

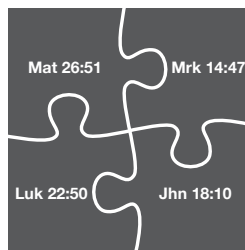
Salvation – with no missing links

BY ANDY HASTINGS

How many of you like a good mystery? A good “who-done-it” movie or book? I do. If the story is well written and it lays out good clues as it progresses, by the time the story comes to its grand finale you might have already developed a pretty good idea of “who done it.” But that proper conclusion rests on you paying attention to all the clues given along the way.

Many people wrongfully teach that the Bible itself is a mystery that cannot be properly solved. They teach that you can’t understand it, at least not fully. The Bible, however, is not a mystery, but rather a book that reveals mysteries. Colossians 1:26-27 states “...the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Instead of giving us a Bible containing long lists of dos and don’ts, God created a book that requires us to exercise our mind in similar fashion to one of those “who-done-it” stories. We’re to gather all the clues, lay them out on the table, and build the complete picture to see what it finally reveals. For example, let’s consider the simple account given of Jesus’ betrayal in the garden of Gethsemane as it is described in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John:



1. **Matthew 26:51** “And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.”
2. **Mark 14:47** “And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.”
3. **Luke 22:50** “And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.”
4. **John 18:10** “Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.”

If we were to leave this last passage off (John 18:10), we'd be missing some very vital information to this event. We would not know that it was Simon Peter who drew the sword, nor the name of the man whose ear was cut off in the scuffle.

If we can appreciate this principle of needing to collect all the pieces the Bible has to say on a subject as simple as this, what about applying this same principle to the most important question anyone could ever ask – “How can I go to Heaven?” Or, you could ask it this way – “What is necessary for me to be saved?” There are many passages that can be supplied in addition to those shown below to indicate what is needed for our salvation; however, the following passages have been specially selected because they **explicitly** address each step as a necessity for our salvation:

1. **GRACE** (Ephesians 2:8)

*“For by **grace** you have been **saved** through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God...”*

2. **BLOOD** (Romans 5:9)

*“Much more then, having now been justified by His **blood**, we shall be **saved** from wrath through Him.”*

3. **GOSPEL** (Romans 1:16)

*“For I am not ashamed of the **gospel** of Christ, for it is the power of God to **salvation** for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”*

4. **FAITH/BELIEF** (Acts 16:31)

*“So they said, ‘**Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be **saved**, you and your household.’ ”*

5. **REPENTANCE** (2 Corinthians 7:10)

*“For godly sorrow produces **repentance** leading to **salvation**...”*

6. **CONFESSION** (Romans 10:9-10)

*“...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. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth **confession** is made unto **salvation**.”*

7. **BAPTISM** (1 Peter 3:21)

*“There is also an antitype which now **saves** us—**baptism** (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God)...”*

8. **HOPE** (Romans 8:24)

*“For we were **saved** in this **hope**, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?”*

9. **WORK** (James 2:24)

*“You see then that a man is **justified** by **works**, and not by faith only.”*

10. **ENDURANCE** (Matthew 24:13)

*“But he who **endures** to the end shall be **saved**.”*

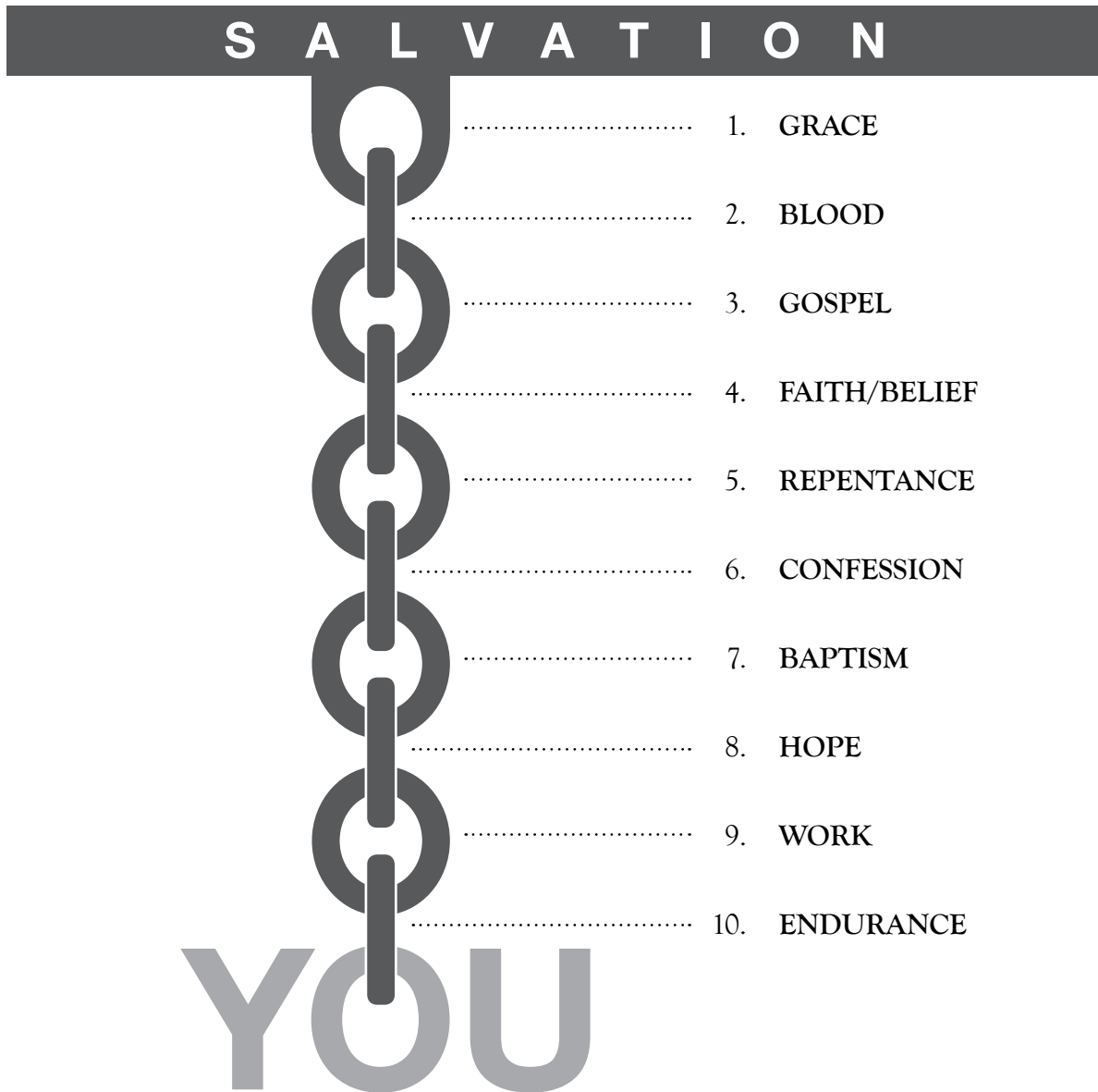
These can be separated into three categories or responsibilities:



As you can see, if we would but take the time to gather all the puzzle pieces on any Bible subject, we can see the big picture and know the truth; yet, there are many religions that call themselves “Christian” that claim some of the passages on the list above aren’t necessary. The Bible says every one of these are necessary – explicitly!

The Bible reveals these steps as our life-line to God, to salvation. All of these steps have to be in place, and we have to take advantage of them in the right order for them to benefit us.

Now, let's do a little exercise in logic. The law of gravity applies to this illustration. Omit any one of these links that the Bible requires for your salvation, and what is the expected result?



T O R M E N T

“...and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power...” 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9