



.. God so loved the world ...

# GOD'S SALVATION

Written by **Carmen D. Hilliard** - Copyright 1989

## I NTRODUCTION:

Through the years, I have studied the doctrines of many religions. My library is filled with manuals and creed books written by the men who founded these churches. Each one began with a set of principles which were accepted by its members as being the truth. Yet all churches differ in what they believe and teach. When the church first began, there was only one set of principles that governed it, known as Christ's gospel. Why did the church divide and follow a multitude of ideas and misconceptions? It happened because many did not want to obey God and refused to continue in the truth. With all of man's false ideas and opinions, he has still not been able to change God's truth. He never will! God has **one truth, one church and one plan of salvation** from sin. We have studied the importance of knowing the truth, and we found the identifying marks of the true church of Christ. In this lesson, you will learn how God saves man from sin. After seeing the evidence from God's Word, you must decide what you will do with God's Salvation.

***It will be the most important decision of your entire life.***

Remember, God gives you the freedom to accept or reject it. But He will not allow those into His heaven who reject it. The choice is yours. Study all of the references from His Word. (Work Section I)

## II. HAVE YOU BEEN SAVED?

The majority of people in the religious world honestly believe they are saved. If you ask them what they did to be saved,

you will get a variety of answers. Many admit they don't know for sure, only hope they are saved. Most think they were saved by God because they believe in Him. Out of the millions of people who populate the earth, only a small number will do what the Bible teaches to obtain salvation. Does that surprise you? It's true. The reason for this is simple. Most people want a painless, no-sacrifice religion with an instant short cut to heaven. They want a religion that requires them to make no changes and one that doesn't conflict with their present habits. In short, they want God to meet them on their own terms and give them salvation with little or no effort on their part. If this is what you want, then you may be one of those who will turn your back on God's salvation and refuse to see the truth. Many before you have done this. Jesus tells us how easy it is to get into Hell. ***"The gate is wide, the way is broad and many are entering. The gate leading to heaven is small, the way is narrow and few are those who will go in."*** Matthew 7:13-14. Do you know how to be saved? Do you want to know? Are you willing to obey God? (Work Section II).

## III. WHY DO WE NEED SALVATION?

All men have sinned, Romans 3:23. The punishment for sin is death, Romans 6:23. Man is separated from God the moment he commits his first sin, Isaiah 59:2. To be separated from God means the person who sins is automatically dead spiritually. The only way he can be united with God again is to be saved from sin and reborn spiritually. If a person dies physically, being separated from God, his soul will spend eternity in Hell. The religious world teaches different methods of salvation, each contradicting the other. Have you been

**T**his will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power . . .

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8

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taught that faith is all that's necessary to save you; that you must do nothing to receive it except believe in God? The Bible does not teach that faith alone saves a person. Other religions sprinkle a few drops of water on the forehead of infants or adults to save them from sin. This teaching is not found in the Bible either. Men have created a variety of different methods for acquiring God's salvation, but the Bible tells only one way to be saved. In this lesson you will learn: *The reason sin has the enormous power to separate you from God. The reason it took Jesus' blood on a cross to save you from sin. You will learn what you must do to be saved from sin.* (Work Sec. III.)

#### IV. SIN SEPARATES MAN FROM GOD

Sin is treated casually by the world. Jokes are made of Satan's power, and few people can give sin a true biblical definition. The word sin means different things to different people.

**B**ut the Bible clearly defines sin as *lawlessness*, 1 John 3:4.

When a law of God is broken, it is sin. Ignorance of God's law is no excuse for disobedience, Acts 17:30-31. There was a time in man's history when he did not have complete knowledge of God's plan of salvation. God took his ignorance into consideration, Romans 5:13. Now that the gospel has been preached in the whole world (Romans 10:18) and the Bible is available to men in every tongue, there is no excuse for a lack of knowledge any longer. God's law has always been the highest governing authority. He revealed His law through prophets and later wrote it permanently in a book called the Bible. To know the enormous power of sin, you must understand God's law. No one has an excuse for not knowing right from wrong and the consequences of sin.

**What is sin?** Sin is disobedience of God's laws. Sin has the power to kill the soul of man. Satan tempts man with sin to gain control of his soul, destroy his relationship with God, and rob him of Heaven. Satan became the ruler of his kingdom with sin. He makes sin free and easy for the taking. All of his efforts to entice man into sin are for one reason, to destroy the goodness of God with his evil. Why is that so important to him? Satan didn't come from Hell. God created this place of torment for Satan and his angels to be punished. When this life is finished, Satan will be confined in torment forever. He wants to influence as many souls as possible to be in torment with him. God's laws of purity and holiness killed the power of sin when Christ died on the cross. The blood that He shed on the cross can give you the power to defeat sin in your life. Without it, you belong to Satan. He works endlessly to sift you like wheat and deceive you with his ties, Luke 22:31.

His greatest desire has always been to bring God down to his level. He tried to convince Jesus to sacrifice just one principle of truth, which would make Jesus a sinner and ruin God's plans, Matthew 4:1-11. If he had succeeded, he would have won the victory over God and tainted Him with sin. I hope you can understand how important it is to realize the power that sin has.

If God ever approved of even one sin, it would change His totally pure and holy nature and kill His righteousness forever. If that happened, God would no longer be complete and total goodness. He would be an evil liar, like Satan. Why would it make God a liar? He established the laws of right and wrong. If He violated them Himself, it would be classified as lawlessness and would be sin. God gives us the opportunity to be partners with Him in the defeat of Satan and the salvation of our own souls. By obeying the gospel, we are given the blood of Christ, which has the power to kill sin and free us. It will unite us with Christ's righteousness. It is important for you to know that God has provided the way for you to kill sin through the blood of Christ. And you must learn what to do to receive it. Satan is cunning. He wants you to refuse the gospel. (Work Section IV.)

#### V. GOD'S JUSTICE

The law states that the payment for sin is death, Romans 6:23 (the soul is separated from God and sentenced to hell). God would not be just if He made a law to condemn sin and then passed over it and let sin go free. Justice demands satisfaction. For God to maintain justice, the payment for sin could not be changed; it must be paid in full. God knew that man would break His law before He ever created him. Man's flesh is weak. He is influenced by feelings and things around him. It was agreed that Christ would be the sacrifice and pay the debt of sin on man's behalf. He was the only one who could make the payment for sinful man. Christ was sinless like God and human like man. Before He could come to earth, man had to be trained in obedience to God's commands. This took several hundred years to accomplish. God started to teach man about the consequences of sin immediately after Adam and Eve sinned in the garden. Innocent animals were slain to provide the skins that covered their bodies because of their sin. As time progressed, God gave the Israelites a law through Moses. It demanded animal blood as the atonement for sin. Why did God require blood to save man from sin? We read in Leviticus 17:11, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the alter to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life." The sacrifice of animal blood symbolized the giving up of an innocent life to save the life of another. God was trying to teach the Jews that sin kills the life of the soul by separating it from God. Only the blood of His Son can restore spiritual life. The animal sacrifice for sin was temporarily used until the Son of God would be allowed to die and give His blood for the atonement of all men. When Christ came to earth, He was both God and man. He fought the temptations of the flesh as a human, yet

remained perfect without sin. God justified the law and made the payment for sin by laying man's sin on His perfect Son. The blood offering that Christ made with His death was the only way to fulfill the standards of God's laws. It was accepted by God because it satisfied all the demands of justice. Christ died the death that man should have died. His blood paid the price for man's sin. Isaiah 53:6, "**All of us like sheep have gone astray, and each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused our iniquity** (violations of God's law) **to fall on Him.**" 1 Peter 2:24. "**And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you are healed.**" The blood sacrifice of the cross was necessary to man's salvation.

**A**ll the sins of the past and all sins of the future were paid for at the cross.

Christ stepped into man's place and took the punishment that man deserves upon Himself, so that we could have forgiveness and be reunited with God. The blood He offered defeated Satan's grip of sin on man and opened the doors to heaven.

### **DO YOU WANT TO BE SAVED?**

All men on earth stand in need of salvation. God provided for man's salvation by sending His Son to pay the debt of sin with His blood. His death made forgiveness possible for everyone. However, forgiveness is not automatically applied to the sinner by God. There are things a person must know and do to receive it. A person must know about sin. He must genuinely realize his need for forgiveness and be willing to obey God in order to receive it. (Work Section V)

### **VI. WILL GOD SAVE ALL WHO WANT SALVATION?**

The Bible teaches that God saves only those who know Him and obey the gospel of Jesus. At the present time you may believe that you are saved. I hope you are. But there is a possibility you are not saved. By studying this lesson, you can be sure if you have met God's requirements to receive forgiveness of your sins. Be honest with yourself and learn the vital facts that will save you. Now is your chance to examine your salvation. Compare the way you think you were saved with the Scriptures. I will show you how to know if your salvation is sure. If you find that something is wrong, please be wise enough to correct it. We know that many churches teach salvation incorrectly. For example: some teach that a person is saved the moment he believes in God and accepts Jesus as his personal Savior. Please be aware, this idea is not stated in the Bible. But it is the most popular belief among churches. If this is what you were

taught, you have not been saved. Many churches sprinkle for baptism. This is also not taught in the Bible. If you were sprinkled, it did not save you. Some churches teach that God gives you a feeling inside when He saves you. This is supposed to be the proof of His forgiveness and acceptance. The Bible does not teach this. These ideas originated with man and are completely false. God has one plan of salvation. The Bible teaches only one way to be saved. (Work Section VI)

### **VII. DO LITTLE CHILDREN NEED SALVATION?**

Little children are not lost in sin and do not need to be saved. Many churches teach that all humans inherit Adam's sin at birth, meaning that little babies are born with a corrupt nature and need forgiveness. God does not create anything corrupt or unclean. God is perfect holiness and purity. Evil does not come from God. No one is brought into the world with the dirty sins of another or an evil spirit. We are the offspring of God, Acts 17:29, created in God's image, Genesis 1:26. When men accepted the idea that humans are born with sin, they began to baptize babies. Infant baptism started three hundred years after the church began. The teaching is false, and those who believed it left the truth and divided the church. Infant baptism was never taught in the first century church and is not found in the New Testament. How do we know it is false? God tells us in Ezekiel 18:19-20 that no one inherits the sins of another. Later in the New Testament, Jesus taught in Matthew 18:1-7 that little children are pure and innocent. If you were baptized as a small child, it was a needless act. Little children are not sinful and do not need salvation from sin. (Work Section VII)

### **VIII. WHEN DO WE NEED SALVATION FROM SIN?**

All of us are born with the potential of doing good or evil with our life on the earth. As babies, our souls were pure and free from sin. We did not know God's laws or have the ability to control our life.

**S**in is a voluntary violation of God's laws, 1 John 3:4. Sin is learned, not inherited.

If we live in the world long enough, we will be influenced by the sin around us. At the age when we realize the difference between right and wrong and are able to control the circumstances of our life, God holds us responsible for our decisions. From this time forward, each wrong choice that we make becomes a willful violation of God's law. Our sin separates us from God, and we are in need of salvation. It is important to understand that no one can be in between God's

kingdom and Satan's. If we have sinned, we are separated from God and are a part of Satan's kingdom. Our soul is lost and doomed to Hell in that state. If we die in this condition, we have no hope of being saved. At this point, our greatest need is to be saved from Satan, cleansed of sin and reunited with God.

**Who will not be saved?** Satan will not be saved nor anyone who is in his kingdom. God will not save an enemy of the cross or those without faith who have no desire to know Him. God saves no one who refuses to obey His will, who will not repent from sins. God will not save a person who refuses to be a part of the church that Christ died to establish. For these reasons, God will not save everyone. Christ made salvation possible for all of God's creation, but not everyone will obey God's terms of pardon to receive forgiveness.

**Who will be saved?** God will save the person who prepares himself to receive salvation. One who reaches out to God by learning about the condition of his soul and obeying God's terms of pardon. To be saved, a person must understand the deadly power of sin; that sin has separated his soul from God and killed him spiritually, Isaiah 59:2. Salvation is offered to those who place their lives in God's hands. This is done through **faith, repenting of sin, confessing Christ as the Son of God, and obeying the gospel in baptism.** A person must prepare himself in this way to receive God's salvation. It is falsely taught by religions all over the world that God's salvation is offered to everyone, without obligation. It is also falsely taught that all one must do to be saved is to believe in the existence of God. You must know and obey the truth. This lesson will help you learn how to prepare yourself for God's salvation and how to get rid of the bondage of sin that separates you from Him. God is ready to give it to you, but you must be ready to receive it. (Work Section VIII).

## IX. HOW TO PREPARE FOR GOD'S SALVATION

**YOU MUST HAVE FAITH!** Preparation for salvation begins with faith. Hebrews 11:6 teaches that it is impossible to please God without a true faith. In the first course entitled *Faith*, we learned there are two kinds of faith, James 2:17-20. The person who has a knowledge of God, yet will not obey God's commandments, has a dead, useless faith. Everyone wants salvation from sin but not everyone wants it on God's terms. The majority of people in the world want God to come down on their level and give them a struggle-free salvation. The person who has a serious faith is willing to learn and then obey the truth at all costs. This is not an easy decision to make. It involves sacrifice as Luke 9:23 reveals. And he said to them all,

**"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."** Abraham put his faith into action by offering his son on an altar as God directed. Noah demonstrated his faith by building a huge boat nowhere near the water. He trusted that God would save him, and He did, because Noah obeyed.

**T** rue faith realizes that God knows what is best for you. True faith surrenders to God in trust and does what God says.

Does true faith mean that I must give up sins that I enjoy doing? **Yes!** Does it mean that I will have to leave my church? If my church is not like the one that Christ built, then yes, God wants me to leave it and worship the way He has directed in His Word. True faith is a willingness to lay aside my opinions and obey God's commands. We do not get faith through a feeling or an emotional experience. Faith is believing and trusting the facts that God wrote in the Bible enough to obey it. How does a person acquire faith? God doesn't put faith into us. Romans 10:17-18 says that faith comes by learning the word of God. You can develop your faith by increasing your knowledge of God and doing His Will. If you have already made the decision to give your life to God, you have a good foundation of faith. (Work Section IX ).

## X. YOU MUST REPENT OF SINS

The next step in preparing to receive God's salvation is to repent of the sins that stand between you and God.

**T** he word "*repentance*" means to "*turn away from sin*".

Naturally God will not take away your sins unless you are willing to stop doing them. God cannot save a person who refuses to turn away from sin. He will allow that person to be lost. People misunderstand repentance by thinking it is a feeling of regret that one gets after realizing he has sinned. Repentance is not a feeling but an action that one takes against sin when he makes the decision to turn his allegiance away from serving sin to serving God. We find this in Acts 26:20. ". . . they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance." This is something that you must decide to do. It is not just a feeling of regret for your sins. Some people are sorry for being a sinner, yet will not leave it. They love sin and stay in it. True Godly sorrow should motivate you to go beyond feeling bad that

you are a sinner, to helping you decide to stop the sins. The decision to stop sinning must also involve the decision to turn your allegiance to God instead. Making this kind of decision takes more than just a casual thought. It requires a dedicated effort and commitment which shows that you are serious about receiving God's salvation. Are you willing to repent (turn away) from your sins? God knows all your sins and the sincerity of your heart. Luke 13:3 says, ". . . except you repent, you will likewise perish." You are not ready to receive God's salvation until you decide to turn away from sin. (Work Section X).

## XI. YOU MUST CONFESS CHRIST AS YOUR LORD

When you repent of sin and turn to God for salvation, you must give your allegiance and trust to Christ. Why? Because Christ is the Savior who died to kill sin's power over your life.

**I**t is important to know that **Christ's blood is the only thing that can save you and unite your soul with God again.**

God wants you to acknowledge that Christ is His Son. In Romans 10:9-10, one is told to **confess that Jesus is Lord with his mouth and believe in his heart that He was raised from the dead.** For with man's heart, his faith results in righteousness and with the mouth, his confession results in salvation. Why is confessing Christ so important? Many people, such as Jews, Moslems, Hindus, and Buddhists, want salvation but do not believe that Jesus is the Savior, God's Son. They do not accept all the evidences of Christ as the promised Messiah who would take away the sins of the world. Read what Jesus said in Matthew 10:32-33. **"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him shall I confess before my Father in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven."**

Do you believe that Christ is God's Son? Are you willing to confess your faith in Him as your Savior? There is an example in John 12:42-43 of some who believed in Christ but were afraid to say it. They were more concerned with what others thought than what Christ meant to them. They loved the approval of men more than having the approval of God. Many today would like to stay with their church, even though it practices things that contradict God's will. They deny Christ by refusing the

church that He established with His own blood. It is impossible for God to save a person who does not believe in Christ, one who refuses to acknowledge that Christ is God's Son, or one who refuses to be a part of the church that He died to establish. These people don't want others to know of their faith in Christ. (Work Section XI).

## XII. PREPARING TO RECEIVE GOD'S SALVATION

Do you have faith in Christ and His power to save you?

Are you willing to repent and turn away from sin?

Are you ready to commit yourself to Christ, making Him the Lord of your life, acknowledging that He is the Son of God?

Do you want to be a part of the saved body of Christ that He calls His church?

**H**ow you answer these questions will affect where you spend eternity!

If you have answered yes to every question above, you are indeed prepared to receive salvation. God is standing ready to forgive you of the sins that have killed your spiritual relationship and separated you from Him. You should now be ready to obey the gospel and be saved. Next, learn what the gospel is and how it takes away sin. (Work Section XII).

## XIII. WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

The word gospel means "good news." It tells us what Christ did to take away sin, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. To have your sins taken away, you must obey the gospel. The apostle Paul said in Romans 1:16, **"I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation."** Christ had no sin of His own. Our sins were put on Him on the cross. He died, was buried, and resurrected to take away our sins. To claim God's salvation, you must go through a process of dying, being buried, and a resurrection to a new life to take away the sins that killed your spiritual unity with God. This process is called a spiritual rebirth. Christ said in John 3:5-7, **"Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."** It is not possible to die physically and be raised as Christ did, but it is done symbolically when we are baptized in water. The water is a symbol of the grave. When you are completely submerged in a watery grave, that represents the burial of your old

**V**isualize in your mind what is happening as I describe it to you step by step. Read every Scripture reference in your Bible, and let God tell you about the terms of His salvation.

- **When a person sins, it brings the *death penalty* and kills him spiritually**, Romans 6:23. Sin is what killed Christ. He died to pay for sin. His body, that bore our sins, had to be buried. When He came forth from the grave, He was reunited with God. To be reconciled with God, He had to get rid of sin. You must also get rid of your sin, Romans 5:8-11.
- **When you go to the water to be baptized**, you are bringing your body that has been spiritually killed by sin, to bury it in a grave, Romans 6:3-4. You must be willing to bury the old life of sin or your baptism will be of no value.
- By being lowered into a watery grave, **you will *re-live Christ's burial***, by acting it out in your own life, Romans 6:10-11. How? The old sinful body that separated you from God is put into a symbolic grave to show that you have buried the old man of sin, Romans 6:6 and that you are transferring your loyalty to righteousness, Romans 6:12-14. You will no longer be a slave to sin, Romans 6:16-18.
- If your faith and repentance are genuine, **God will remove your sins in baptism**. You will be raised out of the watery grave, free of sin, Romans 6:7. Only by being baptized in this manner will you be resurrected as a new person spiritually, Romans 6:4-5. You will be born again, John 3:3.
- In the few seconds it takes to lower your body into the grave, God will forgive all of your sins. At that point, you will be clothed with Christ, Galatians 3:27; cleansed spiritually, Romans 6:6; saved from Satan, and you will become a part of God's family. This is why 1 Peter 3:21 tells us that **baptism saves**. In baptism, God will give you the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:38, to live within as a spiritual shield **to help you fight the battle of sin in the future**, Ephesians 3:16-20. The Spirit is a down payment or pledge that God will keep all of His promises, Ephesians 1:13-14. (Work Section XIII)

#### XIV. FALSE TEACHING ABOUT BAPTISM

**1. Sprinkling:** Were you sprinkled and assured that it was baptism? If so, you have not been saved at all. Sprinkling is not baptism. It is used as a substitution for baptism by many churches, but the Bible does not authorize it. The practice of sprinkling started in the year 253 A.D., or thereabout, after the church began. A man named Novatian was the first to do it. He wanted to be immersed but was very ill and did not want to be lowered into the water. Afraid of dying in sin, he had large amounts of water poured over him in bed trying to duplicate baptism. Many of the church fathers did not recognize this as baptism. They considered this to be unlawful and regarded it incorrect. They also questioned the sincerity of one's baptism at the point of death. Others began to use sprinkling as a substitute in emergency cases. By the seventh century, the first law of sprinkling was passed by Pope Stephen II giving permission for infants to be lawfully sprinkled as baptism. In the twelfth century, sprinkling was fully instituted as an equal to immersion by many churches. It is now used as a universal method of baptism. But **sprinkling is not baptism and is not found In the Bible**. Drops of water on the forehead is not a burial in water as we have just studied. Baptism must be the same act as Christ's burial or it is not correct biblical baptism, Colossians 2:12.

**2. Baptism by the Holy Spirit or Spirit-filled Baptism.** Many churches teach that God baptizes them in the Holy Spirit. They are taught to pray for God to give them this experience. You may have had an emotional experience that you believe came from God. If you believe that God baptized you in the Spirit and gave you a powerful feeling as proof, you have been deceived by a lie. The Bible nowhere teaches us to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. God has never dealt with man through his feelings. These ideas were conceived by men and are not true. The Scriptures used to support this teaching are taken out of their proper context. Holy Spirit baptism is not promised or commanded today. The Holy Spirit is given to those who are immersed in water as a burial. But the person never feels the Spirit's presence. If you have trusted that God baptized you in the Holy Spirit, you are not saved. You must be baptized as the Scriptures teach to be saved.

**No Baptism required.** Some churches teach that faith alone is all that is necessary to save a person. Though this is commonly accepted and believed by many, it is not true. Faith by itself is dead and useless, James 2:17-18. If one does not act on his faith by repenting of sin and obeying the gospel in

baptism, his faith is dead. God saves those who obey the whole plan of salvation, not parts of it. Faith alone is not complete obedience to the gospel. Faith is only the first step in coming to God for salvation. (Work Section XI V).

## **XV. SUMMARY OF GOD'S SALVATION**

### **How do you prepare yourself to receive God's Salvation?**

1. **Faith** . . . a willingness to know and do God's will.
2. **Repentance** . . . a willingness to turn away from sin and stop.
3. **Confession** . . . a willingness to openly declare your belief in Christ as the Son of God, making Him Lord of your life.

### **What must you do to be saved?**

**Obey the gospel** . . . by burying the old body of sin in a watery grave called baptism.

### **When will God save you?**

**At baptism** . . . you will be washed clean of all sin in the blood of Christ and saved.

### **What does God give the new Christian?**

1. **Forgiveness of sins** . . . which unites you again with God.
2. **The Holy Spirit** .... as a down payment on God's heaven.
3. **Freedom from the slavery of sin and Satan** . . . after becoming a saved child of God, a Christian can pray through Christ for the forgiveness of his sin, 1 John 1:9. God forgives the sins of only those who obey the gospel. (Work Section XV.)

## **XVI. WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH CHRIST'S BLOOD?**

Now you know why there had to be a cross. With the blood of the cross God made salvation possible for you. He sent His Son here to die for you. When Christ hung on the cross, He knew every sin of the past and all the sins that would be done in the future. Though you were not living at the time of His death, He still knew of your sins. Christ had the power to destroy His enemies from the cross, but He submitted to death because it was the only way that sin could be paid for and God's justice could be maintained. It was on the cross that Satan's power was defeated. If you are not saved, Satan rules your life through sin and you belong to him. If you are not covered by the blood of

Jesus, you do not have the blessed hope of heaven. Christ has done His part for you by dying to provide for your forgiveness. Now the rest is up to you. God will not create another plan for you if you reject this one. It is the best offer that heaven could allow. He gives you the choice to accept the salvation He offers or reject it and remain in your present condition. He will not force you to take it or try to control your will by tugging at your feelings and emotions. I have known of people in Africa who walked for miles to be baptized. To these people, it was well worth the effort to secure their salvation in Christ. How serious are you about salvation? You must make the decision of what you will do with the blood of the cross. Will you take it and allow it to cleanse your soul of sin or will you throw it back at God and refuse His offer? (Work Section XVI).

### **The following section answers questions you may have about salvation and about baptism:**

#### **Can a person be saved without baptism?**

God balances the scales of justice perfectly. The crime of violating God's law (sin) is serious. It carries with it the penalty of death, Romans 6:23. All men have sinned and need salvation, Romans 3:23. God cannot allow sin to go unpunished because He is just. God's love and mercy for man was so great that He gave His Son to save us, John 3:16. He has provided salvation for everyone who wants it. The only way that we can receive it is through His Son. The blood of Christ is what releases us from sin, Revelation 3:5. Without the blood of Christ, we are lost. What can we do to come in contact with His blood? Believe and be baptized, Mark 16:16. As we obey the gospel in baptism, the blood of Christ is contacted and applied to our lives.

When we obey the gospel, God saves us, Romans 1:16. Those who do not obey the gospel will not be saved, as we read in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. God is not cruel. He would not set conditions of salvation that are impossible for some of us to reach. He is not partial, allowing some to have salvation and others to be damned from lack of knowledge or water. In the Bible, we learn by reading through man's history that anyone who wanted to know and obey God, was provided the way. He is not willing that any should be lost, but wishes for all to come to repentance, 2 Peter 3:9. God revealed Himself to man through the things He made, Romans 1:19-20. He wrote the Scriptures to guide us, 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The gospel of His Son is preached in all the world, Romans 10:18. The Bible has been translated in most of the major languages. There is no excuse for not knowing God.

The Bible says we must be baptized to be saved. God saves no one outside the blood of Christ. Sins are forgiven at baptism, Romans 6:3-7. Christ died to provide this way of salvation through His blood. If God saved one without Christ's blood, then He would do it

for all. If God saves without Christ's blood, then Christ's death was for nothing. The truth is, no one can be saved without baptism. We are cleansed of sin by the blood of Christ in baptism. **Yes, we must be baptized to be saved and cannot be saved without it.**

**Students often ask, "What if a person can't reach the water to be baptized before he dies? Does that mean he will not be saved?"**

God knows everything about us, even to the hairs on our head. He knows the heart and true intentions of every soul. If a person wants to contact the blood of Christ in baptism, God will provide the way. He does not want anyone to perish. God is the only one who knows if a person sincerely wants to change his life. If anyone dies without baptism, it is by his own choice (not God's) to die without being saved. **God knows if the person's repentance was truly sincere.**

**Must I be baptized again?**

If your baptism was not done correctly, it was not a true baptism and should be done again to be right. There is an example of this in Acts 19:1-5. Paul arrived at Ephesus and began speaking to some of the disciples. He questioned them concerning their baptism and discovered they had not been baptized by the authority of Christ. Upon learning this, the twelve men wanted to be baptized correctly in the name of the Lord Jesus (by Jesus' authority). This should always be our attitude as we grow in knowledge of the Scriptures. There will be things learned through our studies that are wrong in our lives. We must correct them, obeying God properly, if we expect to receive His blessings.

**Baptism is essential** to our salvation and we must make sure it is correct. If you are not sure your baptism was done for the right reasons, it probably was not. Study through the lesson material again. Try to remember as much as possible about your former baptism. Examine it thoroughly. Be ready to correct what is not right. Remember, if you thought you were saved before you were baptized, you were not baptized correctly. Why? Because you did not understand at the time you were baptized that one contacts the saving blood of Christ at baptism, not before. You still have your sins.

If you were **sprinkled**, your baptism was not correct, and you will need to be baptized by immersion. Sprinkling is not biblical baptism at all. Baptism must be acted out as a burial in the grave, Colossians 2:12. *Sprinkling is wrong*

If you thought you had experienced **a baptism of the Holy Spirit**, that is also incorrect. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not commanded anywhere in the Bible. It was given twice in history for purposes that do not apply to us. If this is what you were taught, you have

been misled and **are not saved**. You must be **buried by immersion in water to contact the blood of Christ** and be saved. *Don't rely on feelings to lead you.* They are fickle and unreliable. Instead, let the Bible guide you. No one can be saved unless he has been baptized in the correct manner and for the right reasons.

**What are the right reasons to be baptized?**

To re-live the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. To have your sins washed away in Christ's blood. To become a member of God's family and Christ's church. We cannot obey part of God's plan for salvation and be saved. We must obey it all.

**Are the people who lived before the cross lost or saved?**

The sins of those who obeyed God by offering animal sacrifices and sincerely trying to keep the Old Law of the Jews were forgiven at the cross. Christ's blood paid the price for their sins. Those who refused to obey God's law are lost.