

Terms & Conditions

The Correct Condition to Salvation

By Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

In this edition of *Ariel Magazine*, we included an article on evangelism methods (p. 22ff.) and the testimony of a woman who shared the good news of Messiah Jesus during history's darkest time (p. 36ff.). But what exactly do we have to share so that a person may understand salvation? Or, asked differently, what must one do to be saved? Dr. Fruchtenbaum answers this question in this article.¹

According to Scripture, salvation is based solely on faith in Yeshua the Messiah. Salvation is by grace through faith, and faith is the only condition for salvation. This is the starting point from which one must tackle the question of what one must do to be saved.

Over 200 Clear Passages

There are more than 200 passages in the New Testament where the condition for salvation is spelled out, and in all these passages, faith or belief is given as the one and only condition. If this is true and if there are "problem passages," one should not



interpret the 200 clear passages by the few minor problem passages. One should try to interpret the few problem passages by the 200 clear passages.

One clear passage is John 1:12: *But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name.* This verse states that the ones who became the *children of God* are those who *received him*. The second part of the verse explains that to receive the Messiah means to *believe on his name*, to believe that He really is the Jewish Messiah. Simply by believing, one receives salvation. That is the way one becomes a child of God, and believing is the only condition mentioned here.

Another example is Acts 16:30-31: *and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Yeshua, and you shall be saved, you and your house.* In answer to the question of what exactly a person must do to be saved, the only condition mentioned in this passage is to *believe on the Lord Yeshua*. Hence, if a person believes in Yeshua, then he receives salvation.

These are just two of over 200 examples where a condition is given for salvation, and the only condition spelled out is that of faith and belief. Some cross-references are John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 11:25-26; 20:31; and I John 5:13. Because faith is the only condition given in the majority of cases, one must be careful before assuming that the Bible teaches that there are additional conditions to salvation.

Messiah the Savior



The faith that saves must be placed in the Messiah as one's substitute for the penalty of one's sin. The Messiah is the Savior from the penalty of sin. Salvation is not merely believing that Yeshua existed. Some of the most pagan atheists believe that Yeshua of Nazareth existed. They may even believe that He died on the cross and rose again from the dead. However, this knowledge does not save anyone. Rather, the believer's faith must be placed in the Messiah as his substitute for and as his Savior from the penalty of sin. In other words, one needs to trust the Messiah for one's salvation. One must believe that Yeshua has accomplished the salvation work on one's behalf. To be saved, one must believe not just that He died but that He died for one's own sins. This presupposes that one has understood his own sinfulness. If Yeshua died for one's sins, obviously it means that the person for whom He died is a sinner. So, the person must believe that Yeshua died for his sins as his substitute, that He was buried and rose again, and that He has therefore provided salvation. Thus, one trusts Yeshua for his salvation.

This is the condition of salvation: Faith must be placed in the Messiah as one's substitute for and as one's Savior from the penalty of sin.

Yeshua Salvation

¹ This article is based on the author's book *The Soteriology of the Bible: Studies in the Salvation Wrought by the Death of the Messiah*, Vol. 7 of Ariel's *Come and See* book series (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2023).

Grace



Greek Terms

The Greek New Testament uses several words that pertain to the correct condition for salvation. The first term is πίστις (*pistis*). It is used 243 times in the New Testament and has the meaning of “faith,” with only four exceptions:

1. Acts 17:31, where *pistis* has the meaning of “assurance”
2. II Thessalonians 2:13, where *pistis* is translated as “belief”
3. Titus 2:10, where *pistis* has the meaning of “fidelity”
4. Hebrews 10:39, where *pistis* is translated as “belief,” although some translations have “faith”

Except for these four occasions, the word *pistis* always has the meaning of “faith.”

The second key Greek word is πιστεύω (*pisteuó*), which is used a total of 246 times in the Greek New Testament. It always means “to believe” except for nine times: Once it is translated as *believers* (Acts 5:14), and eight times it is translated as either “to commit,” “committed,” or “intrusted”² (Lk. 16:11; Jn. 2:24; Rom. 3:2; I Cor. 9:17; Gal. 2:7; I Thes. 2:4; I Tim. 1:11; Titus 1:3).

The third main Greek word is πείθω (*peithó*), which means “to persuade,” “to have confidence,” or “to cause belief in a thing.” This word is used 50 times in the Greek New Testament, and it is translated in nine different ways:

1. As “persuade” 22 times
2. As “trust” ten times
3. As “confidence” nine times

4. As “obey” seven times
5. As “believed” three times
6. As “assure” once
7. As “yield” once
8. As “made free” once
9. As “access” once

In spite of these nine different translations, the root meaning of the word *peithó* remains the same: “to cause belief in a thing.”

By combining these three Greek terms, one can clearly determine what the condition of salvation is in reference to faith: First, to have faith means “to believe”; second, it means “to be persuaded of”; third, it means “to place confidence in”; and fourth, it means “to trust in the sense of relying upon.” These are the four facets of faith when one places his faith in Yeshua the Messiah.

The Term “Faith” in the New Testament

The term “faith” is used in five senses in the New Testament:

1. It is used in the sense of “conviction that something is true.”
2. It is used in the sense of “trust.”
3. It is used in the sense of “persuasion,” which is stronger than mere opinion, although it is weaker than foreknowledge.
4. It is used in the sense of “belief based upon the facts of knowledge” (Rom. 10:14).

5. Faith must have an object. The object of faith is God, while the content of faith is the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah.

In conclusion, the only condition of salvation is that one believes the Messiah died for one’s sins and was buried and rose again and that one trusts in Him for one’s salvation.

False Additions to Salvation

There are various false additions to the biblical understanding of salvation that have been proposed throughout church history. Two of these additions will be discussed in the remainder of this article.³

Repentance

The first false addition to salvation is repentance. Some groups claim that not only does one have to believe on the Messiah and trust Him for one’s salvation but that one must also repent. Usually, repentance is understood as being truly sorry for one’s sins. One must have sorrow to be saved. However, the biblical meaning of the term “repentance” is simply “a change of mind.” Repentance is not an emotion and does not mean that a person feels sorry for his sins but that he changes his mind.

² This spelling is found in the ASV 1901.

³ For the remaining false additions to salvation, see the author’s discussion in *The Soteriology of the Bible: Studies in the Salvation Wrought by the Death of the Messiah*, available on our website: www.ariel.org.



When the term “repentance” is used as a synonym for “belief,” then yes, it is a condition for salvation. For example, one has to change one’s mind about who the Messiah is in order to be saved. Hence, if repentance is meant as a synonym for faith, then it is indeed necessary for salvation. If repentance and sorrow were necessary, salvation would then become two things: works and feelings. Yet, salvation is based on neither works nor emotions but on the facts and promises of Scripture.

Salvation repentance is never a separate act from faith or believing. Belief as a condition for salvation appears about 200 times in the Scriptures. Repentance as a synonym for believing is given 35 times. Repentance is a synonym for believing, and only as a synonym for believing is it a condition for salvation. However, if one redefines repentance as “being sorry for one’s sins,” then it is a false addition.

The New Testament uses the word “repentance” in four different ways. First, “repentance” appears as a synonym for “belief” and means nothing different from believing in Yeshua the Messiah. One changes his mind and believes on Him (Lk. 24:47; Acts 17:30; Rom. 2:4; II Tim. 2:25; II Pet. 3:9). A second way that the term “repentance” is used is to describe a change of mind about anything. Sorrow may accompany repentance, but the word itself does not mean “sorrow.” It simply refers to a change of mind (Acts 8:22; 11:18; 20:21; 26:20; Heb. 6:1, 6; 12:17; Rev. 9:20). A third way that the word “repentance” is used is in reference to Israel. In this context, the term refers to the nation’s need to change its mind about Yeshua. Israel has to repent in the sense of changing her mind about Yeshua being indwelt by the prince of de-

mons and recognizing Him as the Messiah (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31). A fourth way that the word “repentance” is used is as a reference to John’s baptism, which was called a “baptism of repentance.” In this sense, the term simply describes a part of God’s covenantal relationship with Israel (Acts 13:24; 19:4). It signifies a turning away from Pharisaic Judaism and an affirmation of biblical Judaism as well as a change of mind regarding the position of John the Baptist as the forerunner of the Messiah.

Insofar as repentance is concerned, there are two things to note. If repentance is used merely as a synonym for believing in the Messiah, the way that the Bible uses it, only in that sense is it truly a condition for salvation. But if, as some groups use it, repentance is interpreted as distinct from believing and a “feeling sorry for one’s sins,” then it indeed becomes a false addition to salvation.

Confession of the Messiah



The second false addition to salvation is known as “the confession of the Messiah.” Some circles teach that there must be a public confession of the Messiah for one’s salvation. This teaching is based on two passages. First is Matthew 10:32: *Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven.* The second passage is Romans 10:9-10: *because if you shall confess with your mouth Yeshua as Lord, and shall believe in your heart that God*

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.

The Romans passage explains exactly how one is saved. There is one essential element to salvation, and that is belief. Belief will naturally flow into confession. With the *mouth* one confesses that Yeshua is Lord. With the *heart* one believes that God raised Him from the dead. With the *heart* man believes unto righteousness, and with the *mouth* confession is made unto salvation. This chiasmic construction (mouth-heart, heart-mouth) indicates that believing and confessing occur at the same time. Confession is not something that one does later as part of gaining salvation. Belief in the heart brings righteousness and justification. The confession is made to God, and the content of this confession is that Yeshua died for our sins, was buried, and rose again (I Cor. 15:3-4). Faith has content, and the content is that Yeshua is Savior; this is what one confesses the moment he believes.

It is important to consider the entire context when looking at a verse because, as one of the rules of interpretation declares, a text apart from its context is a pretext. Hence, Matthew 10:32 must be interpreted within its own context. The context of the verse is Israel’s rejection of Yeshua as the Messiah. Over and over again, Yeshua addressed “this generation” in His response to this rejection. Because of the rejection of His Messiahship, that generation of first-century Israel would experience major judgment. Yeshua’s prophecies were fulfilled in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans. Since that time, the Jewish people have lived in the



Diaspora, a technical term referring to Jews living outside the land.

In light of this rejection, Yeshua provided instructions to His disciples about what they were to do and how they were to react. These instructions are detailed in Matthew 10:24-33. First, He warned the apostles to expect rejection on the same basis on which He was rejected (Mt. 10:24-25). He was rejected on the basis of demon possession, and they must anticipate being rejected on the same basis. Second, in spite of all this persecution, they were to boldly proclaim the message (Mt. 10:26). Third, the disciples were not to fear men but God (Mt. 10:28-31). They were not to fear those who could *kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell* (Mt. 10:28). Only God has that authority; therefore, they should fear Him. They were in His care, and He is in control. The disciples were under His watchful protection, and they needed to be conscious of this whenever they were suffering persecution. Fourth, Yeshua spelled out an issue pertaining to first-century Jews who belonged to the generation who rejected His Messiahship: *Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven* (Mt. 10:32-33). The issue for individuals of that generation was that those who denied Yeshua before men would be denied by Yeshua in heaven, but if they affirmed Him, they would be affirmed by Yeshua in heaven. These verses are neither dealing with a second step to salvation nor with the potential loss of salvation but with losing one's

physical life during the A.D. 70 judgment. This explains Matthew's comment: *he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved* (Mt. 10:22). Those who affirmed Yeshua until the end would survive the A.D. 70 judgment. Those who did not would die in that judgment. Furthermore, this would have ramifications later concerning rewards in the Messianic kingdom.

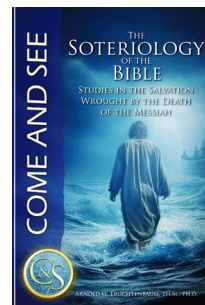
The context of Matthew 10:32 is dealing with Israel's rejection of the Messiah, and those individual Jews who wanted physical salvation from the A.D. 70 judgment had to confess Yeshua as Messiah. It is clear that this confession was simply part of the act of faith.

As far as Romans 10:9-10 is concerned, the chiasmic structure or inverted order of the terms "confession" and "believing" shows that these words are interchangeable and were used synonymously by Paul. Confession equals calling upon the name of the Lord. Calling upon the name of the Lord is simply exercising faith in Him. Again, confession is not a separate act from faith. Furthermore, it is made to God and not to a public audience. In the other 200-plus biblical passages that speak of the condition for salvation, confession is not mentioned. Even in Matthew 10:32 and Romans 10:9-10, confession is used only synonymously with believing in the Messiah. If a public confession were necessary for salvation, then salvation would be on the basis of works. Many people are saved by reading a gospel tract or the New Testament. They believe on Yeshua the Messiah, and they indeed experience salvation without having any opportunity to make a public confession at that very moment. Therefore, the conclusion is that a public confession is not

part of salvation, and those who teach it make it a false addition to salvation.

In summary, there are three problems with the false addition of confession for salvation. The first problem is that confession is omitted in all passages that speak of a condition of salvation, with the above-mentioned two exceptions. In the other 200-plus cases where the condition is given for salvation, confession is not one of them. Even in these two cases, confession is used only synonymously with believing in the Messiah. The second problem is that if a public confession were necessary for salvation, then salvation would be based on works. The third problem is that the circumstances of many people who are saved preclude a public confession. Many people are saved by reading a gospel tract or the New Testament. They believe on Yeshua the Messiah, and they indeed experience salvation without having any opportunity to make a public confession.

Hence, a public confession is not part of salvation, and those who teach it make it a false addition to the condition of salvation.



Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum obtained a B.A. degree from Cedarville University in Hebrew and Hellenistics, a Th.M. degree from Dallas Theological Seminary in Hebrew and Old Testament Studies, and a Ph.D. degree from New York University upon the completion of his dissertation, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*. He is the Founding Director of Ariel Ministries and a much-respected biblical authority in evangelical and Messianic circles.