

The Romans Road to Salvation

Written by David Wise

Monday, 02 September 2019 11:25 -

It's commonly taught in "decisional Christianity" today that one can follow the "Romans Road to Salvation", ultimately confess and believe on Jesus Christ and be saved to eternal life. This supposed road to eternal salvation follows certain verses in the book of Romans culminating in [Rom. 10:9](#)

, calling upon the sinner to confess and believe on Jesus Christ and pray the Sinner's Prayer to be saved. This Romans Road to Salvation – which we will call the "Free Will Romans Road" for clarification purposes – is generally centered around five questions and corresponding verses from Romans to answer each question.

1st – Question: "I consider myself a good person; won't that be good enough to go to heaven?" **Answer:** [Rom. 3:23](#) – "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*". See also [Rom. 3:10-18](#) and [Rom. 5:10](#)

2nd – Question: "Is sin really that big of a deal? If it is, what hope is there?" **Answer:** [Rom. 6:23](#) – "*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

3rd – Question: "After what I've done to sin against God, how could he willing die in my place?" **Answer:** [Rom. 5:8](#) – "*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*"

4th – Question: "How can I be saved?" **Answer:** [Rom. 10:9](#) – "*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*" See also [Rom. 10:10-17](#)

4a Supplement – In addition to the confession and belief, you need to pray the Sinner's Prayer

The Romans Road to Salvation

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Monday, 02 September 2019 11:25 -

(no verse reference from the Bible). The Sinner's Prayer varies but usually goes something like this: "Heavenly Father, I know that I am a sinner and that I deserve to go to hell. I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins. I do now receive him as my Lord and personal Savior. I promise to serve you to the best of my ability. Please save me. In Jesus' name, Amen."

5th – Question: Now, how can I know I am saved? **Answer:** [Rom. 8:1](#) – “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*”

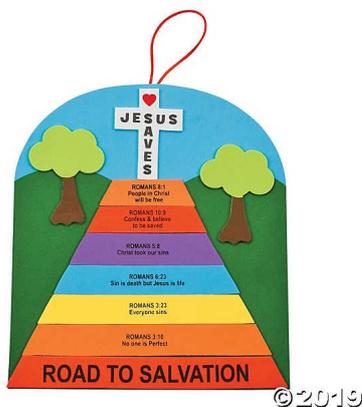
” See also
[Rom. 5:1](#)

and

[Rom. 8:38-39](#)

See this website for the general structure of this Free Will Romans Road: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Romans-road-salvation.html>

See this graphic for another summary of this Free Will Romans Road:



In contrast to this Free Will Romans Road supposedly leading to eternal life, we want to present to you the Sovereign Grace Romans Road, which I believe actually follows the roadmap for salvation presented by the Holy Spirit sequentially through the book of Romans. If you read Romans straight through each chapter, you will reach a different conclusion for the cause of eternal salvation than man's confession and belief that is presented in the Free Will Romans Road.

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Monday, 02 September 2019 11:25 -

A road is something that follows a straight sequential path. When you travel on the interstate, you pass mile marker 100, then 101, then 102 and so on. However, this Free Will Romans Road of salvation is not a road, but a Picasso abstract painting going in every direction. You go from chapter 3 forward to chapter 6, put it in reverse back to chapter 5, surprisingly skip over chapters 7-9 totally for some reason, get saved in chapter 10, and then put it back in reverse to chapter 8, and then back to chapter 5 for your assurance of salvation. The transmission on your salvation vehicle just got ruined with all those starts, stops, reverses, and purposefully swerving to miss chapters 7-9.

The Free Will Romans Road begins in the right place, #1 showing the total depravity of man and everyone as sinners before God. For some reason, however, man's inability to do anything good or righteous from [Rom. 3](#) is somehow forgotten by the time you get to #4 and [Rom. 10:9](#) that calls upon man to do the good work of belief to be saved. It's conspicuous that #4 in the Free Will Romans Road asks, "How can I be saved?" (clearly placing salvation in the hands of man, not in the hands of God); then calls upon the sinner to perform an action (confess and believe); then after they have performed that work, they are notified that they have been saved by grace (unmerited favor apart from works). The logical contractions in this process are blatantly glaring.

Next, we need to consider the Sinner Prayer. There is no verse in the Bible that tells you to pray the Sinner's Prayer to receive eternal life or what that prayer actually is or what you are actually supposed to say. Don't you think that the prayer that is the supposed "one requirement for salvation" that God would give you exactly what to say to where you make sure you say it right? This one prayer that is the hinge that swings my eternal life from hell to heaven, what if I say it wrong or use the wrong words? Something this important, that bears the weight of all of mankind's eternal destination, not only would God definitively inspire it in his word, but clearly Jesus would be teaching men to pray this prayer just like he taught the disciples to pray the model prayer. This prayer would be so replete in scripture that we would know the exact words that we are required to say to gain eternal life. Instead, scripture is entirely silent on the Sinner's Prayer. It has been entirely created by man, apart from scripture. Furthermore, man has not even agreed upon the content of the Sinner's Prayer. Depending on what pamphlet, tract, church, or website you frequent, you will see different wording of the Sinner's Prayer. Let's be honest together for a minute. If this prayer is really the requirement for eternal life, these are the most important words this world has ever known, but for some reason, God didn't tell us what the words of this prayer actually were and didn't bother to mention it in the scriptures at all... Clearly, something this important would be so clearly highlighted in the word of God – even in the book of Romans, right? – that we would know exactly what God required us to say to be saved. Instead, God and his word are entirely silent on the Sinner's Prayer. We as sinners should pray unto God in repentance and faith and belief, but the Sinner's Prayer has no more to do with your eternal life than any other work of man... and that is nothing.

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Monday, 02 September 2019 11:25 -

The process and flow and content of the Free Will Romans Road to salvation is unfortunately riddled with logical contradictions and unscriptural requirements upon man. Here we hope to guide you through the proper scriptural roadmap in Romans – the Sovereign Grace Romans Road to Salvation – straight through the book of Romans with no skips or reverses or swerves.

First, we need to note that the beginning 3 components and verses to this Free Will Romans Road to Salvation are good and lay an appropriate foundation. [Rom. 3:23](#) – “*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*”

– is a very good summary verse of the first 3 chapters of Romans. In

[Romans 1](#)

, we are told about the sinful idolatry and living of the Gentiles apart from God. In

[Romans 2](#)

, we find the Jews are no better because they are just sinners too. In

[Romans 3](#)

, Paul brings both the Jews and Gentiles together on the same plane as abject sinners before God. “

9) *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10) As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11) There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12) They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*”

(

[Rom. 3:9-12](#)

). The summary is very succinctly summarized that “all (without exception) have sinned and come short of the glory of God”. We are ruined sinners, dead in sins, with no ability to do good or perform any act of righteousness that is pleasing to God. That is the appropriate foundation that is necessary to be laid, but for some reason the Free Will road forgets this total depravity of man to do good by chapter 10 when man is then called upon to do the most good and righteous act among men which is to believe on Jesus and be saved.

In [Romans 4](#), we are given a presentation of justification by faith based on the example of Abraham. Just like Abraham, we do not place our hope or assurance of salvation in something we did – “*For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God*” ([Rom. 4:2](#)) – but we place our hope of salvation solely in the grace of God.

Following on to [Romans 5](#), I will flip the Free Will #2 and #3 to where we are following the Romans road in the appropriate chapter sequence. [Rom. 5:8](#) – “*Bu*

The Romans Road to Salvation

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Monday, 02 September 2019 11:25 -

t God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
We are sinners before God but even in that dead and ruined state, God commends his love toward us and sent his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us.

In [Romans 6](#) , even though we have earned death and judgment for our sins (wages are what we earn for our works and the payment for our wages of sin is death), we have been given the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. [Rom. 6:23](#) – “*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

Now, notice what the text says. The just payments for our sins have earned us the wages of death. However, we have been given the “gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”. The Free Will Romans Road leads up to

[Romans 10:9](#)

that calls upon the sinner to choose Christ and to gain eternal life by their confession and belief on Christ. That false teaching is derailed before you even get to

[Rom. 10:9](#)

, even in their own process here in the plain teaching of this verse in

[Rom. 6:23](#)

. How are you given the gift of eternal life? The text does not say you are given eternal life through your belief and confession of Christ, but simply that you are given eternal life “through Jesus Christ our Lord” – through only the finished work of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ with no action performed by man at all for eternal life. Furthermore, this is a “free gift” (see

[Rom. 5:16](#)

&

[18](#)

). Wages are payment for an action you perform. Grace is unmerited favor and cannot be co-mingled with works (

[Rom. 11:6](#)

). If it's required for man to perform the work of confession and belief to be saved to heaven, then that is no longer the “free gift” of eternal life but is now the “wages” of eternal life. Then, in the Free Will Roman Road we are not saved solely by the finished work of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, but we have now received “the wages of eternal life through your confession and belief”. This is contradictory to the entire teaching of the New Testament of the salvation of sinners solely by the grace of God and through the death of Christ on the cross.

Now, even though already unrepairably broken in [Rom. 6:23](#) , the Free Will Romans Road takes the surprising detour somehow entirely omitting the teaching in Romans chapters 7 to 9. This detour is unfortunately necessary for this road's final conclusion of salvation of sinners by their confession and belief of Christ because if

[Romans 6](#)

did not destroy this false teaching,

[Romans 7](#)

The Romans Road to Salvation

Written by David Wise

Monday, 02 September 2019 11:25 -

to 9 will absolutely annihilate it.

As we continue through Romans, chapter 7 presents the internal conflict of the already saved child of God as we war between the flesh and the spirit in our lives. Salvation is not pending until [Rom. 10:9](#), but we see [Romans 7](#) presents the internal warfare and struggle for those that are already saved.

[Romans 8](#) begins with the assurance that the Free Will Roman Road does not offer until “after” confession and belief in [Rom. 10:9](#). [Rom. 8:1](#) – *“There is therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”*

Again, salvation is supposedly pending until we take heed to the well-meant offer of salvation in

[Rom. 10:9](#)

. However, here we find people who are already “in Christ” and have “now no condemnation”. We don’t get “in Christ” when we believe and confess, but we were placed “in Christ” by God from before the foundation of the world (

[Eph. 1:4-5](#)

). It’s vitally important to understand that we are already “in Christ” and already have “no condemnation” prior to our confession and belief of Jesus Christ. Belief is the evidence of salvation, not the cause of eternal life.

[Romans 8](#) continues to give us as great of a summary of our salvation that we see anywhere in scripture. Any Romans Road that does not pass through [Romans 8:29-30](#) has purposefully circumvented the inspired order of this book by the Holy Spirit. If you have never heard these verses in

[Romans 8](#)

preached in your church, you need to ask your preacher why not. If you have never read

[Romans 8](#)

yourself, you need to read it yourself and read this explanation. You cannot understand the context of the call to confession and belief in

[Rom. 10:9](#)

until you travel through the narrow bridge of the covenant of redemption on this road in

[Romans 8](#)

. This road bridge of our salvation road is so narrow that only God can fit through this bridge and man is left out totally.

“29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30) Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

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The Romans Road to Salvation

Written by David Wise

Monday, 02 September 2019 11:25 -

[Rom. 8:29-30](#)

) Here we see that the 5 connecting links in the covenant of redemption are all performed solely by God. You cannot put any action of man, any confession or belief, in this concise chain of salvation. God foreknew his people; God predestinated his people; the Spirit calls his people; Jesus Christ justified his people; God shall glorify his people. The Romans Road of salvation hinges on this verse. This declares the sovereignty of God in salvation from start to finish, not dependent upon man to perform the work of belief for eternal life, but salvation by God from start to finish, grace not works from start to finish.

Therefore, because salvation rests totally upon the work of God, not upon the work of man, we can have assurance that nothing can separate me from God's love. If it was my work (my confession and belief) that caused God to save me, then it would stand to reason that my works could remove me from my saved state as well. Thankfully, since salvation is of God from start to finish, then there is no work of mine or anyone else that can remove me from God's love because there's no work that caused me to be included in God's love. *"37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

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[Rom. 8:37-39](#)

)

In [Romans 9](#), the Holy Spirit takes us back to before the foundation of the world when God chose a people to foreknow and predestinate. What was the basis of God's election (his "choice") of a people to save? God's choice of his elect is depicted in God's choice to show love and favor to Jacob.

"(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)"

([Rom. 9:11](#)) God chose to love Jacob before he was born, before he had done any good or evil. Why? "That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth". Some people might begrudgingly admit the Bible does teach election. Instead of embracing "unconditional election" that we see depicted here (not based on a work or condition that man will meet), they present a teaching of "conditional election" (God chose those who he knew would end up choosing him). There's a major problem with that timeline – the children were not yet born and hadn't done any good or evil. God chose Jacob and God chose his elect before they did any good works. Therefore, God's choice of you to salvation cannot be dependent upon our future choice to confess and believe on him because your choice was too late, but furthermore that is clearly a work and election is not based on works. Many believe that man has the "free will" to choose Christ and be saved to heaven. Unfortunately,

[Romans 3](#)

has taught us that man's free will leads him to only reject Christ, not to confess and believe.

The Romans Road to Salvation

Written by David Wise

Monday, 02 September 2019 11:25 -

Therefore, because of man's depraved and ruined state and inability to perform any action or condition to gain salvation, we are left that the only hope of salvation for sinners is the sovereign election of God totally isolated from any work done on man's part.

"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

(

[Rom. 9:16](#)

). Eternal salvation is not by man's free will (not of him that willeth), it's not by any work we perform (nor of him that runneth), but solely of God's choice to bestow grace (but of God that sheweth mercy).

Now, by the time we arrive at [Romans 10](#), it has already been made abundantly clear how sinners have already been saved. The elect have been foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified by the work of God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit alone, not by any work of man ([Rom. 8:29-30](#)). Therefore, since God loved us before the world began and validated that love by sending his Son to die for our sins there is absolutely nothing that can separate us from the love of God ([Rom. 8:37-39](#)

[Rom. 8:37-39](#)

). The elect were chosen sovereignly by God, not by foreseen good works but were chosen by grace (unmerited favor) that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works (like confession and belief) but of him that calleth ([Rom. 9:11-16](#)

[Rom. 9:11-16](#)

). By the time, we arrive at

[Romans 10](#)

, the eternal salvation of God's people is not in question; it's not pending waiting upon the confession and belief of man. No, quite the contrary. Eternal salvation is not pending and in doubt, but the scripture has declared that it is already fully completed and secure by the work of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

With the understanding that salvation is not being "offered" to the sinner but has already been clearly and unmistakably "declared" to the sinner, we arrive at [Romans 10](#) with the proper context. [Rom. 10:9](#)

— “

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

The Free Will Romans Road has somehow forgot the foundational text that it began with in

[Rom. 3](#)

, that man is dead in sins with no ability to do good or do righteousness. Somehow, in

[Rom. 10](#)

, the sinner now has the ability to do the good and righteous work of believing on Christ. How is that possible when

[Rom. 3:9-18](#)

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The Romans Road to Salvation

Written by David Wise

Monday, 02 September 2019 11:25 -

[23](#)

and

[Rom. 8:6-8](#)

describe the total inability of man to do anything that is pleasing in the sight of God? If we follow the Sovereign Grace Romans Road of salvation, that has already been answered for us. Those who love God and have a desire to believe have already been “called” by the Spirit in the new birth (

[Rom. 8:29](#)

), given a new nature with the capacity to do the good work of belief. God has not offered man the ability to be saved to eternal life in

[Rom. 10](#)

by confession and belief, but instead we see God has changed the nature and heart of sinners by the power of his sovereign grace to enable them to believe in

[Rom. 10](#)

. Remember, belief is always the evidence of eternal salvation, not the cause.

Notice also, that those who are called upon to “confess with their mouth and believe in their heart on Jesus” ([Rom. 10:9](#)), the Holy Spirit affirms that “the word (of faith) is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; the word of faith, which we preach” (

[Rom. 10:8](#)

). Those who are being called upon to confess and believe on Christ already have the word of faith in their mouth and in their heart. Faith is a fruit of the Spirit (

[Gal. 5:22](#)

) and all men don't have faith (

[2 Thess. 3:2](#)

), so if anyone already has faith in their mouth and heart, that is evidence they are already saved and called by the Spirit. Now, these people are already saved by grace and by the work of Christ, and already have the word of faith in their mouth and their heart, but unfortunately they are trusting in their own righteous works for their righteousness and assurance of their salvation before God (

[Rom. 10:2-4](#)

). Paul calls upon those saved to eternal life children of God, to repent of their placing confidence of salvation in their own righteous works and instead place their full hope of eternal life in Christ as the end of the law for righteousness. These children of God were living under the bondage and burden of thinking they had to live a perfectly righteous life to go to heaven which they could never do to meet God's standard. This made them feel the bondage of constantly fearing their salvation in doubt because they never felt they had done enough for them to be righteous before God – and the answer to that was always “No”; they had not and could not do enough to absolve their guilt before God. Paul knew the weight of that burden and bondage intimately because he had lived that out and felt that bondage himself. Therefore, Paul earnestly desired for all his natural kindred of the Jews that were living under the bondage of the law to be saved and delivered from that bondage to feel the liberty that Paul now felt in trusting solely in the grace of God and work of Christ for salvation (

[Rom. 10:1](#)

The Romans Road to Salvation

Written by David Wise

Monday, 02 September 2019 11:25 -

to 4).

Therefore, Paul calls upon those to believe in Christ who already have the word of faith in their mouth and in their heart but are living under the bondage of feeling like only their righteous works can save them to heaven. The Holy Spirit through Paul calls upon those already born-again, saved to eternal life children of God to “confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Remember, you cannot confess something that is not true; otherwise, you are bearing false witness. If you confess that Jesus is your Lord, that’s not what makes him your Lord. Rather, you are confessing a fact that is already true – that Jesus is “already” your Lord. The Lord desires and the Holy Spirit commands every child of God to lay down the bondage of feeling inadequate in their works to be saved to heaven, and instead feel the liberation, salvation, and deliverance from that bondage of works being lifted off your heart by believing solely in Jesus Christ for salvation. There is a vital salvation and deliverance for the children of God in confession and belief in Jesus Christ. The work of confession and belief is not what gains you eternal life, but instead gives those who have already been saved to eternal life peace in their heart and assurance that Christ paid all the debt required for their eternal salvation.

Following the scriptural Romans Road to salvation does not end with an offer for man to choose to accept Christ and choose to go to heaven. Instead, the true Romans Road declares salvation by God’s sovereign grace that is fully executed and finished by God and Jesus Christ. However, we do want to end in the same place by calling upon the child of God to repent and believe on Jesus Christ. Where these two roads differ is the effect of that belief. The effect of our belief in Christ is not what gains us eternal life. Instead, our belief in Christ delivers us from the bondage of condemnation in our hearts and allows us to feel the liberty and peace in our souls of our status of already being saved by Christ. I want to also end with a call to action to repent and believe, and the end result of this road is actually the same as the Free Will Romans Road. The end result of eternal salvation is that we have no condemnation in Christ and nothing can separate us from Christ’s love. However, the reason we end up in that uncondemned and saved state is not because of our belief in Christ but because of God’s salvation solely by grace and the work of Christ. When we heed the call to believe on Christ, we now “feel saved” in our hearts and we “feel at peace” with God in our souls and experience the experiential salvation that is offered to the child of God if we believe on Jesus Christ.

Sermons

Click on the links below to listen to sermons on The Romans Road to Salvation.

[The Romans Road to Salvation – Part 1](#)

The Romans Road to Salvation

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Monday, 02 September 2019 11:25 -

[The Romans Road to Salvation – Part 2](#)