



# GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#81)

Good News – Changes that will occur (Introduction).

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## WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

(OUR responsibility.)

What we do involves (1) **CONVICTION**  
(= responding to what **GOD** says),  
which leads to (2) **CHANGE**  
(= deciding to follow **JESUS**).  
These result in (3) **CONSEQUENCES**  
(= trusting **GOD**, who will do what he promised; also a life of following **JESUS**).

**TODAY:**

If **#1 Conviction** has occurred... → Then we are ready for: **#2 Change**

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## WHAT IS #2 Change ALL ABOUT?

There are (1) **INTERNAL** and (2) **EXTERNAL** dimensions to this **CHANGE**.

People may temporarily **imitate** these changes.  
False religions may offer **counterfeits** to these changes.  
*But when these changes are **genuine**,*  
they mark the beginning of a **life-long NEW** way of life.

Whoever is a believer in Christ is a **new creation**.  
The old way of living has disappeared.  
**A new way of living** has come into existence.  
2 Cor. 5:17 (GW)

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### INTERNAL Dimensions of this CHANGE

1. Repentance/turning
2. Believing/faith/trust

- These *begin* as a complete turnaround in life.
- They *continue* as a way-of-life, as spiritual growth and maturity increase.

### EXTERNAL Dimensions of this CHANGE

1. Baptism
2. Confession, deeds, obedience\*

\* **Confession, deeds, obedience:** These are things we *start* doing as an external expression of this **change**. But then we *continue* doing them as a **consequence** of salvation.

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## SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THESE CHANGES

### 1. THE TIMING OF THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHANGES: IT'S NOT ALWAYS A DISTINCT PROGRESSION.

**LOGICALLY:** The *internal* changes occur BEFORE the *external* changes can occur.

**CHRONOLOGICALLY ("TIME-WISE"):** Scripture does not always describe them as a distinct step-by-step progression. *They often occurred together*, as a single act of turning to Jesus.

Today, people often make "decisions" they don't understand, and then don't get baptized for weeks, months or even years.  
All this was unheard of in the apostle's day!

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### IN MOST PASSAGES, THE LOGICAL PROGRESSION IS FOLLOWED.

Peter replied, "Repent [= internal] and be baptized [= external], ..."  
Acts 2:38a (NIV)

Though there are occasional exceptions.

If you **confess** with your mouth [= external], "Jesus is Lord," and **believe** in your heart [= internal] that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.  
One **believes** with the heart [= internal], resulting in righteousness, and one **confesses** with the mouth [= external], resulting in salvation.  
Romans 10:9-10 (CSB)

As far as **time sequence** is concerned, we might see the *external* changes before we are aware of the *internal* changes.

**EXAMPLE:** Acts 8:26-40 – The first expression of the change taking place was his desire to be baptized.

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**2. SOVEREIGNTY GUARANTEES THAT CHANGES WILL OCCUR. FALSE TEACHERS CANNOT UNDO THIS FACT.**

- When God says that certain things are necessary for salvation, people can't do things differently and still get the same results!

I DON'T THINK "REPENTANCE" IS NECESSARY!

**WRONG!**

If God says you must obey, to be saved... then you will obey, if you want to be saved!

(As we've seen in the past, this obedience does not detract from what God does in our salvation.)

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**There have always been people who claimed that certain changes aren't necessary.**

IT'S OK TO SIN!

IF YOU WANT, YOU CAN EVEN CLAIM THAT IT ISN'T SIN!

**WRONG!**

... ungodly men who have turned the grace of our God into a license for evil...  
Jude 1:4b (NET)

**Yet God's standards remain unchanged.**

- God defines sin; we don't. His definition is based on his unchanging holy and righteous nature.
- We cannot expect to: (a) choose to remain living in sin, AND (b) be saved. (We can only choose one of these two options.)

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**3. THOUGH OUR FOCUS HERE IS ON WHAT PEOPLE MUST DO, GOD IS STILL INVOLVED.**

- We were spiritually dead in sin, and it took GOD to make us alive.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ... by nature objects of wrath.

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.  
Ephes. 2:1, 3b-5 (NIV)

You were dead... Then God made you alive...  
Col. 2:13 (NLT)

**BECAUSE GOD MADE THESE THINGS POSSIBLE,**

① **WE** choose to repent (etc.)  
and ② we give **GOD** credit for our salvation.

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**God makes REPENTANCE possible!**

God exalted [Jesus]... to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. / ... God has granted the repentance that leads to life even to the Gentiles.  
Acts 5:31; 11:18b (NET)

**Our FAITH/TRUST is centered on what GOD does; and God provides the opportunity to trust him!**

For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast.  
Ephesians 2:8-9 (NET)

[God] had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.  
Acts 14:27 (NET)

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**4. THESE CHANGES ALL INVOLVE A FOCUS ON Jesus/God.**

- They all center around our response to who Jesus/God is and our relationship to Jesus/God.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household."  
Acts 16:31b (NET)

... they should repent and turn to God...  
Acts 26:20b (NIV)

"... everyone who believes in him [= Jesus] receives forgiveness of sins through his name."  
Acts 10:43b (NIV)

... and they turned to the Lord.  
Acts 9:35b (NET)

... through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified...  
Acts 13:38b-39a (NIV)

... telling you to turn ... to the living God, ...  
Acts 14:15b (NIV)

"... you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."  
Acts 11:16b (NET)

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**The world offers many types of changes – some may have value... and some don't.**

★ **But NONE of them save us.** ★

**SOME HAVE TEMPORARY VALUE:**  
EXAMPLE – PHYSICAL EXERCISE.

Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important, for it promises a reward in both this life and the next.  
1 Tim. 4:8 (NLT)

**SOME HAVE NO VALUE:**  
EXAMPLE – THE PURSUIT OF RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES.

Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.  
Col. 2:23 (NIV)

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**5. WE HAVE NO BASIS FOR CLAIMING THAT THE INTERNAL CHANGES HAVE OCCURRED, IF THE EXTERNAL CHANGES ARE NOT PRESENT.**

**1 What about baptism?**

In Acts, baptism was the natural "first expression of salvation." They never considered delaying it until later! To them, separating "salvation" and "baptism" was unthinkable!

**BOTH WERE TO BE DONE!** "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins..."  
Acts 2:38b (CSB)

**WHAT ABOUT THE THIEF ON THE CROSS? HE DIDN'T GET BAPTIZED!**

There is a big difference between "no opportunity to be baptized," and "unwilling to be baptized." (Justifiable circumstances are rare.)

**2 What about the various other changes?**

These changes were all viewed as the natural "next step" of salvation, after baptism. Separating them from salvation was unthinkable!

**EXAMPLE: DEEDS (OR "WORKS")** – They prove that our faith and repentance are genuine and living.

**REPENTANCE:** [Paul] preached that they should ... prove their repentance by their **deeds**.  
Acts 26:20b (NIV)

**FAITH/TRUST:** ... faith without **works** is dead.  
James 2:26b (CSB)

★ If God's saving grace is present, there will be evidence! ★

When [Barnabas] arrived and saw the **evidence** of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.  
Acts 11:23 (NIV)

**6. (A REMINDER) SCRIPTURE WON'T MENTION ALL OF THESE THINGS EACH TIME IT DESCRIBES PEOPLE BEING SAVED.**

Mentioning one or two of them implies the presence of the others.

"Repent and be baptized, each of you, ..."  
Acts 2:38b (CSB) → **Implied:** Faith (internal), as well as other external changes.

"... many believed in the Lord."  
Acts 9:42b (NLT) → **Implied:** Repentance (internal), as well as various external changes.

We might see only one or two of these interrelated "salvation concepts" in any specific passage. But as we learn what the Bible says, we develop a fuller concept of what is involved in salvation.

**This week's MISSION!**

HAS **#1 Conviction** OCCURRED IN YOUR LIFE?

**IF NO:**

Find out what Scripture says (about sin and salvation) and decide if you're going to accept it as true.

**IF YES:**

How have you responded?  
What type of

**#2 Change**

has occurred in your life?

In coming weeks:  
{ Our goal is to look further at the specific changes that occur. }

**Credits**

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