

# How Sinners Become Saints

Rockey Jackson, April 22, 2018

***“The just shall live by his faith.”*** (Habakkuk 2:4b)

It is said that a silk purse can not be made out of a pig's ear and the world would say that a sinner can not become a saint, but in Luke 18:27 ***“Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”***” This article will explore the process that changes sinners into saints. Its purpose is to affirm, liberate and empower the redeemed saints of God.

Perhaps the greatest treatise on salvation ever written is the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ecclesia at Rome. One evangelical tool uses just a few verses from the book of Romans to present God's plan of salvation. It is called the Roman's Road and it is worth the journey.

The first way point on the Roman's Road is verses 3:10 and 3:23, ***“As it is written, “There is none righteous, no, not one:” “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”*** To parody a famous transmission from the near disastrous Apollo 13 Moon mission: “People, we have a problem.” The God who created everyone is holy, righteous and perfect. What people do that is not holy, righteous or perfect in God's sight is sin. No one is perfect in God's sight because everyone has sinned at some point.

The second way point is 5:12, ***“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”*** In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had only one rule to follow and they still chose to break it. This sin caused shame and a separation between them and God. A [curse of sorrow](#) was placed upon Eve and a [curse of death](#) was placed upon Adam. Like Adam and Eve, everyone has sinned in some way. Sin separates people from their Creator and separation from the God who created them brings spiritual death.

The third way point is verses 5:8 and 6:23, ***“But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*** In the Garden, God showed that it is by the shedding of innocent blood that sins are covered when he put animal skins over Adam and Eve's shame. It was for sinners that God sent his only begotten son the Lord Jesus Christ to sacrifice his own innocent blood to make atonement for their sins, remove the separation and restore spiritual life.

The fourth and final way point is verses 10:9-11,13, ***“That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture says, whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed.” “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*** If in their hearts, sinners believe that God has made provision to redeem them and they receive Jesus Christ as their Lord, then God will extend grace unto them, forgive their sins and restore them to spiritual life. In response, out of the newly redeemed saint's heart will flow confession of what God has done for them.

At the end of the Roman's Road, travelers are commonly led in a form of the sinner's prayer. It is a prayer of faithful humility to restore relationship and normally would include:

- confession – admitting to being a sinner and falling short of God's perfection
- repentance – turning from self-righteousness, rebellion, and worldliness to God's way
- profession – announcing belief that Jesus Christ has made the sacrifice for sin
- supplication – requesting that God, in his mercy and grace, will forgive the sinner
- submission – receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and asking “What does God want?”

The Roman's Road and sinner's prayer are good and effective tools for evangelism, but what about those who never hear the gospel? In Romans 1:19-20 it says: ***“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has shown it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”*** God has made Himself known and revealed the plan of salvation in the creation. There are those throughout the earth who just intuitively understand what God has revealed in the creation. Their faith has saved them without knowing either the plan of salvation or that Jesus died for their sins. They are redeemed saints even though they've never said the sinner's prayer nor made public confession of their faith. So what is the necessary essence of salvation? It is this: the humility to recognize one's own imperfection, the belief that God has made a way of restoration, the desire to have relationship with God and to accept God as the Lord of one's life. All of this rests on faith, as it says in Romans 1:17, ***“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”***

So what good then are things like the sinner's prayer, public confession of faith and baptism if they are not necessary for salvation? Well if they are performed by self-righteous sinners who are taking pride in their works of religion or those who are just looking for fire insurance without any intention of receiving Jesus as Lord, then they have no value at all. On the other hand, if they are performed by redeemed saints as an act of faith in humble obedience to their Lord and Savior then they are an Ebenezer. No, not Ebenezer Scrooge the character in the novella “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens. An Ebenezer is a stone of remembrance, a memorial, a commemoration of divine assistance. They are announcements before heaven and earth of the redeemed saint's heartfelt faith and obedience. Memorials that stand for all time in memory of decisions made and commitments accepted. Public promises are more often kept because others would know that a person failed to keep their word.

God is a loving father who desires a relationship with His children. That is why Jesus didn't teach a religion, but as a friend he met individuals at the point of their need: healing for the sick, deliverance for those in bondage, food for the hungry and most importantly revealing the nature

of the Father to those who were seeking God. For those seeking salvation, Jesus spoke directly to their individual need:

- To Nicodemus: ***“You must be born again.”*** (John 3:1-15)
- To a sinful woman: ***“Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”*** (Luke 7:36-50)
- To the rich young ruler: ***“Come and follow me.”*** (Matthew 19:16-26)
- To Zacchaeus: ***“Today salvation has come to this house.”*** (Luke 19:1-10)
- To the woman at the well: ***“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, Give me to drink; you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water.”*** (John 4:1-42)
- To the woman caught in adultery: ***“Neither do I condemn you: go, and sin no more.”*** (John 8:1-11)
- To Martha: ***“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die.”*** (John 11:17-27)
- To the criminal on the cross: ***“Today you shall be with me in paradise.”*** (Luke 23:39-43)

Every passage above could be a separate study in its own right. The point is that religion makes everyone conform, but the infinite and omniscient God is able to see into each person's heart and meet them individually to satisfy their need.

Salvation doesn't depend upon correct doctrine or membership in the correct religious institution, though both can be a benefit. When the people stand before the Lord of glory no church membership role will be consulted. The only book checked to see if they accepted the Lord's salvation will be the Lamb's Book of Life. In Matthew 8:11-12 Jesus said: ***“And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*** Are the redeemed saints in danger of being cast out? Heaven forbid! Jesus is the Messiah of Israel and the Christ of the whole earth. When He came as the Perfect Lamb of God to be a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin He came specifically to the Jews. Some believed in Jesus and were saved, but many of the Pharisees (those who trusted in their self-righteousness), the Sadducees (those who held the form of religion while denying its power) and the Herodians (those who advocated compromise with the world) did not believe. What Jesus meant was that these non believing Jews would be cast out. Their membership in the Jewish nation and religion would not save them. Now this can easily be brought to the present. The church today has many self-righteous, some worldly and a few rebellious members counted in the congregation. How shocked many of them will be when

redeemed saints are welcomed into the Kingdom of Heaven from every tribe and tongue while they hear the words: ***“I never knew you, depart from me.”*** (Matthew 7:23) How can that be? How can an omniscient God not know someone? Well obviously this isn't just a casual knowledge of someone's name as an acquaintance. In the story of Adam and Eve it says that Adam knew his wife Eve and she conceived a son. It was an intimate physical knowledge that produced physical life. Here God is talking about an intimate spiritual knowledge that produces spiritual life. That is why it is important to maintain an intimate relationship with God. A relationship with a religion will not suffice.

So how does a sinner become a saint? They must give up their pride, rebellion, and love of the world. In humility they must admit that they are not righteous and believe that God has made provision for the forgiveness of their sins. Finally they must desire to come into right relationship with God, make Him Lord of their life and desire God's will for their lives. All of this depends on faith, for: ***“The just shall live by faith.”*** (Galatians 3:11b)

The next article entitled [“Paradise Lost and Found”](#) details how a redeemed saint may die spiritually and return to Satan's Kingdom. It also explains how to keep the relationship with God strong and healthy so that won't happen.