

# WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?

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Published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,

## WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?

What is it to be saved? It is to be placed in the condition of a child of God, an inmate of the Father's kingdom.

Bible readers ought not to differ as to the terms of admittance into the Kingdom of God; but experience and the history of the world show that they do differ, and that too, widely. It is important to learn what the Bible really does say touching the question "who shall be saved."

Being aliens and foreigners, by nature, before we can consistently cry "Abba Father," we must become heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, by adoption into the family of God.

The pleasant preacher who preached on the day of Pentecost, and who is noted for the wisdom of his teaching, gives us to understand, that in his day he was authorized to declare "repentance" and "baptism" to all that heard him, telling them that by paying heed to these requirements they should receive a remission of their sins. And while we are looking at the words as they stand recorded before us, the impossibility of our entering upon a state of happiness and rest with the stains of convicted sin upon us, is impressed upon us as being not only a truth, but a wise provision of the Almighty; for, could we wish to carry the consciousness of guilt with us beyond the grave, to be continued with us in a saved state, there must remain in us a part of that corruptible nature which is at "enmity with God," and from which we are now so anxious to be made free. Hence this idea of remission of our sins comes to us as a most beautiful and wise provision; and instead of our spirit revolting against it, witness is borne to the truth and the necessity of it as a doctrine of salvation.

In order that sin may be remitted, faith must intervene, and this faith must be of that kind that is pleasing to God; for, "without faith it is impossible to please Him," and "he that cometh to Him must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. xi. 6. And we cannot but accept as

a truth that God can not be pleased with man, unless man yields due homage and obedience to such commandments as He has given to him for his guidance and welfare. When the children of Israel heard the command thundered from the lips of Moses, Repent ye of all your iniquity, they were required to obey. When a similar command issued out of the mouth of John, and reverberated along the shores of Jordan, is it wonderful, or strange, that men listened to it, and, rejoicing that a voice was heard reproving that untoward generation of sin and iniquity, bowed to the mandate, and from Jerusalem, and Judea, and all the region round about, went out to him and were baptized by him, confessing their sins?

Nor should we now wonder that God's goodness should be manifest to man, while confessing to our own hearts that never in the history of the world since the days when John the Baptist preached *repentance* and *baptism*, has a people lived so eminently needful of salvation as the people of the present age; nor should any that have ever lived welcome deliverance so universally and so earnestly as men of this day and generation.

The conclusion from these premises is inevitable, that, if John, Jesus, His immediate disciples, as well as the one born out of due time, all preached *repentance* and *baptism* as of the first importance, and essential prerequisites to salvation, and these prerequisites are the results of faith in God, this Faith would be a moving principle of action impelling men to yield obedience to God's law, that they may be saved with His salvation; and no other salvation is of value to man.

Faith in God prompts its possessor to seek favor with Him; and as a necessary consequence the question is asked: How shall I please God? Of course the first thing pleasing is a desire for His favor and mercy, to be obtained through a forsaking of sin; and this forsaking of sin is to become an established covenant in the heart of him possessing a faith in God and in His abundant power to reward *all* those seeking His salvation.

The creation of this desire to be saved together with the established determination, or covenant to forsake sin, is that which is often alluded to as a change of heart, or experimental religion; more correctly named a change of purpose, or of will, from the service of sin to the service of righteousness. This may be said to be a reception of the Spirit of Christ unto repentance, and has for long years been mistaken for the gift of the Holy Ghost; whereas, the scripture informs us that the *Holy Ghost* fell not upon those people receiving of this Spirit of Christ unto repentance, until after the remission of sins. As proof of this, read Matt. iii. 11, 14-17; Acts viii. 14-25; xix. 1-7. This remission of sins came *after* the work of conviction and repentance had culminated; and the willing subject, in obedience to the commandment: "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;" had been immersed in water by one authorized. The Great Teacher Himself, that He might fulfil *all* righteousness by the redemption of that body of the seed of Abraham which He had taken upon Himself, bowed to the divine majesty of the command, and solicited baptism, (by immersion) at the hands of him who administered freely to all that came, from Judea, and Jerusalem, and the region round about.

How any professed Christian can object to the baptism of water, and that too by immersion, when it is so evident that Christ, "the way and the life," the "shepherd of the sheep," in whom was the fulfillment of the law, was Himself so baptized, is a mystery. For nearly three centuries, as history informs us, no other mode was used.

That baptism by water is for the remission of sins is evident from the scriptures. Read carefully Matt. iii. 6, 16; xxviii. 19-20; Mark i. 4-8; xvi. 14-16; Luke iii. 3; xxiv. 47; John iii. 5.

Now, sins having been remitted through the effect of faith on God, belief on the Lord Jesus Christ, the reception of His Spirit unto repentance, begetting a willingness to yield to the law by which the body is brought in submission to the ordinance of *baptism* in water, there remains that other and better work: the baptism of fire, or the Holy Ghost.

Reader, how often in your still moments, when life in its impulses was pausing for a re-gathering of strength, have you lifted your thoughts upward and longed for that subtle messenger from the skies, promised ages ago to the believer, enjoyed

by very many of the disciples of Christ, in His day, and guaranteed to every *true believer* in *all* the world, whenever and wherever "this gospel of the kingdom" should be preached "for a witness unto all nations." See Mat. xxiv. 14. How earnestly have you wished for the days of the preaching of Christ to return; how devoutly prayed for "good old Holy Ghost religion;" and if this wish be now impressed upon you, if this prayer now linger sweetly in your heart, and you are bold enough to *dare* the contempt of your brethren of the chapel in which you kneel, or the synagogue in which you worship, read what now remains of this little tract. But if you be not thus bold, hand this to your neighbor and let him try to measure it by the scriptures in which you think you have "eternal life," and ascertain whether they testify of these things.

When looking at the record as found in John's Gospel iii. 5, it will be found that the Saviour, the "way" and the "life," declared to a competent ruler in Israel, Nicodemus by name, that a new birth was necessary; and enforcing the precept, repeats the assertion like this: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." You and I, if desirous of entering into such a kingdom, *must follow*, not only the *words* of the "way" and the "life," (see John xiv. 6,) but the example; entering in by the door as He that entered by the door was the Shepherd of the sheep, (see John x. 1-10,) and following Him, acknowledging Him as the proper and only "way," "the door," by which, if we enter we shall find "eternal life," accept the teaching given to Nicodemus and be "born of the Spirit," or to speak more in accordance with the promise of Peter, made in that so oft repeated, and so well remembered sermon of the day of Pentecost, "Receive the Holy Ghost."

But how? Having been born of the water, it remains now for God to sign the establishment of the covenant by the *seal* of adoption, and this was anciently done by the conferring of the Holy Ghost through the *laying on of hands*.

When Christ sent out twelve men to minister in His name, He ordained them. If ordination be the same now as in those days, it will be understood as being by the laying on of hands for the conferring of spiritual power; and is, in effect, saying unto the recipient of the ordinance "Receive thou the power of the Spirit by which thou shalt minister in the name of Christ." If those who went into the world in

those days, to minister, were authorized by the laying on of hands; those now sent must be similarly authorized. "Synods," "Presbyteries," and "Conferences," hold that authority is conferred by the "laying on of hands," and ordain their ministers; but they do not profess to confer the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, the "Comforter," which was given to every baptized disciple, by the same process of "laying on of hands." The possession of the gift of the Holy Ghost depends upon the right to lay on hands derived from Christ, as he says of His sheep; "and I give unto them *eternal life*." (see John x. 28.) If Christ has not given them "eternal life" by giving them the Holy Ghost, in the appointed way, they do not know Christ, they have not entered into the kingdom, and cannot have eternal life abiding in them.

Laying on of hands for the conferring of the Holy Ghost is plainly taught. **FIRST**, by the acts of ordination of the Apostles by Christ, while He was with them, with the commandment to tarry for it at Jerusalem; and, after its reception by them, Peter's bold declaration that it was for "all whom the Lord should call." (See Acts ii. 37, 38.) **SECOND**, Philip, commissioned by the apostles, had been preaching in Samaria, and baptizing in the name of Christ, and had sent the tidings of joy echoing through the streets and round the environs of the residence of the neighbor to him who had fallen among thieves. The apostles at Jerusalem heard of his success, and in order to the confirming of the word uttered, *that the Holy Ghost cometh through the "laying on of hands,"* sent down Peter and John. (See Acts viii. 17.) "Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost." Acts viii. 14-17. **THIRD**, By the record found in the 19th chapter of Acts, when the great apostle to the Gentiles, in the active discharge of his duty, as a man convicted, converted, condemned, blinded, dead unto life; convinced, healed, pardoned, the recipient of sight, physical and spiritual, dead unto sin, having been born unto life eternal, through the *washing away of sin and the laying on of the hands of Ananias,* (see Acts ix. 10-

22) was passing through the upper coasts coming to Ephesus, found there certain disciples, and supposing them to be instructed in the commonly received doctrines, or principles of the "good news:" asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost, *since they believed.* He was answered in a way at once strange and inexplicable; for he remarks, as if in wonder, "unto what then were you baptized?" And being told "unto John's baptism," he takes occasion to preach Christ unto them, hearing which, they were moved to accept his teaching. Receiving baptism at his hands, and sitting down, the apostle's hands are laid upon them and they receive the Holy Ghost. See Acts xix.

The question might here be asked: What has the reception of the Holy Ghost, through the laying on of hands, to do with salvation? It is answered very plainly in 1 Cor. xii. 8, where the declaration is fairly made: "that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

The plain reasoning for this is, that unless men were able to say that Jesus was the Lord, they had not received the Holy Ghost. And it is essential to know that Jesus is the Christ, the Lord, to obtain *eternal life*, which is salvation; for Jesus lifting his eyes to heaven, declaring that "the hour is come" praying for those who had believed and should believe on Him, says: "And this is *life eternal*, that they might know thee the only *true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." John xvii. 3. This knowledge being necessary to the attainment of eternal life, what hope is there given to man in this promise of "life eternal?" It is the *one great promise*. The one beside which all earthly things fade into nothingness. Riches, honor, powers, thrones, are all transitory,—fleeting playthings of the hour, fitted to adorn the fancies of a restless dream, but unworthy the consideration of a soul seeking the salvation of God.

When the Savior was about to take His departure from the earth, in the earnestness of His instruction to His disciples He charges them, as follows: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." John

xiv. 1-4. Also telling them of the Comforter, "Even the spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." John xiv. 17, 18.

And all this, to create in them an earnest longing for, an assurance of, a gift of power from on high to know that He was sent of God, and also to prepare them for the ultimate reception of an inheritance which He must go away to make ready for them, that where He was they also might be.

Now it is evident that Paul longed with strange pertinacity of spirit, for the cessation of the struggle daily imposed upon him by the "body of his death," or warring of the elements of the body *carnal* and the body *spiritual*. He hoped for such cessation through the gospel, in the resurrection with the just, to be blessed and holy, which is the "first resurrection." "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection: Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Rev. xx. 5, 6. Paul expected to receive as a reward for present trial and endurance, a crown of glory. He looked to the obtaining a glorious body, from which should be eradicated every species of corruptibility. He rejoiced in the continued in-dwelling and effectual working of the Spirit of truth, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, which he deemed the earnest of his future inheritance.

The resurrection and eternal judgment are almost inseparably connected, and the reader is referred for proof texts, to the Book of Rev., 14th and 20th chapters, and to 1 Cor. 15th chapter.

Now, while it is admitted that these things were all a part and parcel of the gospel in the days of Christ and the apostles, many assert that they are not needed now, and are non-essential to the salvation desired.

This, you and I can not accept, for we find that all those who really desired salvation through the gospel, came to John when he preached, for baptism. After that, the disciples of Christ baptized while yet He was with them. Still later, Jesus, cru-

cified, buried, risen, charges those to whom fell the work of the ministry, to *baptize*, teaching the *observance* of all things in which they had been *instructed*, and promised that *he* would be with them even to the end of the world. And yet at a still later period, Paul preached, baptized, and laid on hands for the conferring of the Holy Ghost.

Down through each of these periods, continual testimonies give us plainly to understand that no man can be saved except through Christ. If we desire the salvation of Christ, and are assured that salvation is shown forth in the gospel, as contained in the New Testament; we must do as they did who received the word in those days: for not all the light of the nineteenth century aside from the light of God can *save* us.

There is one other testimony found in Paul's letter to the Heb. vi. 1-3, which we now ask your consideration of.

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. And this will we do if God permit."

The principles of the doctrine of Christ are here *enumerated*, quite as a matter of course, not as any strange thing, or new; but as a plain, practical plan of salvation, of which Paul was not ashamed, as he most positively and boldly declares in the 16th and 17th verses of the 1st of Romans.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that *believeth*; to the Jew first, and also the Greek; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall *live* by faith."

Who has authorized a change of the ordinances?

Who has authorized man to say that the plan of salvation has been modified?

Who can, or dare say, that the way is wide that leads to life, and many *shall* be able to find and walk therein?

This puzzling question, as to "who then shall be saved," can be answered by the word of God. Christ said to the tempter when requested to command the stones to be made bread: "Man shall not live by bread *alone*, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—Mat. 4: 4.