

GOD'S

PLAN OF

SALVATION

By Gaston Cogdell

Welcome

We are glad you have chosen to study the word of God and to delve into the depths of His Word. By studying His word, one can grow in knowledge and in maturity and understanding of what is required by God in living our daily lives and our journey towards heaven.

These lessons were written by Gaston Cogdell, a faithful Christian dedicated in his service to God and in helping children and teenagers who attend Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp, Hillsboro, Ohio.

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We pray you will enjoy your study of God's Word.

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LESSON 1

THE PLAN OF SALVATION INTRODUCTION

Even before He created the world, God devised the plan of salvation. In His infinite wisdom, God knew that if He gave man freedom to disobey His moral and spiritual laws, man would inevitably do so. This violation of God's Law is called "sin." *"Whoever commits sin transgresses also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 Jn. 3:4), and "...where there is no law, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15).*

So, although He knew that if He created man as a free moral agent and gave man the option of disobeying Him and defying His authority if he wanted to, man would certainly do so; still God chose to give man freedom. The alternative would have been for God to have created man as a robot, programmed like some kind of a computer to do God's will, and who could not choose to do otherwise.

Thus, because He knew that man would certainly fall, God prepared a "safety net" for him, so that the consequences of his fall could be averted. That safety net is called "Christ."

Just as God gave to man the freedom to choose whether he will obey Him or disobey Him in sin, so God has given to man the freedom to choose whether he will obey Him or disobey Him in salvation. No man is forced to be saved, just as no man is forced to sin, and be lost.

If we are saved – redeemed – from our sin, it will be because we chose to accept the plan of salvation that God prepared for us from before the foundation of the world. The scriptures tell us that we are redeemed ". . . by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you" (1 Pet. 1:19,20). Jesus was ". . . the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:5). *"Known unto God are all works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). God's works "were finished from the foundation of the world" (Heb. 4:3)*

God has done all that He can do toward saving us, without violating our freedom to choose whether we want to be saved by conforming to God's plan of salvation or not. There are not two plans of salvation, or twenty-two, or any other number; there is one, and only one. There is only one *"strait gate and narrow way that leads to life" (Matt. 7:13,14). "There is one body, and one Spirit, just as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and in all, and through you all" (Eph. 4:4-6).*

After He had given His word to Israel, God said through Moses: ". . . I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deut 30:19)

After He had given the gospel to all mankind, Jesus said through John: *"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him who hears say, Come. And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take of the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).*

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

These five lessons are intended to set forth the basic teachings of the scriptures in regard to the salvation of our eternal souls from the death and damnation which are the certain consequences of the sin with which we are all afflicted. *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (Jn. 1:18).* The recurrent theme of the Bible is the universality of sin, the inevitability of God's punishment for sin, both here and hereafter, and the love of God in making a way of escape from sin's awesome consequences. The following simple statements from God's word, set forth succinctly our problem and God's solution:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6).

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:8,9).

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 6:23).

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21).

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9).

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

"Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness by whose stripes you are healed" (I Pet. 2:24).

"And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin" (I Jn. 3:5).

"Who gave himself for our sins, that we might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our father" (Gal. 1:4).

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for us sins according to the scriptures" (I Cor 15:3).

"And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again" (II Cor 5:15).

"Who gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

How important is your soul? Your soul is the real you, who dwells in your body, and when it departs from your body, your body is dead. Your soul is that part of you which will live forever, somewhere. Where?

Jesus asked: *"For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).*

Another way of expressing the subject of this series of lessons on The Plan of Salvation is that it is the study of the "Where Am I Going To Spend Eternity?" We are on this earth for a very short while. There is an endless expanse of time stretching out before

us, after we leave this world. Where will we be when we pass from this world into the world-to-come?

The Bible informs us that we are either going to an infinitely better world than this one when we leave here, or to an infinitely worse one – depending upon whether we hear and obey God's Word while we are in this life, or not.

Jesus told the story of the two men who had radically different positions in this world, in that one was abundantly blessed with this world's goods. He was a rich man; and the other was sick, covered with sores, helpless. He was a beggar. His name was Lazarus. Both men died. The soul of the rich man was in torment after his death. The soul of Lazarus was welcomed to Paradise by Abraham, the Father of the faithful. Their positions were exactly the reverse of what they had been during their earthly lives. The rich man begged Abraham to send Lazarus back to earth to warn his five brothers. *"That he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (Lk. 16:28)*. We read their ensuing conversation: *"Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, O, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent. But he said to him, If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (Lk. 16:29-31)*.

In other words, Abraham told the rich man in torment that the scriptures that his five brothers back on earth possessed were sufficient to keep them from going to torment after they died, even though the only scriptures that they had were Moses and the prophets. The new covenant had not yet been given.

Some people say: "Well, the story of the rich man and Lazarus is only a parable." But Jesus did not say it was a parable; and even if it was, the parables of Jesus were always true-to-life, even if the narrative itself was suppositional or fictional. If this story was a parable, it is the only one in which any character is given a name. Jesus said, *"There was a certain rich man,"* and *"There was a certain beggar named Lazarus" (Lk. 16:19,20)*. Did Jesus tell the truth?

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is all the proof we should need of the vital importance of our hearing and heeding the Lord's commandments as set forth in the scriptures. The only scriptures the rich man and his brothers had were Moses and the prophets, and they obviously paid no attention to them. The implications of Abraham's words to the rich man were that if he had listened to Moses and the prophets, his soul would not have been in torment. How very, very important it is then that we listen to Christ and the apostles, through whom God has spoken to us (Heb. 1:2). Read and discuss the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus – Lk. 16:19-31.

THE GOAL OF THESE STUDIES

The goal of these studies is to impart to each camper a knowledge of what God's word says about salvation, to make him aware of his own personal need of salvation, and of what the scriptures say he must do both to be saved and to stay saved. When he finishes this 5 Lesson Course, each camper should know that there is a plan of salvation, and he should know what it is. He should know how tragic is the human condition; how awful it is to be lost, severed from God forever, damned to hell. He should also know how wonderful is God's infinite love in extending to us salvation and reconciliation through His Son, Jesus Christ; how glorious it is to be saved, to be a part of God and His spiritual family forever, to spend eternity in flawless perfection in heaven!

Salvation is available to all, on terms that are easily understood and to which all can conform. In the Book of Acts we have thousands of examples of conversions to Christ, under the preaching of the inspired apostles and evangelists, beginning with 3000 on

the Day of Pentecost, when the Church was established in Jerusalem. In every one of these cases, those who were converted had heard only one gospel sermon – and in no case, had those who were converted ever even seen or heard of a New Testament, much less read one! This we know, because the New Testament had not yet been written.

This tells us that the basic knowledge needed in order for one to accept Jesus Christ as the resurrected Lord, God's Son and our Savior can be imparted in a very short time. The cases of the Ethiopian Eunuch and the Philippian Jailor and his household are cases in point (Acts 8:26-40; Acts 16: 25-34), because we know that only a few hours could have elapsed between their hearing of Jesus and being saved.

If you know that you are lost, condemned, unclean and separated from God because of your sins and sinfulness; if you know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who died for your sins and is now seated at the right hand of God on High as the resurrected Savior and Lord of all; if you are sorry enough for your sins to truly repent of them and to commit them no more; if your repentance is deep and strong enough to get you to not only want to *"put off the old man"* with affections and lusts thereof but to also *"put on the new man"* in obedience to His word for the rest of your life on earth, seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; if you are willing to confess with your lips the Lordship of Jesus over your life, and Him as the Christ, the resurrected Son of God, and to commit yourself to following Him and obeying His will as it has been set forth in His word, the gospel (whatever the cost); then, you are ready to be baptized for the remission of your sins, into Him, His body, the Church, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and to receive the Holy Spirit which God has promised to those who obey Him. In other words, you are ready to be saved.

The good news about the "good news," the gospel, is that salvation is offered to everybody, everywhere, at all times, and in all places, on exactly the same terms and conditions. They are very simple terms and conditions that everyone can obey. The main obstacle to obedience to the gospel is our pride, our unbelief and our love of sin and self. The Lord explains why many do not believe on Him as follows: *"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God"* (Jn. 3:19-21).

THINGS BY WHICH THE SCRIPTURES TELL US WE ARE SAVED

To ask, "By what are we saved?" is like asking, "By what is physical life brought into being and sustained?" Of course, the answer to both of the above questions is, "By many things." To say that we are saved by God's grace and mercy is preeminently true. To say that we are saved by the blood of Christ is true. To say that we are saved by our faith is true. To say that we are saved by baptism or by living a Christian life is also true. But to say that we are saved by any of these things alone is false. These, and many other things, are absolutely necessary components to our salvation.

God is the author and giver of our salvation, which is offered to us by His grace alone, and through His Son, Jesus Christ alone. We know God, we know Christ, we know of God's grace and love, we know of God's commandments and promises – we know all these things, and everything else we know and believe and receive from God through His word. We know nothing; we believe nothing that is correct; we receive nothing from God apart from His word. God works through Christ who works through the word, in

accomplishing all that God accomplishes spiritually in us or in the world.

Let us say then that all that God does in regard to our salvation, He does through one and only one instrumentality – the Word – the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our part in the plan of salvation is to give to the word of God, the gospel of Christ – to heed it, understand it, and obey it. There are many things that we are to do as part of our being saved, but all of them can be summed up under one heading – obedience to the word of God.

We must believe in Christ because we are commanded to believe in Him. We must love God more than we love anything or anybody else, because we are commanded to do so. We must love our neighbor as we love ourselves, because we are commanded to do so. We must be buried in water for the remission of our sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, because we are commanded to do so. All these commandments, and many more, are contained in the New Testament – the gospel of Christ which is God's power to save our souls, and His only power in this age and dispensation, and will until the end of the world. The gospel is God's word to us, now and forever! To reiterate: God's part in the plan of salvation is the Word.

MAN'S PART IN THE PLAN OF SALVATION IS OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD – SOME OF THE THINGS BY WHICH WE ARE SAVED

The scriptures list many components to the plan of salvation and all of them are absolutely necessary. They can be divided into two categories: the divine category and the human category. We set forth some of the many things necessary to our salvation below.

The Divine Category of Things That Save Us (i.e. God's Part):

1. God..... Jn. 3:16; Titus 2:11; Lk. 1:47; Jude 25
2. Christ I Tim. 1:15; Jn. 4:42:11 Pet.1:1
3. Holy Spirt..... Titus 3:5; Rom. 8:11-14
4. Christ's Life.....Rom. 5:10
5. Christ's Words Jn. 6:63
6. Christ's Works Jn. 5:36; 9:4; 10:38
7. Christ's Death Heb. 2:9; I Pet. 2:24
8. Christ's BloodI Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:6; 6:1
9. Christ's Resurrection Rom. 4:25; I Pet. 1:3
10. Christ's Name Acts4:12
11. God's Choosing II Thess. 2:13
12. Gospel of Christ..... Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 15:1,2
13. God's Grace and Mercy..... Titus 2:11; Eph. 2:8; Titus 3:5
14. The Word of God..... Acts 13:26; 20:32; Jas. 1:21; Jn. 17:17

The Human Category of Things That Save Us: (i.e., Man's Part).

1. Faith Rom. 10:10; Acts 16:31; Jn. 3:15
2. Hope Rom. 8:24
3. Love Gal. 5:6; I Jn. 4:7
4. Repentance Lk. 13:3; 24:47, II Pet. 3:9
5. Baptism Mk. 16:16; I Pet. 3:21
6. Obedience To Christ Heb. 5:9
7. Obeying the Commandments Matt. 19:18
8. Works of Faith Jas. 2:24; Phil. 2:12
9. Confessing Jesus As the Son of God I Jn. 4:15
10. Calling On the Name of the Lord Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:13
11. Preaching I Cor. 1:18; 21
12. Hearing the Word Rom. 10:15-17
13. Fire I Cor. 3:15
14. Heeding and Continuing In the Doctrine I Tim. 4:16
15. Loving God With All Our Hearts, and Our Neighbor As Ourselves Lk. 10
16. Doing Good To the Brethren of the Lord Matt. 25:31-40
17. Believing the Truth and Loving the Truth II Thess. 2:10-12
18. Knowing God and Christ Jn. 17:2-3
19. Eating the Flesh and Drinking the Blood of Jesus Jn. 6:54
20. Being One of Christ's Sheep Jn. 10:27-28
21. Ourselves Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:12
22. The Jews Jn. 4:22
23. Forsaking All and Losing Our Lives for Christ Matt. 10:39; Mk. 10:28-30
24. Fighting the Good Fight of Faith I Tim. 6:12
25. Enduring to the End and Being Faithful Unto Death Matt. 24:13; Rev. 2:10
26. Entering the Strait Gate and Walking in the Narrow Way Matt. 7:13-14

ALL THAT JESUS DID WAS DONE IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD

His entire life was an act of obedience, and an example to us of obedience. His death was also an act of obedience. All that he said was spoken in obedience to the Father to obey God and in so doing, to teach us obedience to God, and to give to us the Word of God which the Father had given to Him to give to us, that we might obey it. Our souls will be judged by that word.

Christ came into the world in obedience to God, and all that he did and said while on earth was in obedience to God.

"Then said He, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He takes away the first that He may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9).

"For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me" (Jn. 6:38).

". . . I am not come to myself but He who sent me is true, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me" (Jn. 7:28,29). See also Jn. 8:42; 4:34; 9:4.

"Then Jesus answered and said to them, Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself but what He sees the Father do; for whatsoever He does, the Son also does in like manner . . . I can of myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge, and my judgement is righteous, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the Father who sent me" (Jn. 5:19, 30).

*"I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him." They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father. Then Jesus said to them: *When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself: but as my Father taught me, I speak these things. And He who sent me is with me. The Father has not left me alone, for I always do those things that please Him" (Jn. 8:28,29).**

THE MESSAGE WHICH CHRIST DELIVERED TO US, WHICH IS THE GOSPEL, DID NOT ORIGINATE WITH THE SON, BUT WITH THE FATHER WHO HAS SPOKEN UNTO US THROUGH HIS SON

God's Word will be the basis of the final judgment of our souls. *"He who rejects me, and does not receive my words, has one who judges him, the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority; but the Father who sent me gave me a commandment is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told me, so I speak" (Jn. 12:48-50).*

"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own authority: but the Father who dwells in me does the works" (Jn. 14:10).

"For I have given them the words which you have given me, and they have received them . . . I have given them your word . . . sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth" (Jn. 17:8, 14,17).

**JESUS BECAME THE SAVIOR BY OBEYING GOD AND
WE BECOME THE SAVED BY OBEYING JESUS – SALVATION
IS GIVEN ONLY TO THOSE WHO OBEY HIM**

"Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Heb. 5:8,9).

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and *"gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:1-11).*

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled" (II Cor. 10:4-6).

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high" (Heb. 1:1-3).

"And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world" (Matt. 28:18-20).

**WE RECEIVE SALVATION IN OBEYING THE WORD OF GOD.
GOD GIVES HIS HOLY SPIRIT TO ALL THOSE WHO OBEY HIM.
ALL WHO DO NOT OBEY THE GOSPEL WILL BE SEVERED FROM
THE LORD AND FROM THE GLORY OF HIS POWER FOREVER.**

"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the Word of God which lives and abides forever . . . Now this is the word which by the Gospel was preached to you." (I Pet. 1:22,23,25).

"And we are witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32).

"And to you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be

punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (II Thess. 1:7-9).

SIN – THE PROBLEM SALVATION – THE SOLUTION
SIN – DISREGARD FOR GOD'S AUTHORITY
AND DISOBEDIENCE TO HIS WORD

Man has only one real problem, and that is sin and its inevitable consequence, death. All other problems are simply different aspects and manifestations of the sin/death problem. This has been true since the very beginning of the human race when our first parents, Adam and Eve, sinned and brought death, alienation from God, and expulsion from the Garden of Eden paradise upon themselves and upon all their descendants, including us.

Because of sin, the human race has been ruined, all the suffering and agony of the death process has been visited upon us, the sweetest ties severed, the brightest hopes and dreams turned to ashes and dust, the earth enshrouded in hopeless gloom, and the world turned into just one big revolving graveyard. The solution: "The Man and the Plan." Salvation through the death of Jesus Christ for our sins, and his resurrection for our glorification – our salvation being conditioned upon our identification of ourselves with that death and resurrection by baptism into Christ's body, the Church, and our continuing as faithful Christians and members of His Church until death. The solution: obedience to Christ.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22).

"Know ye not that as many of you as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3,4).

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Cor. 12:13).

"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

"He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22).

"And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

Divine law produces divine order – a perfect and heavenly order. Disobedience to that law produces disorder, disharmony, and chaos, death, loss of relationship, disintegration and destruction, Hell. God's grace extends full pardon for our sins if we will repent, accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, be baptized into His Church, and be faithful to Him until death. Reconciliation is granted if we will obey the gospel, which is His word, and continue to obey it as long as we live.

LESSON 2

SIN – WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT DOES HOW IT OPERATES IN THE INDIVIDUAL AND IN SOCIETY

Definition of sin: The Hebrew word *“chata,”* and the Greek word *“hamartia,”* which are translated “sin” in our English Bible, mean “to err; to miss the mark; to go astray.” Sin is a violation of God’s law, a disobedience to God, and thus is an act of defiance of God’s authority, of enmity against the government of God over His creation, and a joining of the insurrection against God led by Satan.

“...Where there is no law, there is no transgression.” (Rom. 4:15). “Whoever commits sin transgresses also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law” (I Jn. 3:4). “All unrighteousness is sin” (I Jn. 5:17).

A sin is a trespass – the crossing of a divinely established boundary line. Law creates limitations and obligations, and God’s law sets boundary lines for human behavior. In its essence, sin is lawlessness – a rebellion against the divine moral and spiritual order. *“Righteousness”* is simply obedience to the law of God, and *“unrighteousness”* is simply disobedience to the law of God. We are told that *“By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19).* Of course, the one man whose disobedience is here spoken of is Adam, and the one man whose obedience is spoken of is Christ. Sin is, in the moral and spiritual realm, what crime is in the civil and secular realm – a violation of law.

Sin is the violation of God’s law – crime is the violation of man’s law. Crime is always sin, because one of God’s laws is that we submit to the laws of men except when those laws contradict God’s laws (Rom. 13:1-7); but most sin is not also crime, because man cannot pass legislation or make law in the moral and spiritual realm. Caesar has his little domain over which he struts for a brief moment with God’s permission, but Caesar’s little kingdom is far, far from being the perfect and eternal kingdom of God. (Matt. 22:21; Dan. 2:44). The sinner is a criminal – a repeat offender, a rebel and a renegade against the Creator, Owner, Ruler and Judge of the universe. The sinner has joined company with Satan and his angels, and with the wicked, godless, and lawless elements of the human race of all ages, who have ruined and destroyed God’s creation, set themselves in conflict with His sovereignty and authority, and disobey His Word. *“He that committeth sin of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (I Jn. 3:8).*

Sin is disorder – a rebellion against the divine order in moral and spiritual realm, an order established and maintained through divine law. Sin is therefore the injection of chaos into the highest and noblest realm of God’s beautiful creation.

Sin is not only a departure from God, but it is a declaration of independence from God – a deification of one’s self, and the elevation of one’s self to that place of sovereignty and control over one’s life that God as creator, owner, and sustainer rightfully possesses.

Thus, **sin is the dethronement of God and the enthronement of self.** We declare ourselves free of His laws, and do as we please. The scriptures tell us that the earth is a battle ground, where a war of the worlds is taking place – the conflict of the ages – in which

the forces of light and darkness, good and evil, life and death, heaven and hell, Christ and Satan, are locked in mortal combat. Each human heart is an arena where truth and falsehood struggle for supremacy and control over the soul. The saint is the person who gives truth and control over his life – and “truth” means God’s word, for *“Thy word is truth” (Jn. 17:17)*. The sinner is the person who disregards the truth, who obeys only as much of God’s word as he wants to obey, and who therefore gives evil and falsehood control over his life. In the end he will be told, *“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41)*. Sin not only leads to certain death – *“the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23)*, but sin is death in its incipient and embryonic stage, just as cause and effect are always inextricably united, and are really but two aspects, the beginning and ending phases of the same reality. Divine law means divine order. Disobedience to that law means spiritual disorder (i.e. chaos). Death is separation, disorder, disintegration, and disorganization. Death does not mean annihilation or extinction, but the separation of and loss of relationship between the component parts of the entity that died. Sin is spiritual disorder, and death is its consumption.

All sin is a deviation from and a failure to conform to God’s will. That will has been communicated through God’s Word which in these last days has been spoken to us through Jesus Christ. *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days, has been spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (Heb. 1:1,2)*. There are three ways that we can violate the Divine Law:

- 1) By doing what God has told us not to do.
- 2) By failing to do what God has told us to do.
- 3) By going beyond what God has told us to do, and doing other than, more than, or something in addition to what He has commanded. (i.e., the mother tells her son to go to the store and get a dozen oranges, and he goes and gets two dozen oranges).

These might be called:

- 1) Sins of commission.
- 2) Sins of omission.
- 3) Sins of presumptuousness, or of taking God’s authority upon one’s self. This is the sin of going beyond what is written – of not observing the implied limitations of a commandment – of “going onward and not abiding in the truth.” To *“abide in Christ’s word” (Jn. 8:31)* means to not exceed its boundaries. Satan did not stay within the truth (Jn. 8:44) and neither do those whom he leads from the truth.

An example of a **sin of commission** would be telling a lie, thus violating the explicit commandment to *“Lie not one to another” (Col. 3:9)*.

An example of a **sin of omission** would be neglecting church attendance, thus failing to keep the explicit commandment that we *“Not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is . . .” (Heb. 10:25)*. An example of a **sin of presumption** was the use of *“strange fire”* in burning the incense upon the alter – fire which the Lord

“commanded them not” – by Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1,2), under the Mosaic Dispensation of the Old Testament, or the use of instrumental music in worship in the Christian Dispensation of the New Testament, in which God commanded only that we “Sing and make melody with our hearts” in worship of Him. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). He has commanded simply vocal music; it is a presumptuous sin to inject into worship another kind – namely, instrumental.

“BIG SINS” AND “LITTLE SINS”

We are prone to classify sins as “big sins” (mortal sins), and “little sins” (venial sins), much as crimes are classified as misdemeanors and felonies. Most sins, in the eyes of most people, are really of trifling importance – so insignificant as to not deserve attention. Their lies are “little white lies,” their profanity is just “little by-words.” And they say, “The end justifies the means.”

No doubt there are some sins that are of greater magnitude than others, but all sins are against an infinite God and are of immeasurable consequence. No grain of sand is small in the mechanism of a watch. One leak will sink a ship, and one sin will destroy the sinner if it is not dealt with. There are little cancers and big cancers; but any cancer, however small, is potentially fatal if it is not gotten rid of – and sin is a spiritual cancer, eating away at the soul.

The true measure of the awfulness of sin, and its terrible power to destroy man, God’s beloved handiwork, is the price that God was willing to pay to deliver man from its ravages. The price of our salvation from sin was nothing less than the death of God’s Son upon the cross of Calvary. Nothing less than that could free us from sin’s tentacles.

THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN

We are commanded to *“Exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:13).*

Other translations render this passage “To prevent any one of you from being hardened by the wiles of sin through the delusive glamour of sin by the pleasantness of sin by the fraudulence, the stratagem, the trickery which the delusive glamour of his sin may play on him.”

Sin is seductively beautiful, and it offers thrills, pleasure, and immediate satisfaction to the lusts of the body. It has a powerful appeal to the animal nature of man and to his desire to be free . . . free from all law and limitations, whether they stem from God or man. Alcohol and drug addiction are typical examples of the strong attraction that sin has for man and the strong hold it gets on him, once he has embraced it and the deadly effects it has his life and on himself.

Sex outside the marriage relationship is another example of illicit gratification of a lust of the body which produces immediate pleasure; but which mars and stains the soul, renders the conscience insensitive to right and wrong, and thus produces that *“hardening, through the deceitfulness of sin”* concerning which the scriptures warn us (Heb. 3:13). The hardened, habitual sinner feels no qualms of conscience, whether his sin be a failure to take communion and give properly of his means to support the work of the Lord or to steal, lie, murder, have sex out of wedlock, fail to love God with all his heart and his fellow man as himself, or in some other way to violate God’s commandments.

Sin offers pleasure and reward now – and pain and shame, suffering and torment,

alienation and chaos afterwards, for time and for eternity. Righteousness offers pain and suffering now – and pleasure, honor, glory, eternal life in union with God and His children forever (i.e., perfection, beginning in time, and continuing throughout eternity).

“The pleasures of sin are like poppies spread; one seizes the flower and the bloom is shed; or like snowflakes falling on the river – white for a moment, then gone forever.”

“. . . *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*” (Rom. 8:18). “*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*” (II Cor. 4:17). “*If we suffer, we shall also reign with him*” (II Tim 2:12). The fact that the ultimate reward for righteousness and the ultimate punishment for sin is delayed until the final judgement of God and the world to come, doesn’t mean that they are not surely coming.

“*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not*” (Gal. 6:7,8).

SATAN IS THE AUTHOR OF SIN, AND HE ENSLAVES MAN THROUGH FALSEHOOD, LUST, AND PRIDE

When the Devil approached Eve to induce her to disobey God, and through her to bring Adam and the whole human race into disobedience, he first planted doubt in her mind about God’s word by asking, “*Yea, has God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*” Did God really say that there is some tree whose fruit is forbidden to you? Having planted this question in her mind, Satan proceeds to get her to believe a lie – the lie that disobeying God would not result in her death, but would rather result in her having a richer, fuller life, opening her eyes to good and evil, giving her pleasure and wisdom, and “*ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*” In other words, she and Adam would be god-like in their newfound freedom, knowledge, and independence.

Because she believed the Devil’s lies, and because she saw that by disobeying God she could:

- 1) Satisfy her fleshly desire – “*The woman saw that the tree was good for food.*”
- 2) Satisfy her desire for the beautiful and aesthetically appealing – “*The woman . . . saw that it was pleasant to the eyes.*”
- 3) Satisfy her prideful desire to be as wise and as free from any control or limitation as God Himself. Eve succumbed to the temptation, and persuaded Adam to transgress God’s commandment also.

OBEDIENCE TO THE TRUTH PRODUCES SALVATION OBEDIENCE TO FALSEHOOD, DAMNATION

From that first fatal sin until now, all sin has entered the heart and life of man through Satan, who is “*the God of this world*” (II Cor. 4:4), and who tempts man today through exactly the same channels and stratagems that he used in tempting Eve – the lust of the

flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride and vainglory of life (I Jn. 2:16). As in the beginning, Satan induces man to believe the lie that Sin will not result in destruction, but will bring happiness and fuller, richer life. All sin originates with Satan, and draws the sinner into Satan's insurrection against the Word of God. All sin is based on falsehood.

Those who are eternally damned *"perish because they received not the love of the truth, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"* (II Thess. 2:10-12).

Those who are eternally saved are they who *"have purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren"* (I Pet. 1:22). God desires that *"all men will be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (I Tim. 2:4).

Satan promises the sinner life but rewards him with death; promises freedom but gives him enslavement to sin; promises pleasure but gives him eternal pain and torment; promises riches and glory but strips the sinner of every possession, including his most precious possession which is his soul, and leads him into eternal shame and contempt, in hell. Satan is the archfiend, and father of lies (Jn. 8:44).

SIN IS PROGRESSIVE IN ITS GROWTH, BOTH IN THE INDIVIDUAL AND IN SOCIETY

"A little leaven leavens the whole lump" (I Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9). Just as one rotten apple will spread its rottenness to a whole barrel of good apples if it is left in the barrel, so sin grows in power and influence, in the heart and life of the individual, and in the social order if it is not gotten rid of. We cannot compromise with sin and Satan. As Paul told the church at Corinth, the evil among us has to be cast out entirely. *"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump"* (I Cor. 5:7). Jesus commanded that whatever it is about us that causes us to sin must be absolutely cut off and cast from us, even though it be our right eye or right hand (Matt. 5:29,30).

An old adage about sin says: "First abhor; then endure; then embrace." So it is that sin is first hated, then tolerated, then condoned and promoted. The awesome sin of homosexual acts and relationships – lesbianism, sodomy, and sexual perversion of all kinds, is a case in point in our own society. When one is operated on for cancer, and the surgeon is unable to remove even the smallest portion of the malignancy, the patient is told that the cancer will come back and spread and will eventually kill him. Sin is a spiritual cancer, and to tolerate even the tiniest willful violation of God's moral law, is to ensure the growth of sin in our lives, so that it will finally destroy us spiritually.

The progressive operation of sin, from the illicit desire, or lust, to the consummation of that evil desire by the commission of the evil deed, to the final fruit of the deed, which is the spiritual death of the person who commits it, is set forth in the scriptures as follows: *"But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death"* (Jas. 1:14,15).

Just as sin grows within the human heart and life, changing man who was created in the spiritual likeness of God into a monster who must be chained and caged to prevent his doing irreparable damage to others and to himself, so sin grows progressively in human society, as the flood-tide of evil engulfs the human race; and the wild rebellion against God and His word continues at an accelerated pace. The disease of lawlessness spreads, and man hastens to his final doom. We have been warned that *"Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived"* (II Tim. 3:13). Sin is a departure from

God, and each day that one remains in a sinful state and condition, he gets further from God, further from heaven, and closer and still closer to hell. There is a point of no return.

WHAT SIN DOES – ITS TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES AND BITTER FRUIT – ITS FINAL PAY-OFF

Every human being comes into the world crying. And why shouldn't he weep? He comes with the sentence of death upon his brow, and condemned to a life of hard labor. After a brief and troubled pilgrimage through the vale of tears, which is this earth, man departs in pain and sorrow. Solomon of old experienced all that life on this earth could give, and concluded – *“I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and vexation of the spirit” (Eccl. 1:14).*

The sages of the Orient viewed life as a curse, and set forth as the highest goal of man the achievement of Nirvana – non-existence and cessation of being release from agony of existence.

If human beings consider their condition to be bad, all they have to do is survey the whole realm of being; and they will see that they are at the very tip-top of the pyramid of life, with millions of species of creatures below them whose condition is immeasurably worse than theirs.

Not only does death and the death process reign throughout all levels of life and existence, but all of it including the cosmic order itself is dying, with all the pains and dislocations accompanying the death process. “Death” does not mean non-existence or cessation of being. It means disintegration, separation, disorganization – total disorder, loss of all relationship between anything and anything else – absolute chaos. In regard to the universe, this universally the physicists call operative “death process entropy.”

Obviously, something is very wrong with and within the universe – something very wrong with man and within man. Things are not as they ought to be. This life was not meant to be “a fool’s tale, told by an idiot; full of sound and fury and signifying nothing.” This world was not meant to be a killing ground and a slaughterhouse. “Life is real and life is earnest and the grave is not its goal. Dust thou art; to dust returnest was not spoken of the soul.”

The Bible tells us what is wrong with the world and with ourselves – sin. It also tells us what we must do to escape it and its consequences – and sin’s final pay-off is too horrible even to contemplate. The good news (i.e., the gospel, is that there is a way of salvation opened unto us, a great deliverance from sin and death, from hell and eternal chaos). “. . . our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (II Tim. 1:10).

The whole creation was plunged into the agony of the death-process by the appearance of that process in the highest realm, through the disorder that is called “sin,” and the whole creation awaits the consummation of the redemption purchased by Christ at Calvary. *“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (I Cor. 15:26).* We are told, “The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.” For the creation was subjected to frustration, some translations say “the bondage of transitoriness,” not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” (Rom. 8:19-22).

So, sin is the root cause of the transitoriness of life – the imperfection and fatally flawed

condition of the whole universe and every part of every existence within it, which we are told by both the Bible, by science, and by our own experience, only gets worse and worse with the passage of time.

Let us look at what sin does to man, individually and collectively.

SIN SEPARATES AND ALIENATES THE SINNER FROM GOD

Even the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to God (Prov. 28:9; 21:27). As Isaiah said: *“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear”* (Isa. 59:1,2).

As the blind man whom Jesus had healed said to his fellow Jews who questioned him about Jesus – *“Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth”* (Jn. 9:31).

SIN RESULTS IN THE SPIRITUAL DEATH OF THE SINNER

God is the source of our spiritual life, and the severance from Him that sin brings about produces spiritual death, so that the sinner is alive physically but dead spiritually (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13; I Tim. 5:6; Jn. 11:25; Lk. 15:24; Matt. 8:22). God told Adam that the very day that he ate the forbidden fruit, he would surely die (Gen. 2:17). That which is dead has no power or energy. Those who are living in a sinful state have no spiritual power or energy—as Jesus said, *“for without me ye can do nothing”* (Jn. 15:5). Without Christ we are spiritually dead, in sin (Eph. 2:1).

Whole congregations of the Lord’s people can be spiritually dead and walking in sin, even as the Lord said to the church at Sardis – *I know thy works, that you have a name that thou livest and art dead”* (Rev. 3:1).

SIN DISUNITES MAN FROM HIS FELLOW MAN AND PRODUCES DISHARMONY THROUGHOUT THE SINNER’S LIFE AND IN ALL HIS RELATIONSHIPS

We are told in the scriptures that *“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 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”* (Gal. 5:19,20). *On the other hand, the fruit of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace, . . .”* (Gal. 5:22).

The sinner is not at peace with God, with man, or even with himself. *“From whence come wars and fighting’s among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?”* (Jas. 4:1). No one wants to stay around a dead thing, even if that dead thing was once a loved one’s body. After awhile it begins to stink. Likewise, the spiritually dead are odious and obnoxious. The sinner’s deceitfulness, selfishness, hatefulness, and treachery drives away even his best friends, so that he is isolated and alone – the enemy of God and man, of truth and goodness. Sin destroys the sinner’s self-respect and self-esteem so that he is not only despised by others, but he hates himself.

SIN INCURS A DEBT THAT MUST BE PAID

Each sin creates a debit-entry on the spiritual account-records of eternity, so that the sinner is a spiritual and moral bankrupt who faces the final audit of God with the certainty that the portion of the Master's goods that were entrusted to him were misused, wasted and squandered; and he has nothing with which to cover his shortages.

Jesus often referred to our sins as debts (Matt. 6:12; Lk. 16:1-11; Matt. 25:14; Lk. 19:13; Matt. 18:23-35). Every blessing, power, and ability that we possess; and every precious moment of life is given to us by God, to be used in His service and for His glory. Those who refuse to acknowledge their responsibility to God and their accountability to Him, who do not worship Him in spirit and in truth and give of themselves and their means to His kingdom, shall be utterly stripped of all with which they have been entrusted and cast into what is called the *"outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"* (Matt. 25:30). We must be thankful to Him who has given us that blessing and express our gratitude by sincere prayer and worship with His people and humbly obey His will.

SIN BRUTALIZES MAN, DEBASES AND DEGRADES HIS CHARACTER SO THAT HE FINALLY BECOMES A DEPRAVED REPROBATE UTTERLY LAWLESS, UNPRINCIPLED, DISHONEST AND IMMORAL

The confirmed and inveterate sinner, like the alcoholic and drug-addict, knows only one god whose laws he obeys – his own appetite (i.e., himself). He will say anything, promise anything, do anything to satisfy his own ambitions and lusts. He is the pawn and tool of Satan; his heart and life are diabolical, moved by the Satanic spirit within him to lie, to believe lies, to oppose the truth, and to destroy that which God has created, even to the committing of murder. He is identical with certain of the Jews of Jesus' day of whom He said: *"Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not"* (Jn. 8:43-45).

Sin corrupts man so that he becomes rotten to the very core of his being. It eats away at the moral-fiber of his character so that he becomes a low-down, sorry human-animal. He has to be watched closely and perhaps even put in a cage (prison), because he is dangerous and destructive. His life gives a foretaste of hell to all those who depend upon him, for he is as far from godliness and as close to the demonic as one can get on this earth. Satan has hand picked his bones clean – and left him without hope.

Praise God, who *"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."* (II Pet. 1:3,4).

SIN ENSLAVES THE SINNER – BLINDS HIM SPIRITUALLY INFLECTS HIM WITH AN ALWAYS-FATAL SPIRITUAL DISEASE TOTALLY IMPOVERISHES HIM, STRIPS HIM OF EVERY SPIRITUAL POSSESSION AND STAINS AND SMEARS HIS SOUL

WITH THE GUILT AND FILTH OF EVIL

Jesus said that whoever commits sin (acts sinfully; lives in sin) is the slave of sin (Jn.8:34). Paul says the same thing in Romans 6:16-20. There is an evil empire over which Satan presides, and there is a kingdom of God over which Christ presides. Every person is free to choose which kingdom he shall be in, but once he has chosen, he is absolutely bound to obey the laws which govern that kingdom. Those who obey the mandates of the flesh (the physical reality) must think and act in a certain way. Those who obey the mandates of the Spirit (the spiritual reality) must act in a quite different and opposite way. We either identify with the lower world of the carnal or the upper world of the Spirit – with this world (mammon) or the world to come (God) (Rom. 8:4-14).

Jesus is “*the light of the world*” (Jn. 8:12). Satan is the ruler of darkness (Eph. 6:12). God’s children are called the “*children of light*” (1 Thess. 5:5), and Satan’s minions, the children of darkness. Satan, through sin, blinds the spiritual eyes and dulls the spiritual perceptions of men, so they cannot see the spiritual realities of the eternal divine order. The apostle Paul said, “*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them*” (II Cor. 4:3,4).

Sin hardens the heart, sears the conscience, and blinds the spiritual eye; it perverts the highest faculties of man, coarsens his nature, pollutes his thoughts, and bestializes his character. It utterly wrecks his life, so that he becomes a confused and lost spiritual derelict, adrift on the sea of eternity – soon to sink beneath the waves of perdition forever.

Jesus came into a sin-sick world to heal it of its spiritual diseases, of which leprosy was a type in the biblical era, and of which aids might be a type in the modern era – both diseases being incurable, progressive, and fatal.

A whole congregation can fall into sin, leave the Lord, and come under the rule of Satan, as did the church at Laodicea, to whom Christ said: “*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see*” (Rev. 3:17,18).

SIN INCURS THE ETERNAL WRATH OF GOD UPON THE SINNER

Sin’s fatal pay-off is the fire of everlasting torment, as the disobedient soul is cast into hell, where he will dwell with Satan, His angels, and the damned of all ages, in darkness and indescribable misery, forever and forever and forever. “*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal*” (Matt. 25:41,46).

“*The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth*” (Matt. 13:41,42). “*And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*” (Matt. 8:11,12).

“*And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the*

beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation: and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and forever, and they have no rest day or night..." (Rev. 14:9-11).

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn. 3:36).

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15).

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:7,8).

(See also Matt. 3:12; 5:22; 7:23; 22:13; Mk. 9:43-48; Lk. 16:22-24; Matt. 10:28; 23:33; Matt. 24:51; Rom. 2:8; I Cor. 3:17; II Thess. 1:9; Heb. 10:29; II Pet. 2:4,5, 9; II Pet. 3:7; Jude 13).

LESSON 3

SALVATION WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT DOES

Salvation is deliverance from sin. The angel who announced the coming birth of Jesus to Joseph said, concerning Mary, "*And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins*" (Matt. 1:21). Paul said, "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief*" (1 Tim. 1:15).

SALVATION IS DELIVERANCE FROM: THE POWER OF SIN AND THE DOMINION OF SATAN.

We are "*crucified with Christ*" and become dead to sin, "*that henceforth we should not serve sin.*" "*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof*" (Rom. 6:6-12). In and through Christ, the power of sin is broken. Christ came into the world to ". . . *destroy the works of the devil*" (1 Jn. 3:8), and the Devil's chief work is sin.

THE LOVE OF SIN

When man receives the gift of God's spirit of holiness, the Holy Spirit, he receives the spirit of love – but that spirit of love for God and for all that is of God is equally a spirit of hatred for Satan and for all that is evil. The spirit of Christ, which is the Holy Spirit, is a spirit of hatred for sin. Of Christ we are told – "*Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows*" (Heb. 1:9) Christians are commanded to hate evil (Rom. 12:9).

THE PRACTICE OF SIN

When a person receives the spirit of God within him, he is delivered from the practice of sin – from sinful actions, attitudes, and relationships. He is a "good tree" and a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit (Matt. 7:18). He abstains from the very "*appearance of evil*" (1 Thess. 5:22). "*We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not*" (1 Jn. 5:18).

THE GUILT OF SIN

Sin leaves a stain of impurity upon the soul of man, horribly disfigures him, registers a debt and debit against the sinner which no amount of righteousness can repay. Whoever murders another is always a murderer. He is, and throughout eternity, shall be guilty of that crime which he committed – and that crime must be paid for, if God is a just and righteous God whose laws must be obeyed. And what is true of murder is true of every sin, of whatever kind. It must be punished, and the justice of God demands that *"the soul that sinneth, it shall die"* (Ezek. 18:4).

The glorious message of the gospel is that Christ died in our stead, made full payment for our sins at Calvary, took our guilt upon himself, and fully satisfied the demands of God's justice which requires sin to be punished – all sin, and every sin. *"God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him"* (Rom. 5:8,9). He *"loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"* (Rev. 1:5).

THE LOW STATUS AND CONTEMPTIBLE IDENTITY WHICH SIN CONFERS

Satan and his followers are the trash and garbage of the spiritual cosmic order. Gehenna (Hell) is the Greek term for the Valley of Hinnom, which was just outside Jerusalem, and was the garbage dump for the city. Just as every gold and diamond mine has a mountain of slag out beside it, the waste material in which the precious metal or gems were embedded, so the human race is mostly garbage. To be a sinner is to have the identity and status of trash to God. The kingdom of darkness of which the alien sinner is a citizen is a kingdom of the corrupt and wicked, the enemies of God and man – the rotten souls that bear rotten and poisonous fruit, who shall be rooted up and cast into the fire. *"Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire"* (Matt. 7:19). The Christian has received the status and identity of a child of God, and a member of the divine family of God (Jn. 1:12,13).

CITIZENSHIP IN SATAN'S CONDEMNED KINGDOM OF DARKNESS AND MEMBERSHIP IN A SINFUL AND FALLEN HUMAN RACE

". . . The whole world lies in wickedness" (1 Jn. 5:19) Jews and Gentiles . . . "they are all under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no, no not one. There is none that understands, there is none who seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable. There is none who does good--no, not one! Their throat is an open sepulcher; which their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. 3:9-18).

The Christian has been born again into a new and redeemed spiritual race (Jn: 3:3-5, 1 Pet. 1:22-25). He has parted company with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and has become a part of a new and eternal divine order. *"Giving thanks unto the Father, who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In*

whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:12,13).

Man is born into a ruined race, which is the entire human race, and into a world-order which has rebelled against and completely disregarded the authority of its creator and God. But *"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 2:16)* Praise be His name!

THE AWFUL CONSEQUENCES OF SIN – "THE WRATH TO COME."

"Salvation" means deliverance from sin and its effects and consequences in this world, but even more importantly, the world to come. Sin brings alienation, sorrow and suffering, and ruin of every kind here in this life; but the pain and shame it brings here is nothing to be compared to the agony of damnation in Hell in eternity. Jesus has *"delivered us from the wrath to come" (I Thess. 1:10)*. God's love is infinite, but God's wrath is also infinite. Those who have ignored their responsibilities to Him and who have disobeyed His righteous laws will be banished from His presence forever and condemned to imprisonment forever in the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Rev. 21:8).

Jesus said that many who profess his name and do great works in his name will be told in the judgement to *"Depart from me, you evildoers" (Matt. 7:23)*.

"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18).

We are told that God does not want any one to be lost and has paid the price for our salvation, so that we can be freed from sin and its terrible consequences, if we will but accept the truth: *"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Tim. 2: 4,5)*.

The Gospel is God's instrument of salvation – the power, and the only power, by which he delivers men from the guilt and consequences of their sin (Rom. 1:16). We are to go everywhere and preach it to all men, and *"He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he who believes not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:15,16)*.

John the Baptist called the Pharisees and Sadducees who came out to hear him preach, a *"generation of vipers,"* and asked them, *"Who has warned you to flee from the wrath of come?" (Matt. 3:7)*.

Jesus continually warned of hell, where the *"fire is not quenched, and the worm never dies" (Mk. 9:43-48)*.

Peter, on Pentecost and throughout his preaching, warned and pleaded, *"Save yourselves from this corrupt generation" (Acts 2:40)*.

Paul said that those who do not obey the gospel will be *"punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thess. 1:9)*.

"It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

"For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the lord, we persuade men" (II Cor. 5:10,11).

"Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

"And I say unto you my friends, be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear him, who after he has killed has power to cast into hell. Yea, I say unto you, fear him!" (Luke 12:4-5).

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved" (Eph. 2:1-5).

Note: There is no such thing as cessation of existence. Every one will exist forever – somewhere, and in some state. As life never means mere existence, so death never means non-existence. Death, in the scriptures, is not extinction, but utter ruin; not loss of being, but loss of well-being. Spiritual life is conscious existence in spiritual union with God; spiritual death is conscious existence in a state of total separation from God. The death of the soul is its severance from God and is called *"the second death,"* as distinguished from physical death which is the severance of the soul from the body (Rev. 20:14,15; 21:8). All animals live in a state of severance from spiritual union with God, as do most human beings, even in this present world.

Salvation involves far more than deliverance from sin; it means also the birth of the new man and the infusion of the divine spirit – the holy spirit of truth, submissions to God's will, and love.

Salvation has a dual meaning. We are saved from one category of being and relationships, and saved for another. Saved **from** enslavement to sin and Satan, and saved **for** enslavement to God and righteousness. Salvation to Israel meant more than escape from servitude to Pharaoh in Egypt; it meant also servitude to God in the promised land. (Rom. 6:16-23). We leave the domain of Satan and enter the kingdom of God.

Salvation means departure from the kingdom of darkness and evil and transference into the kingdom of light and Christ (Col. 1:12-14). Salvation means dying to sin, and a total obliteration of the old sinful life and our membership in an old sinful world-order under the dominion of Satan and being born anew into a new and eternal spiritual cosmic-order, as a new creature in a wholly new creation, with a new and divine spirit – God's Spirit, which is Christ's Spirit, which is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of holiness within us – and a new life, a new set of relationships, and a new eternal destiny based upon our new divine identity, granted unto us.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: Old things have passed away; behold all things have become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

". . . How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin" (Rom. 6:2-7).

"Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:12,13).

"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were

by nature the children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:1-7).

Read also Eph. 4:22-24; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14,15; Col. 2:20; 3:3; 9:10; Phil. 3:10,11, 21; Rom. 7:6; 8:10; II Tim. 2:11-13.

Salvation means our severance from this world, the flesh and the devil, but it also means our total incorporation into Christ and His embodiment on earth, the Church. It means "*putting off the old man,*" but it also means "*putting on the new man*" (Col. 3: 9,10). It means death, but it also means resurrection.

THE SALVATION GIVEN TO US IN CHRIST IS TOTAL AND IS A SALVATION OF BOTH BODY AND SOUL

The central doctrine of the Christian religion is the doctrine of the resurrection of the body from the grave. "*Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep*" (I Cor. 15:20). "*The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body*" (I Cor. 15:42-44).

Jesus said, "*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all who are in the graves shall hear his voice (i.e., the voice of the Son of Man), and shall come forth; they who have done good unto the resurrection of live; and they who have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*" (Jn. 5:28,29).

Just what kind of bodies the damned will receive in the resurrection is not made plain, except they will be bodies in which "*the fire is not quenched and the worm never dies*" (Mk. 9: 44-45). Perhaps they will not be too much different from our present mortal bodies, in which every cell is a furnace, burning oxygen and giving off "smoke" (carbon dioxide), and which is maggot-food in the end.

The bodies of the redeemed will be eternal bodies – like Christ's. They will be "spiritual bodies," whatever that is. They will be glorious bodies, imperishable bodies – heavenly bodies, fitted for the heavenly kingdom they will inhabit forever.

". . . Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able to subdue all things to Himself" (Phil. 3:20,21).

"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (I Jn. 3:2).

"Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the

things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which from heaven" (II Cor. 4:14-18; 5:1,2).

Thus it is that we are said to *". . . eagerly wait for the adoption, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23).*

SALVATION MEANS THE POSSESSING OF SINLESS PERFECTION

We are saved, delivered, freed, cleansed from our sins by the blood of Christ. Not just some of our sins; not just most of our sins, but from all of our sins. *"If we walk in the light as He is the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (I Jn. 1:7).*

God is a perfectionist. He will accept nothing less than absolute perfection in any being admitted into spiritual union with Himself. The slightest flaw would disqualify us from that unity with the Father, that perfect oneness that our Savior prayed for just before He went to the Cross (Jn. 17:21-23). Heaven is a perfect place for perfect people, and the guilt of one single sin upon our souls would disbar us from citizenship in the eternal city of God.

So how can any one go to heaven, since we know that we all sin, and since we are told in the scriptures, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us?"*

The answer is that our sins are imputed, or charged to Christ, and not to ourselves, so that we are sinless and perfect with a perfection that is given to and conferred upon us. The Lord, Jesus takes our imperfection, and we are given His perfection, even as we are told – *"For by one offering, He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Heb. 10:14)*

The apostle Paul quoted David concerning this imputed or conferred righteousness as follows: David also describes the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying – *"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:6-8, quoting Psalms 32:1,2).*

The prophets of Israel foresaw and foretold this transference of the righteousness of the Messiah upon His people, so that He would be their righteousness.

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels" (Isa. 61:10).

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness" (Jer. 23:5,6).

"In those days, and at that time, will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgement and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness" (Jer. 33:15,16).

Righteousness is something that we receive from the Lord. When we take on His identity in baptism (Gal. 3:26-29), His righteousness is imputed to us, and our sins are charged to Him. *"We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rages . . ." (Isa. 64:6).* Jesus said, *". . . When you shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which it was our duty to do" (Lk. 17:10).*

The inadequacy of our own goodness to save us is taught repetitiously in the scriptures. Even our goodness is flawed and imperfect "as filthy rags." Our wisdom is foolishness to God; our strength is weakness to God; our righteousness is unclean rags that will not cover our spiritual nakedness. Christ is our righteousness; and we plead Him, His precious blood, and His divine identity as the only basis for our hope and salvation (I Cor. 1:23-29).

"But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written – He who glories, let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor. 1:30,31).

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:20,21).

"But you have come to Mt. Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect . . ." (Heb. 12:22,23).

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1).

". . . Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the Kings of the earth. To Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5,6).

"Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from? And I said to him, Sir, You know. So he said to me, These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:13,14).

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).

SALVATION MEANS MEMBERSHIP IN THE LORD'S CHURCH

Salvation is individual, and the individual is the unit that is delivered from sin and its consequences. Yet, while conversion is a strictly personal matter, involving acceptance and action by the individual, his conversion makes him a part of a corporate entity called the Church or body of Christ and makes him a participant in a covenant and compact binding him for time and eternity not only to God through Christ, but also to all other individuals who have likewise been admitted to that body through their acceptance of the stipulations of the covenant. That covenant is, of course, the New Testament of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The terms and conditions set forth in the New Testament for salvation, and/or for one's entrance into the new covenant, are identical with the terms and conditions for membership in the Lord's body, which is His Church. To be saved therefore, is to be a member of the Church, and to be a member of the Church is to be saved – "a member of the church" meaning actually a part of that spiritual organism which Christ died for, and of which he is the head, and not merely seemingly or nominally a member of it.

God, Christ, and the Church are all one indivisible and inseparable spiritual entity, so that to be a part of one is to be a part of all, and to be separated from any one of them is to be separated from all of them. The Church is the embodiment of Christ on earth, and to be baptized into Christ is to be baptized into the church of Christ. In I Corinthians 12:12, the

Church is called "Christ," and the next verse tells us that we are baptized into that one body which is Christ.

Christ's body is Christ, just as your body is you, and my body is me. I am the head of my body and have control over it; and Christ is the head of His body, the Church, and has control over it (Eph. 1:22,23; 4:15; 5:21,29; Col. 1:18).

Christ and the Father are one (Jn. 10:30), and Christ and His disciples are one (Jn. 17:21-23; Heb. 2:11; Jn. 15:4,5; I Cor. 6:15; Eph. 5:30; I Jn. 2:24).

"All spiritual blessings . . . are in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). Certainly, there are no spiritual blessings outside of Christ, and certainly the greatest of all spiritual blessings is salvation. We are *"baptized into Christ" (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27)*, and baptized at the same time to *"wash away our sins" (i.e., "for the remission of our sins" (Acts 22:16; Acts 2:38))*. So, to be baptized is to receive the removal of our sins and to put into Christ and His body, the Church. We see then, that to be saved is to be a member of Christ and His Church for *"He is the Savior of the body," and "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:23,25)*.

The various religious denominations of the earth which comprise so-called "Christendom," teach that salvation, baptism, and church membership are different things occurring at different times; but in the New Testament, it is taught that they are different aspects of the same thing and take place simultaneously.

SALVATION REQUIRES THE MOST RADICAL AND FAR-REACHING CHANGES IN THE LIFE AND BEING OF THE PERSON WHO IS SAVED.

Imagine the changes that would have to occur in order for an animal to cross the unbridgeable chasm that separates the animal kingdom from the human realm and become a human being. These changes would be no more and no greater than those which must take place in order for a human being to become a divine being – a citizen of the heavenly realm – the kingdom of God by crossing the one and only bridge between the lower and the upper regions, Jesus Christ.

Jacob dreamed of a ladder, stretching between heaven and earth, on which heavenly beings ascended and descended between the two domains (Gen. 28:12). Jesus said that He is that ladder (Jn. 1:51) – the sole connecting link and means of ascent between the human and the divine, the temporal and the eternal, God and man (Jn. 14:6; I Tim. 2:5). What a transition it is in every way for us to become a part of a different spiritual specie and genre, to leave the fallen race of Adam, and become a part of a new creation and higher category of being -- that of Christ; to leave the kingdom of darkness and death; and to become a part of the kingdom of light and life! Yet that transition is precisely what must take place in order for us to be saved.

We must become one of those who *"are of heaven."* *"As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven" (I Cor. 15:48,49).* If we remain a part of that specie which had its origin in Adam, the *"natural man,"* or man of the natural and fleshly order of being, we will perish; for *"In Adam, all die."* If, on the other hand, we are born anew, of that divine and spiritual seed into that new and spiritual order of being which had its origin in Christ, we will live forever; for *"In Christ all will be made alive" . . .* meaning that all who are *"in Christ"* will be made alive forever (I Cor. 15:22).

In order for the transition from the earthly to the heavenly realm of being to take place,

the following changes must take place in, and in regard to, the person who is being saved:

- 1) He must be cleansed of all sin – past, present and future. No guilt or stain, no flaw nor imperfection, can mar his soul.
- 2) He must undergo a change of identity, from being a son of Adam to being a son of God – a member of the divine family, which is the Lord's Church.
- 3) He must receive the gift of God's spirit, the Holy Spirit, so that his carnal nature is replaced by the divine nature, and he has the law of God written on his heart. The corrupted nature that ruled him is subjugated to that higher and heavenly will of Christ, dwelling within him, and leading him. There is a new and higher power at work within the Christian, for holiness and goodness.
- 4) He must have a change of mind, heart, will, and purpose; he must adopt a completely different center and orientation for his whole life and being. Prior to conversion, the individual's life centers in himself and is essentially a selfish life. After his conversion, the individual's life centers in God – is theo-centric, rather than ego-centric.

Being saved involves a change of disposition and attitude; a change of priorities and values; a change of viewpoint and perspective; a change of faith, hope, and love. The saved person believes in a totally different set of ultimate realities and values based upon those realities, from the unsaved person. He hopes for a completely different conclusion to life and to human history, than the unsaved person. He loves God, God's Son, God's Word, and God's family which is the Church with a spiritual passion surpassing in intensity any other feeling or emotion known on this earth, whereas the unsaved person loves them very little, if at all.

He must undergo a change of life, of "life style," and of behavior. He must become a "new creation" in word, thought, and deed. What the Christian does and says, and how he does and says it, is completely different from a non-Christian. Words and deeds are externalities which proceed forth from and are the fruit of the mind, the mind-set, the spirit within us. Jesus said, "*A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit*" (Matt. 7:18). So, the Christian must act differently, talk differently, and think differently from the non-Christian, because he is different, from the core of his being.

He must exchange the context of relationships which he had in his life in the world for a wholly new and radically different set of relationships which the world "like a ship that is in the water, but not of the water," and any leak that lets water come into the ship or lets the world get into the Christian or into the Church must be stopped; or the ship or the Christian or the Church will be sunk beneath the waves (Rom. 12:2; II Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4; II Tim. 4:10; I Cor. 2:12; Col. 2:20; Jas. 4:4; I Jn. 2:15-17; I Jn. 5:4,5).

Jesus told his disciples that they would be hated by the world precisely because they were not a part of it (Jn. 15:18,19; 17:14,15). From the very origin of the human race, those who have belonged to God rather than to the present world-order have "*confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*" (Heb. 11:13). Those who are saved are commanded to come out of the world and be separate spiritually, and to have no part or participation in the world's sinfulness (II. Cor. 6:14-18).

This present evil world is under condemnation and will soon pass away. It will be replaced by a perfect and eternal divine order – "*a new heavens and a new earth, wherein*

dwelleth righteousness" (II Peter 3:12). God is in the process of creating that new order now, and is choosing those souls which will partake of its glories. The Church is that new and eternal order, in embryo, and is made up of those who obey God's commandments in this present time.

We must change worlds now! Salvation is nothing more nor less than becoming a part of the new and divine cosmic order which will replace this world. "The world to come" is already here. It is the Church, God's kingdom on earth, in which we receive the exalted status of sons of God, brothers of Christ, new creatures, in the new structure of authority and being, with a new relationship to God, to His family – the redeemed of all ages, and to this present wicked world and all that is in it. *"The world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he who does the will of God abides forever" (I Jn. 2:17).* Salvation means a complete change of relationships.

He must have a change of destiny. A new home must be readied for the new creation in Christ – not only a new body for his restored and redeemed soul to inhabit throughout eternity, but a new city, a new world, for the new being to dwell in, in perfect union with God and His son, and the innumerable company of angels and other redeemed souls who have "come out of the great tribulation." Heaven is a prepared place for prepared people – a perfect place for a perfected people. If there were no such place, all preparations for it would be useless, of course. Our salvation depends upon there being such a place as heaven and upon our going there.

Jesus said to His disciples: *"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if where I am, there you may be also" (Jn. 14:2,3).* The children of God of all ages and dispensations have shown that they desire a better and a heavenly country; therefore, God has prepared a city of them (Heb. 11:16). That glorious celestial city, and the new heavens and new earth of which it is a part, are described in detail in the last two chapters of the Bible – Revelation 21 and 22. There the saved of the Earth will serve God forever, because they elected to serve Him while they were yet on the earth – *"and they shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 22:5).*

THE WORD OF GOD IS THE ONE AND ONLY AGENCY AND POWER BY WHICH GOD SAVES US

Jesus Christ and the holy scriptures are but different manifestations of the same thing, and in fact, in the final analysis are the same thing – the word of God. The word of God is the expression of the will of God, the law of God, the purpose of God, the mind of God. The word of God is God, as we read in John 1:1-5,14.

"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it . . . and the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

By hearing, believing, and obeying the word of God, the gospel of Christ, we receive a spiritual renewal and rebirth, a spiritual regeneration into God's family and kingdom, the church of Christ. The apostle Peter expresses it this way: *"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because 'All flesh is as grass, and*

all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever.' Now, this is the word which by the Gospel was preached to you" (I Pet. 1:22-25).

When we receive the word, we receive Christ who is the very embodiment and incarnation of the word and is the word; and we are given the power to become the children of God – born *"not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"* (Jn. 1:13). Jesus told Nicodemus, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. Do not marvel that I say to you, You must be born again" (Jn. 3:5-7).*

The word of God is the seed of God's divine and spiritual kingdom, as is stated in Jesus' Parable of the Sower – *"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). James says: "Of his own will begat He us by the word of truth" (Jas. 1:18), and he admonishes us – "Wherefore lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21).*

The apostle Paul says: *"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). And Jesus said – "the words that I speak to you, they are Spirit and they are life" (Jn. 6:6-13). Thus we see that Salvation is extended to us through obedience to the gospel of Christ, and in no other way. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous" (I Jn. 5:3).*

SALVATION IS NOW!

The moment that we are baptized into Christ for the remission of our sins, we receive the gift of His Spirit, the Holy Spirit; membership in His family, which is His Church and kingdom; and salvation, eternal life. *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus..." (Rom. 8:1). Jesus said: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in Him who sent me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death into life" (Jn. 5:24).*

We read further: *"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death" (I Jn. 3:14).*

Jesus told the Jews: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word he shall never see death" (Jn. 8:51).*

So our salvation is total, and our salvation is now. We will never die. Our bodies will, but we won't! We will just change worlds. *"For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens" (II Cor. 5:1). That is why the apostle Paul could say – and all Christians can say – "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).*

SALVATION IS

Sinless Perfection – The complete removal of the guilt, and deliverance from the consequences of all sin, past, present, and future. The Christian is a saint.

Conversion, Transformation, Reformation, Restoration – The change of heart, mind, will, purpose; the change of attitude, disposition, priorities, and goals which take place in true repentance.

Reconciliation with God through the blood of Christ.

A New and Divine Nature and Spirit Instilled Within One – The infusion of the Holy

Spirit, indwelling within, and animating, permeating and motivating all that one says and does.

Membership in the Family of God, Citizenship in a New and Heavenly Kingdom – A perfect and eternal moral and spiritual order, which is the Church.

Oneness with God Through Christ and the Church of Christ, Which Is the Embodiment of Christ on Earth – A vital union with God, and fellowship with Him, His Son, and the saints and redeemed of all ages, in the carrying out of His divine plans, and the carrying on of His work.

A New Identity, And a New Status And Set of Relationships Based Upon That New Identity. He has made us to be kings and priests, and we shall reign with Him forever and ever. (Rev. 1:6; 3:21; 22:5; II Tim. 2:12).

Destiny, Also Based Upon That New Identity – That new destiny is paradise; and paradise is infinite and endless power, peace, pardon, perfection, purity, privilege, pleasure, possession, position, protection, and permanence in perpetuity.

LESSON 4

GOD'S PART OF THE PLAN OF SALVATION IS THE WORD MAN'S PART IS OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD

It is the word of God, the Gospel of Christ, that saves us (Rom. 1:16). It is the word that sanctifies us (Jn. 17:17). It is the word that purifies us (Jn. 15:3). It is by and through the word that we are "born again," and receive membership in the family of God (I Pet. 1:22-25). It is by believing and obeying the word that we become disciples of Christ, and by continuing to obey the word that we remain disciples of Christ (Jn. 8:32). It is through the word that we receive spiritual life; through the word that spiritual life is sustained within us; and by the word and the word alone that we shall be finally judged in that last great day (Matt. 4:4; Jas. 1:21; Jno. 12:48). The word is everlasting life (i.e., the word is salvation – Jn. 12:50; 6:68). It is *"the word of life"* (Phil. 2:16; Jn. 6:63). It is *"the living word of the living God,"* and through it and it alone, divine life is transmitted to us (Heb. 4:12; Jn. 8:51; 5:24). To know the word and to obey the word is the same as loving Christ who is the word, and the person who does obey the word will be loved by both the Father and the Son. To receive the word is to receive God and Christ, and to reject the word is to reject God and Christ (Jn. 14:20-24). The whole physical universe will someday be destroyed, but the word of God, and those who have incorporated themselves into the word and the word into themselves, will never, never be destroyed, but will live forever (Matt. 24:35; I Jn. 2:17; I Pet. 1:23-25; II Pet. 3:10-13).

By the word, all things were created. By the word, all things are sustained and "held together." By God's word, this present temporary order will be dissolved; and by God's word, the new, final, and perfect order will be brought into being (Jn. 1:3; Heb. 1:3; 11:3; II Pet. 3:7). The word is *"able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified"* (Acts 20:32). So close is the relationship between God, God's word, and God's people (the Church), that when the New Testament refers to the Church growing, it says that *"the word of God"* grew or increased (Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20).

"THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US . . ." **(JN. 1:14; I JN. 1:1,2)**

The living word of God – God's law and love, God's grace and truth – that supernal personality and preeminent intelligence, will, and power which is the source of all being, became one of us. The infinite became finite; God became man; the word became flesh! He delivered to us the message of God's love and salvation which the Father gave Him to deliver; gave Himself as a sacrifice for our sins on Cavalry's cross; was resurrected to glory and given all power and authority in heaven and on earth; established the Church, His kingdom, through His apostles; and is now enthroned at the right hand of the Father on high, to reign until everything that exists shall be brought into complete submission unto Him. He has commanded that all who have heard and believed this Gospel message, repeat it to others, so that they too might believe it, be baptized into His spiritual family and kingdom for the remission of sins, and be saved (Mk. 16:15,16; Acts 2:38).

JESUS CHRIST – "THE WORD MADE FLESH" OUR SAVIOR AND LORD

Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of the plan of salvation and is the central figure of the Bible, and of all human history. Everything that happened before His coming was a preparation for Him; and everything that has happened since His coming, or that will ever happen, is related to His coming and is important to the exact extent that it contributes to His ongoing work. When we say that "everything that has happened or will happen since His coming relates to it," we mean that every event either occurred or occurs in the context of time called "B.C." (Before Christ), or in that era called "A.D." (Anno Domini -- Year of Our Lord, Jesus Christ), and is thus related to His coming by its position in time, if in no other way. Everything that happens this year, for example, happens in A.D. 1993 (i.e., one thousand, nine hundred and ninety-three years after Christ came into the world). The Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp exists because Christ came, and has no other reason for being except to help carry on His work on earth.

GOD DOES, HAS DONE, AND WILL DO ALL THAT HE DOES THROUGH CHRIST – "THE WORD MADE FLESH"

The scriptures tell us that God has always worked through His Son, "*The Word*," who is His agent and intermediary in all that He has done or will do. Through Christ, God created the world; through Christ, God governs and sustains the world; through Christ, God saves and redeems the world; through Christ, God speaks to the world; through Christ God will ultimately destroy this present evil world; through Christ, God will judge the world; through Christ, God will bring into being a new heavens and a new earth, "*wherein dwelleth righteousness*." Christ is man's one and only link with God. God does not speak to man except through Christ, and Man cannot speak to God, except through Christ. (Read: Jn. 1:1-14; 14:1-11; Col. 1:12-20; 2:2-9; Heb. 1:1-3; I Tim. 2:5; I Cor. 8:6). Christ is "the Word," the embodiment of God.

CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS, THUS REMOVING THE SIN-BARRIER BETWEEN GOD AND MAN FOR THOSE WHO WILL ACCEPT HIS LORDSHIP BY OBEYING THE GOSPEL "BY WHICH WE ARE SAVED"

The apostle Paul summarized the gospel to the Corinthians as follows: "*Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance; That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures . . ."* (I Cor. 15:1-4).

Our salvation is dependent upon our obeying the gospel of Christ – not merely upon our hearing it and believing it, but upon our obeying it – which means our re-enacting it. In

baptism, we symbolically participate in the death, burial, and resurrection of our Savior and are buried with Him and resurrected with Him.

**THE DEATH OF CHRIST FOR OUR SINS IS THE CENTRAL FACT AND
FEATURE OF THE DIVINE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION.
WE ARE SAVED BY THE ATONING DEATH OF JESUS
SAVED BY HIS BLOOD.**

Christ died in my stead! He died a sinner's death – not because He was a sinner, but because I am – and He died for me. He made full amends for all that I ever did that was wrong and took the full brunt of all the punishment due me. He paid my debt in full and completely removed the barrier of sin, separating me from God, my Father, and from the glorious eternal destiny the Father has in store for His children in heaven above.

At Calvary, God wrote in His own blood the wondrous message of His love for a sinful and fallen human race. In the agony and humiliation of the cross, God told us of our depravity, and of His mercy and compassion in opening unto us *"a new and living way"* into His throne-room of grace and power. And now, having paid the price for our redemption, He awaits our response, for each individual must accept redemption through submitting to the terms and conditions of the gospel. In other words, salvation is completely unearned and unmerited, but not unconditional. We are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8,9), but that grace is extended only to those who obey Him (Heb. 5:8,9). If we obey the gospel, our sins are imputed to Christ, rather than to ourselves. He becomes our scapegoat and sin-bearer. Our sin becomes His sin; His righteousness our righteousness so that Christ is our righteousness; and His sinless perfection is imputed to us, if we become a part of Him in His embodiment which is the Church.

"And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear. Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Pet. 1:17-20).

**ALL TRUE AND GOD-REVEALED RELIGION, AND
ALL TRUE WORSHIP OF GOD
CENTERS IN AND REVOLVES AROUND
A BLOOD-SACRIFICE FOR SIN.
THIS HAS BEEN TRUE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME,
AND WILL BE TRUE FOREVER.**

From the very first instance of man's worship of God, that of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1-8), true and acceptable worship has centered in a blood-sacrifice to make atonement for the sins of the worshiper. The religion of the Old Testament revolved around an elaborate sacrificial system set forth throughout the Mosaic Law, but especially in the Book of Leviticus, where it was taught that holiness, both for the individual Israelite and for the nation, was achieved through blood sacrifice.

The tabernacle/temple, where these blood sacrifices were offered, was the center of Jewish life. The daily, weekly, monthly, and annual blood-sacrifices culminated in the great Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), when the High Priest went once each year into the Holy of Holies with a blood offering for himself and his own family, and for all the nation of Israel.

To be acceptable to God, all these blood sacrifices had to be made by the divinely designated Levitical priesthood and in accordance with the most detailed instructions given by God through His Word, the Law of Moses.

The idea behind these sacrifices was that the animal being offered represented a surrogate for the one who offered it, and its sacrificial death was accepted by God as the offering up of a substitute victim for the worshiper's sins. If no sacrifice was made, no substitute victim offered, or if the sacrifice or the way it was offered did not meet the Lord's stipulated requirements, then the soul of the sinner would be severed from God. He would die, spiritually; for *"The soul that sins, it shall die"* (Ezek. 18:4,20; Rom. 6:23). *"The Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book"* (Ex. 32:33).

The life of the animal was in its blood, and was the blood (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:11; Deut. 12:23). Therefore, the shedding of the blood represented the giving of the life of the beast as a substitute for the life of the sinner, which otherwise would have been forfeited as punishment for the sin. It was the divine law that *"without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin"* (Heb. 9:22). As it was in that first Passover in Egypt, salvation was and is through the shedding of the blood of a substitute victim; and God says, *"When I see the blood, I will pass over you"* (Ex. 12:13). *"Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us"* (1 Cor. 5:7). It is His blood which expiates our sin and satisfies the demands of the law that the guilty soul must be cut off from God must die.

Running through the Bible, from the opening chapters of Genesis where we read that righteous Abel offered a blood sacrifice to God which was acceptable to God because it was *"by Faith,"* meaning that it was according to God's instructions, because *"Faith comes by hearing the Word of God"* (Rom. 10:17) to the last book, Revelation, where we read that the saints overcome Satan *"by the blood of the Lamb"* (Rev. 12:11), is a thread of gold and scarlet – the gold of God's grace, intertwined with the crimson of the blood of the Lamb of which the blood of all the sacrifices which preceded the cross were representations and foreshadowings. Blood sacrifices ended, and the need for them ended, when Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest, offered His own precious blood, *"to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."* *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified"* (Heb. 9:26; 10:14).

**ALL THE BLOOD-SACRIFICES OFFERED IN WORSHIP OF
GOD AND BY HIS INSTRUCTIONS, FROM THAT OFFERED BY
ABEL ONWARD, POINTED TO AND WERE PRE-FIGUREMENTS
OF THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST – *"THE LAMB SLAIN FROM
BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD"***

The unceasing sacrifice of animals placed by God at the very heart of all religion approved by Him from the beginning of time was meant to depict, point to, and prepare the way for the sacrifice of His Son as the final perfect and all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. It was God's plan from before the creation of the world to perform this great act of propitiation and atonement for the sins of men. Jesus is called *"The lamb slain from the foundation of the world"* (Rev. 13:8). *"Who has saved us, and called us with an holy*

calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (II Tim. 1:9). “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory” (I Cor. 2:7). See also Gen. 3:15; Acts 2:33; Titus 1:2; Jn. 1:29,36.

The removal of sin accomplished by the animal sacrifices was only temporary (Heb. 10:3), but they pointed forward to the eternal removal of both guilty and consequences through the death of Jesus (Zech. 3:8-10; 13:1; Heb. 10:14). The death of Christ for our sins is the extension and fulfillment of the entire sacrificial system of the Old Testament, both of the Patriarchal and Mosaic ages (Hebrews – Chapters 9 & 10).

God told Israel: *“The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul” (Lev. 17:11).* Christ’s atoning death was the reality of which all previous sacrifices were but representations, as is set forth in detail in Hebrews, Chapters 7 through 10.

God’s giving of His Son as the propitiation for our sins demonstrated His infinite love for and mercy towards us, and at the same time, fully vindicated His unswerving justice and holy and righteous character which could not allow sin to go unpunished. God Himself provided the substitute victim and offered Him as the propitiatory sacrifice for our sins. It is required of us that we accept that sacrifice through our re-enactment of it and symbolic participation in it in baptism. It is in this act of obedience to the gospel that we appropriate the blood of Christ, and the redemption which it purchased, for we are *“baptized into His death”* where He shed His precious blood. It is in this act that we make spiritual contact with that death for our sins (Rom. 6:3,4; Col. 2:12).

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life . . . He who believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he who believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him” (Jn. 3:16,36).

THE SAVING EFFICACY OF CHRIST’S DEATH DEPENDS ENTIRELY UPON THE FACT THAT HE WAS THE SON OF GOD

The scriptures tell us that *“It is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin” (Heb. 10:4).* Of course not. No animal’s life could be an adequate substitute for a human life. In fact, one human life is worth more than all the animal lives in the world. Therefore, an animal sacrificed as the substitute victim for the sins of a man could not be more than a token offering. If a human being was sacrificed for the sins of another, he could only die for one person, because all human lives are of equal value. So one person could die for only one other person.

How then could Christ die for the sins of all men? How could that one person be the substitute victim for all other persons who ever were or ever will be? He could die for all because He was the Son of God, and, therefore, His life possessed infinite value. His life was worth more than all the other lives that ever were or ever would be, because He was the source of all other lives and because He was beloved by His Father above the entire universe and all that is, was, or ever will be in it.

If you only had one son, what would you take for him? For that matter, no matter how many children you had, how much would it take to purchase any one of them from you? One human life is worth more than all the world, if that life belongs to you. How much more then, was the life of God’s Son of incalculable value.

Jesus was an incarnation of God – a projection, extension, and embodiment of the Father. He came forth from the Father, just as our children come forth from us. His life was of limitless value, and thus His death was also of unlimited value. While human lives are of finite value, Jesus' life was of infinite value and could be given in payment for all the other lives that would ever be which otherwise would have had to be forfeited in payment for their sins. The grace "stored up" and awaiting use by sinful men is inexhaustible. The divine forgiveness available to us is from an unfailing source and is of endless supply. He alone could pay the price for our ransom from sin. Because He did pay that price, God's word can now say: *"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified"* (Heb. 10:10-14).

Jesus' life was divine, and therefore of an immeasurably higher category of being and value than a mere human life, just as one human life is of immeasurably more value than all animal lives. Therefore, His death could take the place of and compensate for an endless number of human lives which otherwise would have to die for their sins.

LESSON 5

MAN'S PART IN THE PLAN OF SALVATION – OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD

We have seen that man is a lost and hell-bound creature by his very nature, a *"child of wrath,"* and spiritually *"dead in his trespasses and sins"* (Eph. 2:1-3). We have also seen how God, in His boundless love, has prepared a way for us to escape from the awful eternal destiny awaiting the Devil, his angels, and the souls of all who have ignored the authority of their Creator, and their responsibilities to Him. God's part in the plan of salvation was to prepare the way of salvation and to make it available to us. Our part is to enter the way and to walk in it. Jesus said: *"Enter by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and few there be who find it"* (Matt 7:13,14).

WE ARE SAVED BY GOD'S GRACE, BUT THAT GRACE IS EXTENDED ONLY TO THOSE WHO OBEY HIS WORD

"God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, and not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph.2:4-9).

God's grace, and the salvation extended to us through it, is unmerited and unearned, but not unconditional. It is given to us only if we do what He says we must do. The great physician has given us a medicine for our incurable and always fatal malady of sin, but we must take that medicine. He has thrown a life-rope of deliverance to those who are drowning in sin, but they must take it and hold on to it and keep holding on to it, while He pulls them to safety on the other shore.

"He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him" (Heb. 5:9).

"Not every one who saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

"If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love" (Jn. 15:10).

"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him", and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in him" (1 Jn. 2: 3-5).

Every blessing of life, and the blessing of his life itself, is equally a gift of God's grace. Salvation, therefore, is no different from any other blessing, whether spiritual or physical, great or small; they are all gifts from God and manifestations of His Grace, meaning that we

did nothing and can do nothing to deserve them. This does not mean that we do not have to do anything in order to receive these blessings. In every case, there is some action that we must perform in order to receive the free gift of God, not in order to pay for it, but in order to appropriate and claim it for our own.

For example, God has given us the sun for light, heat, and energy. Yet, if we do not open our eyes, the light will do us no good. If we do not gather the fuel in which the sun's heat and energy is stored for our use, whether it be for wood or coal or oil, it will do us no good. If we do not harvest the food and prepare the food and eat the food, in which the energy from the sun is stored for the use of our bodies, it will do us no good. In doing all the things, we must do to claim for ourselves the blessing of the sun, we do not pay for the sunlight, nor pay God for creating us, the earth, or the sun, or thereby merit or earn the blessings which God has bestowed upon us through the sun. The sunlight is the free gift of God, like salvation, but there are many things that we must do to claim and appropriate that gift for ourselves.

UNDERLYING ALL OF GOD'S GRACE. ALL OF GOD'S SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ARE GIVEN TO US THROUGH THE WORD.

Underlying man's reception of salvation, and every other spiritual blessings, is man's faith in the word – so salvation is received *"By grace, through faith, and is the free gift of God (Eph: 2:8,9).*

The land of promise, which God promised to give to Abraham and his seed forever (Gen. 13:15), was a type and representation of heaven, which is our promised land (Heb. 11:16). Even though God gave the promised land to Israel, so that they received it completely by grace, yet they had to fight for every square inch of it, as well as do their best to live up to the 613 commandments of the law God gave them through Moses at Mt. Sinai (Deut.26-30). Having done all this, the Israelites had in no way earned or merited the land which God had given them. However, loving God and obeying God was a precondition to their receiving the inheritance of the promised land, just as loving and obeying God is a precondition to our receiving the promised land above. The great city of Jericho was the first citadel of the Canaanites given to the Israelites by God, by His grace. We read: *"And the Lord saith unto Joshua, See, I have given into your hand Jericho, and the King thereof, and the mighty man of valor" (Josh. 6:2).*

Yet, the Israelites were instructed by God to march around the city of Jericho once a day for seven days, and seven times on the seventh day. They were told that after they had done this, and the priests had blown a blast on their trumpets, and all the people had shouted with a great shout, the wall of the city would fall down flat, so that all they would have to do would be to go on in and possess it.

Certainly the obedience of the Israelites to the commandments of God in no way earned them the city of Jericho; yet they would not have received it had they not followed God's instructions to the letter. They received the gift of the city through the undeserved grace of God; but not without the most meticulous observance of the commandments of His word. In the same way, we receive our salvation and our inheritance in the eternal city of God above, completely by grace, but not without our most conscientious observance of the commandments of His word.

There are some things that we must do to save ourselves from the fate of this corrupt generation in which we live, just as there were some things that the Jews who were convinced of the truth of Peter's preaching on Pentecost had to do to be saved. We are told that Peter warned them, and he pleaded with them, *"Save yourselves from this corrupt*

generation." *"Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day" (Acts 2:40-41).*

WHAT DOES ONE HAVE TO DO TO BE SAVED?

One Must Hear the Gospel. The apostle Paul said, *"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).* Quite obviously, if the gospel is the means and instrument by which God saves man, then one must hear the gospel in order to be saved. To "hear it," means to consciously receive it with an understanding heart.

In the Parable of the Sower, we are told that the seed of God's kingdom is His word (Lk. 8:11). That divine seed, the word of God, has to be planted in good hearts in order to bring forth fruit unto life everlasting.

"How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" asks Paul in Romans 10:14. In verse 17, he states, *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*

Jesus at the close of the Sermon on the Mount said, *"Therefore, whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock..." (Matt. 7:24).* One time Jesus was told that his mother and his brothers were standing outside the place where he was preaching, and they wanted to see him. Jesus replied – *"My mother and my brothers are these who hear the word of God, and do it" (Lk. 8:21).* In Acts 18:8 we read: *"and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized."*

One Must Believe the Gospel. The passage first quoted above, Romans 1:16, tells us that the gospel is God's power through which he saves *"for everyone who believes . . ."* It is evident that the gospel has no power over anyone who does not believe it. We "plug into" the power-line of the gospel by faith. Through faith, the gospel is assimilated into our conscious being, and the driving life and spirit that is in the gospel is transmitted into us, there to take root. We are told that *"Without faith it is impossible to please Him; for who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).* *"By grace are ye saved, through faith . . ." (Eph. 2:8).* Jesus told the Jews of His day: *"If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24).* All the miracles that Jesus did were done to produce faith that He was indeed the Christ, the Son of God, and all that are recorded in the New Testament are recorded there for the same purpose, to produce faith. We read: *"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (Jn. 20:30,31).*

Eternal life is promised to the believer: *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should no perish, but have eternal life" (Jn. 5:24).* See: Jn. 3:16 and Jn. 5:24).

Escape from spiritual death is promised to the believer: *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (Jn 11:25,26).*

Power to become a Son of God is promised to the believer: *"But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on His name" (Jn. 1:22).*

Spiritual light is promised to the believer: *"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believes in me should not abide in darkness"* (Jn. 12:46).

Salvation is promised to those who have Faith: *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord, Jesus Christ"* (Rom. 5:1). *"And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he who believeth not shall be damned"* (Mk. 16:15-16).

Faith is the victory that overcomes the world: *"For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith"* (1 Jn. 5:4).

It needs to be stressed that the faith that saves is an obedient faith. It is not enough just to believe. We are told that *"the devil believes, and tremble"* (Jas. 2:19). The entire Protestant world teaches that we are saved by "faith only." But the only time that the words "faith only" is found in the New Testament, it says: *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"* (Jas. 2:24).

The scriptures tell us, *"as the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also"* (Jas. 2:26). In Hebrews, Chapter 11, we have an honor roll of spiritual heroes of all ages who were saved and did great things for God *"by faith."* In every case, their faith was coupled with obedience to God's word. It is suggested that the student read James, Chapter 2, and Hebrews, Chapter 11, as time permits, both of which chapters emphasize the necessity of the faith that saves being an active, working, obedient faith. The only faith that please God is *". . . faith which works by love"* (Gal. 5:6).

One Must Repent of His sins. The word "repent" comes from the Greek word *"metanoeo,"* which means literally "to have a different mind, to change one's mind, to think differently." It signifies a change of mind about sin which is so definite that it produces a corresponding change of life and actions. Repentance is not merely sorrow for sin, since *"godly sorrow works repentance"* (II Cor. 7:10). So then, repentance is preceded by sorrow for one's sins and followed by a changed life and behavior. It includes a resolution to turn from sin and to turn to righteousness – a decision to quit doing wrong and to start doing right. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is an illustration of repentance (Lk. 15:11-24). Repentance is central to the gospel plan of salvation. Christ began His ministry by a call for repentance (Matt. 4:17). He told the people of His day *"unless you repent, you will all like wise perish"* (Lk. 13:3,5). The message then, and now, is "Turn, or burn." "Conversion" means "change" (Acts 3:19). That repentance is an absolutely necessary prerequisite to forgiveness of sins and salvation is made plain, again and again, in the gospel. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples in Jerusalem and said, *"Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."* (Lk. 24:46,47). II Peter 3:9 tells us that the Lord *". . . is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* Paul told the Athenians: *"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent"* (Acts 17:30). Repentance follows faith, in the plan of salvation. In Romans 2:4, we read *". . . the goodness of God leads you to repentance."* That goodness of God which leads us to change our hearts, minds, wills and purposes is the gift of Christ on the cross for our sins, as set forth in the word of God. If one doesn't believe in that word, he will not be convicted by the goodness of God; and so will not repent because of that goodness.

One must Confess With His Mouth That Jesus Is Christ, The Son of God. Jesus said that we must confess Him before men (i.e., make a public declaration of His identity as the Lord and Savior, the Christ, the Son of God). He said: *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in*

heaven" (Matt. 10:32,33). In Romans 10:10 we are told: "For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch is an example of the kind of confession one should make after he has believed in Jesus, and before he is baptized. We read: ". . . the eunuch said, see, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:36,37). Our confession that Jesus is the Son of God is an all-important part of the plan of salvation. We are told, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God" (1 Jn. 4:15).

One Must Be Baptized For The Remission of Sins – Buried In Water In A Symbolic Participation In and Re-enactment of the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ – Born of Water and the Spirit Into God's Family and Kingdom. Of all things that one must do to be saved, being baptized is the only thing that one never has to do again, and keep doing, again and again. One must hear the word all his life and keep hearing it. One must believe the word of God, and keep believing it; one must repent of his sins, and keep repenting of his sins, as often as he commits sins for as long as he lives. One must confess Christ before men, and keep confessing Him at every opportunity he gets. But one is only baptized once, for all, and forever. Baptism does not change the person who is baptized at all. It changes his status, his identity, his spiritual relationships with God, with Christ, with the church of Christ as well as with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Baptism is like marriage, which does not at all change the persons getting married, but changes radically their relationship to each other, to each other's families, to each other's property, and to all things that pertain to each other for the rest of their lives.

In the eight separate cases of conversion through the preaching of the apostles in the Book of Acts, the only two of the five necessary steps to salvation which are specifically mentioned in every case are hearing the word and being baptized.

OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL MEANS OUR RE-ENACTMENT OF THAT DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST BY WHICH WE ARE SAVED OUR SYMBOLIC PARTICIPATION IN IT BY BAPTISM

Again and again in the New Testament, we are told that we must obey the gospel of Christ in order to be saved. When the Lord comes again, in flaming fire with his holy angels, "He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord" (II Thess. 1:7-9). Our obedience to the gospel involves our acting out the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in baptism. We are told: "Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6:3,4). Thus, our baptism is an enactment of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and is the consummating act of our obedience to the gospel. We say that baptism is the consummating act of our obedience to the gospel because it must be preceded by our hearing the gospel message, our sincere belief in it, our repentance of our sins, and the confession of our faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, our Savior and Lord. Jesus Himself set forth these prerequisites to salvation as follows:

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved: but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk. 16:15,16).

"Unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:3,5).

"Therefore whoever confesses me before men, him I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt.10:32).

That faith, repentance, and confession of Christ's Lordship must precede baptism is made plain in other passages, such as Acts 2:38; Luke 24:46,47; Romans 10: 9,10; Acts 8:37; and 16:31.

In Romans 6:17,18 we read, *"But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."*

This states that we are freed from sin (i.e., saved) because we have *"obeyed from the heart a form of doctrine."* The only form or pattern of teaching or doctrine that we obey, or conform to is baptism, where the believer re-enacts the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. He is then made free from sin and saved.

BAPTISM

WHAT IT IS – WHAT IT DOES

WHAT THE SCRIPTURES TEACH CONCERNING BAPTISM AS A NECESSARY PREREQUISITE TO SALVATION IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM IN THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM

Jesus Christ began his earthly ministry by being baptized (Matt. 3:15-17). Jesus was acknowledged by God as His Son and received the Holy Spirit in visible form at His baptism (Matt. 3:16,17). Immediately after His baptism, Jesus Himself began to teach to baptize (Jn. 3:22). Jesus told Nicodemus that unless a man is *"born of water,"* an obvious reference to baptism, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:5). The last thing that Jesus commanded his apostles to do after His resurrection was to go preach the gospel to everyone in the world and to baptize everyone who believed (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15,16).

The very first thing the apostles did in carrying out this Great Commission of Christ was to command everyone who believed that Jesus was the Christ to repent and be baptized for the remissions of his sins (Acts 2:38).

The first thing that those who heard the apostles and believed in the resurrected Lord did was to be baptized (Acts 2:41). The three thousand who were baptized at that time constituted the beginning of the Lord's Church and kingdom upon earth. Those who became members of that church and kingdom did so by being baptized (Acts 2:41-47).

The book of Acts of the Apostles is the book that records the establishment and spread of the Church under apostolic oversight. It is sometimes called "the book of conversions," because it tells how people obeyed the gospel and became Christians under the preaching of the apostles and inspired evangelists. Since we are under the same authority today and have now the same apostles and the same message to proclaim that was proclaimed then, it follows that because they had to be baptized to be saved and to become members of the Lord's Church and kingdom, so do we. There was not one gospel for them to obey in the first century and another for us to obey in the twentieth century (II Thess. 1:8; Eph. 4:4-6; Rev. 14:6).

In every single instance recorded in the Book of Acts, when people believed the

gospel, they were baptized, and in every instance they were baptized immediately. (Believers on Pentecost – Acts 2:36-47; Converts in Samaria – Acts 8:12; Ethiopian Eunuch – Acts 8:38; Saul of Taurus – Acts 9:18; Lydia of Thyatira – Acts 16:15; Philippian Jailer and his household – Acts 16:15; Believers in Corinth – Acts 18:8; Ephesian disciples – Acts 19:5).

Baptism is the one unvarying component recorded in every example of conversion given in the Book of Acts. It is also important to note that in every instance those baptized had heard the gospel message only once!

Let us examine some of the many passages in the scriptures which pertain to the necessity, mode and meaning of Christian baptism.

THE GREAT COMMISSION BAPTISM MUST BE PRECEDED BY TEACHING

Matthew 28:18-20. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying. All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Here in the first record of the giving of the universal commission under which we now operate, Jesus set forth two things that we as His disciples are to do – teach and baptize. Only those who are taught are to be baptized. Infants cannot be taught, and so cannot be scripturally baptized.

JESUS PUT BELIEF BEFORE BAPTISM & BAPTISM BEFORE SALVATION

Mark 16:15,16. "And he said unto them, go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Here, in another recording of the Great Commission under which we now operate and will until the end of time, Jesus put belief before baptism and baptism before salvation. To change that order and to put baptism before faith as do those who practice infant baptism, or to put salvation before baptism as do those who teach that we are saved by faith alone, is to alter and amend the word of Christ as given so plainly in the Great Commission.

BAPTISM IS A PART OF THE NEW BIRTH AND ONE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITHOUT IT

John 3:5: "Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Here Jesus states emphatically to Nicodemus that one must be born of water in order to enter the Kingdom of God. There is no doubt about it. He says that one must be born of

water. That the birth of water is baptism is not questioned by any reputable commentator. If Jesus said one must be born of water to enter the kingdom of God, who has the right to say that one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water (i.e., without being baptized)? To be born of something means "to come out of it." Obviously one cannot come out of water unless he goes into the water. Here Jesus is saying one must be immersed in water in order to be saved.

BAPTISM MUST BE PRECEDED BY REPENTANCE AND IS FOR REMISSION OF SINS

Acts 2:38. "Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Here, on the day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, is the first full gospel sermon ever preached. The apostle Peter told the Jews who wanted to know what to do to be saved to "*repent and be baptized*" for the remission or removal of their sins. Repentance and baptism are for the same purpose. Thus, if one can be saved without baptism, he can be saved without repentance. These Jews already believed that Jesus whom they had crucified was the Christ, the Messiah; and that is why they asked Peter and the other apostles what they must do (Acts 2:37). Obviously, then, belief alone was not enough to save them. Peter told them that they had to repent and be baptized. That the purpose of baptism is the remission of sins is stated plainly here; and the 3,000 Jews who constituted the first congregation of the Lord's Church were baptized for the removal of their sins. If baptism is for the remission of sins, then one's sins are not removed until he is baptized.

One is saved in the act of baptism because salvation is the removal of one's sins. One is saved from his sins – from their guilt and eternal consequences. Any church which practices a baptism not for the remission of sins – in other words, any church which teaches that one is saved before he is baptized, or that baptism is not a prerequisite to salvation – is practicing an unscriptural baptism which has the wrong purpose and significance and is not a valid baptism from the New Testament standpoint.

ONE'S SINS ARE WASHED AWAY IN BAPTISM

Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Here, Saul of Tarsus who became the apostle Paul, was told by a preacher sent to him by God to arise and be baptized and "*wash away thy sins.*" If the 3,000 on Pentecost were baptized for the removal of their sins, and Saul of Tarsus was baptized to wash away his sins, does that not make it plain that the purpose of the baptism of the Great Commission is that our sins might be removed? And does it not follow that we are saved at that point and not before?

Whoever is baptized for a different reason than for the remission of his sins is not baptized for the same reason that those who obeyed the gospel under the preaching of the apostles were baptized, and therefore, is not scripturally baptized. In order to be valid, baptism must not only be performed in the right way, but it must also be performed for the right reason.

It is most significant that when Saul was told he must be baptized to remove his sins, he had already done all the things that the religious world today says one must do to be saved, yet he was not saved, for he was still in his sins. He had seen Christ and confessed Him as Lord. He had a penitent faith in Jesus and asked Jesus *"What wouldst thou have me to do, Lord?"* (Acts 22:10). In his deep repentance, he had fasted and prayed for three days and nights (Acts 9:9-11). Yet he was still in his sins and had to be baptized to wash them away (Acts 22:16). Although most preachers nowadays tell men that baptism has nothing to do with their salvation, faithful preachers of the gospel still tell men as Ananias told Saul, that they wash away their sins in baptism.

WE ARE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST INTO HIS DEATH AND BAPTISM IS A BURIAL

Romans 6:3,4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life."

Here we are told that we are baptized into Christ – baptized into His death. We are also told here that in baptism we are "buried," so baptism is a burial and not a sprinkling or pouring; and we are raised with Christ in baptism to walk in that new life which we can have only in Him.

If one can be saved without baptism, he can be saved without being in Christ and without contacting the death of Christ or the cleansing blood which was shed in that death, because we are here told very plainly that we are baptized into His death.

Christ has commanded baptism as the symbolic act by which we identify with His martyrdom. When we are baptized, we enter into a covenant relationship with him and receive the benefit of the shedding of His divine blood which took place in His death. We are *"baptized into his death,"* and we appropriate the benefits of His shed blood when we are buried into that death by baptism.

BAPTISM IS OUR DELIVERANCE FROM SPIRITUAL BONDAGE

I Corinthians 10:1,2: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

Here we are told that the act of national deliverance by which God delivered the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage was parallel to our baptism.

The Israelites were *"baptized unto Moses,"* that is, they were covered over by the water of the Red Sea and by the cloud that covered them as they passed through the Red Sea; they were buried in water, so to speak, as they went as a nation through that pathway in the sea that God provided for them. That passage through the Red Sea was like our baptism, says Paul. It was their salvation from Egypt and from the bondage of their slavery there, just as our baptism is our deliverance from sin and Satan and is our entering into the freedom of the covenant of grace. We are baptized into Christ as they were baptized unto Moses.

WE ARE BAPTIZED INTO THE LORD'S BODY, THE CHURCH

I Corinthians 12:13: *"For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit."*

Here we are told that we are all baptized into the body, which is the church of Christ (Eph. 1:22,23; 4:4-6). Christ is the head of the body, the church, and He is the head of nothing else; and He died for the church, His body, and He didn't die for anything else (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28; Col. 1:18). If we are outside that body which is His church, then we do not receive the redemption purchased by His death for that body. I Corinthians 12:13 tells us that we are all baptized into one body. That is how we get into that one body which is the church, and there is no other way, for it says that we are all baptized into it. If one can be saved without the church for which Christ died, of which he is the head, and which we are told is the fulfillment of all of his plans (Eph 1:22,23).

WE BECOME THE CHILDREN OF GOD ARE CLOTHED WITH CHRIST IN BAPTISM

Galatians 3:26,27: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

This tells us that just as many – no more and no less – as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Until we put Him on in baptism, we are outside of Him in whom all spiritual blessings are to be found (Eph. 1:3). We put Christ on as a man puts on a garment, and are clothed with His righteousness, rather than our own which is *"as filthy rags"* (Isa. 64:6), when we are *"baptized into him"* (II Cor. 5:21).

THERE IS ONLY ONE TRUE BAPTISM

Ephesians 4:4-6: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Here we are told that there is just one valid baptism, which means that if immersion is scriptural baptism (and every single church and denomination agrees that it is), then it is the only scriptural baptism because there is just one true baptism.

Furthermore, here we see that the doctrine of baptism is put in the same category of importance as the doctrine of the one true church or body; the doctrine of the one true spirit or Holy Spirit; the doctrine of heaven, our only hope; the doctrine of Jesus Christ, the only Lord; the doctrine of the one and only true faith; and indeed, it is placed on the same level of importance as the doctrine of the one and only true and living God and Father of all.

There are seven important things listed here in Ephesians 4:4-6 of which there is only one true and correct representation and in which the Christian must believe. Baptism is one of those seven things. And yet most of Christendom today holds that baptism is of small importance!

THE CHURCH IS MADE UP OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN

CLEANSSED BY THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD

Ephesians 5:25-27: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Here we are told that the church is sanctified and cleansed by the "washing of water by the word." Thus, the church is sanctified and cleansed by baptism.

This is the same terminology used in I Corinthians 6:11, where Paul says, "But ye are washed, ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Here again, sanctification and justification are identified with our washing, which takes place only in our baptism.

BAPTISM IS A BURIAL, AND IS THE POINT OF ONE'S ENTRANCE INTO THE NEW COVENANT JUST AS CIRCUMCISION WAS THE POINT OF ONE'S ENTRANCE INTO THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Colossians 2:10-12: "And ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power; in who also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead."

Here we are told that baptism is to the Christian what circumcision was to the Jew. It is here called "the circumcision of Christ." Circumcision was the point of entrance of the Jew into the covenant of Abraham. Baptism is the point of our own entrance into the new covenant, so that we become heirs of the blessings of that covenant at baptism, and not prior to then (Gal. 3:27-29).

What takes the place of circumcision is not baptism alone, but regeneration. However, regeneration is consummated and completed by baptism which is called "the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5)

Here in Colossians 2:12, the scriptures tell us that we are buried with Christ in baptism. Once again, we see that baptism is not sprinkling and is not pouring. It is a burial in water and from that burial of baptism we are raised with Christ. If we can be saved without baptism and without that burial in water which constitutes scriptural baptism, we can be saved without being raised with Christ, because it is in the act of baptism that we are raised with him, according to the Word of the Lord.

WE ARE SAVED BY BAPTISM AND THE RECEIVING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and receiving of the Holy Ghost."

Here we are told that God has saved us by His grace and mercy "by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." The washing of regeneration is baptism,

and the renewing of the Holy Spirit is the giving of God's spirit unto us when we are baptized, as promised in Acts 2:38. "Regeneration" means rebirth. So this definitely says that baptism is a part of the new birth to which Jesus referred in His conversation with Nicodemus (Jn. 3:5), where He said that we must undergo a new birth of water, as well as of the spirit, in order to enter his kingdom and become a new creature in him (II Cor. 5:17).

BAPTISM NOW SAVES US

I Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Here we are told that baptism now saves us. How much plainer could it be? Of course, it is Christ alone who saves us, but baptism is an instrument through which He saves. Just as Noah and his family were saved by the waters of the flood which washed away that ancient world that otherwise would have engulfed them in its wickedness and sin, so the water of baptism now saves us. This says it. Who can deny it? Baptism saves us.

We are saved by many other things also – by faith, by repentance, by the blood of Christ, by working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, by the mercy and grace of God, by our obedience to the Gospel. For *"He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him"* (Heb. 5:8,9.)

Baptism is like a marriage ceremony – it does not change the person, but it changes his state, status, and relationship to God and Christ, to the church, to his sins, to all things. Faith, repentance, and the Holy Spirit within him change the person. Baptism changes his identity and relationships.

FINAL WORD

In a sense of the word, water baptism has been the agency of God's salvation of his people in every age and dispensation. God ushered in the Patriarchal Age by baptizing (immersing) the world in water, thus saving Noah and his family from the all-prevailing sin which would have engulfed them had it not been destroyed by water. Peter identifies this with our baptism in water in I Peter 3:20,21, where he says concerning Noah and the flood: *"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us..."*

The Mosaic Age was ushered in by the whole nation of Israel being baptized unto Moses in the Red Sea, even as we are baptized into Christ. The water of the Red Sea which saved them destroyed their Egyptian taskmasters, who were types of the sin from which Christ sets us free (I Cor. 10:1,2).

The baptism of the world in the Patriarchal Age and the baptism of the Hebrew nation in the Mosaic Age was followed by the baptism of each individual who is saved in the Christian Age.

The central feature of the preparation for Christ and the Christian dispensation by John the Baptist was, of course, baptism. It is noteworthy that John's baptism, like that commanded by Christ, was *"for remission of sin"* (Lk. 3:3; Acts 2:38; 22:16). It can be said then that the scriptures speak of no baptism other than that performed for the removal or remission of sin. It is obvious that those churches which do not practice baptism for the

remission of sin (and that includes almost all denominations), do not practice scriptural baptism.

What Baptism Is: Scriptural baptism is the burial in water, in obedience to Christ's command and in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and for the remission of his sins, of one who believes the gospel, repents of his sins, and confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, his Savior and Lord (Col. 2:12; Rom 6:3,4; Mk. 16:16; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9,10).

What Baptism Does: Scriptural baptism is the point of one's birth into God's family and kingdom, and hence it changes one's spiritual identity, one's relationship to God and status before God, and one's eternal destiny. At baptism, one becomes a participant in the new covenant, and receives the grace bestowed in that covenant, the chief benefit of which is eternal life in heaven above. One is baptized *"into"* Christ and all spiritual blessings are *"in Christ"* (Eph. 1:3), including redemption, union with Christ and with God in Christ, membership in His spiritual body, the Church, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The great salvation that was purchased for us by the blood of Christ, and all the blessing that go with that salvation, are obtained at baptism; for we are baptized *"into his death,"* where His blood was shed (Rom. 6:3,4; John 3:5; I Cor. 12:13; II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:27-29; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Titus 3:5; Eph. 5:25-27).

STAYING SAVED

Being saved means becoming a Christian.

Staying saved means living the Christian life until you change worlds and step from time into eternity.

Being saved means being born into the spiritual family of God, the Church.

Staying saved means being a faithful, active member of the Church – a laborer in the Lord's vineyard – until the day is done, and "the night falls when no man can work."

Being saved means undergoing the new birth of water and the Spirit, thus becoming a new-born babe in Christ.

Staying saved means growing spiritually, through spiritual food and drink, and engaging in spiritual exercise, work, and activity.

Being saved means entering the Christian race.

Staying saved means *"laying aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us" and "running with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:1,2).* It means being a doer of the work, and not a hearer only.

Being saved is like getting married. One can get married in a few minutes, but it takes a lifetime of loving, diligent effort to stay married to to make one's marriage what it ought to be.

Staying saved means continuing in the Word of Christ, who said, *"If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; and you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free." (Jn. 8:31,32).*

Staying saved means constant study of the Word of God, the Bible. Jesus said, *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (Jn. 17:3).* The only source of information about God and Christ is the Bible. Anything we know about them, we will have to obtain from the Word, through which they have revealed themselves – who they are and what they have done, and what they want us to be and do – for there is no other source of information. Staying saved means that we *"Pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17).*

Staying saved means that we love God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves – it means that, like the Lord, we "go about doing good" – that we *"do good to all men, especially to them of the household of faith"* (Gal. 6:10; Matt. 22:36-40).

Staying saved means having the Spirit of God within us and bearing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives (Gal. 5:22,23). It means being pure in heart and life, crucifying the flesh and its passions and desires, keeping one's self unspotted by the world. It means being absolutely honest and trustworthy, faithful and true. It means having the right priorities and values in our lives – putting God and His kingdom first. It means denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily and following Jesus (Lk.9:23).

WE ARE SAVED BECAUSE WE ARE MEMBERS OF GOD'S FAMILY, THE CHURCH

Just as in the physical realm, every blessing we enjoy is ours because we are members of the family of man, so in the spiritual realm, every blessing we receive, including salvation, is ours because we are members of the family of God. We are saved, not because of what we do, but because of who we are.

There are some things we must do in order to be in God's family, and some things we must do – and must refrain from doing – in order to remain a member of God's family in good standing. But what we do is done to establish our divine identity and to keep it.

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him" (1 Jn. 3:1).

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs-heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Rom. 8:16,17).

"Are they (the angels) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who will inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1:14).

"Then shall the King say to those on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).

"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:7).

We get into the divine family, the Church, by being born into it . . . just as we get into the human family by being born into it. There is no other way. That is why Jesus said to Nicodemus, *"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God . . . Marvel not, that I said unto you, You must be born again"* (Jn. 3:5,7).

We are human beings because we were born of human seed.

We are divine beings, heavenly beings, because we are born again of heavenly seed, divine seed, incorruptible seed.

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever" (1 Pet. 1:23).

"Of His own will begat He us by the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (Jas. 1:18).

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO OVER-EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCH

The Church is the "body of Christ," which means the embodiment of Christ upon earth; it is His kingdom, His family. It is the incarnation and extension of Christ just as Christ was the extension, embodiment, and incarnation of God. God loves those who are members of His Church as He loves His only begotten Son, and they are one with the Father and the Son (Jn 17:21-26; Rom. 8:38,39; Heb. 2:11-13; I Jn. 1:3; 3:1,2). Christ established His Church, and He established nothing else; Christ died for the Church and He died for nothing else; Christ is the Head of the Church, and He is the head of nothing else; Christ saves the Church, and He saves nothing else (Mt. 16:18,19; Eph. 5:23-33).

Our membership in the church of Christ is by far the greatest privilege and most wonderful blessing that God has given us; for the Church is that *"heavenly city which has the foundations whose builder and maker is God"* (Heb. 11-10). Membership in that Church carries with it the most profoundly important obligations and responsibilities that man can have on this earth.

OUR DUTY TO TAKE THE LORD'S SUPPER EACH FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK AND TO GIVE SACRIFICIALLY

One of our major responsibilities as Christians, which is also one of our greatest privileges, is to meet with our fellow Christians in the body of Christ and take the Lord's Supper on the first day of each week, the day of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. At this time also, we give our means to the Lord's work, as He has prospered us (I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:6,7; Read all of I Cor. 11:17-34).

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two symbolic rites or rituals (and there are no others) in the New Testament Church. In both of them, we show forth the Lord's death – depict and pictorialize it, and symbolically participate in it – and look forward to His coming again. In baptism, we are inducted into Christ – into his death. In the Lord's Supper, we symbolically take Christ into ourselves and incorporate Him into ourselves so that we become one with Him, emblematically, and thus, in symbolism fulfill the Lord's commandment, *"Abide in me and I in you"* (Jn.15:4).

Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn. 6:53-53). In instituting the Lord's Supper, Jesus took the unleavened bread of the Jewish Passover meal which He and the twelve Apostles were eating on the eve of His crucifixion, and said: *"Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when He had supped, saying. This cup is the New Testament in my blood. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord"* (I Cor. 11:24-27). Thus we see that we partake of the flesh and blood of Christ in the emblems of the loaf and fruit of the vine, which represent His flesh and blood spiritually, and are given the actual value of His flesh and blood by God, so that if we partake of these emblems in an unworthy manner, we are guilty of the death of Christ!

What does it mean *"to partake in an unworthy manner"*? It means to partake of the Lord's Supper in an irreverent, flippant and frivolous way without discerning that these

emblems are as the actual body and blood of Christ in the Lord's eyes. If partaking of the Lord's Supper in the wrong manner is to be guilty of the crucifixion of Christ, what shall we say of those members of the body who do not think enough of the body and blood of Christ to partake of it at all...who just stay away from Church? Remember what the Lord said: *"Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink of His blood, you have no life in you"* (Jn 6:53). Christians are commanded to attend Church services – *"not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together"* (Heb. 10:25).

THE POSSIBILITY OF APOSTASY, OF "FALLING FROM GRACE," OF BEING ETERNALLY LOST AFTER ONE HAS BEEN SAVED AND SANCTIFIED

If there is any one teaching of the Scriptures reiterated more often than any other, it is probably that men can be in a state of grace and divine favor, and then fall from grace, backslide, and be again alienated from God so that they will be eternally lost. Once one is a child of God, he is always a child of God; but he can be a disinherited child. The children of God at one time were comprised solely of fleshly Israel. Christ, foreseeing His rejection by Israel and His acceptance by the Gentiles, said prophetically: *" . . . Many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of Heaven. But the children of the Kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"* (Matt. 8:11-12). The churches of Galatia were told by the Apostle Paul that those who sought to be justified by the Law of Moses had *"fallen from grace."* (Gal. 5:4). One could not fall from grace unless he had once been in a state of grace. Therefore, the scriptures say plainly that one can fall from grace. Thus, the doctrine of "Once in grace, always in grace; once saved, always saved;" is a false doctrine.

Over and over again, we are told that one can be written in "The book of Life," and then, because of sin, be blotted out of it (Ex. 32:33; Ps.69:28; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 22:19;). There are many passages in the New Testament which warn against apostasy, and which teach that many will fall away from the faith and be lost. Some of them are:

Matt. 24:11-12	Luke 9:62	I Cor. 9:27
Gal. 5:4	Col. 1:23	I Tim. 4:1
Heb. 3:12	Heb. 6:4-6	Heb. 10:38
II Pet. 1:10	II Pet. 2:20-22	II Pet. 3:17
Matt. 7:15-23	II Tim. 3:1-14	II Thess. 2 (entire chapter)
Jude (Entire book)	Rev. 7:17	I Cor. 10:12

The doctrine of "once saved, always saved," which is central to Calvinism, and is a basic teaching of the world's largest Protestant denomination (the Baptist), was first taught by the serpent in the Garden of Eden, who told Eve that she would not surely die if she ate the forbidden fruit, even though God had told Adam that they would (Gen. 3:4). In other words, Satan told her: *"Your disobedience to God will not result in your condemnation or separation from God."* Satan is still teaching people that same erroneous doctrine today.

The doctrine of "Once saved, always saved" strikes at the very heart of the human freedom and liberty in choice and action, which is the essence of the Gospel, for *"where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"* (II Cor. 3:17). It completely destroys the meaning of such passages as: *"He who endures to the end, the same shall be saved"* (Matt. 10:22).

"Be thou fruitful unto death, and thou shall receive a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). "Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in the due season we shall reap if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

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