

Five Principles of Salvation

A general principle in life is to investigate the success of any given action, based upon the success “stories” of those involved. The same principle can be utilized in determining God’s plan to save mankind. In order to find out what that plan consisted of, we simply need only to look at how individuals in the beginning of the gospel were added to the kingdom of God.

One such success story involved the Romans. The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans and related to them how the “gospel” of Christ is God’s power to save (Romans 1:16-17), indicating that it was and is through the gospel message that the lost can be reconciled to the Father through the sacrifice of Christ. What this gospel message contained is revealed in the Roman letter.

The Roman letter tells us five basic principles of the gospel: 1) That faith, (believing that God is and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him, Hebrews 11:1,6) comes from the hearing of the word of God, (Romans 10:17). Thus, no one can come to God without the hearing of the gospel message. 2) That those who hear the message must believe what they hear. The scriptures say, “if thou shalt...believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9). Jesus also affirmed the necessity of belief, when he said, “for except ye believe that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). One of the basic necessities of salvation is the ability to hear a message and believe it. 3) Those who believe the message must respond to it. It is possible for someone to hear the message, believe it, and yet not respond appropriately to it, i.e., “Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *it*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue” (John 12:42). A belief in anything that is lacking an appropriate response is vain. This is not only self-evident, but was also stated by the apostle Paul, when he said, “because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus *as* Lord...thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9). 4) Salvation also requires repentance. Repentance is a turning away from one thing and turning to another. Paul stated the importance of repentance, when he said, “knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance” (Romans 2:4). The repentance of the Romans was expressed by the apostle Paul, when he said, “But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:17-18). 5) Paul also identified that all of the Romans (who had fulfilled the first four requirements) “were baptized into Christ Jesus”; they were “baptized into his death” (Romans 6:3).

Paul further says, those who “become united with *him* in the likeness of his death...shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection” (Romans 6:5). Paul

affirmed that when an individual is baptized into Christ they “put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). This “putting on” Christ makes them “sons of God, through faith” (Galatians 3:26). Every conversion in the book of Acts involved these necessary elements. In each case you will find these elements either alluded to or specifically mentioned.

“For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reprov'd. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God” (John 3:20-21). Ross Triplett, Sr.