

# Questions

# Questions

Question: Is there such a thing as a “sinner’s prayer”?

This is a very good question because we hear this quite a bit in many Christian churches today. To justify this, many go to *Luke 18:10-14* where Jesus makes a comparison of the actions of two Jews under the law. One man, a Pharisee, who prays (actually he boasts), justifying himself by his own works; the other, a tax collector, who humbles himself and asks for God’s mercy because he knows he is a sinner. Then in *verse 14* Jesus says the tax collector “*went home justified before God*” and then goes on to describe what will be the result of what happened. Read *Romans 9:30-32* and put that beside *Luke 18:10-14* and see what you come up with.

Here are some things we need to remember:

- 1) In *Genesis* Adam and Eve turned from God and believed Satan and Man spiritually died, was separated from God and was in a state of condemnation. God then requires all of Mankind to turn back and believe Him (repent).
- 2) In God’s plan to reconcile man unto Himself, He allowed, and very probably instructed, the Gentile nations in their worship of Him. This goes all the way to the cross. Remember Cain and Abel gave sacrifices; one God accepted and one He did not.
- 3) He created the nation of Israel, a priestly and kingly nation and lineage for the coming of the Christ. He gave them a law that was a righteousness for them, as well as instruction and priests to offer sacrifices for their sin, which was only atoned for, not removed. Very important point: Israel was freed from slavery in Egypt.
- 4) The Christ was born of a virgin, a Jew under the law, and came to Israel with instruction and a message of good news that their heaven on earth was at hand or near. But, as we know, He was rejected and God placed Him on a cross to pay for the sins of all mankind.
- 5) Jesus died, was buried and raised to eternal life and now sin can be forgiven/removed and brought to mind no more. By Jesus’ death/shed blood on the cross, Man now has the opportunity to be freed from the slavery of sin.
- 6) Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to indwell those who turn to God, along with a way to do that: believe in Jesus the Christ by believing the gospel message of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus the Christ to eternal life for the forgiveness of sin. Another way to say this is that we put our faith in Jesus to save us from our sin or trust in Jesus to save us from our sin. Paul said it very adequately in *Acts 16:31* where he stated “*believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and your household.*”
- 7) Israel, under the law, was to confess their sin and offer a sacrifice for it. Read *Leviticus chapter 5* and note *verse 5*.

In his work titled “*Systematic Theology*” Lewis Sperry Chafer states that in the Epistles it states salvation is by belief or faith about 150 times. I personally have not counted them all but have marked probably close to 100 in my Bible, more than enough evidence to convince any reasonable person that we are saved by faith in Christ, not a prayer. See the paper on Salvation in the toolbox for more Scripture.

Now let me ask a question: if what we need to be saved from the wrath of God is to believe in His Son, how is a prayer from a person who is condemned, dead in sin, going to do that when that is not what God tells us to do? God is the one who saves and He writes the prescription the dead must take - believe in His Son - not say a prayer. In the Epistles, one will not find a single passage of Scripture that says that saying a prayer will save anyone, because if it did we would not be “...*by grace you have been saved, through faith...*” (*Ephesians 2:8*), because we would be in fact saved by a work, not faith. In *Luke 18* it does not say that the tax collector believed in Jesus, he simply asked “*God have mercy on me, a sinner.*” This example from *Luke* is completely out of context with salvation after the death and resurrection, and a sinner’s prayer for salvation does not exist in the Scripture and is a total fabrication of man and a false teaching.

This brings us to a very misguided and deceptive form of teaching that is abundantly prevalent today: application. When application or “how does this apply to us” is taught, this is the kind of false teaching that results. If we take everything Jesus said to the nation of Israel, under a covenant of law, and try to apply it to the body of Christ, under grace, we wind up with a confused mess and scores of conflicting Scriptures that cannot be reconciled, no matter how one tries to twist and distort it. All denominations were started when a man took the Scriptures and attempted to

## Questions

make them say what he interpreted them to say, instead of putting the Words of God in the context in which He gave them. There is no application of this teaching (*Luke 18*) of Jesus to the body while it is being gathered. It was given to Israel as an example of how they were to confess their sin under the law. People claim that there is a sinner's prayer; by the way, this prayer is different from person to person - place to place, and they can pray it all they want but it is a conflict with Scripture and will never save anyone. Of course, after we are saved, we should have a prayer life with God which should continue until He brings us home. Putting our faith in Christ by believing the message is how we turn to God (repent) and are saved by grace through faith, not by saying a prayer. Read *Acts 10* and *Galatians 3:1-6* and see what you come up with. Thank you for this question.