



God's Salvation Story

From Genesis
To Revelation

As Retold By Sally Sternard

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Our God reveals Himself in *The Holy Bible* to be a loving and relational Being. (1 John 4:8, 16) Since love is always looking for a way to share itself, **God** made creatures in His own image. (Genesis 1:26-27) In other words, He made us to be relational with a mind, will and emotions, and capable of loving each other and Him. Sadly, our will (the part of us that makes choices and decisions) soon got us into trouble. God put us in a beautiful Garden and gave instructions for its care. (Genesis 2:15) He went into detail about what we were to do and not do. And the thing we were not to do was eat of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the Garden, (Genesis 2:17) which, of course, the second His back was turned, we did. (Genesis 3:6)

Satan came to Eve and convinced her that God was holding out on her, that He didn't have her best interests at heart, that He was keeping something good from her. (Genesis 3:1-5) Satan is still doing that today...telling us that God is holding out on us; that He doesn't love us; that He isn't "for" us. He whispers doubt and confusion into our minds. Satan is a liar, (John 8:44) and his tactics haven't changed.

When Eve sinned, everything changed in the flash of a moment. The fellowship that Adam and Eve shared with God in the Garden was lost. God, in His holiness, cannot just overlook sin. It must be dealt with. And the penalty for sin is death. (Romans 6:23) Eternal death. Separation from God forever. No longer did they have the enjoyment of walking with Him in the cool of the evening. Now they were afraid and hid from Him. (Genesis 3:10) They were removed from their Garden home, away from God's Presence. (Genesis 3:23) In addition, they were no longer innocent - their nakedness had been uncovered. (Genesis 3:7) Their relationship with each other changed as well. There would be conflict and pain and difficulty in their lives from this point on. (Genesis 3:16-19)

The wonderful thing is, God, who is all knowing, (1 John 3:20) knew in advance that we were going to disobey, and from the foundation of the earth, He had a plan in mind to restore us. And so begins the story of God's ongoing love and redemption. It started all the way back in the Garden.

God made a promise in the Garden after Adam and Eve sinned. He assured Satan that though a battle had been lost, the war was by no means over...that someday He would send a Deliverer to restore the eternal life that man lost in the Garden of Eden that day. (Genesis 3:15) Because sin requires the death penalty, (Hebrews 9:22) God temporarily covered Adam and Eve's nakedness with the skins of animals. (Genesis 3:21) That meant that the first blood was spilt. It was the first blood sacrifice. It was only the beginning of more to come.

After the first sin, many more followed. Mankind became wholly evil inside and out and God determined to cleanse the earth and begin again with the only man of his generation who was pleasing to Him. Noah. (Genesis 6:5-8) He commanded Noah to build an ark and He sent a flood that covered the earth and destroyed everything living that was not on the boat. That included every person, with the exception of Noah, his wife, and his three sons, Ham, Japheth and Shem and their wives, and every air-breathing bird and animal with the exception of two of each kind that were preserved in the ark. (Genesis 6:14; 17-19) From these 3 sons of Noah, all the families of the earth descended. (Genesis 10:32)

Time went on. God chose a man by the name of Abraham and called him to leave his family and go to the place God would show him. Abraham obeyed God, and God blessed him. He promised him that (1) He would make him into a great nation; (2) He would make his name great; (3) He would bless those who bless him and curse those who curse him; and (4) All people on earth would be blessed through him. Abraham believed God, and God considered Abraham to be a righteous man because of his faith in His promise. (Genesis 12:1-3) Don't miss this! It is an early indication that God plans to justify us by faith through grace rather than by works of our own. (Romans 4:1-5)

One of the promises of God to Abraham was that he would be the father of a great nation. The problem was, Sarah, Abraham's wife, couldn't have children, and they were in their 70s at the time of the promise. Years went by before God fulfilled His promise and gave Abraham and Sarah a son. That son's name was Isaac. In the meantime, Abraham and Sarah tried to fulfill God's promise in their lives by a human method. Sarah gave Abraham her servant to sleep with and he had a son by her named Ishmael, whom Sarah raised as her own. (Genesis 16:1-3, 15) Ishmael is the father of the Arab nations today. This is the root of the situation that we now have in the Middle East. They all claim to have a stake in the land of Israel, the land that was promised to Abraham and his descendants forever. But the promise came through Isaac. Not all of Abraham's descendants are through Isaac. (Genesis 17:15-21) Therefore, not all of them have a legitimate claim to the Promised Land.

Time went on. One day God told Abraham to take his son, Isaac, the son of promise, whom he loved, and go to the land of Moriah and sacrifice him on a mountain there to God. Just as he was about to lift the knife to kill his son, God called to him and told him to stop, and He provided a ram as a substitute sacrifice. God told Abraham that because he had been willing to obey Him, He would bless him and He repeated all of the former promises to Abraham. (Genesis 22:1-18) In this we see the foreshadowing of what God Himself would do at Calvary. God allowed His only beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be crucified on that very same mountain, centuries later, as a substitute sacrifice for our sin. Christ became our substitute sacrifice, just as the ram was the substitute for Isaac. (1 Corinthians 5:7b; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

Time went on. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. God chose Jacob to inherit the promises given to Abraham. (Genesis 25:23-26; 28:13-15) He became the father of 12 sons. Those 12 sons became the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Joseph was one of the 12 sons. One day his brothers, who were jealous of him because their father, Jacob, favored him over them, sold him to some Ishmaelites who were on their way to Egypt to sell their wares. His brothers then went back to their father,

Jacob, and told him that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. (I'm sure they had a lot of explaining to do years later when Joseph showed up again, alive!)

In the meantime, Joseph was sold to a high-ranking official in Pharaoh's court and he became his servant. Through no fault of his own, Joseph ended up in prison for many years. Eventually, because God gave him the ability to interpret dreams, he rose to 2nd in command over the entire country. During a famine throughout the whole region, he was able to supply food to the Egyptians and to those from surrounding nations, including his brothers and their families, who unknowingly came to him to buy food. Joseph sent them back to Israel to get their families, and they all went and lived in Egypt for approximately 400 years. During that time, they multiplied from about 70 people into a great nation of 1-2 million. And the Pharaoh who was in power at that time began to fear that if there were to be a war, they might join the opposite side and fight against him. So he subjected them to forced labor. (Genesis 37, 39-50; Exodus 1)

Enter Moses. God heard the cries of His people and saw their misery, and He called Moses to lead His people out of Egypt, back to Israel. But first, he had to free them from slavery. And that was no easy task. Pharaoh was not about to let all of his slaves just walk away. So God hit Egypt with a number of plagues designed to convince him to release them, and at the same time, demonstrate who the real God of the universe really is. Pharaoh was under the mistaken illusion that it was himself. In addition to that, there were many other gods that the Egyptians worshipped. The plagues were designed to show God's power over each of them. When Pharaoh finally let the people go, Egypt was in shambles. (Exodus 2:23-25; 3:1-12:33)

Now Moses was faced with the task of leading 1 million plus people through the desert. And they weren't the easiest people to lead. They were constantly complaining and rebelling against his leadership. God was with them every step of the way, to be sure. He provided them with water and food, and performed miracle after miracle in their presence. But they still rebelled. Finally, God became so angry with them that He condemned them to wander in the desert until the entire generation died, and then He allowed their children, a new generation, to actually enter the Promised Land. (Exodus 13-19; 32-33; Numbers; Deuteronomy)

During this time of wandering in the desert, God gave His people instructions about how to live a holy life that is pleasing to Him. He trained them, through the sacrifice of animals, on the necessity of blood sacrifice to atone for their sin when they broke His laws. (Hebrews 9:22b; Exodus 20-31; 34-40; Leviticus; Numbers; Deuteronomy) The entire sacrificial system in the Old Testament was set up to help the people understand that God is holy, and they are sinful, and that a perfect substitute is required in order to cleanse them from their sin and make them holy and acceptable to God. Day after day, they were reminded of their sins, (Hebrews 10:3) as they watched innocent animals die in their place...until the time was right for the Lamb of God (Jesus Christ) to die, once for all. (Hebrews 10:10, 14)

He also commanded them to build a Tabernacle. This Tabernacle would be His dwelling place. (The entire Bible is about God's plan to finally dwell intimately with a people who have come to fully know and love Him.) (Revelation 21:3) They were to build it exactly as He instructed them. It was to be patterned after the one that is currently in heaven. (Hebrews 8:5)

All of this was in preparation for the coming Deliverer that God had promised way back in the Garden. The symbolism in the Old Testament is amazingly and beautifully fulfilled

in the Lord Jesus when He appears in the New Testament. The Tabernacle was to be a picture of Christ. Everything in it represented Him in some way. The oil lamps within the Tabernacle represented Him as the Light of the world. (John 8:12) The bread of the Presence represented Him as the Bread of life. (John 6:35) The veil, which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, represented Christ's flesh, (Hebrews 10:20), and so on.*

The laws were given so that we would understand that we are incapable of living a life that is holy and, therefore, pleasing to God. (Galatians 3:19-29) In fact, in the New Testament, Jesus even kicked it up a notch. He said that not only is murder a sin, but if a person was *even just angry* with his brother, he was guilty of sin! (Matthew 5:22) And not only is adultery sin, but if a man *even just looks* at a woman with lustful intent, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart! (Matthew 5:27-28) Then He went so far as to say that we have to be perfect, like God is! (Matthew 5:48) Clearly, God was asking for the impossible! He was asking for something that only God, Himself, could do, and eventually did do! God's plan all along was to send His Son to be that promised Deliverer. He would live a perfect life in our place, keep every law that we have broken, and become the costly blood sacrifice, which would remove the stain of our sin forever. (Hebrews 10:10; Romans 8:3-4) This was something that the blood of sheep and goats could never accomplish. (Hebrews 10:4) The law was never meant to be the means of our salvation...it was only a teaching tool to prepare us for the true sacrifice that Christ would provide at the right time. (Galatians 3:24)

The nation of Israel itself, figures significantly in the salvation story. God chose Israel and the Jewish people to be the line through which the Messiah would be born. In addition, He chose Israel to demonstrate His faithfulness to all of the other peoples of the world. That made the Jews and the nation of Israel the special focus of Satan's attention. If he could successfully destroy the Jewish people, he could keep God from fulfilling His plan to bring salvation to the world. No Jewish line...no Jewish Messiah!!! He has targeted them mercilessly from the very beginning in attempt after attempt to destroy them, to destroy Christ, and to destroy anyone who believes in Him. He continues his fierce attacks to this present day.

Finally, it was time for the Israelites to enter the Promised Land. But there were people living there. They were going to have to fight for the land. Now, God gave them the land. Their victory was assured. But there was a struggle involved to enter and live there. (Joshua) This, too, is a picture of salvation. Our salvation is a gift from God, but we are in a constant battle with Satan, the enemy of our souls. The battle is not to keep our salvation. God keeps us. (1 Corinthians 1:8; Jude 1:24; John 10:28-29) But it is a battle against sin. We have a new nature that loves God and wants to obey Him. But we also have an old nature that fights against Him. We so easily fall into temptation and sin. (Romans 7) The Christian life is a battle. But as with the Israelites, our victory is assured. The war has been won, but the battles continue, and they will continue for as long as we are in these mortal bodies.

As the Israelites entered the Promised Land, their first battle was for the city of Jericho. By depending on God's power, they were successful. The next battle, for the city of Ai, was not successful. They depended upon themselves rather than God, and they disobeyed His direct commands, the result being that they were soundly defeated. (Joshua 6 & 7) The efforts to subdue the Promised Land took many years, and they were not totally successful in defeating every enemy, but they controlled most of the land. It's kind of like our

lives...we are Christians, saved by Jesus Christ, but there are little pockets of resistance in our lives that are not yet under the authority of Christ.

Once established, God's people were ruled by a series of judges. They fell into a nauseatingly repetitious cycle that lasted for about 300 years. They would sin. God would discipline them through the occupation of a foreign nation. They would cry out for deliverance. God would send a judge to deliver them. Then they would start the whole thing all over again. (Judges)

Eventually, they decided they wanted a king, like all the other nations around them. So God gave them a king. First Saul, (1 Samuel 9:16; 10:1), then David, (2 Samuel 5:3) and then Solomon (1 Kings 1:39). After the death of Solomon, the nation split. (1 Kings 12:16-20) The Northern Kingdom, Israel, consisted of ten tribes and the Southern Kingdom, Judah, consisted of two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. All of the kings of the Northern Kingdom were disobedient to God, and the majority of the Southern Kingdom kings were, as well. God sent them prophets to try to turn them back, but they wouldn't listen. Eventually, in 722 B.C., God sent judgment on the Northern Kingdom. They fell to the Assyrians. The Bible does not record that these tribes ever returned to Israel. However, Old Testament prophets speak of God's promise, as the end of the age approaches, to gather His people back to Israel from all of the countries where they have been exiled. (Ezekiel 39:25-28) Over the past 100 years, we have been witnessing this prophecy come to pass before our very eyes!!!! Jewish people from all over the world streaming back to their ancient homeland in Israel for the first time in 2000 years!!! We are living in exciting times! The Southern Kingdom continued until 586 B.C., when they fell to the Babylonian Empire. The two Southern tribes remained in exile for 70 years. In 536 B.C., they began to return to Israel and rebuild. (Ezra 1:1-6)

For the next 400 years, the time between the Old and New Testaments, the Bible is silent. However, God was not idle. He was preparing the world for the coming of the promised Deliverer, His Son, Jesus Christ. During this time, the Greeks brought a common language to the region and the Romans brought a system of roads that allowed for ease of travel unheard of until this time. The climate was being prepared for the birth of Christ and the spread of the Gospel message.

The Old Testament prophets, Isaiah and Malachi, foretold that a messenger would come before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah (Malachi 4:5; Isaiah 40:3-5; Matthew 11:10-14) to prepare the people to receive their Messiah. The New Testament opens with the voice of that messenger, John the Baptist, ringing out through the hills and valleys in the wilderness of Judea, "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him." (Matthew 3:1-3)

At the time of God's choosing, Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, to a young virgin named Mary. He began his public ministry around the age of 30. He spoke with authority about God, His Father, and He turned the rigid rules of the religious leaders up side down. As a result, He wasn't very popular with them. But the common people welcomed Him and heard Him gladly. For three years, He taught in their synagogues, and in the fields and byways and streets and homes of countless towns and villages all over Israel. He walked on the Sea of Galilee and commanded the waves to be still. He raised the dead. He cast out demons. He forgave people of their sin. He healed their illnesses. He laughed and cried and slept and ate with them. Most importantly, He taught them how they could get back

into right relationship with God. When He had fulfilled every Old Testament scripture concerning Himself and every purpose that He came to fulfill on earth and His ministry was completed, he gave Himself to die on our behalf, in our place, to be the Passover Lamb who takes away our sin. (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Hebrews 10:5-14)

So, how do we become right with God, according to Jesus?*** First, we have to understand that we have sinned and we need a Savior. (Romans 3:23) Once we realize that, God invites us to confess our sins to Him and tell Him we're sorry and ask Him to forgive us and be our Savior. By faith (faith that He provides, by the way - because salvation is God's work from beginning to end - we add nothing to what He has already accomplished for us), we trust Him to do that. By doing so, we become rightly related to Him; we become children of God. Then, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we begin to live in obedience to God. We're not sinless. We still sin. (Romans 7:7-27) It's a learning process. But when we sin, we confess our sin and try again. (1 John 1:8-2:2) We read and study His Word, the Bible, and learn what pleases Him. (Ephesians 5:10) As we read, our thoughts and attitudes are transformed. (Romans 12:2) As our thoughts and attitudes are transformed, our actions follow suit. Little by little, we grow in Christ likeness, which is God's desire and plan for us. (Romans 8:29)

After Jesus had been in the grave for three days, He rose from the dead - positive proof that God accepted His sacrifice on our behalf. (Luke 24:1-8) Because He rose, we have the hope of a future resurrection after we die. (1 Corinthians 15:20-23) For 40 days, He stayed on earth and showed Himself over and over to His disciples and other followers, demonstrating and convincing them that He really was alive. (Acts 1:3) At the end of that period of time, He took His disciples to a mountain and they watched Him return to Heaven, (Acts 1:9-11) where He is now seated at the right hand of God, interceding for us before the Father. (Romans 8:34)

Before He left, Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit. Among other things, the Holy Spirit would empower believers to be Christ's witnesses in the world. (Acts 1:4-5, 8) On the day of Pentecost, He did that. (Acts 2:1-4) Now we have been given the task of being His representatives, His ambassadors. Our job is to make people thirsty to know God, so that they may seek Him and be saved. (2 Corinthians 5:20; Matthew 28:18-20)

Some day, He will return. We don't know the exact day or time, but He has given us general signs to look for so that we can know when His return is near. (Matthew 24) When He returns, it will not be as a humble babe in a manger, but it will be with power and glory, riding a white horse, with the armies of heaven at His command, and He will bring judgment on the earth and its inhabitants who have ignored His gracious invitation of salvation. (Revelation 19:11-16) At that time, believers will be raised from the dead and judged and they will reign with Christ on earth for 1000 years. (Revelation 20:6) During this 1000-year timeframe, Satan will be bound and unable to deceive people. Those who survive the war on earth at the time when Christ returns with heaven's army, will go into the new kingdom as mortals. At the end of the 1000 years, Satan will be turned loose one last time to reveal any whose hearts do not belong to God. (Revelation 20:1-3) Then, Satan will be cast into the lake of burning sulfur forever. (Revelation 20:7-10) At this time also, the unbelieving dead will be resurrected and judged. (Acts 24:15; Revelation 20:11-14)

And finally, God will create a new heaven and a new earth, and He will dwell with man again, as He did in the Garden of Eden. (Revelation 21)

Notes and Additional Information

*For detailed information on the Tabernacle's fulfillment in Christ, read *The Tabernacle: Shadows of the Messiah* by David M. Levy

**Additional Information on Becoming a Christian:

There is a great deal of confusion in our society about who a Christian is and how to become one. Let me correct a few common **misconceptions**.

*One does not become a Christian by being born in the United States, or by being born into a Christian family. (We have privileges that many others do not have, and therefore, we have more responsibility!)

*One does not become a Christian by attending or joining a church. (We meet with other Christians in the local church and thereby grow in faith and obedience. The church is where we experience relationship with the family of God.)

*One does not become a Christian by participating in certain sacraments, like baptism or communion or by being "confirmed." (Baptism is commanded by Christ. It is a picture of our death to sin and the beginning of the new life given to us when, by God's grace, we place our faith in Christ. It is the first act of obedience after we are saved. Communion is a symbol of the body and blood of Christ. It is a reminder of what He did for us on the cross. Confirmation means we have completed a prescribed course of study that the church recognizes and values as important in the life of a believer.)

*One does not become a Christian by giving money or time to God's work. (Giving money and time to God's work is good, but it does not save. Christ's followers devote themselves to His Kingdom priorities as a result of the joy of having received His gift of salvation, not in order to obtain it.)

*One does not become a Christian by doing good things or by being a good person or by following a set of rules - even the ones in the Bible. (We have a choice. We can trust in our own works, which God has already told us are "like filthy rags," (Isaiah 64:6) or we can trust in Christ's work on the cross to save us. We can't have it both ways. If we choose to trust in our own works, we will be very disappointed on judgment day...do we really think that if it were possible to be saved by doing good works, that Christ would have gone to the lengths He did to come down here and die for us???!!! I don't think so. If it were possible to be saved by doing good works, God would have required good works! (Galatians 3:21) He would not have put His Son through the pain and agony that He endured on the cross. If you're still unconvinced, see Ephesians 2:8-9.)

*One does not become a Christian by saying a prayer or going forward at a crusade or meeting. (It might happen that way, but if we are only mouthing the words to a prayer, with no heart change or repentance, or if we are doing it because our spouse or parent or pastor or friend is pressuring us to do it, no salvation has taken place.)

So, if none of those things save us, what on earth does save us????

Becoming a Christian is both simple and complex. It's simple because God does it. It's a gift from Him. (Ephesians 2:8)** It's complex because there are no 1-2-3 steps or formulas to follow. God works in many different ways in the life of an individual. Your salvation story will be different from mine, because your background is different. None of that bothers God. He can work in any situation to bring salvation to those whom He is calling. But there are some constants - things that never change. First of all, we don't seek God until He first seeks us. (Romans 3:10-12) So if we have a desire to know Him, we can be sure that it is because He, by the Holy Spirit, is drawing us to Himself. (John 6:44) The Holy Spirit is like the wind that blows around us. We can see the effects of Him having been there, (i.e. a desire to be saved) but we can't see Him moving in a person's heart. (John 3:1-21)

Salvation involves a change of heart and mind toward God. We become aware (by the conviction of the Holy Spirit) that we have sinned against God and that we deserve to be punished. (John 16:8; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8) God wants us, at this point, to acknowledge our sin and

repent. (1 John 1:9; Matthew 4:17; Acts 17:30; Romans 2:4b) **"Acknowledge"** means to confess to Him that we have sinned against Him, rather than deny or hide the wrong that we have thought, said or done. **"Repent"** means a willingness to turn around and go the other way. In other words, we quit doing the things that displease Him, and start doing the things that do please Him. This is evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work, helping us live out the salvation that God has worked in us, because again, we can't do it by ourselves. Even the "want to do it" comes from God.

Coupled with confession and repentance is a belief in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

(Acts 16:30-33) We must believe that He and He alone can save us. He is the only God. (John 14:6; Isaiah 45:21b) We're putting all of our eggs in one basket, so to speak. And it's not Christ plus good works, or Christ plus baptism, or Christ plus anything else that we might do to add to what He has already accomplished for us on the cross. He did it all. There is nothing left for us to do. (John 19:30)

Now is where prayer comes in. With this desire and sincerity of heart and mind, and a basic understanding of the Gospel message, (i.e. that Christ died for our sins, was buried, was raised on the third day, and was seen by many witnesses) (1 Corinthians 15:1-8) we can pray, confessing our sin, asking God to come into our lives and be our Lord and Savior and help us live in a way which pleases Him, and thanking Him for sending Jesus to die in our place. Because He has promised to save those who call upon Him (Acts 2:21) and He cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18), we can be assured that He has heard us and that we are now children of God.

There's one more thing to consider. Jesus is not only our Savior. He's our Lord. Our Boss. He demands total commitment. From the moment we become Christians, we take our marching orders from Him. His kingdom and His glory are to be our priority. That means we die to ourselves and our selfish wants and desires and live to serve Him instead. (Luke 9:23) Following Him will not always be easy or comfortable. (Matthew 8:19-20) Our relationship with Him takes precedence over all other relationships. (Matthew 10:37) It involves single-minded focus and wholehearted pursuit. There is a cost to discipleship. Jesus said to count it before we commit. (Luke 14:25-35) Having said that, our God is good. What we give up in this life will be more than made up for in the next one. (Matthew 19:29) He came that we might have abundant life in this one and the next one! (John 10:10) With Him, we cannot lose!!!

God does not leave us in the dark about whether or not we are saved. He has devoted a whole book in the Bible (1 John) to helping us be assured of our salvation. Here are a few of the signs by which we can know that we have new life:

- (1) Do we see evidence of repentance in our daily lives. Do we keep His commands? Is that important to us? (1 John 2:3)
- (2) Are we consistently saying "no" to sin, or do we allow sin to dominate our lives? (1 John 2:29; 1 John 3:9; 5:18)
- (3) Do we have a renewed love for God and his people? (1 John 3:14; 4:7; 5:1) Do we enjoy reading His Word, being in church with His people, are our priorities becoming the same as His?
- (4) Is the Holy Spirit living in us? We can tell He is there if the other signs listed are present. (1 John 4:13) In addition, we can recognize His Presence through His ministry in our lives. He convicts us of sin (1 Corinthians 2:10; John 16:8) He teaches us and reminds us of what God has said. (John 14:26; 16:13) He guides us into truth. (John 16:13) He baptizes us

(Ephesians 4:4-5) He fills us with the fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:22) He seals us in Christ. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

- (5) Do we have a readiness to testify to the Lordship of Christ? Can we confess that Jesus is the Son of God? (Romans 10:9-10; 1 John 4:15)

Assurance is something that grows with time as we study and live the Christian life. As we see these things become more and more a part of our lives, we can be sure that the Holy Spirit is at work in us.

*****Salvation Scriptures (NIV) Referenced in "Becoming a Christian" Section:**

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Romans 3:10-12 *As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."*

John 6:44 *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him...*

John 3:1-21 ...**7** *You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'* **8** *The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.*

John 16:8 *When he (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment...*

Romans 3:23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

1 John 1:8 *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Matthew 4:17 *From this time on, Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."*

Acts 17:30 *In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.*

Romans 2:4b *Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance.*

Acts 16:30-33 *He brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.*

John 14:6 *I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

Isaiah 45:21b *And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me.*

John 19:28-30 *Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of a hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

1 Corinthians 15:1-8 *Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.*

Acts 2:21 *And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

Hebrews 6:18 *...it is impossible for God to lie...*

Luke 9:23 *Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*

Matthew 8:19-20 *Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."*

Matthew 10:37 *Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.*

Luke 14:25-35 ...**28** *Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? 29 For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and ask for terms of peace. 33 In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.*

Matthew 19:29 *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.*

John 10:10 *...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*