

# Straight Bible Talk

Manchester Church of Christ, Share Christ's Love and Share His Message

## God's Plan of Salvation

Suppose you could face death with calmness and no fears. Suppose you could hear from your doctor that you had some incurable disease and only had a short time to live and that did not upset you. What would that be worth to you?

Suppose you lost everything of value, your bank account, your retirement money, your insurance and all of your accumulated property (cars, furniture, cell phone, etc.) and you said, "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord." And suppose you meant that. What would you give to be able to think like that? (The Bible describes a man by the name of Job who lost everything and that is what he said.)

Everyone seems to be born with an ability to enjoy the good times. Yet everyone has to endure hard times as well. It often seems like I am the one who has the toughest problems. God's salvation is a solution to the problem of the difficult times.

We are living through what some would describe as "tough" economic times. People are losing their savings. People are losing their jobs. No one seems to know whether things are going to get better or worse. Worry and distress are everywhere. Does God have a plan that will enable me to deal with all of this turmoil?

The answer is, "Yes." God has always had a plan that would enable people to survive, yes even thrive, in difficult times. David (the one of Goliath fame) understood God's plan. Jesus understood. His apostles understood. The people for whom John wrote the book of Revelation understood (if they believed what he wrote).

God's plan of salvation is for our survival in this world and it is our hope in death. God saves completely.

The Bible is God's book that explains His plan of salvation. Our relief does not rest on our feelings, nor our efforts. Our salvation is based on believing what God has done to save us and responding to God's plan in the way that He has laid out.

God's plan of salvation is simple enough that a child may understand it. It is plain enough that any honest person who is seeking the truth will find it. It does not depend upon any particular translation of the Bible in order to find it. It needs no theologian to interpret it.

God's plan of salvation may be divided into two parts. There is what God has done and will do. And there is what God expects us to do.

God so loved the world that He gave His Son. Jesus died for the sins of the world. Because of Jesus' death, we have access to the Father and can seek His forgiveness. God has sent this message out to all the world. Jesus told his disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

One should not be surprised that there are two parts to our salvation, God's part and our part. The Bible is consistent in this. Abraham had to leave his country, his family and his relatives. Noah had to build the ark. Lot had to leave Sodom without looking back. Every time the question is asked, "What must I do?" the answer is always that there was something that needed to be done.

The rich man had to sell his possessions. On Pentecost the people had to repent and

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Manchester  
Church of Christ

Meeting at  
595 Tolland Turnpike

Sun Bible Classes—9 AM  
Sun Worship—10 AM

Sun Eve Worship—6:00 PM  
Wed Bible Class—7:00 PM

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Acts 17:31

All scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible unless

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be baptized. Saul had to go to Damascus and there he was told, "What you must do." The Philippian jailer had to go to his house, rouse his family from their sleep, listen to Paul's message, wash their wounds and be baptized. In no instance was anyone told, "There is nothing that you need to do. Just accept Jesus into your heart and you are saved."

While the latter may be a popular saying, it has no proper foundation in Scripture. Far better to rely on Scripture than what is found only in folklore.

Over and over again, the Bible emphasizes the need for people to believe, to believe in God and to believe in God's only Son, Jesus Christ.

Over and over again, the Bible emphasizes the need for people to repent. Jesus said, "Except you repent you shall all in like manner perish," as he referred to some upon whom a tower had fallen.

In the same way, the Bible emphasizes the need to be baptized. It seems a bit strange that people will accept the need to believe and the need to repent, but then balk at baptism. When one has accepted the need to believe and repent, one has accepted the idea that there is some-

thing that people need to do apart from what God has done.

Some would say that baptism is different because it is a "work" and works do not save.

The works of the flesh do not save. The works of the Law do not save. But the work of believing and the work of repenting are necessary for salvation. In the same way, the "work" of baptism is also necessary, although baptism is something done to you and not something that you do.

Consider these comments that are found in the Bible with respect to baptism. "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved." "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." "Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." "Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not

the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." And, lest someone might want to argue that this is some baptism other than with water, please note what Paul wrote to Christians: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." There are not two baptisms, one that saves and one that does not!

For those who would like to read these passages in their own Bible, these are the references: Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21 and Ephesians 4:5.

Consider what God has promised to those who are saved. "The peace of God which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." "I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

God's plan is simple. Will you simply obey God and reap the benefits that He alone can give?