Scriptures reveal that it is *a process*.

The process begins with God's calling, followed by the key steps of repentance, baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit-finally climaxing with the return of Jesus Christ, when the dead in Christ are resurrected to immortality and given eternal life. That is the ultimate conversion and transformation, being changed from a mortal to an immortal being! We must be saved from death that is the result of committing sin. "*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (Romans 6:23)

Perhaps the most concise instructions concerning the steps that lead to being converted and then receiving salvation are found in the message delivered by the Apostle Peter when he preached to a crowd assembled on the Day of Pentecost as he and the Apostles were empowered with the Holy Spirit. Peter preached about Christ and His death and sacrifice and the guilt that humans bear. Many of those assembled were convicted by the Holy Spirit to acknowledge their sins and seek God's direction. Peter then responded to their question of "what to do next?"

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of*

Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

The steps of God's calling, hearing the gospel and the instructions that lead to understanding the true gospel, and the act of repentance, and then bringing forth fruits of repentance, and preparing for baptism and being baptized along with having the laying on of hands for receiving the Holy Spirit are all very necessary. Even after following these steps we are still imperfect humans and we must endure and overcome sin and temptation unto the end of our physical lives. (Matthew 24:13; Revelation 2:7; 2:11)

I can't stress enough that this is an individual matter. Each believer must own these things and only God knows those who have truly and sincerely responded to His call and followed the steps laid out in the Scriptures. We cannot do it for anybody else and we have to be careful about judging others as to whether they are advancing toward conversion.

Following the baptism of those who responded to God's call on the Day of Pentecost, we see the response of those disciples.

Acts 2:42, And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 2:46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Note that these disciples who "continued steadfastly" are referred to as "those who were *being* saved." They were not yet saved. They had begun the process of conversion but had not completed it.

The apostle Paul and Silas were placed in confinement after a severe beating, but were miraculously released from prison and the guard was about ready to do himself in. (Death was often the penalty for letting a prisoner escape). Paul stopped him, and the guard asked Paul what He needed to do to be saved. Here is Paul's response.

Acts 16:31-33 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.

This man and his family needed to hear instruction, believe, and accept Jesus Christ. They then were baptized and with the laying on of hands received the Holy Spirit. Obviously God was calling them and used this occasion to initiate the process that leads to salvation. Paul said that they "will be saved". They were not yet saved.

Let's look at the Apostle Paul's encouragement to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 (Twentieth Century New Testament) *Next, Brothers, I would remind you of the Good News which I told you, and which you received-the Good News on which you have taken your stand, 2 And by means of which you are being saved. I would remind you of the very words that I used in telling it to you, since you are still holding fast to it, and since it was not in vain that you became believers in Christ.*

By responding to the message of the gospel, (the Good News), the members were "being saved". They needed to be and were "holding fast" to the instructions.

Basic teachings and doctrines must be understood, believed, accepted, and practiced by the believer to begin traveling the road that leads to conversion and salvation. Here is a well-known Scriptural listing of the basics.

Hebrews 6:1-2 *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*

We are *in the process* of being converted and changed in our minds and hearts. God's Spirit accomplishes this but only if we are willing participants. As we commit to this process we are being saved, and being converted, and will ultimately be saved from the results and effects of sin and will be given eternal life. Then we will be "always saved!"

As we come up to the fall Feasts of the Lord I encourage us all to take the extra time needed to continue our in depth study of God's Word and solidify these truths in our minds.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

-Scott Hoefker

(Pastor, Church of God Ministries)

Church of God Ministries (CGM)

(Ministerios de la Iglesia de Dios)

tshoefker@cogministries.org

www.cogministries.org

P.O. Box 983

Daphne, AL 36526-0983

251-930-1797 Offices