

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

By Buddy J. Duncan

Introduction

In our world today there is a great need for salvation; I say this because we have all sinned: *(Rom. 3:22 - 23) "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: ²³For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"*. Therefore, if you have never obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ you are in need of salvation!

I am sure that everyone knows that there are many different churches today and they all claim to be the church and to some degree they all teach a different plan of salvation. But have you ever considered what Jesus actually said? Let's read the exact words of Jesus: *(Matt. 16:18) "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Please take notice of the word "church"; did Jesus say he was going to build his "churches" or did he say he was going to build his "church"? Unless I am badly mistaken the word church is singular. If that is the case Jesus only built one church. Which church did Jesus build? The church that Jesus built is the one that you read about in the New Testament. If your church does not follow the pattern of the church of the New Testament it is not the church that Jesus built. The church that Jesus built also had a definite plan of salvation. This also can be found in the New Testament . If your church does not follow this plan of salvation, again it is not the church that Jesus built, and many would question your salvation if you have not followed and did the very same thing that those of the early church did. Wouldn't you agree that you should follow the exact plan that God has provided in His inspired Word to be a recipient of salvation? salvation, again it is not the church that Jesus built, and many would question your salvation if you have not followed and did the very same thing that those of the early church did. Wouldn't you agree that you should follow the exact plan that God has provided in His inspired Word to be a recipient of salvation? The purpose of this book is to provide God's plan of salvation and not include any of man's doctrines. The only way this can be accomplished is to go directly to the Bible and give book, chapter and verse; which is exactly what I will do in this publication.

Step One And Two

I am putting steps one and two together because you must believe and it is impossible to believe what you have not heard or read. Before anyone can obtain salvation they must believe. Believe what? Needless to say there are a lot of things

that can be believed. Of course our topic is “salvation”, therefore, the answer we are seeking must be one that deals with that subject.

Jesus has this to say about “believing”:(*John 8:24*) “*I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*”

So as anyone can plainly read if we want to be saved we must believe. On another occasion Jesus was questioning his apostles as to whom men were saying that he was; which will further explain what it is that we are to believe: (*Matt 16:13 - 17*) “*When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? ¹⁴And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. ¹⁵He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? ¹⁶And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. ¹⁷And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*”The reply that Peter gave is what we must believe; we must believe that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God”.

To quote Jesus if we don’t believe this we “will die in our sins”! I feel certain if we would consider the consequences that no one really would want to die in their sins; that is an awful price to pay: (*Rom. 6:23*) “*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

How is it possible for anyone to come to believe that Jesus is the Son of God? To be able to believe anything you either have to see or hear. (*Rom 10:13 - 14*) “*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (14) How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*” Unless you are deaf you can listen to a preacher or anyone else who is willing to teach you about Jesus and there are many who are willing to do just that. If you are deaf there are two possibilities; you can read the Bible or there is sign language. Now if you are both deaf and blind the Bible can be had in brail. Sometimes we find those who need help in believing; Jesus was faced with this situation: (*Mark 9:24*) “*And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*” This is why I recommend that you make every effort to study with someone. So you see we really don’t have a good excuse for not hearing about who the Son of God is!

Friends it is essential that we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; in one of the parables Jesus taught he showed the necessity of believing; (*Luke 8:12*) “*Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away*

the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. It is very possible to believe (John 20:30) "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: (31) But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. I encourage you to pick up a Bible and study with someone so that you too might become a believer!

Step Three

Once a person believes that Jesus is the Christ she or he must study further to learn what the next step is. If we go to the book of Acts you can read of many conversions beginning with chapter two. But even before that you can find Jesus himself telling us what we need to do in order to receive salvation from our sins: (Luke 13:3) *"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."* This is exactly what Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost :(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. We find the word repent again in (Acts 3:19) "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;"* Repentance is actually a commandment of God: (Acts 17:30) *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:"* Since God, Jesus and the apostles all commanded repentance if you desire to do things in a scriptural manner don't you think you should repent?

Friends and brethren, it is not good enough to say, "I repent" you must actually turn away from sin; I.e. you must have a complete different life-style; you must prove that you have truly repented: (Acts 26:20) *"But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."* The only way I know of to "do works meet for repentance" is to turn away from sin and stop sinning!

Now let us suppose you are already a Christian but you have slipped back into your old habits and you find that you are sinning; what can you do about that, you know that such behavior is not acceptable to God and you want to make things right; what should you do? Can we find such a case as this in the Bible? Yes indeed we do have such a case recorded in the New Testament; there was a man who was a sorcerer, his name was Simon, he had become a Christian but he

slipped back into his old way of life. What was he told to do? (*Acts 8:18-23*) “*And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, (19) Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. (20) But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. (21) Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. (23) For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.*” Simon the sorcerer’s heart was not right with God and he was told to repent and pray to God; this is what we also must do if we learn that our heart is not right with God.

Step Four

Since I put steps one and two together we are now brought to step four. If you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; which would actually be the second step you are prepared to take the fourth step. With this preparation the fourth step should be very easy for you to complete; it is simply confessing what you already believe. The best example of confessing the name of Jesus is found in the book of Acts; now it just so happens that the man who made the good confession was an Ethiopian eunuch: (*Acts 8:26-27*) “*And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. (27) And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,*” Now when Philip caught up with him he was reading his Bible [which would have been the Old Testament] and Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading; he answered, “How can I except someone explain it to me?” So Philip being the kind of preacher he was began to explain to him what he had been reading. Luke, the writer of the book of Acts tells us what Philip taught the eunuch: (*Acts 8:35*) “*Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.*” Now we are not told that Philip taught him about baptism but it is safe to assume that he did because when they came to some water the eunuch requested to be baptized [if Philip had not taught him about baptism how would the eunuch have known to request to be baptized?]. (*Acts 8:35*) “*Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.*” Philip told him if he believed he could be baptized; the eunuch then made the good confession: (*Acts 8:37*) “*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.***” Please notice that I have put the actual confession that the eunuch made in bold letters. The eunuch has now taken the fourth step in God’s plan of salvation.

Confessing the name of Jesus is something that each and every person must do; we must believe in our hearts that Jesus is the Son of God and we must make our belief known with the mouth; *(Romans 10:9-11) “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (10) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (11) For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”* Are you ashamed of Jesus? If you answer no then why not make a public confession?

Step Five

Now we come to step five; this is the final step that must be taken before one can receive salvation. This is perhaps the hardest step for some to take. The reason for baptism to be hard for some is because there are so many false doctrines being taught about baptism. Let us consider what God teaches us about baptism and we will do so from the scriptures themselves, ignoring whatever it might be that man teaches. If we truly love God won’t we want to please Him and not man? I tell you the truth I am more concerned with pleasing God than I am with pleasing any man or woman!

There are more than one baptism mentioned in the Bible. I think it only fair to list them:

There is the “baptism of repentance”; this is the baptism that was practiced before the church was established: *(Mark 1:4) “John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”*

When the children of Israel passed through the Red Sea as if on dry land the apostle Paul wrote that they were “baptized unto Moses”: *(1Corinthians 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; (2) And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;”* This of course is symbolic as there was water on all sides of them and a cloud of water over them.

We are also informed of a “baptism with fire” (*Matthew 3:11*) “*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*” Here we have John speaking to those who came to him and he is referring to Jesus the person who would baptize “with the Holy Ghost and with fire”.

Jesus told his apostles that they would be baptized with “the Holy Ghost”: (*Acts 1:5*) “*For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*” And of course Jesus’ words came to pass on the Day of Pentecost [Acts chapter two].

And finally we come to the “baptism for the remission of sins”. Read the words of Jesus as he commands and commissions his apostles: (*Matthew 28:19*) “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*” But the question that we must ask is “Why did Jesus tell them to baptize those they had taught”? Let’s allow Jesus to answer: (*Mark 16:16*) “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” What did Jesus say? Read it again very carefully; he said that those who believe and are “**baptized shall be saved**”. Could Jesus have spoken any clearer? I don’t know why this is misunderstood by so many. Jesus further said that if you “believe not” you shall be damned”. It is true that Jesus did not mention baptism in the last part of this verse because he knew that if a person doesn’t believe it is certain they will not be baptized.

Baptism is for the remission of sins and this is what Peter preached and taught in the first gospel sermon: (*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.*” This is Peter’s reply to a question he was asked: (*Acts 2:37*) *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” What was it that caused them to ask this question? Peter had just told them that they had “*by wicked hands have crucified and slain the Son of God*” (*Acts 2:23*) . Being told this would make anyone ask “What shall we do”?

What was their response to Peter’s reply to their question of “What shall we do”? Did they repent? Were they baptized? This is what Luke wrote: (*Acts 2:41*) “*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*”

What is the purpose of baptism? Although baptism may not make much sense to you and I we need to remember what Jesus told John when he approached John to be baptized of him: (*Matthew 3:13-15*) “*Then cometh Jesus*

from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. (14) But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? (15) And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.” We are baptized because it is the right thing to do and to have a good conscience before God: (1 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:”

What is the result of being baptized? Peter said baptism saves (1 Peter 3:21) and is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Jesus said baptism fulfills all righteousness. Also baptism puts us into Christ: (Galatians 3:27) “*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*” Here Paul also informs that it is in baptism that we put on Christ. When we are baptized our sins are washed away: (Acts 22:16) “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*”

The apostle Paul wrote some valuable information concerning baptism in the sixth chapter of his epistle to the Romans:

(Romans 6:3-22) Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (4) 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. (5) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: (6) 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. (7) For he that is dead is freed from sin. (8) Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: (9) Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. (10) For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. (11) Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (12) Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. (13) Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. (14) For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. (15) What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. (16) Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (17) But God be thanked, that ye were the

servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. (18) Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. (19) I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. (20) For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. (21) What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. (22) But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. (23) For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

What a mountain of information we find here; let's examine some of this information:

First of all Paul says that when we were baptized we were baptized into the death of Jesus (verse 3). In verse 4 we learn that we are buried with Christ in baptism and even as Christ was raised from the dead we too are raised from the grave of water to walk in newness of life; we are no longer the old person.

In verse 5 Paul wrote if we have been planted in his death we shall also be resurrected just as Christ was resurrected.

Verse 6 is interesting as we see that our old man was crucified with Christ and that we should no longer serve sin! What joy it should bring to read verse 7; doesn't it make you feel good to know that you are freed from sin?

Verse 8 tells us that if we are dead with Christ we shall also live with him.

Are yo alive unto God? Verse 11 tells us we should be. We cannot allow sin to rule our live verse 12.

We to are yield our members of instruments as instruments of righteousness verse 13. He goes on to say in verse 14 that sin shall not have dominion over us.

According to verse 14 we learn that just because we are under grace and not the law we are not at liberty to sin.

According to verse 18 we have been freed from sin and have become servants of righteousness.

Verse 23 is a favorite verse of many and is often quoted. Here Paul holds back nothing. He plainly tells us that the wages of sin is death. Then he gives us some good news by informing us of God's gift. God's gift to those who are baptized is eternal life through Jesus Christ. What a great way to end a chapter that is so filled with the results of those who have been baptized for the remission of their sins!

We are baptized in to one body: *(1 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.” That one body is the body of Jesus Christ which is his church: *(Ephesians 1:22) “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, (23) Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.* There is no need for concern; it makes no difference whether you are Jew or Gentile, bond or free we can all be baptized into the one body.

Now I am aware that there are those in the religious world who say that we are not baptized for the remission of sins; rather according to them you are baptized to show an outward salvation of an inward salvation. Although I don’t like being the bearer of bad news I must inform them that they are wrong. I would refer them to Acts chapter two, verse thirty eight: *(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.”* I would ask you to read what an inspired writer said; he said we are baptized **for the remission of sin**, he did not say because of remission of sins.

According to Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries the Greek word used for the word “for” is “eis”; he says “it is a primary preposition: to or into (indication of the point reached or entered)”, he also says it means “for or intent”. This would mean that Peter was saying that baptism is the point that we reach remission of sins, Peter would also be saying that baptism is the point we receive salvation. To put it in plain and simple words Peter was telling them on the Day of Pentecost that the intent of baptism is for the remission of sins. Friends this is what the Bible says when you properly translate what God wants you to know. Baptism is for the remission of sins; it is how God adds you to the church: *Acts 2:47) “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”* remission of sins; it is how God adds you to the church;”. I guess people can vote all they want to as to whether or not to allow you membership into their church but it really makes no difference because it is not their decision to make; it is God who decides and it is God that adds you to the church.

According to God’s plan of salvation what is the proper mode of baptism? Today you will find some sprinkling, others pouring and still others practicing immersion; are all three right? If we want to follow God’s plan of salvation we will do it the same way as they did in the early church; that is the right way and cannot be wrong! In the early church they buried the person who desired to be baptized: *(Romans 6:4) “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.” (Colossians 2:12) “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.” On two occasions, in two different epistles Paul wrote to churches discussing the subject of baptism and in both cases he said baptism was a burial. Could he have been wrong? Did the Holy Spirit falsely inspire Paul? I say “No way”. I don’t believe that either was the case; I believe that Paul wrote exactly what God wanted us to know! What I teach and practice is a burial or immersion. The Greek meaning of the word baptize is to dip, plunge or submerge. This is what the early church did and this is as God would have us to do.

God planned our salvation and our salvation is of God: *(Philippians 1:28)* “*d in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.*” God has brought us salvation through His grace: *(Titus 2:11)* “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,*” Although God has planned and brought salvation to us it can only be had through the name of Jesus Christ: *(Acts 4:12)* “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*” Furthermore, you cannot have salvation without faith: *(1 Peter 1:9)* “*Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.*”

Conclusion

God provided us with a perfect plan of salvation that will work if we will only take advantage of it. But as we all know many do not take advantage of God’s wonderful plan of salvation: *(Romans 10:16)* “*But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*” Rather they neglect the most precious possession they could ever have: *(Hebrews 2:3)* “*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*” The truth is there is no escape!

Allow me to encourage you through the words of Paul to work out your own salvation: *(Philippians 2:12)* “*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.” We must work out our own salvation by being obedient to the gospel: *(Hebrews 5:9)* “*And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*” Do you have the hope of eternal salvation? *(1 Thessalonians 5:8)* “*But let us, who are of the day, sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love;*

and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. (9) For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,”

It is much easier to accomplish if we start early in life like Timothy: (2 Timothy 3:15) *“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”*

God has made known to us His plan of salvation through the gospel. This is something Paul was aware of and he was not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ: (Romans 1:16) *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”*

If you have never obey the gospel of Jesus Christ won't you consider your position before it is too late? There are two things you should consider, first consider how uncertain your life is and second we do not know when Christ shall return!

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