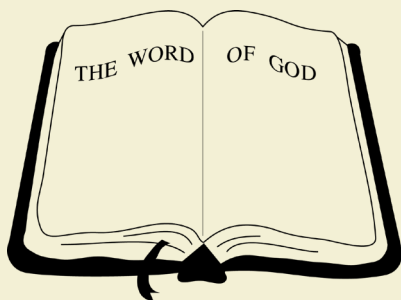


The Gospel Plan of Salvation



*"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path."*

Psalms 119:105

Lynn D. Headrick

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THE GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16). “Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, ... by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:1-2). It is obvious from these Bible quotations that God saves us by the gospel. God planned it that way. This is the gospel plan of salvation.

SAVED

To be eternally saved is to be rescued from hell; it is to be privileged to dwell with God and Christ in a place of unsurpassed beauty and happiness forever. “In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2-3). And God “shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more” (Revelation 21:4). Salvation, how wonderful it will be!

LOST

To be eternally lost is to lose that which is more valuable than the whole world; “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose

his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26). To be lost is to be separated from Christ, to be without hope, and to be without God (Ephesians 2:12). To be lost will mean that we “shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might” (2 Thessalonians 1:9). Lost, how dreadful the thought!

HOW DOES ONE GET IN A LOST CONDITION?

One gets in a lost condition by sinning, which separates one from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). One who is separated from God is lost. Sin is literally a “missing of the mark.” One sins or misses the mark by transgressing God’s law. “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). Or, as another translation has it, “Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.” One who does not heed God’s law is lawless, a sinner and lost. All wrongdoing or divergence from that which is right is sin. “All unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17). The standard of that which is right is not custom or our own personal preference, but the Word of God, for “all thy commandments are righteousness” (Psalms 119:172). One sins also by failing to do good. “To him therefore that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17). Surely we are now able to see that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Roman 3:23). Every accountable being is a sinner and

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no sinner can enter heaven where Christ is (John 8:21). Little children are not sinners for they have not transgressed God's law. Neither are they born in sin as some would have us believe. Those who are able to understand God's law, and who transgress it or fail to measure up to it are lost and stand in need of salvation. How then, can this salvation be obtained? It is obtained by complying with the terms of the gospel plan of salvation.

CONDITIONS OF SALVATION

God does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9). But He has laid down certain conditions recorded in the gospel plan of salvation and we must comply with them or be lost. These conditions are as follows:

1. We must have a willing mind to do God's will. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching" (John 7:17). "... he that will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). Dear reader, please have the disposition of mind to put your will in subjection to the will of God.

2. One must hear and do the will of God as revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ. "Every one therefore that heareth these words of mind, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man" (Matthew 7:24). "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

3. One must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. "... for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). Without belief or faith it is impossible for one to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

4. Genuine repentance is also a condition of salvation in the gospel plan. "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent ye shall all in like manner perish" (Luke 13:3). Repentance is a change of mind resulting in a change in one's conduct. To repent of the sin of thievery one must change his mind and quit stealing. To repent of adultery one must come to understand it to be wrong and quit living in the adulterous relationship.

5. It is necessary to confess Christ with the mouth, "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). One must also confess Christ in his daily conduct. "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32). This is done by standing up for the will of Christ in every day conduct.

6. One must also be baptized in order for his sins to be forgiven. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). "He that believeth

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and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16). Bible baptism is a burial in water. “We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death” (Romans 6:4). “Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:36). Reader, “... why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16).

7. A faithful life unto death is also essential to our eternal salvation. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” (Philippians 1:27).

Are you engaged in the performance of the above conditions of the gospel plan of salvation? Remember your soul’s destiny is at stake. Not one of the above conditions can be left out and the will of Christ fully complied with. “Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10).

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST

God purposed to save the world through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). “Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the

world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). “... thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Yes, if we are saved it will be by the “salvation which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:10). If salvation is in Christ, and it is, then the question that should press heavily upon our minds is, “How can I get into Christ where there is salvation?” The Bible answer is clear. “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). Have you heard God’s word, believed it, repented of your sins, confessed Jesus to be God’s Son, and been baptized into Christ where salvation is?

TO WHAT IS SALVATION ASCRIBED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

We must take the gospel plan of salvation as a whole. It is all important. The New Testament declares that we are saved by the following things:

1. Saved by the gospel of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-2; Romans 1:16).
2. Saved by calling on the name of the Lord (Romans 10:13). This includes more than just saying Lord, Lord (Matthew 7:21).
3. Saved by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:5). This is God’s part in our salvation.
4. Saved by faith (Ephesians 2:8; Romans 5:1). This does not say “faith only.” No passage in the Bible does. See James 2:24.

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5. Saved by baptism (1 Peter 3:21). This does not say by “baptism only.” No verse of Scripture does.

6. Saved by faith and baptism (Mark 16:15-16).

7. Saved in the name of Christ (Acts 4:12). Not in any human name.

8. Saved in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10). Christ is the “saviour of the body” (Ephesians 5:23). The body is “the church” (Colossians 1:18). Christ then, saves those in the church. Are you in His church?

9. We are saved, redeemed, or sanctified by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:13,14,22; 13:12). Christ shed his blood in his death (John 19:33,34). We are baptized into his death (Romans 6:3-4). We, therefore, contact the saving blood of Christ when we are baptized.

We dare not say that we are saved by any one of the above mentioned items alone and to the exclusion of any of the other items. They are all equally important.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION

There are clear-cut illustrations recorded in the New Testament which indicate how people were saved by the gospel plan of salvation. I want to mention two of these cases of conversion.

THE PEOPLE AT JERUSALEM

“Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5). These people heard Peter and the other apostles preach Christ (Acts 2:14-36). “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). This question indicates that these people had a willing mind and believed that which was preached unto them. In answer to their question Peter, inspired by the Spirit of God, 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” (Acts 2:38). Their baptism was for the remission of their sins and was preceded by a willing mind, hearing the word of God, and repenting of their sins. When these people did these things they were saved, for their sins were forgiven. “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). The Lord saved; the Lord adds to the church; these two acts of the Lord occur simultaneously.

THE PEOPLE AT CORINTH

The second illustration of being saved according to the gospel plan of salvation is recorded in the eighteenth chapter of the book of Acts. It concerns the people of Corinth. Paul came to Corinth from Athens (Acts 18:1). While in Corinth he was busy preaching the gospel (Acts 18:4-5). “And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing

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believed, and were baptized” (Acts 18:8). Paul later wrote a letter to these people and said that they were saved by the gospel “if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:2). These who had heard the word, believed it, and were baptized, were saved and constituted the church in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:1-2).

There are other cases of obedience to the gospel plan of salvation recorded in Acts chapters 8, 9, 10, 16, and 22 which also illustrate the same thing as the two cases I have mentioned. Be sure to read the above mentioned chapters.

AN INVITATION

Christ said, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). He calls us by His gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14). He saves us by the gospel (Romans 1:16). He has done his part in the saving of our souls. It is up to you now to obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8; Romans 6:17). Dear reader, it is my “heart’s desire and prayer to God” (Romans 10:1) that you will search the Scriptures to see if these things are so (Acts 17:11), and if you find them to be so, then obey them in order that your soul will be saved in heaven.

Sincerely,
Lynn Headrick

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