

Seven Reasons
Not to Say
"Ask Jesus Into Your Heart."



Adapted from Seven Reasons Not to Ask Jesus Into Your Heart!
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Is it biblically accurate to ask Jesus into your heart? Are those who have simply trusted Jesus Christ and His finished work alone not yet saved because they have not asked Jesus into their heart? Do those who have asked Jesus into their heart truly possess eternal life because they have done this? Or is all this simply a matter of semantics?

#1: It is found in the Bible!

Nowhere in the Bible is anyone ever instructed to ask Christ into his heart to be saved. In fact, nowhere in the Scriptures is there one example of an individual "asking Jesus into their heart." If this is true, why then should we encourage others to do it?

Did Jesus ever say: "Let me come into your heart?" Which one of the apostles wrote in New Testament books to ask Jesus to come into our hearts for salvation?

#2: It is not how one is saved.

When the Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas the question, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?", they replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." (Acts 16:30-31)

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote, "This one word 'believe' represents all a sinner can do and all a sinner must do to be saved." Salvation (p. 33)

The Bible supports this simple truth repeatedly in over 100 verses in the New Testament. Some from the Book of John are-

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. (John 3:16)

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3:36)

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (John 5:24)

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. (John 6:47)

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)

#3: It doesn't necessarily require an understanding of the gospel of grace.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news of who Jesus Christ is and of what He has done in order to save lost sinners from the just penalty of their sins by God's grace (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 1:16). Because of this, God wants believers to proclaim the Gospel to others so that they would know what exactly to believe (Mark 16:15; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21). Any one can ask Jesus into his heart without any true understanding of the person, work, and accomplishment of the Lord Jesus Christ; or the freeness and forgiveness of salvation by God's amazing grace.

Two questions will quickly tell you if a person understands the gospel. They are:

"If you were to die tonight, do you know for sure that you would go to heaven? If God were to ask you, 'Why should I let you in to my heaven?' what would you say?"

While people have "come forward" or "made a commitment to Christ" or "surrendered their lives to Christ" or "asked Jesus into their hearts;" many do not yet grasp that salvation is all by God's grace, based solely on Christ's cross-work and received through faith in Christ alone. This is why the Scriptures go to great lengths to explain to us how one is saved and how one is not saved.

Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Acts 13:38-39)

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)

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5)

#4: It confuses the means of salvation with the results of salvation.

Galatians 4:6, *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the*

Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father." Every child of God has Jesus Christ in his heart through the person of the Holy Spirit when they believed in Christ. This is not because he asked Christ in, but because Christ came in as one of the many spiritual blessings given by God's grace at the moment of faith in Christ.

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27)

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

The Holy Spirit permanently indwells and seals every believer at the point of salvation (Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30). These are results of salvation. We don't tell anyone to ask to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit in order to be saved. Why would we tell anyone to ask to be indwelt with Christ in order to be saved?

#5: It can result in either no assurance of salvation or bring a false assurance to people.

No one has ever been saved or received the assurance of their salvation by asking Jesus into his/her heart. There can be no salvation, no assurance of salvation by something that is foreign to Scripture.

This is not to say that those who have asked Jesus into their heart are not saved. They may be genuine believers in Christ. But if they are saved, they have been reconciled to God through placing their faith in Christ, not by asking Jesus into their heart.

I John 5:11-13 teaches the "how" of assurance. *And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

The assurance of salvation is based on Christ's work alone and the promises of God. This assurance is given to those who *believe on the name of the Son of God* because *these things have I written unto you*. God said it. Christ did it. I believe it. That settles it!

#6: Revelation 3:20 does not teach it.

Whenever a scriptural attempt is made by someone to support this wrong response to the Gospel, normally Revelation 3:20 is used.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. (Revelation 3:20)

The words "ask," "Jesus," and "your heart" are not found in this verse. What is Revelation 3:20 teaching?

The general context of this verse is Jesus Christ's letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor (Rev. 2-3). These were actual local churches that existed at the time of John's writing.

Revelation 3:14-22 is addressed by Jesus Christ to the church of Laodicea in particular. The spiritual state of this church was "lukewarm." While the church viewed itself in a good condition materially, our Lord viewed this same church in a wretched condition spiritually (3:17). They were in desperate need of what Jesus Christ alone could provide for them (3:18). *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. (Revelation 3:19)*

Who is it that Christ chastens or disciplines? Is it the unsaved or the redeemed? Hebrews 12 answers this. "For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons." (Hebrews 12:6-8)

God chastens believers so that "we might be partakers of His holiness" (Heb. 12:10) This indicates that these verses in Revelation 3:19 are addressed to believers in Christ.

Furthermore, it would be inappropriate to command a spiritually dead unbeliever to "be zealous" (or "hot" - 3:15). There is nothing in the Bible about "cold" or "hot" unbelievers. Like the corrective commands given to the other four churches in this section (Rev. 2:5,16, 22,3:3), the believers of the church at Laodicea were to "repent." This would involve them choosing to have a decisive change of mind regarding their spiritual condition. This results in genuine confession of sin to God (1 John 1:9; 1 Corinthians 11:31-32; Prov. 28:13) and a change in spiritual direction.

Right on the heels of this corrective rebuke, Jesus Christ then gives these believers a wonderful offer. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." (Rev. 3:20)

"Behold (pay attention, listen), I stand at the door." Jesus Christ has been and continues to stand at the door. To assume this is the door of someone's "heart" is totally foreign to the passage. This "door" is the door of the Laodicean church. While this church was saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing," they actually kept Jesus Christ outside of the church. No wonder He is described as repeatedly "knocking" (present tense).

Moving from the Laodicean church generally, Jesus Christ then appeals to the individual believers on the inside of this church. "If anyone (singular) hears my voice, and opens (singular) the door, I will come in to him." Notice the two conditions that Christ requires to be fulfilled by those on the inside:

#1: "if anyone hears my voice." This refers to what Jesus Christ has been saying in verses 14-19.

#2: "and opens the door." This again refers to the door where the church is gathered and involves the genuine repentance He required.

Connected with these two conditions are three promises by Jesus Christ:

#1: "I will come in to him" This is a promise of Christ's personal entrance into the church to meet the believer face to face (the literal idea of the Greek word "pros," translated "to").

#2: "and dine with him" This is a promise of Christ's personal fellowship with this repentant believer.

#3: "and he with Me" This is a promise of reciprocal fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Verse 20 says Christ will come "in to" (two different words), not come "into" (one word). The verse is saying that Christ will come in the church to the person, not that Christ will come into the person. When He gets in the church with the person He will eat dinner with him. That is, He will have fellowship with him. This is not a hair-splitting of the English text, but an accurate reflection of the Greek. In Greek, "come in" (eiserchomai) is one word. It is followed by the preposition "to" (pros). That construction occurs eight times in the New Testament (Mark 6:25,15:43; Luke 1:28; Acts 10:3,11:3,17:2, 28:8; Rev. 3:20). In each instance it means to enter into a building and stand before a person.

Revelation 3:20 is a verse for believers, not unbelievers. It is a promise of personal fellowship with and from Jesus Christ, not an offer of

salvation.

#7: It does not clarify the condition of salvation, it confuses it especially with children.

Children begin life thinking very concretely, not abstractly. They understand "ball," "dog," and "hat" before they understand "death," "hell," and "salvation." When confronted with an appeal to ask Jesus into their heart, they are prone to imagine Christ in bodily form somehow living in the organ that pumps our blood.

The condition of salvation for children is the same as it is for adults.

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

"For you are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:26)

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life." (John 6:47)

Possible Objections

Objection #1: "But isn't this all simply a matter of semantics?"

Yes, it is a matter of semantics if you mean that word meanings and definitions are very important.

Charles Ryrie addresses this by stating..."Furthermore, it seems to me that those who believe in the inerrancy of the Bible ought especially to be concerned with accuracy in communicating the truth. All the Bible is inerrant and important to us. But certainly how we as Christians express the Gospel ought to be our greatest concern. We do not want to confuse or shortchange or obscure God's good news of His grace * how He gave His Son so that we might have eternal life through faith in Him. Semantics is key in understanding and communicating the Gospel." So Great Salvation (p. 22-23)

On the other hand, this is not a matter of semantics if you mean that "trusting in Jesus Christ alone" and "asking Jesus into your heart" are really saying the same thing.

Ryrie goes on to state, "Just as words were the means God used to record the Gospel in the Scriptures, so words are the means we use to explain the Gospel to others. Therefore, a correct choice of words is important, even essential, in stating the Gospel well." So Great Salvation(p. 24)

When the Holy Spirit directed the writers of Scripture to record in perfect accuracy the inerrant Word of God, He knew the difference between "pisteuo" (believe) and "aiteo" (ask). Time and time again He chose "pisteuo" (believe) to be the word used to describe the one condition of salvation.

Objection #2: "But is it really that big of a deal how you explain the way of salvation as long as you are sincere?"

Joshua 24:14 reads, "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth." God is a God of truth and commands us to "speak the truth in love."

Objection #3: "But haven't people been saved by asking Jesus into their heart?"

Nowhere in the Bible is anyone ever saved by asking Jesus into their heart!

Individuals may have trusted Christ as Savior at the same time they asked Jesus into their heart and God in His grace saved them in spite of this confusing expression. Nevertheless, this is no excuse for biblical inaccuracy. Furthermore, how many people have asked Jesus into their hearts while never trusting in Him and His work alone? Is it worth the risk?

Objection #4: "But so many people use this expression, it can't be that bad."

The accuracy of Scripture is not determined by a popularity contest. The issue is not an issue of personality, but biblical principle. The issue is: "Does this expression accurately communicate the truth of Scripture or not? Does it have the divine approval of 'thus says the Lord'?"

Objection #5: "But doesn't Romans 10:9 teach one to ask Jesus into his heart?"

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Unlike Revelation 3:20, the context of this verse does deal with personal salvation. However, in Romans 10:9, like Revelation 3:20, there is no "asking Jesus into one's heart" mentioned. This passage is especially targeted at Jews (chapters 9-11 is about Israel) who would make the claim to "believe in the Lord."

To confess that one believes in the LORD while rejecting Jesus Christ as that very God misses the true person of the Savior. And a failure to

believe that God raised Jesus from the dead (which is proof of His propitiatory death) means that one has yet to embrace the finished work of our Lord.

Verse 10 then clarifies the correct order. "For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation." (Romans 10:10)

We can confess to others of our salvation by grace when we have believed in Christ with our hearts.

A final appeal

Do not let pride ("I've taught that expression in the past") or emotion ("I've prayed this with my kids") or tradition ("Our church has always said that") get in the way of truth and biblical accuracy on the most important issue that anyone must address. We need to return to the authoritative Word of God to embrace what God Himself says about our eternal salvation.