House to House
Heart to Heart
VOLUME 31 NUMBER 10
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King Jesus' KINGDOM

Allen Webster

"Kingdom" is found in the Bible over 350 times (163 in the New Testament; 129 in the accounts of the Gospel, 34 in Acts through Revelation).

The kingdom was a popular topic for sermons among New Testament preachers. John, Jesus' announcer, preached the kingdom (Matthew 3:2). John, Jesus' apostle, preached the kingdom (Revelation 1:9). Jesus preached the kingdom (Matthew 4:17). The twelve apostles preached the kingdom (Matthew 10:7). The seventy preached it (Luke 10:9). Philip preached it (Acts 8:12). Barnabas preached it (Acts 14:20–22). Paul preached it (Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). James preached it (James 2:5). Peter preached it (2 Peter 1:11). So at least ninety of the early preachers preached the same subject. It must be an important subject for us to preach today.

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM?

The word "kingdom" (*basileia*) in the New Testament means "reign" or "rule." The term "kingdom of God" is used synonymously by the New Testament writers with "kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:23–24; 4:17; Mark 1:14). In fact, in the Scriptures, "kingdom" refers to the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven. These phrases do not refer to three different kingdoms, but to the same institution.

- It is God's kingdom because He planned and promised it (Daniel 2:44).
- It is the Son's because the Father gave it to Him (Daniel 7:13–14; John 16:15; Philippians 2:9–11; Ephesians 1:20–22).
- It is the kingdom of heaven because it originated there, Christ now reigns over it from there (Acts 2:30–36), and ultimately all the citizens of the kingdom will be united there (John 14:1–3; 1 Corinthians 15:24).

Both "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" can refer to either the church of Christ on earth or to heaven; the meaning must be determined by the context (Matthew 16:18–19; Hebrews 12:22–28; Luke 22:16–18, 29–30).

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM?

There are two types of kingdoms—physical and spiritual. The kingdom of Christ is spiritual. It is not of this world (John 18:36). It "is within you" (Luke 17:21); that is, it rules men's hearts.

Since Christ's kingdom is a spiritual one, a birth different from what is normally required for citizenship is necessary to enter it. Nicodemus was informed that he would have to be born "again" to see or enter the new kingdom (John 3:3, 5). The spiritual kingdom has a physical manifestation. That is, we can see the kingdom in the sense that we can see the people who are members of it, although the world may not recognize them.

God sent Christ to establish a new kingdom and a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31–33; Hebrews 8:8–12). There are four essential elements to any kingdom:

- A King—We have Jesus (1 Timothy 6:14–15).
- A Law—We have the gospel (James 1:25).
- Territory—We have the whole world (Mark 16:15–16).
- Subjects—We are Christians (Colossians 1:13–14).

WHEN WAS THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED?

The kingdom is now in existence upon the earth and has been since the time of the apostles. Paul wrote, "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13–14). John was "in the kingdom" before AD 100. (Revelation 1:6–9).

To help pinpoint the exact date of its beginning, let's back up to the lifetime of Christ. We know that it was not established during Jesus' personal ministry, for it was then spoken of as being "at hand" or "near" (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:5–7; Luke 10:9).

Four verses pinpoint the exact time of establishment:

- Mark 9:1: Some listening to Jesus would not die until the kingdom came with power.
- Luke 24:49: Jesus' disciples were to wait in Jerusalem for the power.
- Acts 1:8: They would receive power when the Holy Spirit came.
- Acts 2:1–4: The Holy Spirit came on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection.

Thus the kingdom was established in Jerusalem on Pentecost Day in the year AD 33, as recorded in Acts 2.

This chart helps to establish the exact day the kingdom was set up on earth:

Before Pentecost	After Pentecost
Mark 1:15: Not existing	Colossians 1:13: Existed
Mark 9:1: Not existing	Hebrews 12:28: Existed
Luke 22:29: Not existing	Revelation 1:9: Existed
Matthew 16:18: Will build	Acts 2:47: Added to
Luke 22:30: Table in kingdom	1 Corinthians 10:21: Table
Luke 22:30: Disciples to eat in	1 Corinthians 11:26: Ate
Daniel 2:44: Stand forever	Hebrews 12:28–29: Cannot be moved

Christ invites you to become a member of the greatest institution on earth, His kingdom (Matthew 11:28–30). As Jesus told Nicodemus, you must be born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:1–5). This refers to being baptized in water, according to the Spirit's teachings in the New Testament (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16–17). The Spirit says one is qualified for baptism when he is a penitent believer who is willing to confess Christ's deity (Acts 8:30–38; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 8:35–39).

Jesus is offering citizenship in His kingdom right now. Won't you take Him up on it?

Keep Your Fork

A woman was diagnosed with terminal illness and given three months to live. She asked her preacher to come by her house to discuss her funeral.

She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, which Scriptures to read, and what dress she wanted to be buried in. She also requested to be buried with her favorite Bible. As he prepared to leave, she suddenly remembered one more thing. "I have one more request," she said excitedly.

"What's that?" the preacher replied.

"This is very important," she continued. "I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand."

The preacher looked at her, not knowing quite what to say.

"That surprises you?" she asked.

"To be honest, I am puzzled," he replied.

The woman explained, "In all my years of attending church fellowships and potluck dinners, I always remember that when the dishes were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, 'Keep your fork.' It was my favorite part, because I knew that meant something better was coming . . . like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. Something wonderful! So I want people to see me in that casket with a fork in my hand. When they ask you, 'What's with the fork?' Then I want you to tell them, 'She believed the best is yet to come.'"

"Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

MATTHEW 25:34

Still Going . . .

In 1977, the United States launched a rocket into space.

On board was a small craft called *Voyager I*, a probe that was jettisoned into space to explore the planets. After *Voyager* finished sending back photos and data from the planet Jupiter and its neighbors, it did not stop working. It just kept going.

Today, almost fifty years later, that tiny vehicle is still going—traveling at a speed of over 38,000 miles per hour—and it is sixteen billion miles away.

That is mind-boggling! Brilliant scientists have sent a ship to the edge of our solar system. It is astounding. It is amazing.

But it is absolutely puny when compared to what God has done. It would be like hearing someone brag to the architect of the Empire State Building that he had traveled to the second floor. We have barely begun to explore the vastness of God's creation, but every small step by mankind should continue to put us in absolute awe of God's power and creativity.

Think of this: While we have passed the realm of one star with a spaceship, the Creator of the stars "calls them all by name" (Isaiah 40:26). After all, He made them. Exploring the universe is amazing. But exploring the God who made it all—that is beyond amazing. —Dave Branon

"Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands."

PSALM 102:25

Do I Have to Go to Church?

Through the years, I have often had people ask me the question, "Do I have to go to all of the services of the church? I mean, what if I don't go on Sunday night?" Allow me to answer that question with a few questions of my own.

- Do you have to hug and kiss your little children?
- Do you have to remember your wife's birthday?
- Do you have to call home when you are late coming home from work?
- Do you have to buy Christmas presents for your family?
- Do you have to attend ball games and band functions in which your children are involved?
- Do you have to attend the funeral of a close friend or loved one?
- Do you have to say, "I love you" when you love someone?

I think you see the point. Sometimes we ask the wrong questions. There are some things in life that we do not have to do, but we get to do. In fact, even asking the question, "Do I have to?" is inappropriate.

When my relationship with God is based on what I have to do and what I do not have to do, then I should take a look at that relationship. —Steve Higginbotham

God's Plan for Saving Man

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Divine Love: John 3:16
God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8
Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9
Holy Spirit's Word: 1 Corinthians 2:12–13
Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31
Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3
Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10
Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16
Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37
Christian's Work: James 2:24
Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24
Christian's Endurance: Revelation 2:10

Religion Is Good for Children

Children with religious parents are better behaved and appear happier than children reared by parents without the influence of religious faith, a new study has shown.

The first study to examine the impact of religion on the development of young children was authored by John Bartkowski, a sociologist with Mississippi State University. Bartkowski's team questioned the parents and teachers of more than 16,000 children, asking the adults to rate the children—most of them age six—on self-control, frequency of poor or unhappy behavior, and their ability to respect and work with peers. The results were compared to the parents' rate of attendance at church services, how frequently they talked about faith with their child, and whether or not there was arguing over religion in the home.

The children of parents who regularly attended church services and talked with their child about religion were rated by both parents and teachers as showing better behavior, self-control skills, and social skills than children from non-religious families. Children whose parents both attended church regularly were rated as having the best behavior and being the most well-adjusted.

"Let the little children come to Me."

MARK 10:14

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Job Description: Parent

Position: Mom, Mommy, Mama, Ma / Dad, Daddy, Dada, Pa, Pop

Job Description: Long-term team players needed for challenging permanent work in an often-chaotic environment. Candidates must possess excellent communication and organizational skills and be willing to work variable hours, which will include evenings and weekends and frequent 24-hour shifts on call. Some overnight travel required, including trips to camping sites on rainy weekends and sports tournaments in faraway cities. Travel expenses not reimbursed. Extensive courier duties also required.

Responsibilities: Must possess the physical stamina of a pack mule and be able to go from 0 to 60 mph in three seconds flat in case, this time, the screams from the backyard are not someone just crying wolf. Must be willing to face stimulating technical challenges, such as small gadget repair, mysteriously sluggish toilets, and stuck zippers. Must screen phone calls, maintain calendars, and coordinate production of multiple homework projects. Must be willing to be hated, at least temporarily, until someone wants to go to a friend's house. Must be willing to bite tongue repeatedly. Must have ability to plan and organize social gatherings for clients of all ages and mental outlooks. Must be willing to be indispensable one minute and embarrassed the next. Must handle assembly and product safety testing of cheap, plastic toys and battery operated devices. Must always hope for the best but be prepared for the worst. Must assume final, complete accountability for the quality of the end product. Responsibilities also include floor maintenance and janitorial work throughout the facility.

Possibility for Advancement and Promotion: None. Your job is to remain in the same position for years, without complaining, constantly retraining and updating your skills, so that those in your charge can ultimately surpass you.

Term of Service: The rest of your life.

Previous Experience: None required. On-the-job training offered on a continually exhausting basis.

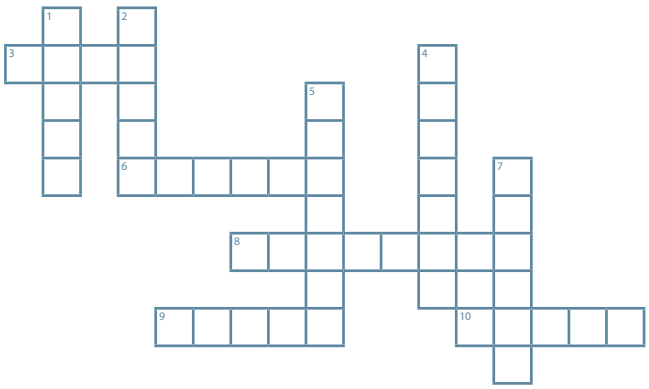
Wages and Compensation: You pay them! Offering frequent raises and bonuses. A balloon payment is due when they turn eighteen, on the assumption that college will help them become financially independent. When you die, you give them whatever is left. The odd thing about this reverse-salary scheme is that you enjoy it and wish you could do more.

Benefits: While no health or dental insurance, no pension, no tuition reimbursement, no paid holidays, and no stock options are offered, this job supplies limitless opportunities for personal growth, unconditional love, and free hugs and kisses for life.

Just for Fun Crossword Puzzle

Use the words in blue to complete the puzzle.

"Being found in appearance as a man, He **humbled** Himself and became **obedient** to the point of **death**, even the death of the **cross**. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every **name**, that at the name of **Jesus** every knee should bow, of those in **heaven**, and of those on **earth**, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should **confess** that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the **Father**." —**PHILIPPIANS 2:8–11**



1. EARTH; 2. DEATH; 3. NAME; 4. HUMBLED; 5. CONFESS; 6. HEAVEN; 7. FATHER; 8. OBEDIENT; 9. CROSS; 10. JESUS

Are There Different Degrees *of* Sin?

There are different types of sin, and sins have varying earthly consequences, but there are no degrees of sin. We sometimes think "little white lies" are not as bad as other "big lies," but the Bible simply says that "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). The eternal consequences for sin are the same for all sins, even if they are sins we think of as only "minor sins."

John wrote that "sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). To transgress the law of the land is to commit a crime. To transgress the law of God is to commit sin. The literal meaning of the word *sin* is "to miss the mark." When we sin, we have missed the mark of following God's will.

While there are no degrees of sin, we may still classify sins in certain ways. Some sins are moral sins, such as adultery and drunkenness, specifically condemned by the Bible. Other moral sins, such as gambling, are condemned in principle by the Bible. John sums up these works of the flesh, saying, "All unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17).

Sins of commission are sins of disobedience to God's will. When Lot and his family escaped from the wicked city of Sodom, God warned that they were not to look back. When Lot's wife looked back, she became a pillar of salt. Her sin was not a moral sin, but it was disobedience to God's command (Genesis 19:26).

Another type of sin is that of not doing right—sins of omission. It is not enough just to refrain from doing things God has condemned. We must also do what God has commanded. James wrote, "To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

The Bible warns, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23); and "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The foremost problem in the world today is a sin problem. Man is a sinner, and the consequences for sin must be paid. The wonderful news, however, is that, even though man sins against God, God has provided a means of escape. Paul wrote, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). By obeying the commands of the gospel of Christ, we can have that eternal life through Jesus Christ. —Bob Prichard

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Bible Quiz

VOLUME 31:10

Send us your answers (address on front) to receive a free Bible bookmark. We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Sermon Scripture Checklist for Children" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

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Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 31:8 *They Saw Him Alive:* ***Questions from Pages 1–2:*** 1. F; 2. F; 3. T; 4. F; 5. 515, 12, 40; 6. T. ***Questions from Page 3:*** 1. Love; 2. Christ; 3. F; 4. Hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized, stay faithful. ***Questions from page 7:*** 1. T; 2. F; 3. T.

V. 31.9 *How Well Do You Know Noah and the Ark?:* 1. Just, God (Genesis 6:9); 2. Gopher (6:14); 3. Pitch (6:14); 4. 300 (6:15); 5. 50 (6:15); 6. 30 (6:15); 7. Violence (6:13); 8. 600 (7:6, 11); 9. Two (7:2); 10. Seven (7:2); 11. The wickedness of man was great, and the Lord was sorry He had made them (6:5–6); 12. Never again would there be a flood to destroy the earth (9:11); 13. 40 days (7:12); 14. 150 days (7:24); 15. Ararat (8:4); 16. A raven (8:7); 17. A dove (8:8–12); 18. The rainbow (9:13); 19. Shem, Ham, and Japheth (7:13); 20. Eight (1 Peter 3:20); 21. Burnt offerings of every clean animal and bird (8:20); 22. 350 (9:28); 23. Baptism is the antitype which now saves us (1 Peter 3:21).

New Testament Bible Characters

Directions: Find your answers in these verses (not in order): Matthew 1:18; 2:16; 14:6–10; 27:2, 3–5, 21, 57–58; Mark 10:46–52; Luke 1:3; 10:38–42; 16:20–22; John 1:40–42; 3:1–5; 18:10–11; Acts 1:1; 2:1, 14; 4:36; 8:35; 13:6–11; 16:14–15; 18:24–26; 22:3; 24:1–9; Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:20; 3 John 1:9. *Questions are taken from the New King James Version.*

1. _____ Released instead of Jesus
2. _____ Son of encouragement; Paul's missionary companion
3. _____ Medical doctor who wrote biography of Jesus
4. _____ Taught Lord's way more perfectly by Aquila and Priscilla
5. _____ Struck blind by Paul for hindering the gospel
6. _____ Came to Jesus by night; was taught about the new birth
7. _____ Preached the Pentecost sermon recorded in Acts 2
8. _____ Blind man healed by Jesus
9. _____ Female convert in Philippi; seller of purple
10. _____ Poor beggar in Jesus' story about two men who died
11. _____ Mother of Jesus
12. _____ Saul's (later Paul) teacher in Jerusalem as a boy
13. _____ Betrayed Jesus; hanged himself
14. _____ Encumbered by much serving; Mary's sister
15. _____ Governor who tried Jesus before crucifixion
16. _____ Had babies killed in Bethlehem
17. _____ Preached to the eunuch (Ethiopian treasurer)
18. _____ Requested to bury Jesus' body after crucifixion
19. _____ Brought His brother Peter to Jesus
20. _____ Beheaded by Herod
21. _____ Loved to have the preeminence
22. _____ Argued against Paul in the presence of Felix
23. _____ Left sick by Paul at Miletus
24. _____ High priest's servant whose ear Peter cut off
25. _____ Person to whom Luke and Acts are addressed

World's Best Book

The prophecies of the Bible are amazing. Eight hundred years before Jesus was born, the prophet Micah predicted His birth in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Then Caesar sent out a decree, as recorded in Luke 2:1, that all the world should be registered. So Mary left Nazareth and went to Bethlehem where she gave birth to Jesus, because her husband Joseph, a descendant of David, had to return to his birthplace for the census. Amazing!

You can turn to Psalm 22, which was written a thousand before the crucifixion of Christ, and find a detailed description of death by crucifixion. This was written before crucifixion was ever even known as a form of execution in Palestine. The Jews did not crucify; they stoned. Yet Psalm 22 records these words, "They pierced My hands and My feet" (22:16). It was prophesied that the soldiers would cast lots for His garments, ten centuries before the actual event (22:18). The Bible prophesied in Zechariah 12:10, "They will look on Me whom they pierced." Of all the wounds that could contibute to death, this one would be unusual. But it happened! The Old Testament description sounds like the writer had been standing at the foot of the cross! —Howell Ferguson, Bells, Tennessee

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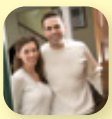

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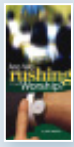

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Chapter to Chapter
2 SAMUEL

This chart is part of a memory system for learning the key people, events, topics, and verses of all 929 Old Testament chapters.

INTRODUCTION

In the Hebrew Old Testament, 1 and 2 Samuel are one book, but it was divided by the translators of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible). The author is unknown, but the inspired writer seems to have used preserved material written by the prophets Nathan and Gad (1 Chronicles 29:29). Second Samuel concentrates on the time around 1010–970 BC and records David's forty-year reign, first over Judah and then over all Israel. The book traces David's rise to power, God's covenant promise concerning his descendants, his victories, his sin with Bathsheba, and the painful consequences that followed within his family and kingdom. It emphasizes God's faithfulness, the blessings of righteous leadership, the destructive nature of sin, and the promise of an everlasting kingdom through the house of David.

CHAPTER/TOPICS	VERSES
David's Triumphs	
1. David mourns the deaths of Saul and Jonathan.	1:11–12
2. David becomes king over Judah.	2:4, 10–11
3. Abner joins David but is killed by Joab.	3:21, 27
4. Ishbosheth is murdered.	4:7–8
5. David becomes king over all Israel; Jerusalem is captured.	5:3, 7
6. Uzzah dies. The ark is brought to Jerusalem.	6:6–7, 14–15
7. God makes a covenant with David.	7:12–16
8. David defeats Israel's enemies.	8:6, 14–15
9. David shows kindness to Mephibosheth.	9:6–7, 13
10. David defeats the Ammonites and Syrians.	10:17–19
David's Troubles	
11. David sins with Bathsheba and has Uriah killed.	11:2–5, 14–17
12. Nathan confronts David; David repents.	12:7, 9, 13
13. Amnon violates Tamar; Absalom kills Amnon.	13:10–14, 28–29
14. Absalom returns to Jerusalem.	14:23, 33
15. Absalom steals the hearts of Israel.	15:6, 13–14
16. David flees; Shimei curses him.	16:5–6, 13
17. Hushai defeats Ahithophel's counsel.	17:14, 23
18. Absalom is killed; David mourns.	18:9, 14–15, 33
19. David returns to Jerusalem.	19:15, 39–40
20. Sheba rebels against David. Sheba is killed.	20:1–2, 21–22
21. The people suffer famine and Philistine battles. The Gibeonites kill Saul's sons.	21:1, 8–9, 15–17
22. David writes a song of deliverance.	22:2–4, 47
23. David writes his last words; his mighty men are listed.	23:1–7
24. David numbers Israel; the plague is stopped.	24:10, 14–17, 24–25

The Cross of Jesus

When Jesus came to earth, He deserved the best. What He received was a cross.

What man and devil meant for evil (Genesis 3:15), God meant for good (Romans 8:28). Now, the cross is the center of Christian hope. Isaiah had described a suffering servant who would bear our griefs (Isaiah 53), and the biographies of Christ show Jesus taking up that role—bearing sin's penalty in our place. Paul summarizes the gospel: "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The cross accomplishes reconciliation by substitution. Peter declares that Jesus "bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). By taking the curse we deserved, Jesus satisfied God's justice and opened the way for mercy.

For Christians, the cross is both finished work and daily challenge: We remember, and we take up our cross to follow Him (Matthew 16:24–26). The cross reshapes identity—from condemned to forgiven, from slaves of sin to servants of righteousness (Romans 6:18). —Matt Wallin

Basic Facts About the Church of Christ

Establishment—Isaiah 2:2–3; Daniel 2:44; Luke 24:46–49; Acts 1:5–8; 2:1–4.
Foundation: Christ—Isaiah 28:16; 1 Corinthians 3:11; Matthew 16:18.
Founder: Christ—Matthew 16:16–18.
Names of Members—Acts 9:1–2, 13–14; 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16.
Organization—Ephesians 1:22–23; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1–12.
Worship: Spirit and Truth—John 4:24; Acts 2:42; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 16:1–2.
Law of Pardon: Faith + Obedience = Salvation—Mark 16:16; Hebrews 5:8–9.
Creed: Christ's Teaching—1 Corinthians 2:2.
Church Name/Description—Romans 16:16; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:15.

House to House
Heart to Heart
10/26

Is the Sinner's Prayer in Romans 10:9–10?

Romans 10:9 is often quoted as the "sinner's prayer" passage: "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." At first glance, it seems simple—believe and confess, and you are saved. But context matters.

Paul is writing to Christians, not nonbelievers, and the surrounding verses emphasize the universality of the gospel: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). Then Paul asks practical questions in verses 14: "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"

After being taught, a person must hear and then believe in order to call on the name of the Lord. Each step is distinct and necessary, but what does "calling on the name of the Lord" actually mean?

Paul himself provides the answer—not only by writing Romans but also by reporting his own conversion in Acts 22:16. He was told: "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." The same phrase appears in both places, and the context makes the meaning clear: To call on the name of the Lord is to submit to His authority, obey Him in faith, and be baptized to have sins washed away. Salvation does not come simply by a prayer we recite; it comes by an obedient faith.

Understanding Romans 10 in light of Scripture shows that salvation is a sequence of teaching, hearing, believing, and obeying Christ.

If you want to study with us how the Bible teaches the steps of salvation and how to call on the name of the Lord the way God intended, we would love to open God's Word with you. —Matt Wallin

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