

## THE PLAN OF SALVATION

The love, mercy and grace of God is made so wonderful and plain in God's marvelous plan of salvation. Since death passed on all men because of sin (Rom. 5:12), someone had to pay the price to redeem fallen man from sin; that someone was Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God (John 3:16-17; Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 8:9; Heb. 5:8-9; Heb. 2:9).

Through His death, burial and resurrection from the dead, we have access to the precious blood of Christ, which is able to cleanse us from all sin (1 Jn. 1:7-9). This is where God's plan of salvation comes in, when we hear the conditions of pardon and salvation and obey them. We receive the remission or forgiveness of our sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:36-47).

We then go on our way rejoicing as the Eunuch did in Acts 8:26-40, added to the church personally by the Lord Himself (Acts 2:41; Acts 2:47) and of course, added to the church that Jesus said, "*Upon this rock I will build my church*" (Matt. 16:18). The same church Jesus bought with His own blood (Acts 20:28) and the one He is coming back for at His second coming (2 Cor. 11:2), the one He is the Saviour of (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22,23; Eph. 4:3-6) and the head of.

But how do we get INTO Christ when we contact His precious cleansing blood?

1. Hear the Gospel (Rom. 10:17)
2. Believe the Gospel (John 8:24; Heb. 11:6)
3. Repent of sin (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:10)
4. Confess Christ (Acts 8:26-40; Matt. 16:16; Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:10)
5. Be baptized (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:1-6)

Let us emphasize the following:

1. Believeth UNTO Righteousness (Rom. 10:10)
2. Repentance UNTO Life (Acts 11:18)
3. Confession UNTO Salvation (Rom. 10:10)
4. Baptized INTO Christ (Gal. 3:26-27)

Baptism is the final act that puts us INTO Christ because it completes our obedience to that form of doctrine -- the death, burial and resurrection from the dead. Notice: UNTO is a preposition "pointing toward" or going in the direction of

salvation, but salvation has not been reached yet at this point. Notice: INTO is a preposition showing that the destination has been reached, realized and enjoyed (remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, Acts 2:38).

When our obedience to the Gospel is completed, we have *"obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."* Notice: before they obeyed they were "servants of sin" (Rom. 6:17). But after they obeyed they became the "servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18).

The form of doctrine is the death, burial and resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 15:1-4). We cannot literally die with Jesus. We cannot literally be buried with Jesus because that event happened about 2000 years ago. We cannot literally be raised with Jesus because that also took place about 2000 years ago. But, we can obey from the heart that form of doctrine.

What is a form? Did you ever place your hand on the blackboard or on a piece of paper and trace the form of your hand? When you removed your hand, only the form was left. The form of doctrine is Rom. 6:17-18, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. When we truly repent of our sins, we die to the love and practice of sin and when there is death, there must be burial. After making the confession, we are buried in the watery grave of baptism, the lowering of the body into a watery grave. When we come up out of the watery grave of baptism, we are raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:1-6), and we go on our way rejoicing just like the Eunuch did in Acts 38:35-40.

We are baptized INTO Christ, we put on Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Cor. 5:17) Then being faithful unto death or till Jesus comes, heaven will be our home (1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10; Matt. 10:22; Gal. 6:7-9; Rev. 20:11-15; Rev. 22:14-15)

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## BAROMETERS OF SPIRITUALITY

*"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psa. 122:1).*

When we think of the measuring gauge of spiritual temperature within a congregation, we usually focus on the attendance and contribution. These do tell a great deal. They are "the proof of our love." I have been very conscious recently of other indications of spiritual strength or weakness within a congregation; and I felt you would be interested in what visiting people many times look for in us. It may help us to evaluate our own congregation.

When do members arrive at the building? I like to arrive at a meeting service on the first night at least 30 minutes early and observe people as they arrive. It tells a lot about the fellowship within the congregation and how precious it is to the members. When most people arrive within the last five minutes before the service is to begin, you begin to see duty and obligation ... rather than a love and desire to associate with brethren. Where do the young people sit? Front and center is wonderful. Some good things will come of this. But when they begin to hunt the back corners, you know you've got problems. Even when a nucleus is down front, danger signs are seen when you notice that some don't blend with the group.

How many leave through the front vestibule? Some congregations leave like a flock of quail -- in all directions and in a hurry! Unless health requires it, it is a good idea to go through the front and meet as many visitors as possible. When people love their brethren, they'll not look for back doors.

How well is the building cared for? Notice especially restrooms and wastebaskets. People who ignore paper on the floor or anything obviously out of order show little congregational pride. People who really care about the appearance of their building will also care about other phases of the Lord's work.

Does everyone stay until the service is over? Leaving during the invitation song is probably the most discourteous and thoughtless thing a member of the church ever did. It shows a lack of concern for those who might need to respond. It also shows that we do not look upon it as a focal point of the service. In fact, anyone who leaves a worship service before it is dismissed, except in a case of real emergency, is casting

reflection both on the congregation and the God they profess to love and serve.

Does the congregation really appreciate biblical preaching and teaching? Do they obviously want ear-tickling lessons? Do they want the best lesson for the prospect and the erring or do they only selfishly consider what they like and what benefits them personally? Much can be learned from such attitudes.

When our barometer of Spirituality is read, how do you feel we measure up in these critical areas? Can you think of ways for making improvements?

adapted by JACK GRAY

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BEFORE YOU GO TO BED, GIVE YOUR TROUBLES TO

GOD. HE WILL BE UP ALL NIGHT ANYWAY.

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## GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE &amp; TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
April 6 - 11	West Broad Street Wedowee, AL	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
April 7 - 13	Athens Church Liberty, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 14 - 18	Oak Grove Church near Eubank, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 21 - 25	Mt. Zion Church Crab Orchard, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
April 27 - May 2	Ashlock Church near Celina, TN	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

# SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What Old Testament woman does 1 Peter chapter 3 give as an example of an obedient wife?
2. Ezekiel prophesied that what portion of the people of Jerusalem would die by plague or famine?
3. In what does Paul encourage the people to be steadfast, immovable, and always abounding?
4. Who was devoured by the lions in the book of Daniel?
5. Which tribe carried the Ark of the Covenant?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. In Corinth Paul found a man named Aquila. What was his wife's name? PRISCILLA (Acts 18:2)
2. When receiving the Commandments, how long did Moses spend on top of the mountain with God the last time he went up? 40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS (Exo. 24:18)
3. When Jesus arrived in Bethany, which of Lazarus' sisters ran to greet Him? MARTHA (John 11:20)
4. Jeremiah prophesied in Lamentations that better were those who were slain by  
  
the sword than those slain by what? HUNGER (Lam. 4:9)
5. Were the cherubim on the mercy seat facing out or in? IN (Exo. 25:20)

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## LISTEN TO YOUR RADIO!

Gospel Preaching by Sam Dick  
WAAX (AM 570)  
Sunday mornings 7:30 - 8:00 (C.S.T.)  
Sponsored by Hokes Bluff Church of Christ  
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