

# Overview Of The Bible (8)

## Introduction:

- A. The Bible presents a consistent story from beginning to end.
  - 1. It is important to have a grasp of the overall story of the Bible.
  - 2. The Bible tells the story of how God created man, and tells the story of God's purpose for man.
  - 3. It answers the most important questions man has ever asked.
  - 4. And, it tells us about the problem of sin.
    - a. Sin is the violation of God's law (1 Jn. 3:4).
    - b. When man sins he becomes separated from God.
    - c. Man started out in a perfect relationship with God, but that relationship was soon lost through sin.
    - d. If one is guilty of committing sin, then he is spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1).
- B. The Bible also tells us about God's plan to deal with the problem of sin.
  - 1. The plan from the beginning was for Jesus, the Son of God, to come into the world for the purpose of taking away man's sins.
  - 2. Since man couldn't do anything to remove his own sins, God's plan from the beginning was for Jesus to come and provide a way for man to have his sins forgiven so that his relationship with God could be restored.
  - 3. God's plan involved Abraham.
  - 4. God would use Abraham to carry out his plan to save mankind from sin.
  - 5. God made three promises to Abraham in connection with this plan (Gen. 12:1-3).
  - 6. The rest of the Old Testament deals with the fulfillment of these three promises.
  - 7. The third promise refers to the fact that Jesus would be Abraham's descendant.
- C. The fulfillment of the promises God made to Abraham.
  - 1. God fulfilled his first promise to Abraham by making his descendants (Israel) into a great nation of people.
  - 2. God fulfilled his second promise to Abraham by giving Abraham's descendants (Israel) possession of the land.
  - 3. God fulfilled the third promise when Jesus came to take away man's sins.
  - 4. When he came he fulfilled God's plan by providing a way for man's sins to be taken away so that man could have fellowship with God again.
  - 5. The Old Testament concluded by looking forward to the coming of Christ.
  - 6. The New Testament begins by announcing the birth of Christ.
  - 7. He comes from the correct family line.
  - 8. But, he is also the Son of God.
  - 9. Jesus existed from eternity as one who is God before he came to earth as man (Jn. 1:1, 14)!
  - 10. Jesus presented his teachings when he came.
    - a. He came to fulfill the Old Testament.
    - b. He challenged the Jewish religious leaders.
    - c. He presented the highest moral standard the world has ever seen.

D. Jesus died for the sins of mankind.

1. Judas leads a mob to arrest Jesus.
2. Jesus is arrested.
3. His disciples run away (Matthew 26:56).
4. The Jewish leaders decide that Jesus deserves to die for claiming to be the Son of God (Matthew 26:65-66).
5. The Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, gives in to their plan to put Jesus to death.
6. The Roman soldiers scourge Jesus (Matthew 27:26).
7. They ridicule and mock him.
8. They crucify him (Matthew 27:35).
9. The Jewish leaders continue to mock him while he is dying.
10. Finally, Jesus dies on the cross.

E. Jesus was resurrected from the dead.

1. Jesus said he would rise from the dead on the third day following his death (Matthew 20:18-19).
2. The third day after Jesus died and was buried, his tomb was empty!
3. Jesus was raised from the dead on the first day of the week (Sunday).
4. He appeared to his disciples during 40 days following his resurrection (Acts 1:3).
5. He sent the apostles on a special mission to preach the message of Christ everywhere (Mk. 16:15-16).
6. The message of salvation through Christ would be sent to everyone.
7. Jesus told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit would come to guide them in their teaching (Lk. 24:49).
8. Forty days after his resurrection from the dead, Jesus returned to the Father in heaven.
9. Jesus completed his mission!

F. The Holy Spirit came in Acts 2 and the apostles began their work.

1. Jesus told his apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).
2. About 10 days after Jesus ascended into heaven, the power of the Holy Spirit is poured out on the apostles.
3. The apostles preached the gospel on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.
  - a. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
  - b. Jesus died for the sins of mankind.
  - c. Jesus was raised from the dead.
  - d. Jesus is now on the throne of God in heaven.
  - e. Jesus offers mankind salvation from sin.
4. The apostles make the Lord's terms for forgiveness known.
  - a. Man must believe the gospel.
  - b. Man must repent of his sins.
  - c. Man must be baptized (immersed in water).
  - d. When a person meets these terms, God will forgive all of his past sins (Acts 2:38).
5. These are the same conditions for forgiveness that every sinner must meet!
6. The church began in Acts 2 when those who were saved were added to the Lord's body.

7. The Lord adds the saved to his church.
  8. When the people met the Lord's conditions for forgiveness they were saved.
  9. When they were saved, the Lord put them in his church.
  10. Christ adds people to his spiritual body of saved people (the church) when they meet his terms for forgiveness of sins.
  11. Chart: The Lord adds the saved to the church.
- G. The book of Acts tells of the first people converted to Christ.
1. The word "conversion" refers to the idea of turning completely to God.
  2. The apostles (and others) continued preaching the message of salvation through Christ after the Day of Pentecost.
  3. As a result, many people believed and obeyed the gospel.
  4. By looking at their examples we can learn how to be saved today.
  5. These examples show us exactly how someone becomes a Christian.

## **Body:**

### **I. The Conversion Of The Samaritans.**

- A. Philip preaches to the people of Samaria (Acts 8:5-6).
- B. Many of the Samaritans respond to his preaching by believing and obeying the gospel message (Acts 8:12).
- C. The Samaritans met the Lord's conditions for forgiveness of sins and salvation.
  1. They heard the gospel.
  2. They believed the gospel.
  3. They were baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins.

### **II. The Conversion Of Simon.**

- A. Simon was a sorcerer in Samaria (Acts 8:9-10).
- B. Simon hears the preaching of Philip and is baptized into Christ like the other Samaritans (Acts 8:13).
- C. Simon met the Lord's conditions for forgiveness of sins and salvation through the gospel.
  1. He heard the gospel.
  2. He believed the gospel.
  3. And he obeyed the gospel.
- D. The sin of Simon.
  1. After his conversion Simon commits sin by attempting to purchase the power of the Holy Spirit from the apostles (Acts 8:18-19).
  2. Peter tells Simon that he is separated from God because of his sin (Acts 8:20-21).
  3. What does Simon need to do to have his sins forgiven?
  4. Peter tells him to repent of his sin and pray to God for forgiveness (Acts 8:22).
  5. The conditions for forgiveness that Simon was told to meet are different now because he is already in Christ.
  6. One who sins *after* he has become a Christian needs to repent and ask God for forgiveness!

### **III. The Conversion Of The Ethiopian.**

- A. God sends Philip to preach to an Ethiopian man who is reading the Old Testament Scriptures (Acts 8:29-30).
- B. Philip preaches the gospel to him (Acts 8:35).
  - 1. The Ethiopian decides he wants to be baptized (Acts 8:36).
  - 2. He confesses his belief in Jesus and is baptized (Acts 8:37-38).
  - 3. The Ethiopian rejoices after his baptism (Acts 8:39).
  - 4. Why is he so happy?
- C. The Ethiopian met the Lord's terms for forgiveness of sins and salvation.
  - 1. He heard the gospel.
  - 2. He believed the gospel.
  - 3. He confessed his faith in Christ.
  - 4. And he was baptized into Christ for the remission of his sins.

### **IV. The Conversion Of Saul.**

- A. Saul was a Jew who was trying to destroy the church (Acts 9:1-2).
- B. Jesus appears to Saul and speaks to him (Acts 9:3-6).
  - 1. Saul now believes in Jesus.
  - 2. It is obvious that Saul has repented of his sins because he no longer wants to destroy the church.
  - 3. But, there is still something he must do.
- C. God sends a preacher named Ananias to preach to Saul (Acts 9:10-16).
  - 1. Ananias baptizes Saul (Acts 22:16).
  - 2. Even though he believed in Jesus and had repented of his sins, his sins would not be forgiven until he was baptized.
- D. Saul met the Lord's terms for forgiveness of sins and salvation.
  - 1. He heard the gospel.
  - 2. He believed the gospel.
  - 3. He repented of his sins.
  - 4. And he was baptized into Christ for the remission of his sins.
  - 5. Of course, he would later become known as the apostle Paul.

### **V. The Conversion Of Cornelius.**

- A. Cornelius was a Gentile who was a good man by most standards (Acts 10:1-2).
  - 1. Cornelius was devout, generous, and prayed to God.
  - 2. But Cornelius was still lost in sin!
- B. God sends Peter to preach to Cornelius and his family (Acts 10:19-23).
  - 1. Peter preaches to Cornelius' family about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 10:38-41).
  - 2. The power of the Holy Spirit falls on Cornelius and his family while Peter is preaching (Acts 10:44-46).
  - 3. Were they saved at this point?
  - 4. No, this power was a sign to the Jewish believers to show them that these Gentiles could also be saved through Christ.
  - 5. Cornelius and his family still needed to be baptized (Acts 10:46-48).
- C. Cornelius and his family met the Lord's terms for forgiveness of sins and salvation.
  - 1. They heard the gospel.

2. They believed the gospel.
3. And they obeyed the gospel.

**VI. The Conversion Of Lydia.**

- A. Paul travels to Philippi and preaches to Lydia and her family (Acts 16:14).
- B. Lydia and her family are baptized (Acts 16:15).
- C. They met the Lord's conditions for forgiveness of sins and salvation.
  1. They heard the gospel.
  2. They believed the gospel.
  3. And they obeyed the gospel when they were baptized into Christ.

**VII. The Conversion Of The Philippian Jailer.**

- A. Paul and Silas are put in Jail in Philippi while preaching the gospel (Acts 16:16-24).
- B. This situation gives them an opportunity to preach the gospel to the jailer and his family (Acts 16:32).
  1. As a result, the jailer and his family are baptized into Christ (Acts 16:33-34).
  2. Because it is so urgent, they are baptized "the same hour of the night" instead of waiting until the next morning.
- C. The jailer and his family met the Lord's terms for forgiveness of sins and salvation.
  1. They heard the gospel.
  2. They believed the gospel.
  3. And they obeyed the gospel when they were baptized into Christ.

**VIII. The Conversion Of The Corinthians.**

- A. Paul travels to the city of Corinth and preaches there (Acts 18:1-7).
- B. As a result, many of the Corinthians obey the gospel (Acts 18:8).
- C. The Corinthians met the Lord's conditions for forgiveness of sins and salvation.
  1. They heard the gospel.
  2. They believed the gospel.
  3. And they obeyed the gospel when they were baptized into Christ.

**IX. The Conversion Of The Ephesians.**

- A. Paul meets people in the city of Ephesus who want to be disciples, but they don't know about the Lord's conditions for forgiveness (Acts 19:1-3).
  1. They had been baptized with John's baptism (John the Baptizer).
  2. Paul explains the difference between John's baptism and baptism into Christ (Acts 19:4).
- B. These Ephesians decide to be baptized into Christ (Acts 19:5).
- C. They met the Lord's terms for forgiveness of sins and salvation.
  1. They heard the gospel message.
  2. They believed the gospel message.
  3. And they obeyed the gospel when they were baptized into Christ.
- D. Those who were not baptized properly the first time need to be baptized again!

1. Some people have been baptized in the wrong way, for the wrong reasons, or with the wrong baptism.
2. When they learn the truth they need to be baptized properly.
3. These Ephesians serve as a good example of those who had been baptized improperly and needed to be baptized again.

**Conclusion:**

- A. There is one overall story that runs through the pages of the Bible.
- B. This has to do with the fact that mankind has had a problem with sin and that God has executed a plan to take away man's sin through the sacrifice of Christ.
- C. When we read about these cases of conversion in the book of Acts we are able to clearly see the conditions that man must meet in order to have the forgiveness of sins and salvation that Jesus has made available to us all
- D. Everyone was saved the same way:
  1. They heard the gospel message.
  2. They believed the gospel.
  3. They repented of their sins.
  4. They confessed their belief in Jesus.
  5. They were baptized for the forgiveness of sins.
- E. Everyone must be saved the same way today!