

What is Salvation?

From the Bible's point of view, salvation means to be saved from our sins. Jesus was born into this world so that He could become our savior. The name Jesus means, "Jehovah saves" or "Jehovah is become salvation". An angel told both Mary and Joseph that the child to be born was to be named Jesus (Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:31). Jesus is the only saving name given to mankind (Acts 4:12). The Bible declares that all men are sinners and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The Bible also states that the wages (payment) of sin is death (Romans 6:23). The word death in Romans 6:23 refers to more than just physical death; it is referring to the eternal separation from God that a person will experience if one dies in one's sins. This is where the Gospel comes into play. The word gospel means "good news." The "Good News" is that through the blood of Jesus we can be saved from our sins and born again.

How Can I Be Saved?

Jesus said that a man must be born of the water and Spirit to enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5). This new birth involves three elements: repentance, water baptism (born of the water) and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost (born of the Spirit). Even though Jesus doesn't mention repentance in John 3:5, God would not fill an unrepentant person with His Spirit.

Jesus preached that repentance was a necessary step to enter the kingdom and that it is required for salvation (Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:15, Luke 13:1-5). Jesus gave his disciples a command to baptize in water (Matt 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-48). Both John the Baptist and Jesus preached about the coming of the Holy Ghost [Spirit] (Matthew 3:11, Luke 3:16, Luke 24:49, John 7:37-39, 14:14-18, Acts 1:4, 8). So we see that when Jesus talked about being born of the water and the Spirit, He was saying that a person had to repent of their sins, be baptized in water in Jesus name, and receive the Holy Ghost.

How Did the Apostles Carry Out Jesus Command?

The Book of Acts is the only book in the New Testament with actual examples of people being saved after Jesus was crucified and the Holy Ghost came upon the apostles. The Book of Acts tells us how the early church started, how it grew and spread, and what they preached to people who wanted to be saved.

The Book of Acts starts out with Jesus telling the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:4-8). In Acts 2:-14, the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the disciples and the church was born. When the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, they began to speak in other tongues (languages) as the Spirit of God moved upon them (Acts 2:1-4). What happened caught the attention of other Jews in Jerusalem, and they asked what was going on. The apostle Peter preached to them that they had crucified the Jesus the Messiah, but He had risen again and sent back his Spirit upon the church, causing the apostles to speak in tongues.

When the multitude was convicted of their sin in crucifying the Messiah, they asked Peter, "...Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Peter then responded with these words, "...Repent, and be

baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38). We see that Peter applied the same three elements that Jesus had preached and taught his disciples, repentance, water baptism and Holy Ghost baptism.

Acts 2:38 Repeated in the Book of Acts

We see the message of Acts 2:38 repeated throughout the Book of Acts.

- In Acts chapter 8, the Samaritans are saved and come into the church. They are water baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:14-17).
- In Acts chapter 10, the Gentile Cornelius and his household are saved and come into the church. They receive the Holy Ghost and are water baptized (Acts 10:44-48).
- In Acts chapter 19, the apostle Paul finds disciples, re-baptizes them in Jesus' name, and prays for them by laying his hands upon them. Then they receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts 19:1-6).

What is the Plan of Salvation?

We see that on the Day of Pentecost when convicted people asked what they needed to do, Peter told them to repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, and they would receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38). This message was repeated in Acts 8:14-17, 10:44-48, and 19:1-6.

The Book of Acts reveals that the plan of salvation preached by the apostles and early church required people to:

- Repent
- Be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins
- Receive the Holy Ghost

We find that repentance, water baptism in Jesus' name, and receiving the Holy Ghost identify a person with the basic gospel message. The Gospel message as summarized by the apostle Paul is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4). A sinner identifies and partakes of the gospel by the following:

- Death to sin – Repentance (sinner turns from sin to God)
- Being buried with Jesus – Water Baptism (Rom 6:3-5)
- Rising again in the newness of life – Receiving the Holy Ghost

When we respond to the word of God in obedience, we will obtain the salvation experience recorded in the book of Acts. For additional information, see the articles on repentance, water baptism, Holy Ghost baptism, and the Gospel.