**What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

"What must I do to be saved?" This question is asked twice in Acts, once to Peter and the other to Paul. The question was answered differently. We need to understand why the answers were different since it was the same question asked.

**Peter's response**

(Acts 2:22 KJV) **Ye men of Israel,** hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

(Acts 2:32-38 KJV) This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. {33} Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. {34} For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, {35} Until I make thy foes thy footstool. {36} Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. {37} Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? {38} Then Peter said unto them, 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.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost is delivering a message to the nation of Israel. We know this because in Acts 2:22 he identifies his audience, "ye men of Israel." On that day of Pentecost, Peter tells the nation of Israel about Jesus Christ whom they crucified but God raised Him from the dead to sit on the throne.

In verse 37, we read about the response that the men of Israel had when they heard about who Jesus Christ is, "What must we do?"

Peter's response is clear, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." From this response we are able to see that water baptism was a part of this gospel that Peter preached. Baptism was absolutely necessary and it was for the remission of sins.

Why do people get baptized today? Is it for the remission of sins? In most instances, it is not for that purpose we read about in the early Acts period. Most will say that it is for a sign of what happened to one on the inside, a symbol of the new life we have in Christ. Clearly, this is not the same reason why Peter said one must be baptized.

Peter also told them to repent. Repent means to have a change of mind. This word has changed much since the sixteenth century and we often think of repentance as being sorry for one's sins or the necessity to do something to make up for a wrong that was done. Peter tells Israel that they need to repent because they had crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, because they did not believe who He was and is. The men of Israel who recognized the truth about Jesus Christ asked Peter what they had to do to be saved so that they would not be counted as one of God's enemies (Acts 2:35). They understood that they had killed their Messiah and needed to change their minds as to who they believed Jesus Christ to be.

**Paul's response**

(Acts 16:30-31 KJV) And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? {31} And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Here we read about Paul telling the Philippian jailor what he must do to be saved, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

Here we read of the same question being asked but a different response. Peter's response had been that it was necessary to repent and be baptized; Paul's response was to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

This question is still being asked today. "What must we do to be saved?" What do we tell people today? Repent and be baptized or believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?

Since two different people answered the question and the responses were different let us look at who Peter and Paul were:

**Who is Peter and what message did he preach?**

(Matthew 16:18-19 KJV) And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. {19} And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Here we read that Peter was given the keys of the kingdom of heaven. In the book of Matthew, the kingdom of heaven was preached to be "at hand". This message was first preached by John the Baptist; later Jesus began to preach that same message.

(Matthew 3:1-2 KJV) In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, {2} And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The term "kingdom of heaven" is unique to the gospel as recorded by Matthew and it has to do with the Lord Jesus Christ sitting on the throne of David and reigning over the house of Jacob forever and ever. That kingdom will have no end and will not only extend over Israel but will extend over the whole earth. The kingdom of heaven has to do with Jesus Christ sitting as Kings of kings and Lord of Lords and reigning in the physical, literal, visible, earthly Davidic kingdom over the whole earth. It is that kingdom that was promised to the nation of Israel.

(Matthew 4:17 KJV) From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

(Matthew 4:23-24 KJV) And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. {24} And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

Jesus went about and preached the gospel of the kingdom. Remember the word "gospel" means "good news. Jesus preached the "good news" of the kingdom. It is a gospel that has a specific message. The nation of Israel was told that the kingdom was "at hand". The gospel was preached and practiced at that time. Healing was manifest among the people whenever the gospel of the kingdom was preached. The issue was Jesus is King.

(John 1:49 KJV) Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

Jesus told them that they had to believe who He was.

(John 8:24 KJV) I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

Jesus then sends the twelve to go out and preached the gospel of the kingdom, the good news of the kingdom. For Israel, to learn that the kingdom was at hand was good news.

(Matthew 10:5-8 KJV) These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: {6} But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. {7} And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. {8} Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Peter was given the keys of that kingdom. He had a special place of authority.

(Matthew 19:28 KJV) And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Peter is an apostle to the nation of Israel.

**Who is Paul and what message did he preach?**

(Romans 11:13 KJV) For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

Paul writes that he is the Apostle of the Gentiles. Was Peter, on the day of Pentecost, speaking to Gentiles? No, he was speaking to Israel (see Acts 2:22). The person in the Bible who speaks to Gentiles is PAUL.

(Romans 15:16 KJV) That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Again, Paul writes that he is a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.

(Ephesians 3:1-5 KJV) For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, {2} If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: {3} How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, {4} Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) {5} Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

Today we are living in the dispensation of the grace of God, God dispensing His grace. Paul writes that when we read his writings we may come to understand his knowledge of the mystery of Christ which was not made known in other ages unto the sons of men. This means that Peter, James and John did not know what Paul had learned about Christ.

Paul’s message is different than what the twelve preached. They preached the gospel of the kingdom, Christ returning to set up His kingdom on earth; Paul preached about the grace of God, how Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. (Romans 5:8)

We need to understand that there is more than one gospel in the Bible. Paul tells of the *mystery* that was not made known until a particular time in history. Paul tells us that there was something that was a mystery but it is now made known. Therefore it is no longer a mystery; it has been revealed.

In Ephesians 3:5, we need to understand the holy apostles and prophets mentioned there are referring to the apostles and prophets that were operating under Paul's ministry. It cannot be referring to those of time past because the *mystery* was not make known until Paul.

Paul tells us that he is the minister, the preacher and teacher of Jesus Christ for us Gentiles. The one who now has a message from God for us today is Paul. Paul's message is different from that which Peter preached. Paul does not tell us today that the Kingdom of heaven is "at hand".

(Acts 20:24 KJV) But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Paul testifies of the grace of God and his office is "Apostle **of** the Gentiles".

**How did it get from Peter to Paul?**

The nature of the book of Acts is transitional. In the beginning of Acts, Peter told the nation of Israel to repent and receive Jesus as Messiah. Israel rejected that message. Acts explains how Israel failed to obey God and rather than God coming with the prophesied wrath, He set aside His dealings with Israel and raised up a new apostle, Paul, with a different message. (Acts 9)

(Romans 11:32 KJV) For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

In Romans 11, Paul explains what happened in Acts 7, the fall of Israel. After the stoning of Stephen Israel is no different than the rest of the nations. There was a time when Israel was exalted above the other nations. Paul tells us that now there is no difference between Jew and Gentile.

Paul does not describe God continuing His dealings with the nation of Israel. Instead he tells us that God has set aside His dealings with Israel has been set aside for a season. (See Romans 11:25) God is now creating "one new man" (the Body of Christ), composed of Jews and Gentiles who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Different Apostleships - Different Gospels**

(Galatians 2:6-9 KJV) But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: {7} But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; {8} (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) {9} And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

In verse 7, we see that the gospel committed to Peter was the gospel **of** the circumcision and it was different than the gospel that Paul preached, the gospel **of**the uncircumcision.

**Note:** The new versions of the Bible change this verse to read the gospel **to** the circumcision and the gospel **to** the uncircumcision. This changes the meaning of the passage. Back in verse 2, Paul writes that he went to them to communicate the gospel that he preached among the Gentiles. And in verse 7, there is the word "*contrariwise*" which indicates something to the contrary, different.

Peter's message to the circumcision included repentance, water baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For they who seemed to be somewhat (the leaders among the 12: James, Cephas and John) saw that Paul preached a different gospel than what they were preaching. They recognized that Paul had authority equal to that of Peter who was given the keys of the kingdom.

In Galatians 2:8, we see the distinctive apostleships of Peter and Paul. Peter's apostleship is to the circumcision (the believing remnant of Israel) and Paul's apostleship is to the uncircumcision (heathen).

When James, Cephas, and John understood that Paul was preaching a different message, God was now doing something different, they shook hands and agreed to confine their ministry to the circumcision. The circumcision is what is known as the Little Flock, that is those who believed that Jesus was who He said He was, King of Israel.

Paul's ministry was confined to the heathen, which includes everyone that is not of the circumcision, Little Flock, which is the kingdom church on the day of Pentecost.

Paul message is the gospel of grace of God, the gospel of the uncircumcision. It is by Paul’s message we learn Jesus Christ died at Calvary and fully paid the sin debt for every person, both Jew and Gentile alike. When Paul says that to be saved we need to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, he means that you must believe what Christ has accomplished on the cross.

The message that Paul proclaimed was the preaching of the cross. The cross and the accomplishment of the cross were for the first time revealed and made known by the Apostle Paul. Paul did not go out and preach the "kingdom of heaven is at hand", and he did not say that one needed to "repent and be baptized."

(1 Corinthians 1:17 KJV) For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Peter was sent to baptize, wasn't he? Did not Jesus say in Matthew 28, "Go and baptize all nations?" and in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved?" If it were the same message that Peter preached; why was Paul NOT sent to baptize? Because Paul was given a different message to preach. Paul preached the cross; he did not preach the baptism for the remission of sins.

Paul tells us that a person must believe, that is, to trust in what Christ has done at Calvary to be saved under the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God. There is nothing else to do. no water baptism ceremony is necessary.

(Ephesians 1:12-13 KJV) That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. {13} In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

After they heard the gospel, that Christ died for their sins, that Christ paid the sin debt. They heard that Christ has done everything there is to do and there is nothing left to do but believe in order to be saved. After they believed they were sealed with the Holy Spirit, the earnest of our inheritance.

**Which answer should we follow?**

In the book of Acts we see that the question, "What must I do to be saved?" was asked two different times to two different men. And it received two different answers. Peter says to the nation of Israel on the day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins and you will receive the Holy Ghost" Paul says to the Philippian jailor to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

If we want what God has for us today we need to receive it from the Apostle Paul. Paul was given the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles. It is in Paul’s writings, Romans - Philemon, that we find the message of salvation today.

(1 Timothy 1:15-16 KJV) This *is*a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*{16}*Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Paul says that in the dispensation of grace his salvation was for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.

This is why it is so important to understand where to go in the Word of God to get the answer to the most important question anyone can ask, "What must I do to be saved?"

(2 Timothy 2:15 KJV) Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.