

Understanding Salvation in 2023
By C. Benjamin Dill
January 8, 2023

Good morning, Lighthouse! Are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Today we are going to talk about what may be the most important subject in the entire Bible. This subject is at least more important than any other to you, even if you are unaware that it is.

Today's subject is **salvation**.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there **salvation** in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Romans 1:16 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 to the Greek.

"Here we go again Pastor, why do y'all talk so much about salvation?"

Why, because it is for you the most important subject in the Bible...and many, maybe some of you, still do not understand it.

So today is all about **Soteriology**, the study of salvation. This is from the Greek word pronounced "soteria" that is translated to the Word "salvation" over 50 times in the New Testament.

We call it "God's simple plan of salvation"; but if it is so simple, why are so many confused about it?

This past year marks my 45th year that I have been teaching Basic Bible Truths. What I have discovered is that more people are confused about this supposedly simple plan than any other issue of doctrine you can name.

I have taught these Bible classes to hundreds of people over these past 45 years.

Of all the people from various religious backgrounds that are not Baptists, more than 95 out of a hundred discover they are lost and get saved in these classes.

Of Baptist Church members, more than half discover they are lost and get saved in these classes.

If that statistic holds true for this group here today, at least some of you need to get saved!

So today I will do my best to help you to understand the most essential elements of soteriology.

First, we need to understand what sin has done to our spirit. Why do I even need to get saved; and, get saved from what?

We are spiritual beings and:

I. Sin has destroyed our spirit.

A. I want you to think of your spirit as your operating system. (Your operating system is within your spirit, within your very soul; in a place the Bible calls the heart; where you think and reason and love and believe and more.)

1. Now, I want you to imagine the worst virus ever devised, way worse than COVID 19, a virus that has spread out and corrupted, without exception, every operating system throughout the entire world.

2. This is what the virus called sin has done to your spirit:

3. **Romans 5:12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

B. God tells us clearly the damage this sin virus has done to our operating system. This virus has left every one of us:

1. Dead in sins: **Ephesians 2:1 & 5**

1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were **dead in trespasses and sins**;

5 Even when we were **dead in sins**, hath quickened us together with Christ...

2. Unrighteous:

1 Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the **unrighteous** shall not inherit the kingdom of God?

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is **none righteous**, no, not one:

3. Condemned:

John 3:18 ...he that believeth not is **condemned** already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

4. Without Strength:

Romans 5:6 For when we were yet **without strength**, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

5. Ignorant and blind:

Ephesians 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the **blindness** of their heart:

6. Evil:

Matthew 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being **evil**, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

7. And much, much more:

Titus 3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.

8. This virus is real!

C. Your operating system has been corrupted!

1. There are, however, still lots of applications you can download and run;

2. ...but only the applications that are designed to run on your corrupted operating system:

Galatians 5:19-21 describes these:

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

3. All the good apps that make life worth living won't download!

4. We read the description of this state we are in in

Ephesians 2:2-3

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

II. You must, and I do mean MUST; download a complete new operating system!

A. Jesus said it like this as He was talking to a Pharisee named Nicodemus in the Bible:

1. John 3:3-7

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, **How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?**

5 Jesus answered, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

6 **That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**

7 **Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.**

2. Here Jesus compares the spiritual new birth to the flesh birth; both are mysterious, and both are from God, not we ourselves.

3. **Ecclesiastes 11:5** *As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.*

B. When we get our new operating system; when we get saved; when we are born again, a whole host of things will change!

1. We get to go to heaven when we die.

2. Jesus brings us to God; we now have access to the presence of God.

3. God now hears us when we pray and promises to act upon what we ask.

4. We are no longer in any danger of going to hell.

5. We become the actual children of God; both spiritually and eternally.

6. We experience a new peace in our lives that could not be experienced before.

7. All those Bible applications that give us the real answers for a great life and good success now become available to us.

III. What action on your part must take place in order to download this new operating system?

A. You must believe.

1. The word “believe” is God’s one condition of salvation.

a. It is found in the New Testament 220 times.

b. The word means “to entrust” or “to put in trust with”. *pisteuo*–

pist-yoo’-o

From [G4102](#); to *have faith* (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), that is, *credit*; by implication to *entrust* (especially one’s spiritual well-being to Christ): - believe (-r), commit (to trust), put in trust with.

c. Of the 220 times “*pisteuo*” is used in the New Testament, 110 of those times the word is used to tell us directly what to do to be saved –or- what someone did in order to be saved.

2. Upon our meeting this simple but extremely important condition, God Himself saves us, all by Himself without any help from us.

C. There are important things to know about this condition that we believe:

1. It is not the same term as the usual way we commonly use the word “believe”.

a. We “believe” we will win the game; we “believe” it is going to rain. We “believe” we will get home safely.

b. All those usages have question marks on them; maybe we will get home safely and maybe we won’t!

c. There are no question marks on God’s promise to save you:

John 3:36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life:* simply because it is not the same term that you use so often.

2. Since this word really means “to trust”, thus an important question immediately arises: “How can you genuinely trust something you are not sure about?”

a. The answer is simple; you can’t!

b. The Bible is the only resource from which we can know about the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.

c. How can you be sure about Jesus unless first you are sure about the Bible?

d. Same answer; you can’t.

e. That is why at Lighthouse, you keep hearing about how to KNOW the Bible to be accurate, dependable and trustworthy and about the salvation that is contained therein.

3. There are two aspects to this Biblical term “believe”; you must exercise both.

a. **There is a general trusting** in Jesus that He is who and what He says He is; that He is God Himself, that He by Himself, paid for all our sins on a Roman cross, that He spent three full days and three full nights in the grave and then rose again with power to save anyone who will place their trust in Him!

b. In Ephesians 1:12 this is called “first trust”. Do you have confidence that these things are true?

c. This is like what is described in **Hebrews 11:6** ...for he that cometh to God must believe that **he is**, and *that he is a rewarder* of them that diligently seek him.

c. **There is also a point of trust** that takes place; after we understand that we can really trust the Bible; after we learn Who Jesus really is [God] and what He did on the cross for us; upon which then and only then can we personally and individually place or put our trust in Him to actually save us from our sins.

d. **Ephesians 1:12-13**

12 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 [trusted], ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

IV. “But Pastor, I was told that first, I must repent of my sins...”

A. Did not Jesus tell us to repent?

1. Yes, He did.

Mark 1:15 Jesus said ...repent ye, and believe the gospel.

2. However, the Bible does not say to a lost man, “repent of your sins”; you won’t have the strength to do that until after you are saved and then you will be doing this continually the rest of your life.

3. **Hebrews 6:1** Tells us that the foundation of our salvation is: ...repentance from dead works, and of faith [trust] toward God,

4. When you place your trust completely in Jesus, the trust you had in your dead works or anything else for that matter will be a thing of the past!

5. Repentance takes place completely and automatically when, from the heart, we indeed trust in Jesus alone to save us from our sins.

B. What is it like in most cases when a person has some religious experience that does not produce a new spiritual birth?

1. The Bible condition for salvation is that you must “believe” or trust Jesus to save you.
2. Preachers are all the time telling you to “ask Jesus into your heart”.
3. But, asking and trusting is not the same thing! You could ask Jesus to save you a hundred times without actually trusting Him to do it.
4. Conversely you can trust Jesus to save you without saying a single word!
5. Oh, you will say something afterward; it is so wonderful you won’t be able to shut up about it!
6. As a matter of fact, if you have asked Jesus to save you more than once, it WAS NOT trust; it couldn’t have been. What does that tell you?
7. Have you ever downloaded a new app on your phone and the icon appears like it is supposed to; but when you try to use it, it won’t work?
8. This is what it is like trying to be a Christian when you are not really born again; sound familiar?

V. How does salvation really work?

A. A real new birth works like this.

1. “Born” is made alive, regenerated; “again”, Gr. *anōthen* literally means “from above”.

an'-o-then

From [G507](#); *from above*; by analogy *from the first*; by implication *anew*: - from above, again, from the beginning (very first), the top.

2. When we place our trust in Jesus to save us, God, by His Spirit, regenerates us from above and gives us life eternal.
3. **John 5:24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.
4. **1 Peter 1:23** Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

5. **1 John 3:9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Conclusion:

Some of you have all the icons:

You prayed,

You were baptized,

You are regular in Church,

You worship,

You may even give...

But there is still no peace.

There can be only one solution; you need a new operating system!

Some of you have recently downloaded your new operating system and now you are struggling to learn how to use it.

That's actually quite normal.

There is one other really common problem:

I have here an iphone 8; it's really old. The latest one is an iphone 14; I just really dread having to learn a new system.

So, I just keep putting off getting a new one.

Not a big deal with your phone; when it dies you can replace it.

You die in your old corrupted system, there is no coming back.