

## GOD'S GRACIOUS PLAN OF SALVATION

From time to time, perhaps at least twice a year, I want to present to my readers God's gracious plan of salvation as set forth in the New Testament. A number of my readers have never obeyed the gospel of Christ and are therefore in a lost state (II Thessalonians 1:6-10). I have a deep and sincere love for them and their souls and a compelling desire to share God's wonderful plan of salvation with them. I want all of them to hear and understand the pure gospel of Christ, as opposed to a perverted gospel (Galatians 1:6-9), and I want all of them to know God's simple plan of salvation as opposed to corruptions of that plan by the doctrines, commandments, and traditions of men (Matthew 15:8-9; II Timothy 4:3-5). I urge all to read all the passages cited in this essay, those above and those that will follow.

Salvation begins with the recognition that one is a sinner, and therefore lost and in need of salvation (Romans 3:23; Titus 3:3). God, in His matchless grace (His graciousness), gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, as the atonement for our sins (John 3:16; Titus 3:4-7; Ephesians 2:8-9). Christ died, was buried, and was raised from the dead that we might be saved. This is the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-5). And it is this gospel that is God's power to save those who will believe and obey it (Romans 1:16-17; Romans 6:16-18). Now follow these Bible steps.

HEAR THE GOSPEL. Christ commissioned the teaching and preaching of the gospel in all nations to every creature until the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).

BELIEVE THE GOSPEL. The gospel is God's power to save those who will believe it (Romans 1:16). Without faith it is impossible to please God, for the one who comes to God must believe that He is and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Christ declared, "For if you do not believe that I am He (the Messiah, the Savior of the world, hf) you will die in your sins" (John 8:24).

REPENT OF ALL SIN. God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). To repent means to change one's mind, leading to a change of actions and a change of spiritual direction in one's life. If one is in Nashville, TN and wants to go to Knoxville but finds himself on I-40 West headed toward Memphis, he must turn around and head in the opposite direction. Spiritually, one must do this with reference to the direction of his/her life. That is repentance.

CONFESS FAITH IN CHRIST. One must acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37 [KJV]).

BE BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF SIN. Christ made baptism a condition of salvation from sin. He said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16a). In the New Testament sinners were told, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin" (Acts 2:38). Baptism is an immersion in water (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12). Those who have only been sprinkled or had water poured on them (either as infants or as adults) have not been scripturally baptized. Those submitting to these human substitutes for God's divine ordinance need to make their calling and election sure (II Peter 1:10-11).

LIVE A FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN LIFE. Add to your life the Christian graces (II Peter 1:5-9). Avoid the works of the flesh and manifest the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26). Always abound in the work of the Lord (I Corinthians 15:58). Be faithful even to the point of death (Revelation 2:10).

These are the divine actions that every accountable being must take in order to be saved from sin, enter into a right relationship with God, and maintain a right relationship with Him. Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9). If I can study with you and assist you in obeying the gospel of our Lord, please feel free to contact me by responding to this message via email. I want all to understand and obey God's gracious plan of salvation. Remember this: "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul" (Matthew 16:26)?

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