

sins through the prayer alone, apart from baptism. Those who believe in such a prayer use Romans 10:13 as their authority: “*For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.*” Is this text referring to a prayer that can forgive sins? The apostle Paul, who pinned those words of the Holy Spirit, had a previous experience personally with those words, and it would be good to consider his background with “calling on the name of the LORD.”

When Paul was struck blind by the Lord on the road to Damascus, Jesus told him to “*Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do*” (Acts 9:6). After following the Lord’s instructions, Ananias came to Paul, saying “*Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord*” (Acts 22:16). There should be no doubt that “calling on the name of the Lord” is essential to salvation. What I am bringing into question is whether this call is a prayer or some other action. It seems that Ananias makes a connection to baptism and calling on the Lord, but that may not be the case, so I want to investigate further.

Peter’s sermon on Pentecost also commands salvation by calling on God’s name (Acts 2:21). Those who responded well to Peter’s preaching asked him “*what shall we do?*” Peter already told them what to do: “*whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.*” It seems they were

unsure about how to go about this call. Therefore Peter explains “*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*” Peter taught that “calling on the name” (Acts 2:21), is the same as being “baptized in the name” (Acts 2:38). Peter makes it clear that prayer is not for the remission (forgiveness) of sins, but baptism is. After all, when Paul was blinded and realized that he needed to start following Jesus what did he do? He prayed (Acts 9:11). However, his prayers did not wash away his sins, thus Ananias told him “*be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” We now know with certainty that this call is in reference to baptism in Acts 22:16. Its meaning is now clear; baptism is the act which the Lord authorized as the only way to wash away sins. Anyone who is baptized for the remission of sins is acknowledging (i.e. calling) that this is what Christ authorized under His name.

Friend, I thought you’d benefit from this. Contact me if you have any questions.

Name: _____

Phone: _____



The Sinner’s Prayer

How can I “Call on the Name of the Lord” Today ?

Many are familiar with the statement “calling on the name of the Lord.” It was first used a number of times by the Holy Spirit to communicate a certain action, but it is now used popularly by denominationalists to communicate an entirely different action. Chances are if you’ve heard about “calling on the Lord,” then you have probably heard that it means either to pray to the Lord, or to pray the “Sinner’s Prayer” for salvation. But now, we will search the scriptures and seek out the truth of the concept of “calling on the name of the Lord,” and whether it properly fits today’s idea of the “Sinner’s Prayer.”

Sample of the
Sinner’s Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. In Your Name. Amen

Due to the widespread use in the scriptures of the statement: “calling on the name of the Lord,” we have a great opportunity before us to come to a full and accurate biblical understanding. Its first occurrence is in Genesis 4:26, “*And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the LORD.*” Now if “to call” simply means “to pray,” then this would be an odd statement and strange to the context. By

definition, the Hebrew word for “call” (*qara*) means to acknowledge, make mention of, preach, or publish. Taking that into consideration, this text is explaining that Enosh’s generation began to look to God, make mention of His name, and publish His will in their lives. Therefore, the first time “calling on the name of the LORD” was used it referred to man’s service and obedience to God. And that is exactly what the statement means the next time it is used, in Genesis 12:8, where Abraham “*built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.*” Again, to say that this call was a prayer would be strange to the context. Abraham built an altar, and gave service to the will of God on that altar (i.e. he called on the name of God).

Before going further, it is essential to point out that these individuals in Genesis were calling on the NAME of the LORD. The Hebrew word for “name,” is *shem*, and its definition is as follows: “honor, authority, character.” These men were not shouting out the name of God, they were acknowledging His authority in their acts of service. So, a man who is following the scriptures in his actions to be a true worshipper is “calling on the name of the Lord.” And so we see then that a Christian “calls on the name of the Lord” every time we serve within the authority (name) of Jesus Christ.

There are a few other examples in the Old Testament of men calling on the

name of the LORD, such as Genesis 13:4; Genesis 21:33; Genesis 26:25; Joel 2:32, but I am anxious to examine the New Testament’s use of the statement. In 1 Corinthians 1:2, look carefully at the entire verse: “*To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.*” Just with consideration to the context, is it logical to conclude that Paul meant that these saints in every place were praying to the Lord? Certainly not, for that would be a contradiction of the bible. Who do we pray to? The Father, or the Son? Some may direct their prayers to Mary, others to Jesus, but the bible reader knows to pray to the Father only (Luke 11:2, “*When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven*”). Besides the contradiction, the Greek word for “name” is defined as follows: “authority, character, rank.” That’s just like the Hebrews word in the Old Testament. So then, 1 Corinthians 1:2 refers to saints in every place who acknowledge (call) the commandments (authority) of Jesus Christ in their lives, and live not according to their own name.

There is a lot of talk in the world about praying the sinner’s prayer in order to be saved. For those not familiar with the sinner’s prayer, it is a short spoken request to Jesus, inviting Him into one’s life as their personal Savior, and forgiving them of all