

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”

MAY 16, 2021

GOD PLANNED MAN'S SALVATION

by Jim Stauffer

God planned for man's salvation before He even created man (**Eph. 1:4-7; 3:10,11**) This teaches us at least two things about our Creator. He loved His creation to such an extent He desires they be with Him eternally and that He is omniscient. He knew prior to the creation how we would conduct ourselves, thus demanding redemption to be with Him.

He promised Christ, the Messiah as the seed of Abraham (**Gen. 12:1-2; 22:18; Gal. 3:16**) This promise is continually spoken of by the prophets of God to remind men of each and every generation of God's plan for our redemption.

He then completed His promise to give the descendants of Abraham a land and make them a nation when Moses gave them the Law and Joshua led them into the land of Canaan. He then said the Law of Moses would be a tutor to bring God's people to Christ (**Gal. 3:23,24**). It was not a law unto salvation itself, but rather one to lead men to salvation through Christ Who would redeem men from their sin of every age (**Heb. 9:13-15**).

Christ was born to rule on the throne of David according to the promise Gabriel made to Mary (**Luke 1:31-33**). He is said to have ascended to that throne following His resurrection (**Acts 2:32-36**). Both, the kingdom and His reign on its throne were prophesied by Daniel (**2:44,45; 7:13,14**). This, of course, is the kingdom He spoke to Nicodemus about, telling him about the new birth that must take place with each individual who would enter that kingdom (**John 3:3-5**). This new birth and the new person are described as those who have been *....created in righteousness and holiness of truth* (**Eph. 4:24**). This the apostle says is a change from being guided by the flesh to being led by the spirit (**Eph. 4:22-24; Gal. 5:16,17**) This kingdom designed for those who have been changed by their

redemption, the forgiveness of sins (**Col. 1:13,14; 1 Pet. 2:9**), is the church Jesus promised to build (Matthew 16:18). Interestingly then, this church is the body to which people are added when they have obeyed the commands given *....by which you will be saved.....* (**Acts 2:47; 11:13,14**).

The question before all mankind is will we seek first this kingdom over the material, earthly matters of everyday life (Mat. 6:33). We see life through the prism of our lifetime. The temptations and difficulties in following God and Christ through the words of truth provided in His revealed word are presented to each generation in a different cover. John tells us the basic temptations are the same, *“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”*

(1 John 2:15-17)

It is the choice of each of us as to whether we will be led to God by this Christ Who is the Son of God (John 14:6) Will we hear Him or follow after the ideas of men, ideas He calls transgression (**2 John 9-11; Mat. 17:5**).

If we indeed listen to Him, we will know the reason Israel was given by God into Assyrian captivity and Judah into Babylonian captivity was due to a failure to listen to the prophets God sent. They chose to worship in their own way (idolatry) because they enjoyed it. It pleased the flesh but was not directed by His word.

Men are doing the same in every generation since. As a result Jesus warns us to avoid the *wide gate and broad way that leads to destruction*. His advice is to choose the narrow gate that *leads to life* (**Mat. 7:13,14**).

Baptism & Salvation: What's The Connection?

David A. Cox

Many people have a misunderstanding of baptism, and its connection with salvation. They believe that to connect salvation with baptism means that man is in some way earning his salvation and is completing the work of Christ. It does not matter what one might say about baptism and its connection or its lack of connection with salvation. It is only the connection the Bible makes between baptism and salvation that matters.

Baptism and Its Purpose

The first question that must be considered is: "What is the stated purpose of baptism?" In **Acts 2**, Peter preaching to the crowd gathered at Jerusalem was asked, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" (**Acts 2:37**). Peter immediately replies, "*Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*" (**Acts 2:38**). Here is a case where men recognized their need for forgiveness and salvation from their sins. Peter did not tell them that "there is nothing to worry about because Jesus has already saved you." Instead, Peter told them that repentance and baptism were necessary to receive forgiveness and salvation from their sins. Again, in the conversion of Saul, we read of Saul on the road to Damascus to persecute Christians. After being struck blind, Paul is told to go into the city, and a man by the name of Ananias would tell him what to do to be saved (**Acts 9:3-6**). Paul later tells of his conversion and what Ananias told him to do. "*Arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*" (**Acts 22:16**). Baptism was the point at which were are forgiven or "*washed away.*" It seems quite clear that the Bible's stated purpose for baptism is the forgiveness or the "washing away" of man's sins.

Man's Need For Salvation

The question then arises, "Why must man be saved?" Man is in need of salvation because of sin. The prophet Isaiah said, "*Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that I cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear*" (**Isaiah 59:1-2**). When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden, sin separated man from God. Before they sinned, there was a relationship that God desired for man to have with Him. But after sin came into the world, this relationship did not exist as it once did. Sin entered the world, and all men of accountable age are guilty of sin they commit (**Romans**

3:10,23). God's desire for all to have a relationship with Him caused Him to give "*His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life*" (**John 3:16**). In Christ's death on the cross, he bore our sins for us (**1 Peter 2:24**) and became the perfect sacrifice required for man's sins (**1 Peter 2:22- 24; 1 John 2:2**). It was this marvelous grace of the Lord that provided a means for man to restore the relationship with God that had been severed by sin. Looking into the Bible, we see a connection drawn between the sacrifice of Christ and baptism. Paul, writing to the Christians at Rome said, "*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*" (**Romans 6:3-4**). Baptism is described here as the action it is, a burial, and by which we become Christians or in Christ. The fact is that all must be baptized to come into contact with the death of Christ, where His blood was shed and by which there is the cleansing from our sins (**Revelation 1:5; 1 John 1:7**).

Baptism's Connection With Salvation

What about the question, "Does the Bible make a connection with baptism and salvation?" It seems clear that the Bible does make a connection between baptism and salvation. Notice the connections made.

1. First, the reason we do not have salvation is due to our sins (**Isaiah 59:12-2**). To have forgiveness or the removal of our sins, we must be baptized (**Acts 2:38; 22:16**).
2. Peter connects baptism and salvation when speaking of Noah and his obedience to God's commands. Peter said, "*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*" (**1 Peter 3:21**).
3. Jesus made clear the connection between baptism and salvation when He gave the command, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned*" (**Mark 16:16**).

The Bible is clear that there is a definite connection between baptism and salvation. Baptism and the link to salvation are evident; there is never any evidence or even a hint that baptism is an "outward sign of an inward grace." May we rest assured of what the Bible teaches, and follow its teachings faithfully for salvation as Noah did. Have you been baptized to be saved? If not, do so for the saving of your soul.

My Heart's Desire

Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation (Romans 10:1).

This week's message is based on the words, "*My heart's desire*"--Today, I am convinced in my heart that when we seriously consider what is implied in this expression, it will make us or break us spiritually. For, you see, the desire of our heart will control what we say as well as what we do each day (**Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 12:34-37; Luke 6:43-45; Matthew 15:18-19; Matthew 5:8; Luke 10:27**). It is no wonder that we are told through words divinely inspired to "*Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flows the springs of life*" (**Proverbs 4:23-27**).

Not only is desire of our heart going to greatly influence our conduct in the every day affairs of our life, it is going to be a determining factor in the kind of zeal and enthusiasm we have relating to our obligations and responsibilities in loving and serving the Lord. Over the years I have often heard the question asked, Do you want to go to heaven? If so, is the desire of your heart such that it leads you to eagerly and enthusiastically do what is necessary in order to go to heaven? In a heart where there is a lack of desire, the truth is not as important as it should be and material things overshadow the spiritual things of God. In fact where enthusiasm for the Lord and his cause is lacking, people will look for and offer feeble excuses for their indifference and lukewarmness.

Peter tells us in **1 Peter 2:5** that we are "*lively stones*". I don't believe God has any "dead stones". Lively is opposed to dead and for the life of me, I just cannot see how we can be lively without a heart filled with the desire to eagerly and enthusiastically obey and serve the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (**Mark 12:30**).

A great zeal and enthusiasm for the Lord and his kingdom will put joy in our hearts, and a smile on our face whatever betides us, be it good or not so good. It will keep us from complaining, murmuring, finding fault. It will make us think positive not negative and will prevent the lukewarmness and indifference that will condemn our soul. We do not have the power to stop the hands of time and before we hardly know it, we will be standing in the presence of the Lord (**Acts 17:31**). Is your heart's desire such right now that you can with the greatest of confidence say, It is will with my soul?

Charles Hicks; swabbie5256@gmail.com

Are There Any False Teachers?

The Bible warns of false prophets, ones who pretend to be preachers of righteousness, but are actually agents of the devil. "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works*" (**2 Cor. 11:13-15**). John warned, "*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world*" (**1 Jn. 4:1**). However, in spite of these warnings, many today act as though there are few, or no, false teachers in the world. They will give their general approval to almost any man (or woman) who says he is preaching the gospel.

In contrast to the general feeling among religious people, the Bible teaches that false prophets abound. John said "many" have gone out into the world. Is it any different today? Right after Jesus stated that few would make it to heaven while many will go to hell, He warned us about false teachers (**Matt. 7:13-20**). Do you suppose there is any connection? Many false teachers will deceive many people. Few teachers of righteousness will persuade few people.

Instead of endorsing everyone who is a "preacher" and accepting his teaching, we are to examine, test, and try what he says by the Scripture (**1 Thess. 5:21; Acts 17:11**). When it is true, accept it and live by it. When it is false, reject it and him (**Gal. 1:8-9**). When a man will not affirm that Jesus is the Christ, reject him (**Matt. 16:16**). When a man will not teach that salvation is offered to all men of all races, reject him (**Mk. 16:15**). When a man will not advocate the words of the Lord, that baptism is for salvation, reject him (**Mk. 16:16; cf. Acts 2:38**).

Please, dear friend, understand that there are false teachers in the world. Use some discernment. If what we teach is false, reject it. Only follow the Word of God! Yet, if what we teach is true according to God's revelation, receive it and abide in it. We want to go to heaven and want you to go, too.

by Steven F. Deaton

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Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study
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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

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7845 Cottonwood Dr.
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Bible Classes:

**Sunday Morning - Hebrews -
Jim Stauffer**

**Wednesday Evening - Proverbs -
Bill Miller**

Sunday Sermon:

The Purpose of Good Works



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10