

GOD'S AMAZING PLAN FOR MAN'S SALVATION

1. GOD'S CREATION.

God created the heaven the earth the seas and everything that moves therein. (Acts 17:24) God's highest creation is man. Man is created in the image of God. (Genesis 1:26) Since God is a spirit (John 4:24) man is a spirit being confined to a fleshly body. This makes man God's highest creation, no other living being has a spirit like man. He has the power of thought, logic and choice. The body wants to satisfy the carnal desired of the flesh, whereas the spirit hungers and desired to be in fellowship with the Creator. (Romans. 7:14; 1 Corinthians. 9:27)

2. GOD IS HOLY.

God is different to man. He cannot be tempted and He cannot sin. God expects man not to sin. God created us because He wants to have fellowship with us. He had a Son who loved Him and He wants many sons and daughters to love Him. Sin is man's number one problem. Sin is transgression of God's law. (1 John 3:4) However God expects man to be holy like God is holy. (Leviticus 20:25)

3. SIN SEPARATES US FROM GOD.

The penalty for sin is death. (Romans 6:23) Death is a separation. Physical death is a separation of the spirit from the body. (James. 2:26) Spiritual death is the spirit's separation from God. (Isaiah 59:1-2)

4. GOD'S JUSTICE DEMANDS DEATH (BLOOD)

The Bible tells us that all have sinned, (Romans 3:23) therefore all are in need of a Savior. Since the penalty of sin is death, all must die. God allowed man to offer animal sacrifices to atone for his sin. The sacrifice was killed by the sinner to help him understand the seriousness of sin. The blood was offered up by the sinner to atone for his sin. (Leviticus 17:11) The innocent was offered to God by the guilty. *"Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins."* (Hebrews 9:22)

5. GOD'S LOVE FOR MAN PROVIDES MERCY.

God hates sin but He loves the sinner. Since God desires fellowship with sinful man He has to justify man's acceptability to Him. Justification is the legal process of acquitting man from sin. It makes unrighteous man righteous, not based upon what man has done but based upon what God has done. Mercy is God not handing down justice. A just God must carry out the punishment. Man does not deserve a substitute to die in his stead but God's mercy has made it possible.

6. THERE IS ONLY ONE GOSPEL.

There is only one God and there is only one Lord. (Eph. 4:4-6) It does not seem logical that God would have many churches, or that Christ would die for many churches all with many different faiths and gospels. In the first century there was only one church. All of the apostles and disciples were members of that one church which Christ died for and established. This one church was the only

church until 605 AD when the Roman Catholic church was established, and Pope Boniface III was the first official pope. This church differed from Christ's church in doctrine, practice and government. From 605 to 1054, there were only two churches, the church which Christ died for and built, (Matthew. 16:16) and the Roman Catholic church. In 1054 AD there was a breakaway from the Roman Catholic church and the Greek Orthodox church was established. There were only three churches from 1054 to 1530 AD, when the reformation period began, and many broke away from the Roman Catholic church to start new churches. They did not restore the church which was established by Christ in the first century, but tried to reform the Roman Catholic church. All protestant churches are less than 500 years old. The church which Jesus and His apostles established in the first Century is nearly 2000 years old. Jesus warned about false teachers during His ministry. (Matthew 7:15) Paul tells us that the Galatian brethren were troubled by those who preached another gospel. (Other than the one given by Christ) (Galatians 1:6-9) The gospel (the one true gospel) is God's power to save man's soul. (Romans. 1:16) No other gospel can do that.

7. FAITH RESPONDS IN OBEDIENCE.

There is only one faith. (Ephesians 4:5) *"Faith is the substance of things hope for, the evidence of things not seen."* (Hebrews 11:1) None of us have seen God at any time, that is why it is called faith. Some would want you to prove that there is a God, but there is no proof, just God's word, God's creation and faith. And without faith it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11:6) Faith leads to obedience. If we believe God then we will do what He commands. (Matthew 7:21) *"By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice."* (Hebrews 11:4) *"By faith Noah prepared an ark."* (Hebrews 11:7) *"By faith Abraham offered up his only son Isaac."* (Genesis 22:2-12) James says that faith without works is dead. (James 2:26) It is not works of merit, for man cannot work his way to heaven but it is works of obedience to God's will. Grace is a free gift from God, based upon man's response of obedience to God's love. (Romans 6:23)

8. JESUS IS GOD'S SACRIFICIAL LAMB.

The lamb that was sacrificed to atone for man's sin, was a shadow of the substance, the final sacrifice under the sacrificial system. Jesus offered Himself upon the cross of Calvary, the perfect and innocent sacrifice of the Son of God to atone for man's sin one time for all time, never to have to be repeated. John the Baptist pointed his disciples to Christ and said *"behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world."* (John 1:29) Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah, left the glory of heaven and came to this earth below and was tabernacled in a body as are we. (John 1:1,14) Sin was conceived in the flesh, it had to be conquered in the flesh. Man was not capable of doing that so God sent His Son. (John 3:16) When Jesus was crucified on the cross He conquered, sin, death and Satan.

9. JESUS PAID THE PRICE FOR THE SINNER'S DEATH.

By living a sinless life Jesus qualified Himself as an innocent substitute to die in the place of those guilty of sin. (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:26-28) *"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross so that we might die to sin."* (1 Peter 2:24) Jesus paid the ransom price for our redemption. Redemption is a price paid to buy back something.

10. THE BELIEVER MUST DIE WITH CHRIST.

This is the purpose of the plan of redemption, that the believer dies through and with their representative, Jesus Christ. Jesus death represents the death of the believer, just as the lamb that was sacrificed under the Old Testament represented the death of the sinner. Remember, that the penalty for sin is death. (Romans 6:23) *“If we died with Him we will also live with Him.”* (2 Timothy 2:11) *“Since you died with Christ.”* (Colossians 2:20; Romans 6:8) *“You have died and your life is hidden with Christ.”* (Colossians 3:3) *“I have been crucified with Christ.”* (Galatians 2:20) Baptism is for the remission of sins, but it is also symbolic of being dead, buried and risen with Christ. Paul says; *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”* (Romans 6:3-4) When Christ died He was buried, and when we are baptized we are buried with Him into His death. As Jesus shed His blood when He died then His blood washes away our sin when we join Him in His death. As the penalty of sin is death, and we have died with Christ, we have paid the penalty for sin, through obedience to the will of God. Therefore baptism is a burial or immersion. If we sprinkle some dust on a coffin we have not buried it. In a like manner if we sprinkle a person, we have not buried them with Christ nor have they received forgiveness of sins for they were not buried with Christ. There is only one baptism. (Ephesians 4:5) It is not pouring, it is not sprinkling, it is immersion, a burial with Christ, into His death. When one is baptized by being dead with Christ he goes into the water spiritually dead (a sinner) and comes out spiritually alive (a saint), having no sin.

11. JESUS COMMAND TO HIS APOSTLES.

The core of the gospel is the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4) After His resurrection but before His ascension into heaven, Jesus told His disciples to *“go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believes and is baptized shall be saved, he that believes not shall be condemned.”* (Mark. 16:15-16) One has to hear the true gospel (there is only one gospel) believe the gospel, repent of sins. Repentance means to have a change of heart that leads to a changed life, without sin. The next step on the road to salvation is to confess with the mouth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37) Then one may submit himself to be baptized (buried with Christ) for the remission (forgiveness) of sins. At this point one is added by the Lord to His church and is in fellowship with God and other Christians, he belongs to the family of God. If one lives a faithful life from this point on, his destiny will be heaven and to live eternally with God, when this life is finished.

12. THE CERTAINTY OF PHYSICAL DEATH.

When we go to the funeral of a loved one it reminds us of our own mortality. We will all have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of the things we have done in the body whether good or bad. (Romans 14:10) Concerning the brevity of life Job says; *“Man born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower and fades away, he flees like a shadow, and does not continue.”* (Job 14:1-2) James says; *“whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.”* (James 4:14) Concerning the certainty of death the Hebrew writer says; *“as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”* (Hebrews 9:27) Death is final and no one can escape it, unless Christ returns again. When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ and the sentence is announced, it will be eternal and there will be no appeal. Are you prepared for heaven?