

God's Plan of Salvation

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If there is one thing that one must learn in life, it is God's plan of salvation. Those who never obey the Gospel and do not come to know God will be forever separated from the God who loved them so much He gave His only begotten Son for them (2 The. 1:8-9). A counterfeit plan requiring either more or less than God's Word teaches will condemn (Gal. 1:8-9).

In what part of the Bible do we find God's plan of salvation? Not in the Old Testament, Jesus came to fulfill it. (Mat. 5:17-18) and to take it away that He might establish His New Testament (Heb. 10:8-10). This he accomplished through the cross (Col. 2:14). The design of the Old Testament chiefly was to point men to and prepare them for the coming of Christ (Gal. 3:24). This in no way minimizes the importance of the Old Testament, but it remains a fact that God's plan of salvation is not revealed except in the New Testament.

Jesus commissioned the apostles to take the saving Gospel to all nations and every creature. This involved teaching men to be baptized (literally immersed), continuing to teach them His commands (Mat. 28:19-20). This involved teaching them to believe and be baptized in order to be saved; unbelievers remaining lost in their sins (Mark 16:15-16). This involved preaching repentance and remission of sins to all nations (Luke 24:47).

What did the early preachers preach concerning salvation? Believers were told to repent and be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Note that all these elements are clearly stated in the combined accounts of the commission (belief, repentance, baptism, remission of sins). Not every one of these commands is mentioned in each case of conversion, but since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), it is both logical and Scriptural to conclude that He requires the same acts of obedience of all people. While belief and repentance are not mentioned in every detailed conversion recorded in Acts, baptism is. And in every New Testament passage where it and salvation are both mentioned, baptism is always first (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21). Salvation by faith is taught throughout the Bible but NEVER SALVATION BY FAITH ONLY (Jam. 2:17-26)

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