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Have You Been Saved?

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As Latter-day Saints use the words saved and salvation, there are at least six different meanings.



What do we say when someone asks us, "Have you been saved?" This question, so common in the conversation of some Christians, can be puzzling to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because it is not our usual way of speaking. We tend to speak of "saved" or "salvation" as a future event rather than something that has already been realized.

Good Christian people sometimes attach different meanings to some key gospel terms like *saved* or *salvation*. If we answer according to what our questioner probably means in asking if we have been "saved," our answer must be "yes." If we answer according to the various meanings we attach to the terms *saved* or *salvation*, our answer will be either "yes" or "yes, but with conditions."

I.

As I understand what is meant by the good Christians who speak in these terms, we are "saved" when we sincerely declare or confess that we have accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior. This meaning relies on words the Apostle Paul taught the Christians of his day:

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" ([Rom. 10:9–10](#)).

To Latter-day Saints, the words *saved* and *salvation* in this teaching signify a present covenant relationship with Jesus Christ in which we are assured salvation from the consequences of sin if we are obedient. Every sincere Latter-day Saint is "saved" according to this meaning. We have been converted to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, we have experienced repentance and baptism, and we are renewing our covenants of baptism by partaking of the sacrament.

II.

As Latter-day Saints use the words *saved* and *salvation*, there are at least six different meanings. According to

some of these, our salvation is assured—we are already saved. In others, salvation must be spoken of as a future event (e.g., [1 Cor. 5:5](#)) or as conditioned upon a future event (e.g., [Mark 13:13](#)). But in all of these meanings, or kinds of salvation, salvation is in and through Jesus Christ.

First, all mortals have been saved from the permanence of death through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” ([1 Cor. 15:22](#)).

As to salvation from sin and the consequences of sin, our answer to the question of whether or not we have been saved is “yes, but with conditions.” Our third article of faith declares our belief:

“We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel” ([A of F 1:3](#)).

Many Bible verses declare that Jesus came to take away the sins of the world (e.g., [John 1:29](#); [Matt. 26:28](#)). The New Testament frequently refers to the grace of God and to salvation by grace (e.g., [John 1:17](#); [Acts 15:11](#); [Eph. 2:8](#)). But it also has many specific commandments on personal behavior, and many references to the importance of works (e.g., [Matt. 5:16](#); [Eph. 2:10](#); [James 2:14–17](#)). In addition, the Savior taught that we must endure to the end in order to be saved (see [Matt. 10:22](#); [Mark 13:13](#)).

Relying upon the totality of Bible teachings and upon clarifications received through modern revelation, we testify that being cleansed from sin through Christ’s Atonement is conditioned upon the individual sinner’s faith, which must be manifested by obedience to the Lord’s command to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Ghost (see [Acts 2:37–38](#)). “Verily, verily, I say unto thee,” Jesus taught, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” ([John 3:5](#); see also [Mark 16:16](#); [Acts 2:37–38](#)). Believers who have had this required rebirth at the hands of those having authority have already been saved from sin *conditionally*, but they will not be saved *finally* until they have completed their mortal probation with the required continuing repentance, faithfulness, service, and enduring to the end.

Some Christians accuse Latter-day Saints who give this answer of denying the grace of God through claiming they can earn their own salvation. We answer this accusation with the words of two Book of Mormon prophets. Nephi taught, “For we labor diligently ... to persuade our children ... to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do” ([2 Ne. 25:23](#)). And what is “all we can do”? It surely includes repentance (see [Alma 24:11](#)) and baptism, keeping the commandments, and enduring to the end. Moroni pleaded, “Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ” ([Moro. 10:32](#)).

We are not saved *in* our sins, as by being unconditionally saved through confessing Christ and then, inevitably, committing sins in our remaining lives (see [Alma 11:36–37](#)). We are saved *from* our sins (see [Hel. 5:10](#)) by a weekly renewal of our repentance and cleansing through the grace of God and His blessed plan of salvation (see [3 Ne. 9:20–22](#)).

The question of whether a person has been saved is sometimes phrased in terms of whether that person has been “born again.” Being “born again” is a familiar reference in the Bible and the Book of Mormon. As noted earlier, Jesus taught that except a man was “born again” ([John 3:3](#)), of water and of the Spirit, he could not enter into the kingdom of God (see [John 3:5](#)). The Book of Mormon has many teachings about the necessity of being “born again” or “born of God” ([Mosiah 27:25](#); see [Mosiah 27:24–26](#); [Alma 36:24, 26](#); [Moses 6:59](#)). As we understand these scriptures, our answer to whether we have been born again is clearly “yes.” We were born again when we entered into a covenant relationship with our Savior by being born of water and of the Spirit and by taking upon us the name of Jesus Christ. We can renew that rebirth each Sabbath when we partake of the sacrament.

Latter-day Saints affirm that those who have been born again in this way are spiritually begotten sons and daughters of Jesus Christ (see [Mosiah 5:7](#); [Mosiah 15:9–13](#); [Mosiah 27:25](#)). Nevertheless, in order to realize the intended blessings of this born-again status, we must still keep our covenants and endure to the end. In the meantime, through the grace of God, we have been born again as new creatures with new spiritual parentage and the prospects of a glorious inheritance.

A fourth meaning of being saved is to be saved from the darkness of ignorance of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and of the purpose of life, and of the destiny of men and women. The gospel made known to us by the teachings of Jesus Christ has given us this salvation. “I am the light of the world,” Jesus taught; “he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” ([John 8:12](#); see also [John 12:46](#)).

For Latter-day Saints, being “saved” can also mean being saved or delivered from the second death (meaning the

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