

# The New Testament Plan Of Salvation

## Introduction:

The subject of salvation should be of interest to everyone, especially to professing Christians and to those who love the Lord. There is much in the Word of God that unfortunately, is often overlooked in the denominational world today. The Spirit of God comes to lead us into all truth, but it is very hard for people to receive new truth, especially those who have already had a Christian experience. Many people are afraid of anything that's not taught in their particular denomination and are apt to classify it as heresy, false teaching, or fanaticism without stopping to see whether or not it is really found in the Word of God.

Saul of Tarsus truly believed that he was serving God when he persecuted and imprisoned the Christians of his day, but after Jesus appeared and spoke to him, he was dramatically transformed. He later declared, "After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers" (Acts 24:14). We must search out the Scriptures with an open mind in order to truly determine if what we've been taught can hold up to the standard of the Word of God. Traditions of men and churches are useless if they are not found written in Scripture.

## The Teachings of the Apostles:

Have you ever studied the New Testament and compared mainstream Christianity of today with the Christianity practiced and taught by the apostles? In the early church, as recorded in the New Testament, they baptized (immersed) all their converts in Jesus' name (not in the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost). They were also routinely filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke in other tongues. They believed and practiced divine healing. Any one of these things is often called fanaticism by many modern churches. Who is wrong – the Bible or modern churches? How did mainstream Christianity stray so far from the original pattern presented in Acts (the record of the early church)? Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism (Ephesians 4:5).

Many people have inherited religious beliefs from their mothers and fathers and have never stopped to compare those beliefs with our only guidebook – the Bible. The death of Jesus Christ purchased a far greater salvation than most people know anything about today. Many people believe that by repenting of their sins and striving to live as best as they can, they experience all there is to salvation. But as Paul said, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33). God desires to give all of us righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17), and receiving the Holy Ghost is a very definite experience with definite supernatural evidence. As is routine in the record of Acts, Peter and the Jews with him perceived that the household of Cornelius had received the Holy Ghost “because they heard them speak with tongues” (Acts 10:46), and we should expect the same evidence today. Because

many people do not, they mistakenly believe that they have received the Holy Ghost when in fact they have not. For this reason, there is much deadness in many churches and often a feeling that “something is missing” in the lives of many professing Christians. There is something missing – the authentic baptism of the Holy Ghost, as experienced by the New Testament church!

On the Day of Pentecost, when the New Testament church was inaugurated, the Holy Ghost filled all who were waiting for Him, and they all spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4). Peter explained, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh” (Acts 2:16-17). If God worked in this way in the days of the apostles, and we read of this same sign being used throughout Acts and the Epistles, then why do some people (even preachers) go as far as to call the same experience today the work of the devil? If we do not understand something, we should go slowly and see whether it is really in the Bible, lest we be found fighting against God and He would say to us as He did to Saul, “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (Acts 9:5).

When Peter preached his marvelous sermon on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost pricked the hearts of the hearers with conviction, and they cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter gave them the only New Testament method of receiving salvation: 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).

How terribly this method has been changed and twisted today! No wonder many churches do not have the results the apostles did. The record and

pattern of Acts should be normative and expected in the church – not the exception. But over the course of history, the church has deviated from the Biblical pattern. In anticipation of this, Paul declared, “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel ... let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8).

There has been a measure of truth in most churches, and therefore they have received a measure of blessings, but God is encouraging us to come deeper and obey/experience the same gospel pattern preached and practiced in the Book of Acts. God is no respecter of persons. He will do for us just what He did for the apostles if we meet the same conditions – simple faith and obedience.

### Repentance, Baptism, and the Holy Ghost:

Let's quickly outline this Biblical gospel salvation plan as commanded in Scripture. The grace of God through Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross has made salvation possible. There is nothing we can do to add to what He has done. We receive this free gift through the vehicle of faith. Yet, man does have a role in his own salvation – his role is simple obedience. Part of true faith is appropriation, or application (obedience). One who truly has saving faith will obey. Someone rightly has said, “Only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes.”

First, we are told to repent, turning our backs on all sin and turning to God in faith. Repentance is motivated by godly sorrow, and it includes confession of our sins to God and a meaningful commitment to change.

Second, we must be baptized (immersed) in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matthew 28:19 Jesus told His disciples to baptize in the name (singular) of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. He did not say to baptize in the titles. If this command literally meant to use the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, then there would be a great contradiction in the Bible, for the disciples never baptized in any way but in the name of the Lord Jesus (see Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16.). So, we must conclude that either the disciples disobeyed Jesus' command, or the mainstream church today is. Jesus said to baptize in the name (singular) of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. These titles are not the one proper name of God, but terms that describe God's relationships to humanity.

These three roles of God are revealed to us in the name of Jesus. The name of the Son is Jesus (Matthew 1:21). Moreover, Jesus said that He came and manifested the Father's name, and that the Holy Ghost would be sent in His name (John 5:43; 14:26). The one saving name of God is Jesus, which literally means Yahweh-Savior. Jesus was the one God of the Old Testament who came in flesh to be our Savior. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name" (Luke 24:47). In Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, according to Colossians 2:9, so to fulfill Matthew 28:19 we must baptize in Jesus' name. This is the apostolic pattern we see being exercised in Acts, and referred to consistently in the Epistles.

Third, God will pour out the gift of the Holy Ghost upon us just as He did on the disciples and early church, and we will manifest the same Biblical sign that they did – speaking in unknown tongues. (See Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6.) As Jesus said, "These signs shall follow them that believe ... they shall

“speak with new tongues” (Mark 16:17). This is also a consistent pattern we witness all throughout Acts and the Epistles.

It takes obedience to all three elements to complete God’s plan of salvation for the New Testament church. This is the Scriptural pattern first commanded on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38), and we were never given any instruction that retracts or alters this command.

### Conclusion:

Our hearts are burdened for those who really love the Lord but who through ignorance or fear are being cheated out of their inheritance. We encourage you to search the Scriptures, and see whether these things are true. Earnestly ask God to lead you into further truth despite the earthly consequences. We must obey the gospel according to the Biblical pattern in order to be ready for the coming of the Lord. He will come to catch away (or rapture) those who have the same Spirit dwelling in them that raised up Jesus from the dead. Now is the time to examine yourself to see whether or not you are in the faith of the apostles, or the faith of a mainstream religious system created by men. Now is the time to compare what you have been told against what is clearly taught in Scripture. Now is the time to make your election sure!

May God bless you and lead you in Jesus’ name!

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