

Searching For The Sinner's Prayer In The New Testament

Introduction

- It is common for people who want to be saved, become Christians, to be told "Just trust Jesus as your personal Savior."
- To do this, they are told they must pray what is called "The Sinner's Prayer"
- In order for their prayer to be accepted, they must believe in Jesus as the Son of God, repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Savior and Lord

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Introduction

- But, when we examined many of the cases of conversion in Acts, we did not find the Sinner's Prayer
- Instead, we found people who believed in Jesus as the Son of God, repented of their sins, confessed their belief in Jesus and were baptized for forgiveness of their sins
- Now, we ask, is the Sinner's Prayer found in the New Testament?

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Introduction

- We cannot search all the New Testament but will note some of the verses used to justify the Sinner's Prayer
- But first, we look at two false ideas that can prevent us from understanding God's plan of salvation in Acts

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Two Reasons Why People Reject God's Plan of Salvation

1. The sinner can only understand and obey the gospel if the Holy Spirit directly operates on his heart
2. Baptism is not essential to salvation because it is a work and conflicts with being saved by faith

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Direct Operation of The Holy Spirit On The Sinner's Heart

- We are told because we have been born in sin, the Holy Spirit must miraculously change our hearts so we can understand and obey the gospel
- We are told that passages applying only to the apostles apply to us today
- But, it was the apostles, not anyone today, who directly received, spoke, confirmed by miracles and wrote God's Word

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The Apostles Received, Spoke,
Confirmed And Wrote The Word of God

Joh 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

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The Apostles Received, Spoke,
Confirmed And Wrote The Word of God

Joh 16:12 "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now.

Joh 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

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The Apostles Received, Spoke,
Confirmed And Wrote The Word of God

Act 2:1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

Act 2:2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

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The Apostles Received, Spoke,
Confirmed And Wrote The Word of God

Act 2:3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.

Act 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Act 2:43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

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The Apostles Received, Spoke,
Confirmed And Wrote The Word of God

1Co 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

1Co 2:13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.

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The Apostles Received, Spoke,
Confirmed And Wrote The Word of God

Heb 2:3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,

Heb 2:4 God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

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The Apostles Received, Spoke, Confirmed And Wrote The Word of God

Joh 20:30 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

Joh 20:31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

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People Were Commanded To Hear, Believe and Obey The Gospel

- The Holy Spirit guides sinners to the Truth only through the gospel message that He gave to the apostles
- The Holy Spirit does not directly do anything to our hearts to make us understand or obey the gospel
- If we trust that He does, we will be misled by our feelings
- All who choose to have good and honest hearts will obey the gospel

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Those Who Choose To Have Good and Honest Hearts Will Obey The Gospel

Luk 8:15 "But the *seed* in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

15

The Holy Spirit Leads Sinners To Salvation Only By The Gospel Message

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

1Co 1:21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come* to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

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The Holy Spirit Leads Sinners To Salvation Only By The Gospel Message

Rom 10:14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

Rom 10:15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"

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The Holy Spirit Leads Sinners To Salvation Only By The Gospel Message

Rom 10:16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?"

Rom 10:17 So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

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The Holy Spirit Leads Sinners To Salvation Only By The Gospel Message

Act 11:13 "And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, 'Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here;

Act 11:14 and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.'

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People Obeyed The Gospel By Repenting and Being Baptized

Act 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified."

Act 2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

20

People Obeyed The Gospel By Repenting and Being Baptized

Act 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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Understanding Believing and Obeying The Gospel Is Our Choice

- All people can understand, believe and obey the gospel
- But instead of the Sinner's Prayer, they were commanded to repent and be baptized for forgiveness of their sins
- If we choose not to hear and obey the gospel, it is because of our sinful attitudes
- It is not because God did not send the Holy Spirit to do something to our hearts

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God Desires All Men To Be Saved

1Ti 2:3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

1Ti 2:4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

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God's Word Can Be Understood By Those Who Either Hear It Or Read It

Luk 10:25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Luk 10:26 And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?"

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God's Word Can Be Understood By Those Who Either Hear It Or Read It

Luk 10:27 And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

Luk 10:28 And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE."

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God's Word Can Be Understood By Those Who Either Hear It Or Read It

Act 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.

Act 8:36 As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch *said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

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God's Word Can Be Understood By Those Who Either Hear It Or Read It

Eph 3:3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.

Eph 3:4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

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It Is Our Fault If We Are Unwilling To Hear Understand and Obey The Gospel

Mat 13:15 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.'

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Two Reasons Why People Reject God's Plan of Salvation

1. The sinner can only understand and obey the gospel if the Holy Spirit directly operates on his heart
2. Baptism is not essential to salvation because it is a work and conflicts with being saved by faith

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The Bible Plainly Teaches We Are Not Saved By Works

- There is not disagreement that we are not saved by works
- The question is, what type of works do not save us?
- And, is baptism one of those works that does not save us?

30

We Are Not Saved By Works of The Law of Moses

Rom 3:19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

Rom 3:20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

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We Are Not Saved By Works of The Law of Moses

Rom 3:27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

Rom 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

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We Are Not Saved By Works of Merit That Earn Our Salvation

Rom 4:2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

Rom 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

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We Are Not Saved By Works of Merit That Earn Our Salvation

Rom 4:4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

Rom 4:5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

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We Are Not Saved By Works of Merit That Earn Our Salvation

Rom 11:6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

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Is Baptism A Work of Merit Or A Work of Saving Faith?

- They say that since we are saved by faith and not by works, baptism cannot be involved in our salvation
- Then they add the Sinner's Prayer as the final step of salvation
- All things God commands us to do to be saved including baptism are works of faith that show our trust in His grace and mercy
- He does not command the Sinner's Prayer

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We Are Saved By Grace Through A Working
Faith That Trusts and Obeys God

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;

Eph 2:9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

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We Are Saved By Grace Through A Working
Faith That Trusts and Obeys God

Jas 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

Jas 2:22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;

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We Are Saved By Grace Through A Working
Faith That Trusts and Obeys God

Jas 2:23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.

Jas 2:24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless
We Believe In Jesus

Joh 6:27 "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."

Joh 6:28 Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless
We Believe In Jesus

Joh 6:29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless
We Believe In Jesus

Act 16:31 They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless Our Belief Leads Us To Repent

Act 2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

Act 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless Our Belief Leads Us To Confess Jesus

Rom 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

Rom 10:10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless Our Belief Leads Us To Be Baptized

Mar 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

Mar 16:16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless Our Belief Leads Us To Be Baptized

Act 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 22:16 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless Our Belief Leads Us To Be Baptized

Mat 26:28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless Our Belief Leads Us To Be Baptized

Rom 6:3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

Rom 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless Our Belief Leads Us To Be Baptized

Gal 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless Our Belief Leads Us To Be Baptized

Col 2:11 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;

Col 2:12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless Our Belief Leads Us To Be Baptized

Col 2:13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

Col 2:14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless Our Belief Leads Us To Be Baptized

Tit 3:4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared,

Tit 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless Our Belief Leads Us To Be Baptized

Tit 3:6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

Tit 3:7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless Our Belief Leads Us To Be Baptized

1Pe 3:21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

1Pe 3:22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

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We Cannot Be Saved Unless Our Belief Leads Us To Be Baptized

- Again, why is there so much trouble with accepting baptism as the last step in becoming a Christian?
- Excluding this part of God's plan of salvation and including the Sinner's Prayer which is not mentioned is corrupting the Word of God
- In every step of becoming a Christian, our trust must be in God, who by Jesus' blood, cleanses us from our sins by His grace 55

Two Reasons Why People Reject God's Plan of Salvation

1. The sinner can only understand and obey the gospel if the Holy Spirit directly operates on his heart
2. Baptism is not essential to salvation because it is a work and conflicts with being saved by faith

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New Testament Passages Often Used To "Prove" The Sinner's Prayer

- The Sinner's Prayer is not found in the book of Acts
- But, we did read about all who believed in Jesus, repented and were baptized to be forgiven of their sins
- Now we will notice several often used passages given to prove the Sinner's Prayer is the final step in becoming a Christian

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Do We Receive Christ By The Sinner's Prayer?

Joh 1:11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

Joh 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,

Joh 1:13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

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Do We Receive Christ By The Sinner's Prayer?

- The passage says those who receive Jesus by believing in His name He gives them the right to become His children
- No mention of the Sinner's Prayer but those who received the gospel became His children through repentance and baptism

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We Receive Christ When We Receive and Obey The Gospel

Act 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 2:41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

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Are We Born Again By The Sinner's Prayer?

Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Joh 3:4 Nicodemus *said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"

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Are We Born Again By The Sinner's Prayer?

Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Joh 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

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We Are Born Again When We Are Baptized For Forgiveness of Sins

Rom 6:3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

Rom 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

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Does Romans 10 Teach The Sinner's Prayer?

Rom 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

Rom 10:10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

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Does Romans 10 Teach The Sinner's Prayer?

Rom 10:13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

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Does Romans 10 Teach The Sinner's Prayer?

- No prayer mentioned in this passage
- Faith and confession are essential to be saved
- But, repentance and baptism also are essential
- Calling on the Lord's name involves believing enough to repent, confess Jesus and be baptized

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Calling On The Name of The Lord Is
Submitting To All Conditions of Salvation

Act 8:36 As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch *said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

Act 8:37 [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."]

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Calling On The Name of The Lord Is
Submitting To All Conditions of Salvation

Act 8:38 And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.

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Calling On The Name of The Lord Is
Submitting To All Conditions of Salvation

Act 2:21 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'

Act 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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Calling On The Name of The Lord Is
Submitting To All Conditions of Salvation

Act 22:16 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

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Does Rev. 3:20 Teach The
Sinner's Prayer?

Rev 3:20 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

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Does Rev. 3:20 Teach The
Sinner's Prayer?

- The passage written to those who had already become Christians
- Does not mention the Sinner's Prayer as a way to become a Christian

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Rev. 3:20 Written To Christians Who Needed To Repent

Rev 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

Rev 3:19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

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Does Luke 18:13-14 Teach The Sinner's Prayer?

Luk 18:13 "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

Luk 18:14 "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

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Does Luke 18:13-14 Teach The Sinner's Prayer?

- Jesus' parable tells how an unfaithful Jew living under the Law of Moses can be restored back to God
- Nothing is revealed about one becoming a Christian

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Did The Thief On The Cross Pray The Sinner's Prayer?

Luk 23:40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"

Luk 23:41 "And we indeed *are suffering* justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."

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Did The Thief On The Cross Pray The Sinner's Prayer?

Luk 23:42 And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"

Luk 23:43 And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

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Did The Thief On The Cross Pray The Sinner's Prayer?

- While he lived on earth, Jesus said and confirmed by miracle, that He had authority to forgive sins
- After Jesus' death, the new covenant was established
- Since the first preaching of the gospel in Acts 2, all must believe in Jesus to the point of repenting of sins, confessing Jesus as the Son of God and being baptized for forgiveness of sins

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While On Earth Jesus Had Authority To Forgive Sins

Luk 5:20 Seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you."

Luk 5:21 The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this *man* who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"

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While On Earth Jesus Had Authority To Forgive Sins

Luk 5:22 But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts?"

Luk 5:23 "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"

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While On Earth Jesus Had Authority To Forgive Sins

Luk 5:24 "But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,"--He said to the paralytic--"I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home."

Luk 5:25 Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God.

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New Covenant Established After Jesus' Death

Heb 9:15 For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were *committed* under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

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New Covenant Established After Jesus' Death

Heb 9:16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.

Heb 9:17 For a covenant is valid *only* when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.

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We Must Be Saved Under The Conditions of The New Covenant

Luk 24:47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Mar 16:16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

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We Must Be Saved Under The Conditions of The New Covenant

Act 2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

Act 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.