**he *only way* a person may apply Christ’s substitutionary work on the cross for the benefit of his personal salvation (*i.e*., to procure eternal life) is by making a c*onscious decision* to receive (accept) Christ and His work on the cross apart from anything else for the purpose of procuring (securing) it, period!**

**The Salvation Moment***In What Precise Instant is a Person Saved?***By Charles Strong of** [**Bible One**](http://www.bibleone.net/)

The words “salvation” and “saved,” as used in Scripture mean “deliverance,” any type of deliverance — physical, bodily healing, spiritual, etc. But this composition will only address it as used in the procurement (attainment, acquisition) of eternal life. You may have never considered the issue of precisely *when it occurs* as a person pursues it. In fact, you may conclude that a pursuit of this nature can only be an exercise in futility; that such an exercise cannot possibly benefit anyone’s knowledge and appreciation of biblical doctrine.

But, *you would be wrong*. Why? Because if one understands this reality — the precise instant a person is saved — it will elucidate exactly what one must do to obtain eternal life, which will significantly clarify various passages of Scripture and assist in determining the invalidity of various proffered formulae pertaining to the matter. For instance, a review of the myriad programs and websites fostered by evangelical Christian ministries throughout the world, which reflect a host of sequential steps that a person should take in order to procure eternal life, may often only confuse a person seeking to know God’s will concerning the matter.

Many of these ministries stipulate that one should “repent” of (*i.e*., turn from) one’s sins as part of the “acquisition formula.” They endeavor to prove this point with a few passages of Scripture taken from the gospels and the book of Acts. Unfortunately, most of these ministries publicize an interpretation of “repentance” that is quite contrary to the true meaning of the word in the original languages (Hebrew or Greek) from which the concept is derived. Furthermore, their interpretation of “repentance” is contrary to its application within Scripture — primarily a word directed toward the Jewish people requiring that they turn from their disobedience toward God.

“Repentance” and the use of the word in Scripture is, more often than not, misunderstood [*e.g*., unsaved individuals often called upon *to repent prior to believing* (some attempt to make *repentance* and *belief* synonymous or inseparable); or, in a similar respect, seeing the call for Israel to repent in the gospel accounts and in Acts as a call to the unsaved].

The word “repent” is a translation of the Greek word, *metanoia*, or in its verb form, *metanoeo*. Both are compound words [the preposition *meta* (meaning, “with”) prefixed to words derived from *vous* (meaning, “mind”)]. Thus, these compound words, in their base sense, mean “with the mind.”

The word [either noun or verb form] refers to *doing something with the mind*, and that which is referenced through the use of this word has to do with *changing one’s mind*. And that is really all that the word means.

The Jewish people in the gospels and Acts were called upon to *change their minds relative to their continued disobedience*, which would lead to a change of actions, etc.

Relative to salvation today, does an unsaved person have to repent? He does if he has to change his mind about Christ before he can believe, though most today would probably have to make up their minds rather than change their minds prior to belief. But either way, it is *believing* that saves a person, not making up or changing one’s mind. The latter would only place a person in *the position where he can believe and be saved*. ([Bible One - Arlen Chitwood's Middle East Peace, How? When?, Ch. 2](http://bibleone.net/MEP-HW_02.htm))

Then again, if “repentance” is understood as the turning or forsaking of one’s sins as a foundational step to believing in Christ, a step always noted as prior to one’s *belief* in Christ, the concept would be a complete deviation from Scripture. Why? Because it precedes the complete “formula” advocated by these ministries for the procurement of eternal life and is therefore a step taken by the person when he is still “lost.” Nowhere does Scripture teach that a person who is “dead *in trespasses and sins*” ([Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV)) can turn from (forsake) sin, a possibility that exists only for those who are empowered by the Holy Spirit, *i.e*., those who are already “saved.”

True. Many attempt to circumvent this logic by declaring that “repentance” and “faith” are “two sides of one coin,” that one cannot exist without the other; but, frankly, this explanation does not logically, or scripturally, hold up. And it certainly doesn’t comply with the true meaning of the word (repent, repentance) in the original languages.

In like manner, many inappropriately utilize a passage in the tenth chapter of Romans ([Romans 10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+10&t=NKJV)) to specify that one must “publicly confess Jesus as Lord of their life” before one can be certain of eternal life. The argument is also advanced by many of Calvinistic persuasion that one who has become a child of God (procured eternal life) will without fail evidence a righteous life. But this argument is invalid in light of the various times Peter, most certainly a child of God, failed to evidence a proper (righteous) attitude or manner of living ([Matthew 26:33-34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.33-34&t=NKJV), [40](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.40&t=NKJV), [43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.43&t=NKJV), [69-75](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.69-75&t=NKJV); [Galatians 2:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+2.11&t=NKJV)). Then again, if a Christian must without fail evidence righteous living, then there would be little use or reason for [1 John 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+1.9&t=NKJV), a verse specifically addressed to Christians for when they sin.

There is also the step often advanced by many of these ministries that one should pray to God (or Christ) in a certain way in order to procure eternal life. And again, not only can this be interpreted as a “work of man,” but nowhere in Holy Writ can such be understood as key to the procurement of eternal life. True, many endeavor to use the twentieth verse of the third chapter in the book of Revelation ([Revelation 3:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.20&t=NKJV)) to prove one must “invite” (“*open the door*”) Christ into their life for salvation; but, again, this would be a serious misinterpretation of the passage, a passage addressed specifically to individuals already saved (Christians) who need to achieve the status of “overcomers.”

And if a prayer to God is the key to procuring eternal life, then at what point in the duration of the prayer is the “deal sealed,” *i.e*., transformed into a child of God — at the beginning of the prayer, in the middle of the prayer, or at its end?

When one considers the various formulary positions advanced by different evangelical ministries regarding the procurement of eternal life, it is no wonder that one becomes hesitant regarding how one is to actually achieve it.

But there is clarity in God’s Word, as delineated below.

The requisite purpose for Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, to come to earth was to be the *propitiation* (Gk. *hilasmos* – the means of covering and remitting, *i.e*., satisfying God) for the sins of mankind. Christ accomplished this purpose on the cross of Calvary by taking on and becoming man’s sin so that man could obtain the righteousness of God. While on the cross Christ paid the penalty for all of sin by suffering the extreme punishment and judgment of God the Father (spiritual death, i.e., being separated from [forsaken by] God the Father) for a period (several hours) of time. Christ’s work on the cross was total, complete, and, in His own word, “*finished*.”

*And He* [Jesus Christ] *Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. . . . In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* ([1 John 2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+2.2&t=NKJV); [4:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+4.10&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Romans 3:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+3.25&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.17&t=NKJV))

*For He* [God the Father] *made Him* [God the Son] *who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*. ([2 Corinthians 5:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.21&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Isaiah 53:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+53.6&t=NKJV); [Romans 8:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.3&t=NKJV); [Galatians 3:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.13&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.24&t=NKJV))

*Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me*?” ([Matthew 27:45-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+27.45-46&t=NKJV))

*So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit*. ([John 19:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+19.30&t=NKJV))

And the *only way* a person may apply Christ’s substitutionary work on the cross for the benefit of his personal salvation (*i.e*., to procure eternal life) is by making a c*onscious decision* to receive (accept) Christ and His work on the cross apart from anything else for the purpose of procuring (securing) it, period! Such a decision can only be made *by* (through) *faith* (plus absolutely nothing else [self-works]). This would be an *instantaneous internal conscious decision* — not a prayer, a dedication, a promise, or any form of outward demonstration that may be taken after one hears and understands God’s grace-gift of salvation (a work that can only be performed by the Holy Spirit [[John 16:7-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+16.7-11&t=NKJV)]). It can only be an internal, conscious decision to place one’s faith completely and solely in Christ for one’s eternal life — prior to *any* outward, following demonstration of this fact.

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* ([John 3:16-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.16-18&t=NKJV))

*But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.* ([John 20:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+20.31&t=NKJV))

*And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved . .* . .” ([Acts 16:30-31a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.30-31a&t=NKJV))

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast*. ([Ephesians 2:8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8-9&t=NKJV))

Yet, even without this clarity on the issue, many are saved throughout the world. There are many throughout all levels of Christendom who have been informed that salvation is to be obtained by means of a series of steps, *i.e*., faith plus works (*e.g*., confession of/turning from sins, specifically worded prayers, administration of baptism, etc.), who are indeed saved, but *that* would *only* be due to their *faith* in Jesus Christ — a decision made prior to the exercise of any other “proffered requirement.”

Please note the following from [Bible One - Arlen Chitwood's Salvation by Grace through Faith, Foreword](http://bibleone.net/SGF_F.htm):

Eternal salvation is by *grace* (that which God is able to do completely apart from human merit) *through faith* (*by believing* on God’s Son [[Ephesians 2:8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8-9&t=NKJV)]), and it is based entirely upon *the finished work of Another* ([John 19:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+19.30&t=NKJV)). Nothing that man has done, is presently doing, or will ever do can have anything to do with his eternal destiny. Man can do no more than receive *by faith* that which has already been done on his behalf.

This is why Scripture states:

“. *. . Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved . .* . .” ([Acts 16:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.31&t=NKJV))

This statement is in response to a question in the preceding verse:

“. . . *Sirs, what must I do to be saved*?” ([Acts 16:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.30&t=NKJV))

And within another frame of reference, the response to this question could only be, “*Nothing*!” This would have to be the response simply because there is not one single thing left for unsaved man to do (nor could he do anything if something were left, for, he is spiritually dead and incapable of acting in the spiritual realm [[Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV), [5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.5&t=NKJV)]).

It is of interest to note that the question, “*Sirs, what must I do to be saved*?” and the answer, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved*,” only appear together one place in the entire Bible. Scripture is filled with information concerning redemption, but [Acts 16:30-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.30-31&t=NKJV) *is the only place*, from Genesis to Revelation, where the question concerning eternal salvation is asked and answered in so many words.

Thus, within *a completely biblical framework*, if the question in [Acts 16:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.30&t=NKJV) is asked, there can be *only one answer: “Believe . . . .” Man’s ideas, thoughts, comments are of no moment. God has spoken, and that’s the end of the matter.*

[John 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.16&t=NKJV) is often called “the gospel in a nutshell” by individuals seeking to draw attention to the overall salvation message stated in its simplest form in Scripture. God, because of His love for fallen man — who had been *created in His image, after His likeness, for a purpose* ([Genesis 1:26-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.26-28&t=NKJV)) — “*gave His only begotten Son* [[1 Corinthians 15:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.3&t=NKJV)], *that whoever believes in Him* [[Acts 16:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.31&t=NKJV)] *should not perish but have everlasting life*.”

Everything, in its entirety, to procure man’s salvation was done by Another. It had to be accomplished by Another, for, as previously stated, the one being redeemed was “*dead in trespasses and sins*” ([Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV)), *totally incapable* of acting on his own behalf.

Christ is the One who died, Christ is the One who performed the work to procure man’s salvation, and *God is satisfied with His Son’s finished work.*

When Christ cried out from the Cross in “*a loud voice*” near the ninth hour, “*It is finished*” ([Luke 23:46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+23.46&t=NKJV); [John 19:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+19.30&t=NKJV)), He used one word in the Greek text — *Tetelestai* — that could be better translated, “*It has been finished*.” *Tetelestai* is a perfect tense usage of *teleo*, which means “to bring to an end,” “to complete.” And the perfect tense refers to action *completed* in past time, with the results of that action extending into and existing during present time *in a finished state*.

*All of the work* surrounding man’s redemption that Christ had come to perform had, at that point in time, been *completed*. This was the announcement that Christ made, in “*a loud voice*”; and, because of that which was involved in the announcement, there was then no longer any need for Him to continue His sufferings on the Cross. Thus, immediately after He cried out, “*It has been finished*,” He “*gave up the ghost* [KJV, *lit*., ‘He breathed out’ (He expired, willingly relinquishing His life)]” ([Luke 23:46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+23.46&t=NKJV)).

The work of Christ at Calvary, from the point He cried out, “*It has been finished*,” has existed in *exactly the same finished state* in which He proclaimed it to exist at that time. It has existed as *a work completed in past time that extends into present time* (in a finished state) *and that will extend into all the ages comprising eternity ahead* (in the same finished state).

Nothing can ever be added, and nothing can ever be taken away. That is to say, *nothing can ever change* relative to Christ’s finished work at Calvary.

That’s the way God’s procurement of man’s salvation had to occur. Once Christ’s work had been finished, that’s the way His work had to always continue to exist — *in a finished state* — throughout both time and eternity.

Because of Christ’s finished work, salvation is extended to man “without money and without price” ([Isaiah 55:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+55.1&t=NKJV)); and apart from Christ’s finished work, there is no salvation.

*He who believes in him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already* [*lit*., ‘has already been condemned’ (a perfect tense — condemned in past time because of unbelief and presently living in that condemned state)], *because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*. ([John 3:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.18&t=NKJV))

It is utterly impossible — and foolish to even consider — that finite man, “*dead in trespasses and sins*,” could add one thing to or take one thing from the finished work of the infinite God through His Son.

All man can possibly do is simply receive, by *believing on the Son*, that which has already been done on his behalf.

When a person makes that internal, conscious decision to *believe on* (trust in) *Christ* for his personal eternal salvation, it is in that “*precise instant*” that he procures eternal life, becomes a child of God. And you may be assured that God is completely aware of that decision when it occurs; and, instantaneously acts upon it.

**Personal Experience**

This writer recalls the “precise instant” he was saved (procured eternal salvation) back on December the 25th of 1959 at approximately 2:00 o’clock in the morning. The night before, he tried to link up with a friend who he thought was attending a local evangelical church. Seated in the auditorium but failing to see his friend, he was hesitant to leave because the service had started.

The minister put forth how one could be saved, but the writer just couldn’t understand the concept of faith without works as the means for salvation. Even when a number of Christians attempted to reiterate the means to salvation to the writer, he simply could not comprehend that it was a matter of faith without subsequent works.

It was only after the writer finally located his friend that night (a friend who most certainly didn’t “act like a Christian” during much of his life of frivolity and misdeeds) and inquired of him regarding the issue of salvation that he finally understood it.

When he was seated in his friend’s car, he asked his friend how a person could be saved “only by faith.” Upon this, he noticed an immediate change take over his friend who then proceeded to explain the issue. Although his friend presented the issue no differently than those who previously explained it that night at the church, the issue “all of a sudden” became very clear to the writer. Here was someone who certainly did not reflect an admirable Christian life, but who indeed knew he was saved. The crystalline thought emerged — *one can only be saved through faith in Christ and His work on the cross*, not by any other means.

Later, during the early morning hours on that Christmas morning while the writer lay on his bed in his home in that south-Texas town, he made the decision to trust only in Christ for his personal salvation, even though he didn’t know all the theological details on how Christ took his sins and paid the price for them. He simply looked up to the ceiling (in his mind, heaven) and told God that he was now placing his total trust in Christ for salvation.

Was the writer saved when he versed that prayer? No! He was instantly saved prior to it when he made the conscious decision to trust in Christ. He turned over and then went to sleep feeling no emotion or relief. But from that day forward he was never the same. God was now part of his life and his spiritual transformation continued on from that point in time.

**Postscript**

Without question there appears to be a vast amount of confusion regarding the means whereby a person may be “saved.” But then this should be clearly understood by Christians who realize that there is an “*adversary the devil* [who] *walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*” ([1 Peter 5:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+5.8&t=NKJV)).

One primary way Satan accomplishes this confusion among those who read God’s Word is to blind them to the doctrinal distinctions between the initial offering of the proffered kingdom to the nation of Israel, an offering promulgated by John the Baptist and Jesus Christ based on “repentance” ([Matthew 3:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.2&t=NKJV), [17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.17&t=NKJV)), and the offer of eternal salvation to all occupants of earth ([John 3:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.16-17&t=NKJV); [20:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+20.31&t=NKJV)) based only on a conscious decision of “*faith in Christ alone*.”

The confusion that exists when a student of the Word endeavors to combine the various passages of Scripture regarding these two doctrinal issues only increases when he further fails to understand *the tripartite composition of man* (spirit, soul, and body [[1 Thessalonians 5:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+5.23&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 4:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+4.12&t=NKJV)]) and how the complete issue of eternal salvation affects each part. When a person attempts to apply the distinctly different passages of Scripture applicable to the separate components of man to the same salvation issue, it is no wonder that various and opposing ministries and denominations emerge.

Further confusion arises over the “security of the believer” when one fails to understand the distinctions mentioned above. But when one accurately compares Scripture with Scripture under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit ([John 14:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+14.26&t=NKJV); [16:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+16.13&t=NKJV); [1 Corinthians 2:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.13&t=NKJV)), “*rightly dividing the Word of truth*” ([2 Timothy 2:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.15&t=NKJV)), the confusion will disintegrate and clarity and confidence will most assuredly flourish.

For lucidity on these doctrinal issues, it is recommended that the reader access and investigate the following websites: [Bible One by Charles Strong](http://www.bibleone.net/) and [Arlen Chitwood's Lamp Broadcast](http://lampbroadcast.org/)

Finally, should you, the reader, upon reading this composition have any uncertainty regarding your personal eternal salvation, you need only consider and reply to the following question:

*Do you solely trust* (have faith in) *Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross for your personal salvation*?

If you can honestly say “yes” to this, you may be assured of your eternal salvation. It makes no difference if you can recall the exact time you first made such a decision (many individuals experience this at a very early age); it only matters that you confidently know it is real -- now.

And if this would be the very first time that you decide to completely and solely *place your trust only in Christ and His work on the cross for your personal salvation*, then you may be assured that you have now experienced the “*precise instant*” of your personal eternal salvation.

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[Bible One - Charles Strong's The Salvation Moment](http://www.bibleone.net/Salvation-Moment.htm)