

10 Common Misconceptions that People Have About Christianity and Salvation

New Life Alliance Church June 2008

Misconception 1

I believe in God; I've always believed in God. I'm not an atheist, so I feel like I'm OK.

Jas 2:19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

Ac 20:21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

Mt 16:24 NLT Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. 25 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. 26 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?"

Other Scripture: Romans 10:9-13

Misconception 2

I just have to try to make sure that my good works outweigh my bad. Don't you think that God will grade on a curve? I just hope that if I try to be good that will good enough.

Ro 3:10 NLT As the Scriptures say, "No one is righteous — not even one. 11 No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. 12 All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one." 19 Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God. 20 For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.

21 But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. 22 We are made right with God by

placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. 23 For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. 24 Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.

25 For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus. 27 Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. 28 So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.

Isa 64:6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;

Eph 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — Eph 2:9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

2Co 5:21 God [the Father] made him [God the Son] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him [united with Jesus Christ by faith] we might become the righteousness of God.

Isa 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. Isa 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Other Scriptures: Galatians 3:10-13; 1 Peter 3:18; John 3:16, 36; 1 Timothy 1:9

Misconception 3

As long as you are sincere I don't feel like it really matters what you believe. All religions lead to God. It would be wrong to say that only one way is right. Tolerance demands that we not proclaim our beliefs as absolutes or as the exclusive way of truth.

Pr 14:12 NLT There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.

Mt 7:13-14 NLT "You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. 14 But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is

difficult, and only a few ever find it.

John 14:6 NLT Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

Ac 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

Other Scripture: Romans 10:1-4

Misconception 4

I think that if you make it your goal to follow the teachings of Jesus that makes you a Christian. In fact I go to church sometimes and I was even baptized, so I'm sure that I'm a Christian. After all I try to follow the Golden Rule. I think that all I really have to do to be a Christian is believe what a Christian believes. I believe the basic doctrines of Christianity. I've made Christianity my religion, so I'm a Christian.

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Ac 20:21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

Mt 16:24 NLT Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. 25 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. 26 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?"

Other Scripture: Romans 10:9-13

Misconception 5

I prayed a prayer and I felt so much better after that. I had a spiritual, mystical experience; Now I just feel like I'm OK with God. I pray. I'm a pretty good person. I've discovered who I really am and I'm experiencing some peace.

...Another version of this misconception goes like this...

I prayed the prayer. You know...the prayer. I believed that Jesus died on the cross for my sins and I got saved. I asked

Jesus to come into my heart. I went to the altar at the end of a church service (or I prayed with my Sunday School teacher or my vacation Bible school teacher, or...).

However, to tell you the truth, I don't know that I've really surrendered my life to Jesus. No, I guess if I were to be totally honest I would have to say that Jesus is not the most important love of my life. No, I'm not really living my life for Jesus. No, Jesus is not really the Lord of my life. No, I haven't really turned from doing my own thing and from following my own selfish pursuits.

I don't know about this repentance thing, but I do feel sorry sometimes when I do something I shouldn't do. No, my life is not all about the Lord, it's really all about me, other things, and other pursuits.

But since I prayed a prayer and asked Jesus into my heart I think I'm saved.

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Misconception 6

I don't feel like a person has to be "born again." I think that is just a radical thing taught by some fanatics. I think a person should add a little bit of morality or spirituality to his life, but not go overboard. I just feel like a person can live a good and happy life without all this religious stuff.

Jn 3:1 NLT There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. 2 After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. "Rabbi," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you." 3 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the

Kingdom of God.” 4 “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” 5 Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. 7 So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’

Other Scriptures: Ezekiel 26:36; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Titus 3:3-7

Misconception 7

I just feel like when a person dies that is it; I don’t think there is anything beyond the grave. I think we just cease to exist. So I’m just going to live life for the here and now.

Ecc 3:11 [God] has... set eternity in the hearts of men.

Rev 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. Rev 7:10 And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

Rev 14:9 A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, Rev 14:10 he, too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. Rev 14:11 And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.”

Misconception 8

I feel like when a person dies he may come back as someone or something else. Maybe reincarnation is true. I think there is a cycle of life. We may come back as a different person and get another chance to live. I just feel like somehow everyone will get another chance.

Heb 9:27 ...man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment...

Misconception 9

Surely it can’t be true that God is going to condemn people on judgment day for not submitting to Him. You don’t believe in a literal hell, do you? I don’t feel like God is like that. My God is loving, not judgmental.

Rev 6:12 I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, Rev 6:13 and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. Rev 6:14 The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Rev 6:15 Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. Rev 6:16 They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! Rev 6:17 For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

Rev 9:20 The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshipping demons, and idols... Rev 9:21 Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Rev 16:8 The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was given power to scorch people with fire. Rev 16:9 They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him. Rev 16:10 The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their tongues in agony Rev 16:11 and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.

Rev 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Rev 20:13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Rev 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Rev 20:15 If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Misconception 10

It seems like Christianity is just a bunch of rules. I think if I become a Christian my life will become dull and boring. I'll have to give up so much. I'll be miserable. I'm just going to enjoy life and not worry about it. I think the life I'm now pursuing is the good life. The Christian life will not bring me the most pleasure or happiness. Maybe I'll become a Christian someday after I've had my fun.

Jer 2:13 "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

Jn 7:37 ...Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Jn 7:38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

Jn 10:10 Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

1Pe 1:18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 1Pe 1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Ro 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Warnings from the Book of Hebrews

Heb 10:26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, Heb 10:27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Heb 10:28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Heb 10:29 How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? Heb 10:30 For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." Heb 10:31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Heb 3:7 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, Heb 3:8 do not harden your hearts... Heb 3:12 See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. Heb 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. Heb 3:14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. Heb 3:15 As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

Heb 4:2 For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

Prayer for Salvation

Dear Lord, I humbly admit that I'm a sinner and I need Your forgiveness. I know that I can't save myself by doing good things. I believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins. He shed His blood for me. He also lived a perfect life for me. He has provided righteousness for me.

I now receive the free gift of salvation that You are offering. I am turning from my sins and from living for myself. I am humbly bowing before you in complete submission. I am surrendering to You. I pledge allegiance to You as my Lord and King. I am making a commitment to serve and obey You for the rest of my life. With the strength you provide I will love You, trust You, obey You, worship You, honor You, delight in You and do everything to Your glory. I am even willing to die for You. You will be my life and my first love from now on.

Thank You for loving me, causing me to be born again, forgiving my sins, and giving the Holy Spirit to me. Thank You for saving me by your grace and mercy. Thank You for writing my name in the Book of Life and reserving a place in heaven for me. Thank You for my new life through Jesus, the Creator God, the Messiah and the returning King. In Jesus' name, Amen