

CONFESSION

“For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” (Rom 10:10)

Someone has observed that virtually no one really believes in salvation by “faith only”. Those who claim to believe this invariably ask for some kind of action. A typical “invitation” to salvation might involve bowing the head, closing the eyes, raising a hand, coming forward, repeating the sinners’ prayer, etc. Without deprecating the power of faith, let us focus on “confession” for the Scriptures teach that this is definitely something we “do” that results in salvation.

First, remember that confession was an integral part of Mosaic Law. Sinners were not just commanded to bring their offerings to the Lord, they were also required to “confess” their sins (Lev. 5:5). In similar fashion the High Priest not only offered sacrifices, he also “confessed” the sins of the people (Lev. 16:21). Even the Jews that were scattered throughout the world were commanded to “confess” their sins and the sins of their fathers (Lev. 26:40). We may never know all the reasons why, but the subject of “confession” is very much a part of the Bible. For further examples see also Nu. 5:7; 1 Ki. 8:33, 35; 2 Chron. 6:24, 26; etc.

The sin of Achan is an interesting case in point. We read about him in Joshua 7:. He is the man who stole gold, silver and Babylonian garments from the city of Jericho. God, of course, didn’t need to hear his confession to know what happened, for God knew what Achan was going to do before he even did it. Nevertheless, Joshua urged Achan to confess what he had done (Josh. 7:19). There are at least two reasons why this would be helpful. First, it was therapeutic for Achan. The Scriptures teach that if we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive (1 Jn. 1:9). Second, it would bring clarity and closure to Joshua and all the people. Israel had recently suffered a stunning defeat because there was sin in the camp. When Achan confessed everyone understood clearly what he had done and why God had punished them.

Unfortunately, there is sometimes a disconnect between what people say and what they do. Jesus, for example, asked why anyone would call Him Lord, but not do what He commanded (Lk. 6:46) This spiritual problem is too serious to be adequately described by words. Remember that the devil is the father of lies (Jn. 8:44), and that all liars will have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone that burns forever and ever (Rev. 21:8). The words we speak come from the heart (Matt. 12:34). Corrupt and dishonest words therefore come from a corrupt and dishonest heart. When someone dares to honor God with their lips while their heart is far from Him it is indicative of a spiritual problem of eternal consequence (Matt. 15:8). Those who dare to mock God will have to pay the consequences.

Please note that the confession that brings salvation is so pure that it is not associated with shame: **“As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” (Rom 10:11)** Anyone who is ashamed of Jesus is deficient in their faith. If someone truly realizes that Jesus is the Sovereign of the Universe, and that He is God manifest in the flesh, it is impossible to be ashamed of Him. If unsaved people are ashamed of Jesus on this earth, He will be ashamed of them before the Father and the holy angels (Lk. 9:26).

Therefore, confession is not something that we only do once, it is a way of life. It is a perennial indicator of the spiritual condition of our heart. When James spoke about the use of the tongue he asked **“Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?” (Ja. 3:11)**. Obviously not! Jesus said it like this: **“The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks. “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:45-46)** Today there may be some ambivalence or question in your mind about the true identity of Jesus. On Judgement Day, however, you will be absolutely certain. **“It is written: “As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘Every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.” (Rom 14:11)**