

The Violent Take It By Force

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If a skilled researcher were asked a question, “What do the scriptures actually say about salvation?” and given an accurate copy of God’s Word to research and told to ignore any thing that might have been told them previously from any other source: what sort of things do you imagine they would come up with?

They would probably come up with a list of things that were said by God, the prophets, Jesus and his Apostles.

How long do you think that list would be? Is it a finite list? And at what point on that list if you should actually do these things would you be saved?

Conversely, what sort of things would expect **not** to find on the list that are commonly stated to be a way of salvation?

If we were stand afar off and just look at the recurrent themes relating to salvation, we would see things like don’t commit evil or sin. Secondly, we are told to study and meditate on God’s Word so we can learn of him. We are told to have faith in God and his word. And we are told that we can have salvation through his name.

So salvation seems to boil down to four major themes. Lets take a look at them one at a time.

The first is don’t commit sin. Sin has always plagued man from the Garden of Eden till the time of the Law when then Ten Commandments were given by God to help clarify things. Now they weren’t the only commandments of God but they were a good basis for establishing behavior and character that pleased God. The proper response by man to sin is repentance.

Secondly, we are told to read or hear the Word of God and to take it to heart. When we do this we learn about God and man and our history and his will for us. And part of his will is that none should perish but all come to

repentance. This is repentance from the sin we have committed under point 1 and repentance from not having faith in him and his word under our next point 3 – Faith.

Without faith it is impossible to please God we are told. Why is that? It has to do with two principles. The First thing is that God is a spirit. And human flesh cannot see spirits directly. But we can read his word and God's word can be verified many different ways. God is saying though his word trust me and I will reward you greatly. God said that you must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. So we must believe in God and believe in his word.

The fourth point is God's name. What does that have to do with salvation? Five scriptures from the old and new testament basically sum it up:

If my people which are called by my name will humble themselves, seek my face, turn from their wicked ways and pray then I will forgive their sin and heal their land. 2nd Chronicles 7:14

Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. Acts 15:14

And in his name shall the gentiles trust. Matthew 12:21

Thou shall not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain. Exodus 20:7

And it shall come to pass saith the I AM that anyone who shall be named with my name shall be saved ... Joel 2:32. (From the Hebrew)

These five scriptures explain what we see in the new testament church as described in the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

In the New Testament we get a powerful commentary on the effectiveness of the Old Testament scriptures. Let's see what God the Father, his Son Jesus and the Apostles had to say about the name of God.

Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

John 3:17&18 *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that world through him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

John 1: 12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

We are told, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.* And in another place, *A like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us.* How does baptism save us? Now here are three scriptures that command us to be baptized by being immersed under water while being named with the name of the Lord.

Acts 2:21 in the original Greek will tell us: *“And it shall come to pass, everyone, who if [they] shall be named with the name of the Lord [they] shall be saved.”*

How and when are we named with the name of God? When we are baptized properly by obeying Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:21 and Acts 2:38 at the same time.

Matthew 28:19 *“All power in heaven and on earth is given unto me; go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.”*

Acts 2:38 *“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”*

What is being said here in these last three verses is that **Jesus** is the name of all of the ways God manifests himself to us – as the Father of Creation, the Son of Redemption and the Spirit of Regeneration – and that in this name, **Jesus**, we all must take to be saved. And that this occurs by being named with this name in water baptism.

You might ask, “I don’t see anyone taking the Lord’s name on themselves.” That is a good point and maybe the reason for this has to with

a comment that Jesus made about John the Baptist: “**From the time of John the Baptist till now the Kingdom of Heaven has suffered violence and the violent take it by force.**” You have to violently shake off the complacency that holds us down and keeps us from responding to God’s Word and actually obeying it.

And again Jesus said, “**Strive the enter in at that straight gate for few there be that find it.**” The word strive here means to strive as in an olympic competition for the Gold medal – to try with all your being. You might ask who are we striving against? The Devil of course – he doesn’t want anyone saved. And he will put a million roadblocks in your way and give a million reasons why you should not or don’t have do it now – or that you can always – just do it later. Of course, ‘**Later**’ never actually comes. There are a lot of people in Hell today wishing they had done things when they had the chance. That is why God said, **Today is the Day of Salvation.**

Also you might notice in that last scriptural verse, “**and few there be that find it.**” The rarest person you will find on the earth is someone that has actually **been named** with the name of **Jesus** in water baptism.

Did you ever wonder what Jesus meant when he said, “**you will be hated by all men for his names sake?**” Have you ever met anyone who was hated for his name’s sake? Try being baptized in his name and see what happens. Now for a few verses that might help you make up your mind and to take action to obey the Scriptures.

Acts Chapter 22:16

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, being named the name of the Lord. (From the original Greek)

Acts 15:17 says:

That the residue of men might seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called.

Ephesians 3:15 says:

Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.