

Captive's Corner



Emmaus Bible Correspondence School Set Free Ministries of Missouri and Illinois Post Office Box 22006 Saint Louis Missouri 63126-0006

"Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" - 2 Corinthians 10:5

THE SINNER WHO BELIEVES IS SAVED

Sadly, God's plan for man to be saved is often miscommunicated because one or two verses of scripture are taken out of their context and used independently of the rest of God's word to say something they never were intended to say. Romans 10:9-13 is such an example of a passage which, when used by itself out of its context, can be easily misunderstood and miscommunicated to mean that man must do more than simply believe on Christ to be saved. When Romans 10:9-13 is

"The following is a sample of the 150 New Testament passages which make it crystal clear that our only obligation for receiving salvation is believing on Christ: John 3:14-18, 36; 6:28 - 29, 40, 47; 11:25-27; Acts 16:30-31; Rom 1:16; 5:1; 1 Cor 1:18 with Eph 1:13; Eph 2:8-9"

used to say, "believe, confess, and call on the Lord to be saved," the confusion is obvious in that this comment seems to communicate that there are three things that man is obligated to do in order to be saved while the New Testament has over 150 passages which very clearly communicate that salvation is received by simple faith or believing in Christ. The scriptures everywhere harmonize with this overwhelming

body of truth. The fruitful walk in Christ of obedience to God, which includes confessing, water baptism, etc., follows believing the gospel of Jesus Christ. See Rom 10:14, 15:18, 16:25-27, Rom 8:14 and 2 Cor 10:5. The confusion from Romans 10:9-13 can be easily avoided by applying one of the most fundamental rules of interpreting scripture, which is to interpret the cloudy or seemingly difficult to understand passages by viewing them in the context of other scripture which is very clear. You see, God's Word is a lamp or a light which illuminates not only how we are to walk (Ps 119:105) but scripture also illuminates scripture so we can see it's intended meaning more clearly. This illumination takes place when we

"compare spiritual words with spiritual words" -1 Cor 2:13. So let's shine the light on Rom 10:9-13 by comparing it with other scriptures to clearly see its intended meaning so we can apply it to our lives and pass it on to others.

In chapters 1-5 of Romans, Paul in detail explains that God's righteousness is given freely to everyone who places their faith in Christ. In Chapter 10 of Romans he then explains that the Jews did not have the righteousness of God, their salvation, because they simply did not believe on Christ. See 10:1-5, 16-21. In verses 1-5 of chapter 10, although Paul greatly desired his fellow Jews to be saved, he makes it clear that their zeal will not save them and that their attempt to make their own righteousness by keeping the Law will not save them either. Only Christ could supply them, and can now supply us, with the righteousness of

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God. In fact, the purpose of the Law is simply to point a person to Christ, our true righteousness, not to make a man righteous. See Rom 3:20, Gal 3:24, 1 Cor 1:30. Once a person believes on Christ, His righteousness is put to the believer's account, giving him a right standing before God. See Gen 15:6, 2 Cor 5:21; Rom 5:1. Therefore, the Law's usefulness has come to its end or goal for the one who believes on Christ - Rom 7:1-4, Rom 10:4. Since it is Christ's righteousness which makes us acceptable to God there is no

requirement or need to do anything else after believing on Christ in order to be saved. See Eph. 1:6, Titus 2:13-14; 3:4-7. This good news actually begins in Genesis and continues clear through the New Testament. See Gen 15:6.

The following is a sample of the 150 New Testament passages which proclaim this good news: John 3:14-18, 36; 6:28-29, 40, 47; Acts 16:30-31; Rom 1:16; 5:1; 1 Cor 1:18 with Eph 1:13, Eph 2:8-9. At least 115 of the 150 passages declare salvation depends on believing while in the other 35 passages it is declared to depend on faith. So there is no confusion between the word "faith" and the word "believe". It is helpful to note that they are simply two different forms of the same Greek word, *Pistos*. "Faith" is the noun form and "believe" is the verb form of *Pistos*. So when you read in scripture that we are saved by "faith" in Christ and also that we are saved when we "believe" in or on Christ it is the same thing. Rom 3:22 and 4:5 illustrate this well by using the words "believe" and "faith" interchangeably. The two most key words of the Gospel of John are "believe" and "life". The Gospel of John, which was written that man might believe on Christ and that by believing have life (John 20:31), uses the word "believe" 83 times. "Believe" is used 6 times in Romans 10 alone. John 1:12 tells us that to receive Christ is to believe in His Name. Many names are ascribed to Jesus in God's Word, such as Mighty God, Lord of Lords, Savior, Messiah, etc. See Is 9:6; Titus 2:13; Rev 17:14; 19:16; Heb 1:8; Matt 1:21, 23; and John 4:25. Each one tells us something about Who He is and the work He has done for us. Therefore, to "believe in His Name" simply means to believe on His Person and work for our salvation, that on the basis of God the

Son's death, burial and resurrection He now guarantees our eternal destiny with Him apart from any works, deeds, confessions or merit on our part. See Rom 3:21-28; 5:1, 6-11. This believing (faith) is a trustful dependence on the promise God has made to give us eternal life based on His Son's sacrifice (work). Believing is the opposite of doing anything. It is trusting in another to do what we cannot do – 2 Tim 1:9-12; Rom 4:5. God the Father declared by resurrecting Jesus and giving Him the highest place of honor in glory that He is entirely satisfied with His redemptive work and also entirely satisfied with those who are linked with His Son by faith - Eph 1:6; 19:23; Rom 5:1. Therefore, we should be satisfied also with His work and rest in it, content to not add anything to it. This is why the scriptures are violated and God's whole message of grace is confused when salvation is made to depend on anything other than "believing." God's plan of salvation is not "believe and ask", "believe and confess sin", "believe and confess Christ", "believe and be baptized", or "believe and call". These are five additional subjects which have their full intended meaning in scripture, but, if they were essential to salvation, they would not be omitted from any passage wherein the way to be saved is stated. So it is clear that the only condition for receiving salvation is believing on Jesus. His promise is to all, and it is impossible for God to lie - Heb 6:18; Titus 1:2. Therefore, it is critical that we do not add anything to

this simple obligation of simple faith to be saved because, if we do, we are saying that Christ's death is not sufficient to pay our sin debt, God the Father is not satisfied with His Son's work, that more work must be done, and that it is up to us to do it. Of course, this would be impossible for us since our works are valueless. In fact, they are even the very thing that condemns us because they are tainted with sin and the product of a nature that is at enmity with God – Is 64:6; Jer 17:9; Eph 2:3. Thankfully, the weakest faith in Christ alone saves.

In verses 6-8 of Romans 10 Paul further explains

Israel's unbelief. They, as well as us, have no excuse for unbelief because the gospel is not far away in Heaven or Hades but it is so close and accessible that it was actually "in their heart and mouth" because Paul would go into the synagogue and proclaim the gospel when he visited a city – Acts 18. Romans 10:9 tells us that Paul preached the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Sadly though, although the Jews heard, debated, and discussed the gospel with their "heart and mouth," they did not believe, causing Paul to echo the words of the prophet Isaiah in verse 16. See Is 53:1. You see, God looks at the heart for belief or unbelief, not the mouth or the outward appearance – 1 Sam 16:7; Lk 16:15. Yet, it is out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks, and if our heart has believed and is therefore occupied with or filled up with Christ, then it is Him who will be

confessed by our life and lips – Matt 12:34; 5:16; Rom 10:14; 1 Cor 12:3; 1 John 4:13-15; 1 John 4:1-6; Rom 8:16. So, scripture is also crystal clear that confessing Christ with our life and lips follows "believing". Therefore, "confess" and "call" in verses 9, 10, and 13 of Romans 10 are results of salvation, not two parts of a three-part formula to obtain it. If we are to communicate to others the relationship between believing, salvation, and confessing Christ, we should be extremely clear, as clear as scripture as a whole is, that man is saved by believing on Christ alone and confessing Him with our life and lips follows or results from our salvation. If we are trying to communicate how one is to be saved there are many verses in this letter which are much clearer and plainer than Romans 10:9-13 is by itself. If Romans 10:9-13 is used, then verse 14 should be included to make it evident that confessing does not precede salvation but rather follows it.

Here is a great

comment in closing regarding the relationship between believing, salvation, and confessing: **"The sinner who believes is free and can now confess, 'Jesus, my Savior, died for me'"** Hallelujah! that's good news to tell others about so they, too, can be, Set Free! - Romans 10:15, 17.

Sincerely in Christ,

Set Free Instructor,
Set Free Ministries of
Missouri and Illinois