

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

John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

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A NEW YEAR IN HIS SERVICE

Jim Stauffer

As we take time to wish all of you who receive our paper, we are reminded of just what effect the New Year has on us all. We often view the New Year as a fresh start in many areas. We resolve to make changes from the past. We plan to lose weight, rid ourselves of habits we deem unseemly or unwise. This generally signals some disappointment in the previous year. Some way or some thing we believe we can improve on.

As is implied above, the new year serves as a time to stop, take a breath and review how well we carried out the plans we had for that year.

The word new to the Christian generally conveys the idea that something better has arrived. When Paul wrote the Roman letter he described the spiritual birth of children of God as first a death and then a new life.

Rom. 6:3 *Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?*

Rom. 6:4 *We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.* He wrote similarly to the Corinthians. **2 Cor. 5:17** *Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.*

Of course these passages teach us there is a change that comes with conversion. One now serves the Lord rather than himself. **(Mat. 16:24-26)** The very conduct of his life will change. New things will become important while other things that were once deemed of great value will be forgotten and set aside. This change takes place not just from a moral standpoint but from a view of their value and importance. We must learn how to conduct ourselves *in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.* **(1 Tim. 3:15)** We now have brethren with whom we have a spiritual familial relationship. This relationship will of necessity cause some old worldly relationships to cease.

We have entered into a covenant relationship with God in Christ. The sign of the covenant between God and man in the Old Testament was the circumcision of the males. Moses made this covenant clear when he told the Israelites to circumcise their hearts. That is they needed to enter this covenant with all their heart and

soul. **(Dt. 10:12-16)** But we too have entered into a covenant relationship with God and there is a sign or seal of this covenant. In New Testament times the Jews often tried to bind the circumcision of the Old Covenant on the Christians of that day. Paul explained the difference, **Col. 2:11** *in whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; 12 having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.* The Hebrew writer tells us this covenant is mediated by Christ and replaces the old one that was faulty. **(Heb. 8:6,7,13)**

This new relationship Paul tells the Ephesians, calls on us to put off the old man and put on the new. This he says will involve putting away many of the traits we previously learned from the world. We must put off deceitfulness and put on righteousness and holiness of truth. We now speak the truth rather than falsehood. We must now control our anger to avoid sinning against another. Stealing and swearing and filthiness in our speech must be put away. **(Eph. 4:22-29)** He sums up these changes in these verses. **Eph. 4:31** *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.*

There is a parallel passage in Colossians where Paul lists several immoral acts and describes them as the doings of the old man. These, he says are to be put away in order to put on the new man who is created in the image of Christ. **(Col. 3:5-10)** He then sums it up by saying, **Col. 3:17** *And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

As we contemplate the new year and our plans, let us reflect on the kind of change God and Christ have made in our lives. Then let us focus on being that new man he describes. May we plan to have the kind of effect on the world around us Jesus spoke of when He said, **Matt. 5:16** *Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

Origin And Meaning Of Antichrist

The English word Antichrist is taken from the Greek word, *antikhristos*, which literally means "instead of Christ".

The words "Antichrist" and "Antichrists" appear only five times in the Bible - in two of the Apostle John's three letters in the New Testament, **1 John** and **2 John**:

Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. (1 John 2:22, ESV) This passage gives us the answer to the age old question, The text here says the antichrist is anyone who denies that Jesus Christ is the Messiah [i.e. the Son of God].

Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. (1 John 2:18, ESV) This passage tells us that antichrist is coming in the last hour [i.e. The last hour or dispensation began on Pentecost, **ACTS 2**], all those that denied Christ during this time were antichrists as well as those in the future from that time until the end of the world.

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (1 John 4:3, ESV) There is little to doubt about who is meant in this verse, surely the Gnostics which surely were many during the early period of the church after Pentecost are intended here. The Gnostics were a religious group that denied the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, they believed that Divinity could not reside in flesh and blood because of the physical body's ability to decay and go back to dust.

Many deceivers have gone out into the world; they do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. (2 John 1:7, ESV.) In this verse we have a further description of antichrist, antichrist is one who denies that Jesus Christ is the Messiah [i.e. Divine]. This is a good description of the Gnostic religious philosophy and they are surely included in this description.

CONCLUDING NOTE:

Antichrist is therefore anyone who denies that Jesus Christ is Divinity or denies that Jesus Christ of Biblical history has not come. This idea of limiting antichrist to one person [i.e. a particular person in history is without Biblical support. Because of these facts we conclude that antichrist is [1] any person who denies the Biblical - historical Jesus Christ [i.e. God's Divine son] in any age or [2] any group of any size consisting of a movement that denies the Biblical Jesus Christ and His Divinity.

By Garrith L. Clair

CHRIST'S CHURCH AND SALVATION

Our last article dealt with understanding the church of our Lord. As stated then, He died to purchase the church with His own life's blood (**Mat. 16:18; Acts 20:28**).

What is the connection between the death to purchase the church and His death for my sins (**1 Cor. 15:3**)? It is clearly revealed in Acts chapter 2 when those who *gladly received* the word Peter spoke and were baptized for the remission of sins were added to the church daily as the saved.

What is clear from scripture is that Jesus died and established His church/kingdom, one that would never be destroyed (**Dan. 2:44**). Those who become members of that church/kingdom are those who are saved by the blood of Christ (**Rom. 5:9**).

The most pertinent question then for you and me, is how can I be saved by the blood of Christ?

Jesus told His disciples, **Mark 16:15** *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.* Obviously faith in Christ that leads me to submit in baptism will lead to salvation. We have also noted that Peter told those on Pentecost in Acts 2 to *repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins*, **2:38**. So, it was in response to the command Jesus had given His disciples that, *they that received his word were baptized*, **2:41**. They were then *added to the church*, **2:47**. Paul explains to the Romans a man must also confess with his mouth, Jesus as Lord in order to be saved (**Rom. 10:9,10**). All of these things are responses on the part of one who believes Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (**John 3:16; Rom. 10:17**).

When our obedience to Christ is consummated in baptism, we are then brought in contact with His cleansing blood. This happens when our faith in Him leads us to this baptismal burial into His death (**Rom. 3:25; 6:4-6**).

At this point we have been bought with a price (**1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23**). That price being paid by Christ as He was sacrificed on the cross bearing our sins (**Isa. 53:5; Heb. 9:28**). He purchased the church/kingdom with His blood. The purchase of our souls was complete when we decided *to obey from the heart that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered* (**Rom. 6:17**).

by Jim Stauffer

GOD'S PART AND MAN'S PART

Does man contribute to his salvation? Does man have any part to play, any role to fulfill, in the salvation process? Does salvation arise from human activity? Some say no. What saith the Scripture?

It is imperative to properly define our terms. Webster defines "contribute" as follows: "1: to give a part to a common fund or store, 2: to play a significant part in bringing about an end or result." Among the definitions Webster gives for the word "part" is: "one's share or allotted task (as in an action)... A function or course of action performed."

The above definitions deserve elaboration as they relate to the questions asked in the first paragraph of this article. Does man contribute to his salvation? Yes. Not in the sense that he gives a part to a common fund

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or store but in the sense that he plays a significant part in bringing about an end or result. In other words, it is true that there is nothing that I can contribute to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ to make it any more efficacious or powerful than it already is. I cannot improve upon the redemptive work of Christ. (I cannot ever remember hearing a preacher in the Lord's church say that we can, by what we do, add anything to the Divine side of God's work. Yet, the charge is being made that this is a widespread mistake among us). God's part is his and I cannot add anything to his part.

However, this is not to say that I have no part to play. I have an allotted task to perform. My performance of this task is not meritorious (**Eph. 2:8,9**). I can never do enough to deserve salvation (**Luke 17:10**). Yet, without doing the will of the Father in heaven, I can never enter into the kingdom of heaven (**Matt. 7:21**). I do not nullify God's part (Grace) by doing my part (Obedient Faith).

Hebrews 5:9 should forevermore settle the controversy as to whether God and man both have a part to play in the salvation process. The record says that Jesus became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. The word "author" is the translation of the Greek word "aitios." Vine's Expository Dictionary of Greek New Testament Words notes the meaning of the word which is found only once in the New Testament. He says that Christ "on the grounds of his finished work on earth has become the personal mediating cause of eternal salvation." Thus, the word "author" denotes God's indispensable role in saving humanity. Jesus is the divine cause of eternal salvation. Does man also have a part in this process? The latter portion of verse 9 answers with a resounding yes! Jesus is the cause of eternal salvation only to men and women who obey him. If obedience is never offered in response to the grace he proffered, then salvation will never be realized.

Numerous examples of this principle are found in Scriptures. God made gracious provisions for Noah and his family to be saved from the flood. Did Noah contribute one whit to his salvation from the flood? *Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he* (**Gen. 6:22**). *By faith he prepared an ark to the saving of his house* (**Hebrews 11:7**). Noah couldn't add anything to God's power to protect him and God wouldn't build the ark for Noah. Thus, God had his part and Noah had his. Noah didn't earn anything. God deserves all the glory. However, if Noah hadn't built the ark and followed God's instructions, all of the grace that God had promised Noah would have been pointless.

It was the power of God that caused the walls of Jericho to come tumbling down. Yet, man had a part to play in bringing about the transaction. Men walking around the walls didn't contribute any power that God needed to make the walls fall down. But God had made it clear that he would not do his part until man had done his (**Heb. 11:30**). The same is true of our salvation. Though he has already done his part in the sending of his Son to die on the cross, he will not do his part in cleansing us from our sins until we have done our part in humbly submitting to his will. Salvation would never have arisen for Saul if he had not arisen and been baptized (**Acts**

22:16).

God has done his part, and without it, no amount of man's part can justify. God's part has been to demonstrate his grace. Our part is to access that grace by a faith that submits and obeys (**Rom. 5:1,2; 6:1-4**) and to realize that even after we have done our part we have not merited our redemption. God has done his part. We must do ours to receive the promise (**Heb. 10:36**).

by **B.J. Clarke**

A BIBLICAL TEST OF OBEDIENCE

Numbers 21:4-9. The Israelites murmured against God and against Moses. They were dissatisfied with their food. *And Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.*

The people confessed their sins, and asked Moses to pray for them. This he did; but instead of removing the serpents, God provided a remedy. *Make thee a fiery serpent and set it upon a standard: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he seeth it, shall live.* Moses obeyed: *And it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked upon the serpent of brass, he lived.*

For the people there was no other way of escape. God might have chosen another way. But this plan having been chosen and announced, left the people without any choice but to disobey and die, or obey and live. No substitute on their part would do, and they offered none. Their case was too desperate to admit of delay or experiment.

Of course, none of them thought the brass cured them. And there was no blatherskite present to call it "snake salvation." It was God's cure brought about in his own way. But it was a test of their faith. Evidently they could see no reason in it, but their confidence in God led them through obedience to the point where God healed them. They knew the cure came from God.

Thus that which was a test of their faith became also a means of strengthening their faith. Had God commanded Moses to make a strong decoction of herbs and bathe the wounds with it, the people, thus cured, would have attributed the cure to the solution of herbs and lost sight of God in the matter. But the whole circumstances, as arranged, strengthened their faith in the power, and benevolence, and mercy of God.

Sound Doctrine, Vol. 1, Pages 121,122; C.R. Nichol, R.L. Whiteside

May we all learn to trust in God's power to save through His divine plan revealed by way of men who have been moved by the Holy Spirit.

2 Pet. 1:21 *For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.*

2 Cor. 12:9 *And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

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.*

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PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: J.R. DANIEL, GRANT CLOTHIER, MARY CZIRR, AND JAN PATRICK. LORETTA TAPP HAS RETURNED HOME. STEVE WIMP HAS RETURNED HOME FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL SURGERY.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE: SUNDAY MORNING: EVIDENCES AND WEDNESDAY: THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

SERMON SUNDAY AM: THE PURPOSE OF LIFE



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