

Where's the Invitation?

If you search the Bible from cover to cover you will find something missing from its sacred pages, which many assert, is necessary to go to heaven. I, along with a multitude of others, was told Christ is received by personal invitation so I asked Christ into my heart thinking this was the biblical way to receive Christ as Savior.

But the Bible teaches the way to receive Christ is by believing, not by asking. John 1:12, says, "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."

When the Apostle Peter was presenting the Gospel to Cornelius and his family and friends, he explained that forgiveness for sins is received when a person believes in Christ. The moment those listening to Peter believed, God, the Holy Spirit, indwelt them. Acts 10:43, records Peter saying, "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins." Then the very next verse says, "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message."

Did you notice there was no invitation to receive Christ?

When the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30), he was told, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved" (Act's 16:31). The reason he was not told to do anything more is because there is nothing more to do.

When the Lord died on the cross, He paid the penalty for our sins so that we wouldn't have to face an eternity separated from God. We can add nothing to His perfect work. For this reason, the Bible states, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

It is only when we understand that we have absolutely no part in getting ourselves to heaven, that we are placing our faith in Christ to be our Savior. As long as someone thinks he must do anything more than believe, even something so simple as saying a prayer to receive Christ, he is not trusting Christ as his Savior.

Many have used Revelation 3:20, where Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me" as proof an invitation is necessary. But the Lord isn't addressing unbelievers; He is addressing His children. (He speaks of chastening them in verse 19.) When the Lord spoke of dining with these

disobedient believers, He was referring to the custom of the day to restore a broken relationship by sharing a meal together. Thus, the issue involved is not receiving salvation, but restoring a friendship with Christ.

The same man, who wrote this passage in Revelation, also wrote the Gospel of John. The book of Revelation was written primarily to believers, whereas John's Gospel account was written primarily to unbelievers. John states, "But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). If an invitation were necessary to go to heaven, this is the place you would find it.

It is also of interest to note that John speaks of some who believed in Christ and never confessed Him (John 12:42,43). He records Jesus speaking of fruitless believers (15:2), and loveless believers (14:24). And he clearly showed there was a distinction between being a believer and being a disciple (8:30,31). This all coincides with the fact the Bible teaches there will be believers in heaven without any rewards (First Corinthians 3:11-15).

Some may question why Romans 10:9 says to confess Christ. The answer is found in Romans 10:10, which says, "With the heart man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Salvation is received upon believing, but without a confession, no one knows except God and the person who has believed.

Such a person will someday be accepted into the presence of God by a Lord who will be ashamed of him. Jesus said, "For whosoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

IN CONCLUSION

To lead someone to think he must invite Christ into his heart or life is to preach a message opposed to the Bible. To be assured of heaven, a person must believe in Christ alone. To be assured of rewards in heaven, the believer must be faithful to God. What could be more important than accurately presenting God's message of salvation?