

Continued from Page Three, "Our Great Salvation"

and be baptized (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). Isn't this plan simple?

Man's plans do not turn out like God's (Isa. 55:8-9). God's plan for salvation is so great because it simply requires us to turn from our sinful life and submit to Him.

The Great Reward

Nothing could be greater than the reward that is given to the saints. This reward is an inheritance for His people (Matt. 25:34; I Pet. 1:3-4). This reward provides great joy

to those saved (Matt. 25:21, 23). One of the best parts about this great reward is that those saved will be in the presence of Jesus forever (Jn. 14:1-3). The Bible also teaches that our reward will not include some things (hunger, thirst, death, crying, Rev. 7:14-17). This great reward makes salvation great!

Do not neglect this great salvation! If you are not a Christian, please become one before it is too late. Please do not neglect this great salvation! Be like Paul who "pressed" toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:13-14). What will you do with your time on earth? Will you waste it, or give it in service to God and look forward to the great salvation that belongs to all

What Do I Owe My Congregation?

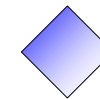
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I owe it my loyalty. I must help carry out every good work it undertakes. I should help other congregations in special efforts, but I should not neglect my home congregation. I owe it my dependability. I am depending on it for many things it does in my behalf. It is not fair and right for me to depend on it and not be such that it cannot depend on me.

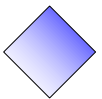
I owe it my financial support. It takes money to operate the church and preach the gospel. I am responsible to the Lord to give as He has prospered me. My home congregation has first call on my financial ability, for if the members of the church do not support the work of the home congregation, it will not be supported. The expenses go on whether I am there or not, so I should make up my contribution when absent.

I owe it my presence. If everyone stayed home there would be no worship of God. I am responsible as anyone to attend all of my congregation's services. I must not be a parasite.

I owe it the influence of a godly life. The life I live either helps others to obey the gospel or makes it the harder for them. How I live affects the work of the church and the salvation of the lost. I should live in such a way that my life will be blessing to others.



The Voice of Truth



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Doing What God Says

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The Lord gave Noah specific instructions concerning the material of which he was to build the ark. "Make thee an ark of gopher wood", the Almighty enjoined. In specifying gopher wood, the Lord automatically excluded every other kind of wood. If there were varieties of gopher, as there are of oak, for example, he could have used any or all of these that were suitable for his purpose. But Noah could not use, without bringing the condemnation of God upon himself, any wood other than gopher. A modern "intellectual" among us has ridiculed the idea of God's condemning Noah if he had used a "little cedar" in the ark. Such ridicule betrays a woeful lack of knowledge of the Bible, or of respect for the Bible, or both.

Nadab and Abihu, when they came to burn incense before Jehovah, "used strange" fire which he had not commanded; that is, they did not use fire from off the altar (Num. 16:46). We do not know where they obtained the fire they used. We know at least one place where they did not get it - from off the altar. They may well have rationalized: "Really, what difference does it make where we get the fire; fire is fire; it will burn regardless of where we get it. Why be tradition-bound and narrow? Why not be broad and scholarly? The main object is to burn the incense; and fire from any place will do that". Yes, they tried "strange fire; and fire from Jehovah devoured them" (Lev. 10:2). This example does not suggest that God would have done nothing to Noah by way of punishment if he had used some other kind of wood than gopher in building the ark. It

is recorded of Noah that "According to all that God commanded him, so did he". Evidently, Noah had a better idea of what is obedience to God than some moderns. The same principle in Noah's obedience to God's command is involved in our relation to God's will now.

For example, we are commanded to "sing" in the worship of God (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:10; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15). God did not say, "Make music". If He had, then instrumental music would have been acceptable. He specified singing. He did not say, "Make vocal music". If He had, then there would have been some ground for "whistling" and "humming" in the worship of the Lord. But since inspiration has specified "singing", "whistling" and "humming" have no more place in the worship than cedar wood in the ark; or "strange fire" in the burning of incense.

We should be satisfied with what God has commanded. It is true that the nations around us whistle and hum; but that is no reason why we should. Israel wanted a king to be like her neighbors; but that desire brought disaster.

"Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition" (1 Cor. 10:11). "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). Will we profit by what was written aforetime? ♦

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

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www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com		

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"Come Out From Among Them"

By L. A. Stauffer, www.moodychurchofchrist.com

Paul's words to the Corinthians, is a classic definition of "holiness" and states in clear terms Jehovah's demand, "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy" and "be ye yourselves holy in all manner of living" (2 Cor. 6:17; 1 Pet. 1:15-16). Holiness, as often defined, means to be "set apart" from the world. It calls disciples of Christ to a "distinct" and "special" life that elevates their thinking and lives above the "present evil" that has and always will define the world (1 John 2:15-17).

Be Ye Separate

The apostle's orders to retreat—to exit the world and remain aloof from it, if taken physically, are the very opposite of the Lord's prayer in which Jesus asks the Father not to take His disciples "from the world" (John 17:15). This is what creates the struggle that Paul describes in this text and that he himself battled daily (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 Cor. 9:24-27).

As a "holy nation" saints have a mission to live in the world while keeping themselves from its evil. Their goal is to shine as lights and hold forth the word of life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation (Phil.2:15-16). Paul's command to the Corinthians to "come out" and "be separate" follows a comprehensive appeal to the brethren to live in an ungodly world without compromise.

The apostle practically exhausts his vocabulary stressing that Christians must not be unequally yoked with unbelievers in lawless behavior. Righteousness, he says, may not "share" (metocha) with iniquity, light may not have "fellowship" or "communion" (koinonia) with darkness, Christ and Belial may not play together in the same symphony (sumphonosis), believers may have no "part" or "accord" (meris) with unbelievers, and God's temple may strike no "agreement" or "alliance" (sunkatathesis) with idols.

A Holy Sanctuary

This last image leads the apostle to call for holiness. "Ye," he says, "are a temple of the living God" in fulfillment of God's promise to dwell in His people, walk with them, be their God, and receive them as His children (vs.16, 18). He had made this point to the Corinthians in a previous epistle when admonishing them that the body may not be joined to a harlot in sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6:15-20)—"Know ye not," he wrote, "that your body is a temple of the

Holy Spirit, which is in you, which have from God."

Paul's word for temple (in the first epistle and here) is not hieron, the grounds around the temple building where ordinary Jews could congregate. Their bodies are the naos, the "holy place" where only the priest, set apart for sacred services, could enter to approach God. Their bodies are sanctuaries, hallowed temples, where God dwells through the Spirit and only sacred and holy conduct may enter.

Cleanse Yourselves

What this demands, the apostle concludes, is that Christians must "cleanse" themselves "from all the defilements of the flesh and spirit." In this way they bring to perfection through lives of purity the holiness that proceeds from a heart that fears God (7:1). And this, brethren, is the key to all that Paul calls on the Corinthians to do. Fear God! When disciples fear God, they sanctify their hearts in reverence and awe before Him and deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" to "live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12).

At no time in history is man more exposed to the world of sin. He no longer has to look for evil in hidden brothels. Lascivious behavior is available on a TV screen that hangs on the wall of man's living room or bedroom, it can be seen with the click of a button on a pornographic internet site, and it can be purchased and viewed in lewd magazines at open newsstands. Immodest clothing that was once reserved for places of ill-repute, ballrooms and beaches now appears on the streets and in the malls of every city. Regrettably, some of it has been seen at the weddings of Christians and in the assemblies of saints.

This world may not be our home, but it is our present dwelling place and we cannot escape that. We have a mission here as "strangers" and "pilgrims" to show forth the Excellency of God. When we separate ourselves from the culture of an evil world, fill our hearts with the fruit of the Spirit, and manifest in our lives the holiness of God—then will the light of the gospel shine through us into a world darkened by the unholy and irreverent behavior of men who have no fear of God and no regard for their own souls (1 Pet. 2:9-12; 2 Cor. 4:3-4).

For the benefit of a corrupt and benighted world and the salvation of our own souls, brethren, "come ye out from among them, and be ye separate." ♦

"Our Great Salvation"

By Jarrod Jacobs, www.southside-churchofchrist.com

In **Hebrews 2**, the Jewish Christians were shown the great salvation that belongs to those in Christ. They were told, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will? For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak" (**Heb. 2:1-5**). Knowing that we can become frustrated and want to give up at times, let us consider our salvation and see what it is that makes our salvation great.

A Great God Planned It

Our salvation, and all that was necessary to bring it about, was no accident! The Holy Spirit said this great salvation, "at the first began to be spoken by the Lord" (**Heb. 11:3**). Our salvation has been planned since before man first sinned (**Rev. 13:8; Eph. 3:11; Gen. 3:15**). God promised that it would be through Abraham that "all families" of the earth would be blessed (**Gen. 12:1-3**). We can also read of the prophecies of a coming Savior (**Isa. 7:14, 9:6; 53**). When thinking about our great salvation God provides, we see forethought and extensive planning on His part. This was not an afterthought or accident that men can be saved!

A Great Savior Executed This Plan

Revelation 13:8 shows us that God's plan for the great salvation was for Jesus to die as a sacrifice for man's sins. This passage also reveals that Jesus agreed to God's plan long before man was created! David declared that God planned for Jesus to be resurrected from the grave after His crucifixion (**Ps. 16:8-10; Acts 2:25-27**). While on earth, Jesus had one motive, namely to seek and save the lost (**Lk. 19:10**). His life, death, and resurrection was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Jesus Himself also prophesied of His coming death, burial, and resurrection (**Matt. 12:40**). He prophesied that He was to be resurrected the third day (**Jn. 2:19**). His crucifixion in **Matthew 27** was the fulfillment of **Isaiah 53**, and **Matthew 28** records where even His enemies declared that Jesus had

risen! Yes, a great Savior executed a great plan of salvation!

The Bible states that Jesus is the Son of God by the resurrection (**Rom. 1:4**). In fact, it is His resurrection that gives us the hope of everlasting life (**I Cor. 15:13-20; I Pet. 1:3**). God's plan for the great salvation was executed flawlessly by the Sinless Saviour (**Matt. 5:17; Jn. 17:4, 19:30**).

Great Miracles Were Used To Confirm The Word

In **Hebrews 2:3-4**, we read, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" The purpose of Christ's miracles was to prove that Jesus is the Son of God and that He was speaking the truth (**Jn. 2:11, 23; 4:46-54; 11:43-48**). The apostles and first century Christians used miracles for the purpose of confirming the word they preached and declared their power was from Christ (**Acts 13:7-12**). What makes their miracles stand out is that they were real (**Acts 8:9-13; Jn. 3:2**)!

Those in Bible days did not possess the completed Word like we do; thus the need for miracles, signs, and wonders, so folks would believe! Seeing that the word has been confirmed through the miracles, and recorded by the apostles and prophets (**II Pet. 1:20-21**), there are no miracle workers today (**Jude 3; I Cor. 13:8-10**). These great miracles served their purpose.

The Simplicity Of Obedience Makes Salvation Great

God's plans are such that man can carry them out. What good would it do for God to devise a plan of salvation that was impossible for man to obey? God's commands have always been such that man could obey them.

For example, in **Genesis 2:15-17**, mankind was to dress and keep the Garden of Eden and stay away from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Wasn't that simple? In **II Kings 5:10-14**, we read about a man named Naaman who complained about God's plan for cleansing him from leprosy (an incurable disease) because it was so simple! Today, God's plan of salvation is that we believe that Jesus is the Son of God (**Jn. 8:24**), repent of our sins,