

Scripture and comments from God's Word for leading someone to Salvation and Eternal Life.

The single most important issue in this life is to know, by faith, that our soul is

# Heaven Bound

*If you were granted only one desire by our God, for yourself and your loved ones, what would that desire be? I'm sure you would choose to spend eternity in heaven. God stands ready to grant you the fulfillment of that desire, if you so choose.*

Lee Roy Golden

May 2009

## A Word About God's Love

The greatest attribute that God yearns to see in you and me as his children is godly love, our love for God, and love (and forgiveness) for our fellowman, the two greatest commands (Mk 12:28-31). Faith, hope and humility are essential attributes, but Godly love is the centerpiece, the pinnacle, the crown jewel of what God really wants in His children. *"And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love...Make love your aim..." (1Cor 13:13 and 14:1a).*

**A New Creation.** When we are saved, God *"...has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Col 1:13).* *"(God) has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a deposit" (2 Cor 1:22).* He promises us that: *"...He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6).* We may quit on God but he will not quit on us. No matter what happens in the world or in our life, if we are a Christian, and there is true repentance for sin, God will forgive us.

## World War II Days

In World War II, I served aboard a large aircraft carrier as one of the two main ship's helmsmen. The helm (steering the ship) was my battle station. Our ship, the USS Bennington, was the Flagship of the largest wartime naval group ever assembled for battle up to that time. It was Task Force Group I of the Third Fleet, under Admiral "Bull" Halsey. Our missions were invading Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and the daily bombing of Japan, while under constant attacks by their Kamikaze air groups. As we were about to invade Japan, with our naval personnel, under Halsey, the two atom bombs were dropped. A few days later Japan's surrender took place aboard our battleship, the USS Missouri, as the Bennington's planes flew overhead air cover.

When returning from Japan and heading for San Francisco, the experience of steering that ship under the Golden Gate Bridge was one of the most joyful, thrilling experiences in my memory. The war was over, no more Kamikaze bombers and we were *homeward bound*. I wish to thank God for my safe return and for the many blessings and opportunities I have experienced in this life. Now, at 89, I am thinking how wonderful it will be to be *heaven bound* and going through *that* Golden Gate soon.

Lee Roy Golden

May 2009

How, *From God's Word*, To Be

# Heaven Bound

*"It is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment." (Heb 9:27)*

**Heaven is a prepared place** for a prepared people. We must take God's word seriously, He means what He says. We do not go to heaven by accident or by positive thinking. With this in mind, I want to present some important Bible truths by way of verses and comments that relate to our salvation and eternal life. I dedicate this booklet to the work of seeking and teaching those who desire to spend eternity with God and his family.

L R G

*How great is our God, who can devise a plan that has bridged the chasm that exists between his holy righteousness and our total and helpless unrighteousness. Before the world began, he had formed plans for a human family to be in eternity with him one day. Jesus is the bridge that spans that chasm. God so loved man that he gave up his only Son as a sacrificial Lamb. Given the plan and the hope of eternal life every Christian should fall in love with God and his Son and serve them with a great joy and gladness all the days of his or her life.*

## Sources

A superior Bible program containing 26 Bible translations, concordance, dictionary, commentaries, etc. The Bible, Harpers Notes, Halley's Bible Handbook, Ken Craig's *REDEMPTION* sermon and 58 years+ as a Christian and Bible student.

Note: Bible verse quotes are taken from the KJV, the NKJV and the RSV. The NKJV capitalizes pronoun references to Deity while the KJV and the RSV do not.

## **Christ Is The Center & Heart of the Bible** (and of the Christian's life as well)

¥ The Old Testament is the account of a Nation (Israel).

¥ The New Testament is the account of a Man (Jesus Christ).

¥ The Nation was founded and nurtured of God to bring the Man into the world to teach the world about God, and to redeem it.

The Word of God (Logos) became a Man (Jn 1:14). He was Christ *the Messiah*, or *the anointed one*. Christ is both the Son of God and the Son of man. His birth, his life, his crucifixion, his resurrection and his ascension is the focus and hub of world history. The Old Testament sets the stage for it. The New Testament records it. (Halley's handbook)

Col. 1:15-20 describes the greatness of Christ: *"He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions...or authorities Ñ all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."*

As a man, Jesus taught and pointed people to God and eternity. He was kind and sympathetic. He loved mankind, loved to forgive, help and heal them. He wrought miracles to heal the sick, raise the dead, turn water into wine and feed thousands. He had compassion to forgive the guilty and took with him a convicted thief to Paradise. He was wounded and slain for our transgressions, and by His stripes we are healed. (Isa. 53 foretells his suffering and death.)

We need to be aware, however, that Christ also spoke many warnings concerning the ungodly, the unbelieving, the unrepenting, and the self-righteous. He warned that only a (relatively) few would enter the narrow (difficult) gate to eternal life (Mt 7:14). The ungodly will face judgement with severe consequences. (Rev 21:8).

Christ is the Door, the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is our peace with the Father, our hope for a glory to come, and our righteousness because we are unrighteous. He also is our Savior, for **"He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."** (Heb 5:9). He is presently seated at the right hand of the Father where he is our King and High Priest, and as such, our mediator and intercessor before God.

## Heaven ☩ Home of the soul

When we die we know that our body will return to the dust from which it came. But where will our soul go? We know that nothing can go with us, no money, land or possessions of any kind. Death is an equalizer. We brought nothing into this world and we can take nothing out. Only our works follow us.

If you are a child of God an indescribably wonderful experience awaits you. There is coming a day when you will close your eyes to all the familiar scenes of this earth and open them to the glorious beauty of God's celestial homeland we call heaven.

You may have lived a full life with many thrilling experiences. Your eyes may have feasted on the rare and exotic things of this world. Adventure may have been your goal, and you sailed the seven seas in pursuit of it. But all these things will seem as nothing the moment you set foot in the effulgent brilliance and unbelievable splendor of God's paradise.

On one occasion the Apostle Paul was caught up to the "third heaven", where God dwells. He did not, and could not express words to describe what he heard and saw.

If God can, and has, created the material heavens and the earth, filled it with living things without number, and endless spectacular beauty, things made to perish what can and will he do in in the spiritual realm!!!

No one has ever seen God at any time, yet the evidence of his divine, all knowing, all powerful presence is seen and felt everywhere.

## Hell -- Where no one desires to go!

Sin is universal. The break-down of morals and character of many people in our world is occurring at an alarming rate. God, the Bible and prayer have been virtually isolated and rendered out-of-bounds for public use or acknowledgment.

Partial-birth abortion (infant murder), homosexual activity, same-sex marriage, etc. are in much of the news of the day. Those who oppose these things are labeled as bigots. Are homosexuals *born that way*, as some claim? This act is a chosen venture. God gives them up to reprobate passions (Rom 1:26), the guilt feelings become dulled and addiction soon sets in. God pronounced the judgement of death for all who commit adultery and/or homosexual activities, if they fail to repent of their sin. (Please read Lev 20:10-13, 1 Cor 6:9-10, 2 Pet 2:10, Rom 1:18-28, and Gen 1: 1-29).

Sexual relations with a partner outside of marriage, is a common occurrence today. This sin will cause many to miss heaven.

**"Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals...shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor 6:9-10, NAS, & RSV).**

## Introduction

*Heaven Bound* was prepared to assist in leading the lost to redemption through Jesus Christ. The gospel (good news) of Jesus is the power of God for salvation to a believer (Rom 1:16). We must obey the gospel by becoming one with Christ (2 Thess 1:7-9; Gal 3:27).

The booklet is rather brief, so that in a short period of time one may come to know, from God's word, how to become a Christian and how to grow in Christ and in the knowledge of His word. There are so many views and opinions about God's plan of salvation that it can be very confusing. Yet, knowing the truth on this issue is the most important one that we will face in this life. We are to "test every spirit" (1 Jn 4:1), and "prove all things" (1 Thess 5:21) by God's holy Word.

Many think of themselves as "good" persons and not in need of Christ. God's word teaches that no matter how hard we try to live a good life, we cannot live above sin. All of us need God's divine grace and continuing forgiveness through his Son, "...For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." (Rom 3:23).

Most people *feel* that they are saved, even though there are many different views and positions. This includes Roman Catholics, Protestants and others who profess Christ, and Jews, Muslims, and others who do not. We cannot trust feelings unless they are anchored in God's truth.

Why are there so many professing Christian churches, all basing their different doctrines, views and practices on the same Bible? Liberalism with God's word, and failure to harmonize all of the Bible's teaching on a matter, especially in obeying the one true gospel. There are also many who follow unscriptural worship practices based on parts of Roman Catholicism, Calvinism, and/or Lutherism.

The apostle Paul tells us in Gal 3:24 where to begin our search for the one gospel. "Therefore the law has become our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, so that we may be **justified by faith**." Verses 26 and 27 tell how we get into and how we put on Christ by faith.

When we purchase our earthly dwelling we make sure that every thing is legal and correct. With respect to our salvation and heavenly dwelling Peter has told us to "be diligent to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet 1:10). We will all be judged by the words of God, the Bible, which are Spirit, Truth and Life.

Our destiny is determined by our own choices. We must choose whom we will serve and where we will spend eternity and then act on it before the opportunity for choosing is gone. Our destiny is sealed and unchangeable once this life ends.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

God's Love. WW II Days. -----	i
Heaven Is A Prepared Place -----	ii
Christ Is The Center And Heart of The Bible -----	iii
Heaven. Hell. -----	iv
Introduction. -----	v
Table Of Contents. -----	vi

### PART I

#### GOD'S AMAZING PLAN OF REDEMPTION

God's Amazing Plan Of Redemption. The Big Picture. -----	1
The Power Of Biblical Faith -----	2
Why Be A Christian? The Joy And Expectation Of A Christian. -----	3
Salvation Is Through Jesus Christ -----	4
To Spend Eternity With God. To Become A Christian. -----	5
After Baptism <u>Into</u> Christ You Are A Christian -----	6
After We Have Salvation, What Then? Can We Lose It? -----	7
The Christian Human Family -----	8

### PART II

#### THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND BAPTISM

The Gospel Of Jesus Christ And Baptism. -----	9
The Meaning And Importance Of Baptism. -----	10
Is Water Baptism Essential To Our Salvation? -----	11
Baptism Is From God, It Is Essential. It Began With God! -----	12
God's Salvation Plan Was In Place Summary Of God's Plan Of Salvation -----	13
Can One Be Saved By Faith Alone? Is Baptism A Work? -----	14
John's Mission And Jesus' Ministry Begins. -----	15
Jesus' Ministry Ends. The Lord's Supper. The Thief On The Cross. -----	16
The New Covenant Begins-----	17
Why Scriptural Water Baptism Should Be Considered Essential -----	18
Recorded Christian Conversions. Important Baptism Verses -----	19, 20
Bible Terms Defined -----	21
Christ's Church (of the New Testament) -----	22
Seeking The Lost. -----	23

## PART I

### God's Amazing Plan Of Redemption

#### The Big Picture

For something so important as the eternal dwelling place of our soul we need to get the Big Picture. The essence of the Bible is one primary theme, God's amazing plan to redeem his fallen creation. This plan of redemption is "The Big Picture", or theme of the Bible. The Bible was written by around 40 men over a period of about 1,500 years men with varying degrees of education, different nationalities, and diverse cultures. Containing sixty-six books of law, poetry, history, narrative and prophecy, each book reflects a unity of facts, teaching and purpose. All of man's history unfolded around God's plan of redemption. Each book of the Bible is a single thread woven into this amazing tapestry.

The Bible and its consistent theme and revelation is an awesome evidence of God. Ordinary men could never have created this book. The writer of Hebrews states that *"The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."* (Heb 4:12).

The Bible is a progressive revelation. If you skip the first half of any good book and try to finish it, you will have a hard time understanding the characters, the plot, and the ending. The New Testament is only completely understood when it is seen as being built upon the foundation of the events, characters, laws, sacrificial system, prophecies, covenants and promises of the Old Testament. In this manner all of O.T. history was a learning or training period to prepare the world for the arrival of Jesus Christ and his role in the plan of redemption, involving the one true gospel of Jesus Christ.

God's plan of redemption, while anchored in the writings of the Old Testament, obtains its fulfillment in the New Testament. Here it is called the "Gospel" or "good news" of Jesus Christ. We must consider and comprehend the importance of this gospel.

Seven hundred years before John the Baptist and Christ were born, God, through Isaiah, to the disciple Mark, said: *"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, behold, I send my messenger (John the Baptist) before your face, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ready the way of the lord (Christ), make his paths straight. John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins."* (Mark 1:1-5).

Note: God ordained baptism.

## **The Power Of Biblical Faith**

(When we believe, trust and obey)

Salvation is a gift from God, by grace on his part and faith on our part. After love, faith may be the greatest single factor in our relationship with God and is essential to our salvation and eternal life. "...without faith it is impossible to please him." (Heb 11:6). Jesus said, "...If you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins." (Jn 8:24). True biblical faith also produces fruit and good works.

There is a wide difference between *Biblical faith* and *positive thinking*. Positive thinking can help you to become a millionaire, but it alone won't get you to heaven. Biblical faith will help you to inherit eternal life. Faith operates in the inner man, the spiritual mind, the heart, and involves trusting and obeying God, who is unseen and unheard by physical eyes and ears. God, through the Holy Spirit dwells in our heart by faith. The Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor 6:19,20). Faith is not limited to what we can see. "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*" (Heb 11:1).

Biblical faith is belief in, and trusting obedience to God and his word. (Rom 16:26). True faith bears good fruit. "*As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*" (Jas 2:26).

During Christ's ministry people flocked to him for physical healing. In many cases He would say: "*let it be done according to your faith,*" or "*your faith has made you well.*"

¥ God justifies him who has faith in Jesus (Rom 3:26). ¥ "*We walk by faith and not by sight.*" (2 Cor 5:7). ¥ "*Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...*" (Heb 12:2). ¥ God has dealt each of us *a measure of faith*. (Rom 12:3). ¥ We grow and develop in our faith by *hearing* God's word. "*Faith comes by hearing...the word of God*" (Rom 10:17).

Abraham was truly a great man of faith and became the father of God's chosen nation after he was one hundred years of age. He believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. (Rom 4:3). He offered his son Isaac upon the altar, believing that God could raise him up again, so that by his works of obedience his faith was made perfect. (Jas 2:21, 22).

"*By God's power (you) are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed...As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls.*" (1 Pet 1:5-9).

Peter walked on the water by the power of trusting, obedient faith (Mt 14:28-31). But...his faith weakened and he began to sink "*...this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith*" (1 Jn 5:4).

## Why Be A Christian?

There are two primary reasons to consider: 1. We want to be blessed with the limitless blessings that those in Christ are promised, both during this life and in the life to come. 2. We do not want to face the consequences that those outside of Christ will face.

Though we all must die physically and our bodies must return to dust from where it came, we don't want our souls to die eternally. We want to go to that place of unimaginable wonders called Heaven.

When we observe God's handiwork in the sky above, the beautiful splendors of the earth below, the marvels of an endless variety of life in the seas, a new-born helpless baby, we get only a glimpse of God's nature, power, and what He will provide for His people one day.

God demonstrates that sin will not be allowed in heaven. The angels that sinned were cast from heaven into hell, reserved for judgement (2 Pet 2:4). When Adam and Eve sinned they were cast out of the garden and from the presence of God. We learn that beginning with Adam, **all** have sinned and do sin (Rom 5:14-20). So how can we deal with our sin and gain the hope of going to heaven? We will see how God's grace is demonstrated through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, coupled with our faith and obedience, to cleanse us from sin.

As a Christian, our whole world can change for the better. We will respect God and his Word, the Bible. We will worship God on the Lord's Day. We can pray to God in faith and trust because he has promised to hear and answer our prayers. The blessings that we can enjoy with God, through Christ, are without number. We need not fear death anymore, because we can look forward to eternal life.

## The Joy And Expectation Of A Christian

Christians can have a thrilling and realistic hope that one day they will leave behind all of their burdens, discomforts and problems and enter the place that they have heard so much about the wonderful world of heaven. We can look forward to seeing and meeting God our Creator, Jesus our Savior, our redeemed departed loved ones and endless things far too numerous to know about.

God made known through the apostle Paul a mystery hidden from the ages past but now revealed to the saints: "*The riches of the glory of this mystery is Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Col 1:27). Christ was sent to become our Savior, our hope of eternal life, our mediator, our king and high priest before God (1 Tim 2:5, Heb 4:14-16). God sent the Holy Spirit to live in our heart as our teacher, counselor and comforter, and to make it possible for the extended presence of God our Father, and Jesus our Lord, to dwell within us.

## **Salvation Is Through Jesus Christ**

Sin is so contrary to God's very nature that, because He dearly loves man, He conceived a plan of reconciliation to make atonement for sin so man could be permitted to enter Heaven. (Jesus was slain from the foundation of the earth to redeem you and I.) God's Word was transformed into a man and became His own Son as *God in the flesh*. God spoke the world and universe into being through His Word (Logos). God's Holy Spirit worked through the angel Gabriel and Mary (the mother of Jesus) and a male child named Jesus was conceived and born. (Lk 1:26-38). Jesus Christ would be the Son of God and the Son of man and become an acceptable sacrifice for our sins.

Jesus came to the earth to seek and to save the lost. (Lk 19:10). As the Son of God, without sin, he became the *lamb of God*, a blood sacrifice for the sins of all who would trust and obey him. (Heb 9:22).

Peter tells the Jewish leaders: "*This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, but which has become the head of the corner. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*" (Acts 4:11,12,).

God wants a human family with him in heaven one day. The **gospel** represents the scheme and work of God by which he rescues man from the eternal ruin of sin and bestows on him the riches of his grace, the promise and hope of eternal life through his Son.

Sinners are called by *the gospel* (2 Thes 2:14) *God's power for salvation*. (Rom 1:16). When we accept and obey the terms of this calling, God extends his grace to forgive our sins and impart the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). He makes us His "adopted" children (Eph 1:5). We are *sealed* with the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our inheritance until the day of redemption (Eph 1:13,14; 4:30), and we are added to Christ's body, the church, (God's kingdom on earth) and to *the Book of Life* (Lk 10:20; Phil 4:3). Salvation is a condition of pardon from our sins, giving us the assurance of eternal life.

We are saved by God's grace and not by meritorious works (Eph 2:8-10). Grace may be defined as God's unmerited favor; or his willingness to forgive our sins and save us, even though we don't deserve it. God's forgiveness is applied to us the moment that we are in Christ, spiritually "born again" into the family of Jesus Christ.

Jesus paid the ultimate price on the cross so that a righteous and just God is able to forgive every sinner on earth who will believe and obey him (Heb 5:9). To say that we are saved by grace doesn't mean that we have nothing to do in regard to our salvation. It means there's nothing we can do that will merit God's grace, or our salvation. But getting into Christ is something we must do. *Saving faith* is an *active faith* that responds to what God's word says, simply because he said or commanded it. (see James 2:14-24).

## To Spend Eternity With God

Believe God when His Word tells the sinner that:

**God Loves You** *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life* (Jn 3:16). (Also see 1 Jn 4:10; Jn 15:13; Rom 8:35).

**None Are Good, All Have Sinned** *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom 3:23). *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"* (1 Jn 1:8; Eccl 7:20; Rom 3:10,12)

**The Penalty For Sin Is Death** *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Rom 6:23; also Jas 1:15).

**We Are Unable To Save Ourselves** *"by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast"* (Eph 2:8,9). *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us."* (Tit 3:5).

**God's Remedy Is His Son** *"Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (Jn 14:6). (Peter speaking) *"This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. Nor is salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

## To Become A Christian

We must obey the gospel of Jesus Christ. Rom 1:16; 2 Thess 1:8; 1 Pet 4:17).

Obedience to the gospel of Christ requires that we:

**Hear God's Word** (with a humble heart and open mind)

*"Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock. If he does them not, he is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand, and it fell (Mt 7:24-27). "Faith comes by hearing...the word of God "* (Rom 10:17).

**Believe in God, His Word and His Son**

*"If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (Jn 8:24). "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"* (Heb 11:6).

**Repent of our Sins** (Turn from sin to righteousness)

*"These times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men...to repent"* (Acts 17:30). *"Peter said...Repent and be baptized..."*(Acts 2:38).

**Confess Christ (before Men)** *"Whoever confesses me before men, him I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven"* (Mt 10:32). *"And Philip said, if you believe with all your heart, you may (be baptized). I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God "* (Acts 8:36,37).

**Be Baptized (into Christ)** *And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...those who received (believed) his word were baptized..."* (Acts 2:38-41). *"And Jesus said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved..."* (Mk 16:15,16). For more on baptism see PART II.

## **After Baptism Into Christ You Are A Christian**

After one is baptized into Christ's death we then live by the grace of God through righteousness. We are dead to sin. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; (Rom 6:5). For he that is dead is freed (justified) from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him.

Likewise, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you. Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness (Rom 6:7-18)..

*"To be carnally minded is death (separated from God) but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom 8:6). "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness... ; against such there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal 5:22-24).*

The spiritual Christian is one who has been truly converted to Christ, whose life is yielded to God (*our aim*) and whose will is in subjection to God's will. Our desire is to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit in our heart and life. *Our goal is to grow up in Christ.*

There are many things that describe a spiritually minded Christian. Jesus said that we must become like children in humility (Mt 18:3,4). God, who cannot tolerate arrogance, also wanted His people Israel to walk humbly with their God. *"He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8).*

Fornication, adultery and homosexuality are grievous sins in God's eyes. (Gen 1:29; Ex 20:14; Lev 20:10-13; Mt 5:27-29; 1 Cor 6:9-10). Only the foolish get caught up in this. Christians must also avoid illegal drugs, foul language, immodest dress, and all immoral conduct.

**A Christian's Spiritual Warfare.** Along with initial confidence and enthusiasm, however, we can expect a warfare to begin within because Satan will be after us even more than before. *"All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"* (2 Tim 3:12). Every Christian faces spiritual battles, but God is now on our side. Sin is ever present, but so is grace. The new must be separated from the old. The world, the flesh and the devil are set to defeat us. God's armor is our prime protection. (Eph 6: 10-18).

## After We Have Salvation, What Then?

When we were born as a baby in the flesh we began to learn about physical things. We learned to crawl, to walk, to talk, and mature into adulthood. Finally we get old and die physically.

When we are born again of the Spirit, we are a *babe in Christ* and must start through a growing process in the Spirit, as we did in the flesh. The difference is that we should grow up, but never grow old in the Spirit. There isn't a place to stop growing so long as our mind can learn and comprehend. Christians are to grow in God-likeness, walk in the Spirit, and bear fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, etc. (Gal 5:16, 22-25).

As a new Christian, the Bible is our best source for in-depth, never-ending spiritual knowledge and growth. We should read *and study it regularly*.

## Once We Have Salvation, Can We Lose It?

Many of us take God's warnings too lightly. While a few verses, taken alone, may seem to imply that our salvation, once secured by Christ's sacrifice and God's grace, becomes a permanent commitment and obligation on God's part, the vast majority do not. So far as God is concerned, a forgiven sinner is a Christian and has *possession of eternal security*. However, man's God-given freedom of choice can destroy that security. When we are born again, salvation becomes a present and conditional possession that can be forfeited. (Heb 6:4-8, Heb 10:26-31). (Please review Mt 7:13-28, narrow gate, few find it, etc.).

Even though God is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet 3:9), if a Christian chooses a sinful path and refuses to confess and repent of his sin, he will face eternal death (separation from God), (Acts 17:30). If our name can be blotted out of the Book of Life (Rev 3:5); if we can be severed from Christ and fall from grace (Gal 5:4), surely we can lose or forfeit our salvation.

A few more Bible "ifs" : If we endure, we will reign with him. (2 Tim 2:12); If we hold fast a confidence in Christ firm to the end, we are Christ's. (Heb 3:6,14); If we don't continue in his goodness we will be cut off. (Rom 11:22). Once in Christ we, as a branch in Christ, can be taken out of Christ. (Jn 15:1-8).

In the parable of the prodigal son, had the son not repented and returned to his father, he would have been cut off and lost forever. (Luke 15:11-24).

Some of many verses that indicate a child of God can be lost: Mt 7:13-28, Mt 25:31-46, Rom 8:12-13, 1 Cor 10:6-12, 15:1-2, Col 1:21-23, 1 Tim 5:8, Heb 6:4-8, 10:26-31, Jas 5:19-20, 2 Pet 2:20-21, Rev 3:5-15, Rev 22:18.

The apostle Paul did not consider his own salvation as irrevocable, but felt compelled to continue a dedicated effort to life's end. *"I buffet my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified."* (1 Cor 9:27.). *After finishing the race Paul felt safe.* (2 Tim 4:6-8).

Speaking to Christians Paul said: ***"Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God"*** (1 Cor 6:9-10, NAS, RSV).

## The Christian Human Family

**God's Human Family.** As a Christian we also become subject to the teachings of the Bible regarding our family. The importance of the relationship to our family members is second only to our relationship with God. Solomon once said: *"unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain"* (Ps 127:1).

**In the beginning God** made a helpmate for the man. *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh"* (Gen 2:24).

**To the wives Paul says:** *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be subject to their own husbands in everything"* (Eph 5:22-24).

**To the husbands Paul says:** *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself ... let everyone of you so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband"* (Eph 5:25-33).

**To the children Paul says:** *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the training...of the Lord"* (Eph 6:1-4).

**God must be first.** The Bible tells us to put God first. He will not accept second place in our lives. He first gave us earth life, He sustains us and, at a very great price, redeemed us from sin and gave us a hope of eternal life. We belong to Him (1 Cor 6:19,20). God wants us to take pleasure in Him. *"Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and He will act"* (Ps 37:4,5). (see Lk 10:27)

We can find strength, comfort and advice from other Christians as we attend church worship and teaching services, and be involved. We are to become a fruit-bearing branch in Christ *the Vine*. Christ tells us *"seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these (carnal) things shall be added to you"* (Mt 6:33).

Paul gives a great discourse on the true focus of the Christian life: *"...you were buried with him in baptism..."* (Col 2:12). *"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth"* (Col 3:1,2)." (please continue with Col 3:3-17).

## PART II

# The Gospel Of Jesus Christ *and* Baptism

### Scriptural Water Baptism

Please review page 5 as you begin Part II

The term **Baptism** is defined and described on pages 18 and 21. Water baptism is widely misunderstood and misapplied in the religions of today. Our sins are forgiven by the shed blood of Christ, but who came up with the idea of water baptism? What is its purpose and design? When did it begin to be practiced. When is one a candidate for baptism? What is its importance to our salvation?

Scriptural water baptism is an ordinance of God. It is not a man-made ordinance of a denomination. In baptism, a repentant believer makes *symbolic* contact with the cleansing blood of Christ, he dies with Christ, his sins are forgiven and God saves him by His grace. He rises from baptism as a forgiven child of God, a part of Christ's body, the church. (Scripture references are given on pages ahead).

Jesus used symbolism on occasions. When he initiated the Lord's Supper, he told his disciples that the unleavened bread represented his broken body; and the fruit of the vine (grape juice or wine) represented his blood, shed for our sins. He told his disciples to remember him by eating the bread and drinking the fruit of the vine in this way. Acts 20:7 implies that they did this each Lord's Day.

### Some Of The Things Covered In Part II

God's plan of salvation. When and how water baptism began? Was the thief on the cross saved without baptism? Is baptism a work? Can one be saved by faith alone? Every recorded Christian conversion was accompanied by water baptism. (see pages 19 and 20) Was John's baptism (of *repentance for the remission of sins*) "*from heaven or from men?*" (Mk 1:4; 12:30).

## **The Meaning And Importance Of Baptism**

When repentant believers are baptized they are immersed in water, which symbolizes Christ's own death, burial and resurrection. They are baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of sins. They die to sin, they are saved by God's grace, they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and are spiritually born anew! Rom 6:3,4; Gal 3:27; Jesus answered, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (Jn 3:3-5).*

**Question: If you, as a repentant believer, have been baptized, was it a baptism by immersion, into Christ, for the forgiveness of sins? Most would have to say no.**

Water baptism is a very meaningful event in the plan of God when he sees a believer become ONE with his Son, as he or she is baptized into Jesus, into his body (the church) and, by God's saving grace, become a child of God.

If we feel that dipping into water seems too insignificant to be important to God, hear him as He says: *"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."* (Isa 55:8-9).

God's Word reveals that baptism, by immersion, for the forgiveness of sins, is an ordinance of God (Mk 1:1-5), an ordinance of Christ (Mk 16:16) and an ordinance of the Holy Spirit through the apostles (beginning with Acts 2:38), in obeying the gospel of Christ.

Christian baptism unites the sinner to Christ just as the marriage ring ceremony, a modern day custom, unites the woman to her husband. The words "I now pronounce you husband and wife" are not said until after the ring ceremony. God's Word does not place us in or into Christ before our baptism.

## Is Water Baptism Essential To Our Salvation?

- ¥ Catholics teach that a child is saved by baptism. Faith can come later.
- ¥ Denominations teach that we are saved by faith. Baptism can come later.
- ¥ Jesus and the apostles taught that we are saved by our faith and God's grace when we are baptized into Christ. (Gal 3:23-27; Eph 2:8; Rom 6:3-8; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38)

### Jesus and the apostles agree on baptism

In baptism our sins are forgiven and, by God's grace we become His child.

¥ **Ananias said to Paul:** *"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."* (Acts 22:16).

¥ **Paul said:** *"for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, **through faith**. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."* (Gal 3:26,27).

¥ **Peter said:** *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit..."* (Acts 2:38).

¥ **Jesus said...** *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved;..."* (Mk 16:15, 16 ; Mt 28:19).

**The design and purpose of baptism.** The death, burial and resurrection of Christ is the most remarkable and important event in world history. Water baptism symbolizes our own death, burial and resurrection, and unites, or puts the believer into Christ (see Rom 6:3-8 below). In Christ, our sins are forgiven, we are saved by God's grace, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and become a born-again child of God. A Christian. We do not earn anything.

**Baptism is not about water regeneration or cleansing our body; it is about the cleansing of our soul.** If we just confess Jesus and ask him into our heart and then follow up with baptism at a later date, as some do, the conversion and the baptism are not scripturally valid. We should consider being re-baptized into Christ, by faith (Gal 3:26,27), for the forgiveness of our sins. This is Christian baptism as set forth in the Bible. Thus we become a child of God and begin life anew.

Jesus revealed to a Jewish ruler named Nicodemus that *"except a man be born again, of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."* (Jn 3:3-5). The "water" refers to water baptism (not birth water). The Spirit refers to the spiritual rebirth that occurs as one begins his new life as a Christian. (Acts 2:38)

How and when do we die and become one with Christ? Paul tells us in Rom 6:3-8. ***"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin..."***

## **Baptism Is From God, We Believe It Is Essential!**

*The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men? (Mk 11:30)*

Because the Bible is a progressive revelation, God's plan of salvation in the NT is only understood completely when it is seen as being built upon the foundation of the events, characters, laws, sacrificial system, prophecies, covenants and promises of the OT. In this manner all of OT history was a training period to prepare the world for the arrival of Jesus Christ and God's plan of redemption.

*"The Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in...Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:22-27).*

For his own reason, God chose water baptism, an essential step of faith, as the way into Christ through the gospel.

## **When And How Water Baptism Began?**

**It began with God!**

¥ **Noah and his family** were saved by the very water that separated and destroyed the ungodly people of the *old world*. Peter calls this a type of baptism which now separates and saves us from the bondage of our sinful past (see 1 Pet 3:20-21).

¥ **The Israelites** were set free and saved from their bondage to the Egyptians as they were "baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor 10:1-4). As God caused the Red Sea to rise up and form a wall of water, they walked through on dry ground. Then the water fell back, drowning the pursuing Egyptians. Saved (physically) by this symbol of water baptism the Israelites began the journey through the Sinai-wilderness to their promised land Canaan (Ex 14:12-30). This is a type of our "baptism into Christ", which separates us from our past sins and its bondage. Now in Christ we receive the forgiveness of our sins by God's saving grace, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are set free from the bondage of sin and so begin our journey, through this *world-wilderness*, to our promised land, heaven.

¥ **Naaman was healed** from his bondage of leprosy after dipping in Jordan seven times, (a type of baptism) as Elisha, (the man of God) commanded. He obeyed and his leprosy vanished. (2 Kings 5:1-14).

## **God's Salvation Plan Was In Place When The World Began (Eph 1:4)**

The gospel, *the good news* regarding God's plan of redemption of man through His Son was a mystery, hidden from the foundation of the world. Beginning with the resurrection of Christ, water baptism became a work of faith, a part of obeying the gospel, to put us into Christ (Gal 3:26-27).

"Gospel" means *good news*. The heart of the gospel is that the Son of God has died and risen again for man's justification. ... "*it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith...*" (Rom 1:16; Gal 3:23-27). The gospel was even preached, in anticipation, to Abraham (Gal 3:8,9).

*"If it (judgement) begins with (Christians) first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?" (1 Pet 4:17)..* Our baptism into Christ must take place during our conversion—not days or weeks later, and not for a different reason than forgiveness of sins. In baptism our old man symbolically dies with Christ. Baptism is an ordinance of God, not an ordinance of some church.

### **A Summary of God's Plan of Salvation**

**As a repentant, Christ-confessing believer, we put on Christ by faith, when we are baptized into him (Gal 3:24-27). Just passive belief (even Satan believed), or asking Jesus to come into our heart *alone* is not Bible doctrine. In baptism, the old man of sin symbolically dies and is buried with Christ. Now in Christ, God forgives our sins and saves us by his grace, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are born-again of water and the Spirit, our names are added to the Lamb's book of life and the new man in Christ is raised (from baptism) to walk in newness of life. (John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3-8; Eph 2:8; Rev 21:27). By believing in God and obeying His word in repentance, confession and baptism into Christ, we become a babe in Christ, a child of God. Salvation is a free gift of God's grace. No works of merit are involved, only our submission to God's will by humbly obeying all that He told us to do.**

Examination of the New Testament Conversions on pages 19 and 20 should remove all doubt about God's position concerning the necessity of baptism to make one a child of God.

## Can One Be Saved By Faith Alone?

Various verses in the Bible, mostly found in the gospel of John, may seem to indicate that having a simple passive faith or belief in God and Jesus, and just asking Jesus to come into our heart as our Savior is all that is required to be saved. John 3:15,16, Jn 5:24, Rom 10: 9, 10 and 13 are such verses. Note that these *faith-only* type verses do not mention the need for repentance, confessing Christ before men or baptism as necessary to our forgiveness, yet they are. These verses must be considered as general, comprehensive, *umbrella-like* verses that must include all that God requires. *Example: obedience (Heb 5:9), bearing fruit, (Jn 15:2), repentance (Acts 17:30), confessing Christ before men (Mt 10:32), being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of sins, etc.*

**As a young boy I had diphtheria**, a fatal disease if untreated. My parents took me to a physician in whom they *believed*. He wrote out a prescription which I took and was made well. Had we not *obeyed* the physician I would not have lived. Jesus is *the great physician*. If we believe in him enough to obey him, we will be healed, we will be forgiven, and have eternal salvation. (Heb 5:9).

## Is Baptism A Work?

***"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*** (Eph 2:8,9). Baptism is an obedient response to a command of God (Mk 1:1-5), of Christ (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16), and of the apostles, beginning with Acts 2:38. Some of the Jews were boasting about their circumcision, their sacrifices, etc. (all works of the law). We have nothing to boast about in baptism. James 2:20-26 states that faith without works is dead, being alone. Eph 2:9 is speaking about works of the law, or works of merit, not righteous works of obedience. We are saved by the atonement in Christ's blood.

If my Earthly father put a million dollar deposit in the bank for me and said son, all you must do to get the money is simply go to the bank, write a check for \$1,000,000,000.00 and the money is yours. Would you think of that as a work? No! Would you boast? No.

## The Gospel of Christ Must Be Obeyed

God's word says that those who do not obey the gospel of Jesus (which includes baptism. See page 5) will *"suffer the punishment of eternal destruction"* (2 Thess 1:8,9). When we become a Christian, it also costs us our old life in the flesh in that we are no longer our own, *"...you were bought with a price..."* (1 Cor 6:19, 20).

## **John's Mission And Jesus' Ministry Begins**

God inspired Isaiah some 700 years before the births of John the Baptist and Jesus, to write the following message:

***"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, Behold, I (God) send my messenger (John the Baptist) before thy (Christ's) face, who shall prepare thy way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea,...all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins."* (Mark 1:1-5).**

Mark 1:1-5 was an inspired message to us from God. John's baptism, ordained by God, laid the foundation, cleared the way for the good news (the gospel) that the Messiah, the Savior was here. John's baptism was coupled with repentance and was "...for the forgiveness of sins" (Mk 1:4).

Jesus had no sins of his own, yet before starting his three year ministry he chose to be baptized by John. He said that he wanted to be baptized "*to fulfill all righteousness.*" ( Mt 3:13-15). As he arose from the water, the Spirit of God came down to him in the form of a dove and a voice came from heaven saying, "*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*" Baptism must have been considered very important for God and His Son to do this. It seems that Jesus wanted to set an example for others before starting His ministry by doing everything He commands of us. After being baptized by John (and praised by God when He did so), then tempted by the devil, Jesus began his three year ministry.

***"Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand; (his crucifixion) repent, and believe in the gospel."* (Mk 1:14,15).**

*"Jesus and his disciples went into the land of Judea; there he remained with them and baptized. John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; (baptism requires emersion) and people came and were baptized. (John 3:22,23).*

During his ministry, Christ taught the Jewish people about the ways and truths of God and His kingdom. He healed their sicknesses and infirmities, raising some from death, and, along with John the Baptist, and his own disciples, baptized the people for the "*forgiveness of their sins.*" Remarkably, Jesus' disciples baptized a greater number of sinners than John and his disciples (Jn 4:1).

## **Jesus' Ministry Ends**

Both Jesus and John The Baptist lived and died under the Old Covenant period. The baptisms by them (under the Old Covenant) carried no promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had told his disciples that when he departed he would send the Holy Spirit to be with them, to comfort and guide them into all truth. (See John 16:13, etc.) Their sins, committed under the Old Covenant, and all sins, going back to Adam, remained unforgiven until the sacrifice of Christ, at which time all sins became forgivable for those who had qualified themselves by believing and obeying God (Heb 10:3,4).

**Christ's three year earthly ministry** occurred during the end of the Old Covenant period, and provided a transition between the Old and the New Covenants. When Christ died, the Law of Moses ended and was "*nailed to his cross.*" The New Covenant (*The Dispensation of Grace*) began with his resurrection. (Col 2:14; Heb 9:14).

Except for his death on the cross, Jesus' earthly mission was finished. The Jewish priesthood hierarchy had come to hate him because of his popularity with the people and they decided that he must die.

## **The Lord's Supper**

Jesus called his disciples together for a last gathering and shared with them what is commonly called the Lord's Supper. Together they ate of the unleavened bread and drank of the fruit of the vine. These, in a symbolic way, would represent Christ's broken body and his shed blood as he was crucified the very next day between two criminals, one of whom is referred to as *the thief on the cross*.

It is difficult to know who suffered the greatest in this sacrifice; the Father or the Son? But this sacrifice was necessary in God's mind for Him to *justify* the forgiveness of all sin for those who would believe, trust and obey Him. Jesus ordained the Lord's Supper as a memorial to himself, to *remember him until his return*, by those who would choose to be his disciples. There is scriptural and historical evidence that the first century Christians worshipped God and observed the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day (Acts 20:7).

## **The Thief On The Cross Saved Without Baptism?**

This man could have been baptized by either John the Baptist or Christ's own disciples (Jn 4:1), but it really doesn't matter. The thief died with Christ that day, during the Old Covenant period. Jesus said "*today you will be with me in Paradise.*" Christian baptism requirement began after Christ's resurrection, the beginning of the New Covenant. While on earth Christ had the power to forgive and save sinners, and even raise the dead, without baptism (Jn 11:44).

## The New Covenant

The New Covenant began with the resurrection of Jesus from the grave, and provided for the most important relationship changing event since creation. All men now could be forgiven, become one with Jesus, and be heaven bound. Fifty days later on the Day of Pentecost, three thousand were saved and became the beginning of Christ's church, His kingdom on earth.

After his resurrection, Jesus first ascended to his Father in heaven the morning of his resurrection. He returned to his disciples that evening. One might imagine the rejoicing that took place between God the Father and His Son. Jesus' resurrection from the dead had defeated Satan, abolished death and redeemed mankind, for those who would believe, trust and obey him. He then spent forty days with his disciples; teaching and reassuring them about the kingdom of God and other things.

He also told them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father "*... until you are clothed with power from on high*" (*Lk 24:49*). As promised earlier, they were about to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. "*For John baptized with water but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit*" (*Acts 1:5; Mk 1:8*). This Holy Spirit baptism is described in Acts 2:1-13, for the Jews, in Acts 10: 44-48 and Acts 11:15,16 for the Gentiles. (Also see page 21 of the booklet).

**The last words that Jesus spoke** before ascending into heaven were very important. He charged his disciples with what is called The Great Commission: "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned*" (*Mk 16:15,16*). "*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.*" (*Mt 28:18-20*).

Jesus, here ordains water baptism as a part of obeying the gospel under the New Covenant, as God had done in Mark 1:1-5, near the end of the Old Covenant. Under Abraham every male Israelite was required to be circumcised in the flesh as a "seal" of the covenant between God and His People. Any male that refused circumcision was to be cut off from His People (*Gen 17:10-14*). Under the New Covenant Christians are "*circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism...*" (*Col. 2:11-15 and Rom 6:4*). Water baptism may be considered a *seal* between Christians and God as circumcision was a *seal* between Israel and God.

## **WHY SCRIPTURAL WATER BAPTISM SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL TO OUR SALVATION!**

**Scriptural Water Baptism Described:** A submersion in water by a repentant believer who believes in and accepts Jesus Christ as his or her Savior. The blood sacrifice of Jesus on the cross of Calvery payed the price of all sin, as was required to satisfy the justice of God.

1. *This* baptism puts the person in or into Christ, makes him or her one with Christ. (Rom 6: 3,4; Gal 3:27).
2. *This* baptism is for the forgiveness of sins. (Acts 2:38). Jesus had no sins but insisted on being baptized, "*To fulfill all righteousness*" (Mt 3:13-15). After his baptism he received the Holy Spirit from God, as we do after our baptism. (Acts 2:38).
3. In *this* baptism one figuratively dies with Christ. When and how else does one die with Christ? (Rom 6:3-8).
4. In *this* baptism we put on Christ when we are baptized into Him, by faith. (Gal 3:26,27).
5. The Phillipian jailor and his household were saved after believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. When we read on down to verse 34 we learn that "believing" included *this* baptism. (Acts 16:30-34).
6. The apostle Paul was told to rise and be baptized and "wash away" his sins. (Acts 22:16).

Water baptism *through John The Baptist*, for the forgiveness of sins, was this from heaven? (Mk 11:30). It was from God (MK 1:1-5).

If we love God and respect His Word why should we not be baptized His way? A repentant believer who confesses Christ before men is ready for scriptural baptism. In this baptism he or she  $\forall$  *dies* with Christ,  $\forall$  is baptized *in or into* Christ,  $\forall$  (his or her) sins make *contact* with Christ's shed blood and all past and present sins are forgiven  $\forall$  becomes *one* with Christ  $\forall$  receive the gift of the Holy Spirit  $\forall$  is raised from the water grave of baptism and is ready to walk in newness of life, with Christ. Question: How, when and where can one satisfy all these conditions other than through water baptism? (Acts 2:38; Mk 1:1-5; Rom 6:3-8; Gal 3:24-27).

**The next two pages** will focus on the **examples** of the eight conversions and baptisms recorded in the New Testament.

It is noteworthy that the one common step recorded in every conversion is water baptism, which always occurred at the time of conversion, not later.

## Recorded Christian Conversions

Eight specific Christian conversions are recorded in the New Testament and are listed below in their scriptural sequence. The first occurred on the day of Pentecost and included the Jews only. The first Gentiles were saved about eight years later in Acts chapter 10.

**Note: Every recorded conversion included immediate water baptism.**

**1. On The Day Of Pentecost** (Acts 2:36-38,41) *"and Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit....So those who received his word were baptized; and there were added (to the church) that day about three thousand souls."* (See "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" on page 21).

**2. Simon And Others** (Acts 8:12,13) *"But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done."*

**3. Ethiopian Eunuch** (Acts 8:35-39) *"Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. And as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, see, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized? And Philip said, if you believe with all your heart, you may. And he answered and said, ÓI believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.." (Note Philip's confession before baptism and his rejoicing after baptism. Note also that baptism must have been included when Phillip *preached Jesus to him*).*

**4. Paul** (Acts 9:17,18) Ananias speaking to Paul) *"Brother Saul, (Saul's name was changed to Paul in Acts 13:9) the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized."*

**Note:** Acts 22:16, Paul re-tells his conversion experience to the Jerusalem mob. *"And now (Ananias speaking to Paul) why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."*

**5. Cornelius & His Household.** (Acts 10:45-48) *"And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. v46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, v47 Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? v48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." **Note:** Cornelius & his group were the first recorded Gentile Christians.*

**6. Lydia & Family.** (Acts 16:14,15) *"The Lord opened her (Lydia's) heart to heed the things spoken by Paul and when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay. So she persuaded us."*

## Recorded Christian Conversions *Cont'd*

**7. Philippian Jailer.** (Acts 16:30-34) *"And he (the jailer) brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? v31 so they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household. v32 Then they spoke the word of the lord to him and to all who were in his house. v33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. v34 Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household."*

"believe" in verse 31 & 34 includes baptism; as shown in verses 32 & 33.

**8. Crispus And The Corinthians.** (Acts 18:8) *"Then Crispus...believed on the Lord with all his household. And many...hearing, believed and were baptized"*

## Important Water Baptism Verses

¥ God ordained baptism through John the Baptist. (to forgive sins). ---- Mk 1:1-5  
 ¥ Christ, (had no sins) was baptized "to fulfil all righteousness." ----- Mt 3:13-17  
 ¥ Both Jesus' and John's disciples baptized for the forgiveness of sins. ---- Jn 4:1  
 ¥ "(Jesus) remained with them, as his disciples baptized. John was also baptizing at Aenon..., because there was much water there." ----- Jn 3:22,23  
 ¥ "*The Great Commission.*" Believe the gospel and be baptized to be saved. Note:  
 God had ordained baptism in - Mk 1:1-5, now Jesus does so in -- Mk 16:15,16  
 ¥ The first "Christian baptism." Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 3000 souls were saved ----- Acts 2:38  
 ¥ Baptized into Christ, we put on Christ: are justified by faith ----- Gal 3:24-27  
 ¥ Baptism "now saves you" like Noah and his family. ----- 1 Pet 3:20,21  
 ¥ Baptism is commanded by the apostles. ----- Rom 6:3,4; Acts 2:38; 10:48  
 ¥ Baptism can "wash away sins." It did so for Paul. ----- Acts 22:16  
 ¥ Baptized into Christ, our sins are forgiven. --- Rom 6:3-8; Gal 3:27; 1 Cor 12:13  
 ¥ Baptism is symbolic of our death, burial & resurrection with Christ. Christians are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands. -Rom 6:4; Col 2:12  
 ¥ There is now only one baptism (Eph 4:5). ----- It began with Acts 2:38  
 ¥ In baptism we are born again of water and the Spirit. ----- Jn 3:3-5 ¥ Baptism is a washing of regeneration to Christians. ----- Tit 3:4-7, Eph 5:26

## The Bottom Line

The ordinance of water baptism is an essential part of God's salvation plan as has been pointed out in this booklet chapter II. But the bottom line of what is even more essential follows:

*"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be found; Dressed in His righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before the throne. On Christ, the Solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand, All other ground is sinking sand."*

## Baptism Terms Defined

### Baptism

**Baptize** is an anglicized Greek word. It was not translated by Bible scholars but merely transliterated, that is, changed in form for English usage. The original Greek word is *baptizo*, which literally means to immerse, dip or plunge.

Baptism cleanses and separates the sinner from his sin. God applied a form of water baptism with the flood to separate and save Noah and his family from the old sinful world. (see 1 Pet 3:20,21). The mission of John the Baptist was to go ahead of Jesus, and preach a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

When repentant believers are baptized they are immersed in water, which symbolizes a likeness of Christ's own death, burial and resurrection. They are baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of sins. They die to sin. (See Rom 6:3-8).

### The One Baptism of Ephesians 4

*(Eph 4:5) "There is one body and one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all".*

At the time that Christian baptism was first commanded by Peter in Acts 2:38, the baptizing mission of John the Baptist had been fulfilled.

This leaves only one baptism (Christian baptism), which began in Acts Chapter 2, ten days after Christ's ascension into heaven, and continued throughout the first century of the church, and is still a requirement today for those who obey God's gospel plan of salvation.

### The Baptism of the Holy Spirit And The gift of the Holy Spirit

*"For John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 1:5, also see Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16). Holy Spirit baptism was a miraculous manifestation from God that occurred on only two occasions according to scriptural record. (1) On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21) as the apostles were given the miraculous ability to speak in other languages to the gathering of Jews (in fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, Act's 2:28-32). (2) A similar outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles occurred eight years later (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15,16). These displays of the Holy Spirit confirmed God's acceptance of both Jews and Gentiles as a single body of Christians.

Christians today receive a special, but non-miraculous **gift of the Holy Spirit** who comes to reside within us when we are baptized. We are born of water and the Spirit. (Acts 2:38, Jn 3:5 and 1 Cor 6:19). The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance until the day of our redemption (Eph 1:13,14).

### Sprinkling, Pouring & Infant Baptism

These were alterations from the original mode of Christian baptism and were started by men long after the first century. They have no scriptural basis. Christian baptism involves the *immersion* of a repentant believer, which is symbolic of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

Infant baptism is founded upon an erroneous doctrine that infants inherit the sin of Adam. They are not sinners nor can they believe or repent as is required of candidates for baptism. (See Mt 18:3; 19:14; Mk 10:15; Lk 18:17; 1 Pet 2:2). They have no need of baptism before they are accountable for sins.

## **Christ's Church (of the New Testament)**

**Jesus said, "I will build My Church" (Mt 16:18)**

Christ's church was born on the day of Pentecost, as described in the second chapter of Acts. The church is a body of called-out believers and was referred to in the New Testament by various titles: each expressing a relationship to the Father or the Son: The *church of the first born, church of God, body of Christ, the church or churches of Christ, etc.* Christ identified his church as being made up of those who would embrace Peter's confession, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (Mt 16:16-18). Christ is the head of the body, the church, also referred to as the bride of Christ (Eph 1:22,23).

The body of Christ, soon after the first century, faced increasing religious persecution. Departures from the true faith became widespread; the Roman Catholic Church with its multitude of religious heresies came into being. Beginning with Martin Luther, the Protestant Reformation began. "Denominational churches" sprang up, yet these denominations still did not conform to the practices of the church established by the apostles.

In about 1803, the son of a Presbyterian clergyman by the name of Alexander Campbell, along with others, opposed the idea of denominationalism and appealed for what is now referred to as the Restoration. Their goal was to restore the church of the first century, using as seed, the Word of God, as originally penned by Christ's inspired apostles. This should be the basis for all religious matters pertaining to the church, its name, its organization, its doctrine, its worship, etc. They said, "Let us go back to the Bible, to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." This was an attempt to do all things by faith, based on a "thus says the Lord," which was, and still is, the only real solution to the problem of division in the religious world.

True churches of Christ regard Jesus Christ as the founder, the head, and Savior of the church. They contend that the Word of God is the seed of His kingdom. When it is faithfully preached, obeyed, and practiced, without addition or subtraction, it will produce true Christians. Christians consider the entire Bible to be the inspired word of God, but recognize that the Old Testament (binding upon ancient Jewry) was superseded by the New Testament (binding upon Christians) at Christ's death on the cross.

**Organization.** In the New Testament, local churches were independent of one another, and were led by two or more scripturally qualified elders, sometimes referred to as bishops, or presbyters, who were assisted by scripturally qualified deacons. There were also teachers and preachers, and there were evangelists that established new churches in other localities. Occasionally evangelists spent an extended period of time with a local church.

**Assemblies And Worship.** New Testament public assemblies for worship took place on each Lord's Day (Sunday) and consisted of:

(1) singing (a-cappella), (2) prayer, (3) the Lord's

Supper, (4) teaching or preaching, and (5) giving of their means. Churches of Christ today follow this same simple pattern of worship. NOTE: There are about 5 verses in the New Testament which refer to music in the church. All speak of vocal music only: 1 Cor 14:15; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16; James 5:13 and Rom 15:9. Instrumental music is entertaining but cannot be used (by faith) in our public worship to God.

## Seeking The Lost

There is nothing of greater value in this world and more precious to God than a human soul. Yet, many do not take the steps needed to seek heaven as their eternal home. The soul that gains God's saving grace shall live, and be *Heaven Bound*.

How pleased God would be and how blessed we would be, now and in eternity, if we as Christians commit ourselves to become fishers of men, to seek out and save one lost person (or more) each year. They would be so grateful to you in eternity.

It takes a new fisherman time and trials to become a successful fisherman. He must learn where fish are, what bait to use and many other things. A committed fisherman learns by experience to catch fish and it is not labor to him because he has a desire and a love for what he is doing. It takes similar things to become fishers of men.

## God Reaches the Lost Through You And Me

Before we knew about God and his desire for us to become his adopted children we only had hopes for the best in this life. Through others, we learned of God's love and his plan and offer for us to become his children so as to inherit eternal life. Do we grasp and appreciate what this means?

In this present world, God has limited himself to reaching the lost with his message of salvation through his word and through you and me. Do we really love our fellowman so as to use some of our time and efforts to lead them to eternal life through Jesus Christ.?

Love finds a way.

## God Can Be Found By Those Who Seek Him

**"Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him come to the LORD, that He may have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isa 55:6-7.**

## What God Has Prepared For His Own

**"As it is written, eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love him." 1 Cor 2:9.**

## What A Day That Will Be

A song about heaven by Jim Hall

**There is coming a day when no heart aches shall come,  
No more clouds in the sky, no more tears to dim the eye;  
All is peace for ever more on that happy golden shore,  
What a day, glorious day that will be.**

**There'll be no sorrow there, no more burdens to bear,  
No more sickness, no pain, no more parting over there;  
And forever I will be with the One who died for me,  
What a day, glorious day that will be.**

**What a day that will be when my Jesus I shall see,  
And I look upon His face, the One who saved me  
by His grace; When He takes me by the hand,  
and leads me through the Promised Land,  
What a day, glorious day that will be.**

If you have any questions concerning the booklet message,  
or feel that you desire help, please call or write me.

LeeRoy Golden  
2625 5th Way NW  
Center Point, AL 35215  
205-853-3819

The greatest goal in this life should be that we gain a realistic hope of eternal life, and never give up pursuing that goal, **nothing is more important!**

## ***Salvation!* Don't leave here without it!**

**HEAVEN BOUND** deals with a subject that is the most important to mankind, that of inheriting everlasting life. The booklet endeavors to express in a condensed and organized form what the Bible teaches about having a sure hope of making heaven our eternal home, by becoming a Christian and living as a Christian.

**PART I** Deals primarily with Salvation, by our faith and God's grace, in accepting and obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**PART II** Deals primarily with the part that water baptism plays in obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ, as ordained by God and by Jesus, and as practiced by the apostles.

Since the Bible is our *road-map* from earth to heaven, a special effort has been made to be conservative and *Bible-sure*, to simply present what Christ's apostles, led by the Holy Spirit, taught, wrote and practiced in the first century church concerning matters of our salvation. Using Bible verses, comments and examples, this booklet spells out the way *into Christ* and God's saving grace.

If you are a professing Christian with different views than those expressed, please, at least give consideration to the points that are made in light of the scripture presented. It is not the purpose or intent of this booklet to judge you or your salvation. Only God and His word can do that.

**The Marriage Supper of the lamb** (Rev 19:9) may be the very first event that Christians will experience when eternity has begun, or is beginning. What a glorious and joyful event that should be. The bride of Christ (His church) will be there. He may even serve us the meal, just as He washed His disciples feet. I want to be there, don't you.

We had nothing to do with our being born into this world, but we have everything to do with our being a part of the next world. God has given us an opportunity to believe in, and obey his plan of salvation.

This little booklet is the product of many years of prayer and serious Bible study. May you read it with an open mind and a teachable heart. And may God bless you in your journey to becoming Heaven Bound.