

# Confession What, How, When?

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mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10). Confession is a condition of salvation and therefore precedes remissions of sins.

Knowing that confession precedes salvation, and that Jesus declared, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16), it only follows that confession also precedes baptism. This is the order in which the Ethiopian became a child of God.

From searching the Scriptures we learn that a verbal confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God is a condition of salvation, is made after belief, and followed by baptism in order to be saved. We also see that once one sins having become a Christian, he must confess his sin in order to receive forgiveness.

There are two types of confession mentioned in the Scriptures. One is the confession of sin; the other is the confession one makes which is involved in becoming a child of God.

John speaks of the confession of sin a Christian makes unto to God saying, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1Jn. 1:9). After one becomes a child of God he can and will sin before God. Therefore, one must confess these wrongs and turn from them to receive forgiveness.

Sin is to be confessed within the circle of which it is known. If the sin a child of God has committed is publicly known, it should be confessed in a public manner. We must seek the forgiveness of those of whom we have sinned against or brought reproach upon and we need one another's prayers. "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed" (Jas. 5:16).

The term that is translated in our Bibles "confess" comes from the Greek word *homologeō* which is a compound word; "*Homo*" meaning "the same," and "*Logeo*" meaning "to speak." Thus, confess literally means "to speak the same thing."

When a person confesses his sins, as we mentioned above, he is simply saying what the Bible has pointed out in his life. By confessing he is agreeing, acknowledging, the same thing the word of God has stated that he has sinned.

It is generally admitted that some sort of confession of something should be made by everyone at sometime prior to being admitted into the Lord's church. Let us search the Scriptures that we might know what that confession is, how and when it is to be made and its importance in God's plan of salvation.

Concerning the confession one makes that is involved in becoming a child of God, let us consider Acts 8:36-38. Here we find that, while riding in a chariot, Philip had been preaching Jesus to an Ethiopian nobleman. Having come upon a body of water the Ethiopian says "Look, Water, what prevents me from being baptized?" (v.36). Then Philip, the inspired teacher says, "If you believe with all your heart, you may. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (v.37). "Then the Ethiopian ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him" (v. 38).

That the confession the Ethiopian made was proper is seen in the fact that Philip, the inspired teacher of the gospel of Jesus, proceeded at once to baptize him. This is the confession that one must make to become a child of God. One must confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, to become a member of the Lord's body. How confession is made is seen by the Ethiopian's verbal statement. Confession is made with the mouth (cf. Rom. 10:9-10; Phil. 2:10-11).

It is also seen from this passage when confession is to be made. The Ethiopian made his confession after he believed. Thus, confession comes after faith. A confession before faith would be a false confession. One has to believe in what he confesses. When one hears that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and truly believes it, he then can confess that truth. In doing so one is acknowledging that he believes the "same thing" the Word of God has declared about Jesus, that He is the Christ the Son of the living God.

We also see that confession is made before baptism. In fact, Philip, the inspired teacher, demanded it as a condition preceding baptism. Paul declared "If you confess with your

