

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## “BRETHREN, WHAT SHALL WE DO?”

By Jim McDonald

These were the anguished words which anxious hearers asked Peter on Pentecost after he had said, ***“Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified”*** (Acts 2:36-37). Was there anything they could do?

Television airways are filled with the ads of a preacher who refers to politicians and then tells us that Jesus is One whom we can always believe. We are assured by that preacher that there are not many ways to God – there is only one way and that way is Jesus who said, ***“I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me”*** (John 14:6). We couldn’t agree more.

The preacher then directs his thoughts to those who have never committed themselves to Christ nor sought the salvation He gives. He urges them to confess to God they are a sinner, asking God to forgive them with his assurance that upon doing such, they will be saved.

Jesus always tells the truth, and about ten days before Pentecost, He had given Peter and his fellow apostles His great commission. He said, ***“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be condemned”*** (Mark 16:15-16). Surely these words rang in Peter’s ears when he heard anguished sinners cry out, ***“Brethren, what shall we do?”*** Peter responded to their question with this answer: ***“Repent ye and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins ...”*** (Acts 2:38). Did Peter tell the audience what Jesus had told the apostles He wanted men to do? In His various words to them before He ascended back to heaven Jesus said, ***“All authority hath been given to me In heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ...”*** (Matthew 28:18-20). When Peter responded to men’s question, ***“What shall we do?”*** saying, ***“Repent ye and be baptized ... for the remission of your sins ...”*** was that response faithful to the Lord’s command: ***“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you”***?

Saul of Tarsus was a fierce persecutor of Christians. He was sincere in his actions and zealous to persecute Christians in Damascus as well as Jerusalem. He went to Damascus to see if there were any Christians there and if so, to bind them and carry them back to Jerusalem to ***“punish them”*** (Acts 9:2). Jesus appeared to Saul in a great light and fearful Saul asked, ***“Who art thou Lord?”*** and when told by the Lord, ***“I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest”*** (Acts 9:5), he asked, ***“Lord, what shall I do?”*** (Acts 22:10). The Lord did not say. ***“Confess that you are a sinner and ask me in prayer to forgive you.”*** Instead, he told Saul to go into the city where he would be told what he was to do. The preacher Ananias came to him by Jesus’ commandment. What did Ananias tell Saul to do: ***“Confess you are a sinner and pray to Jesus, asking him to forgive you?”*** No. Ananias said, ***“And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins ...”*** (Acts 22:16). Did Ananias tell Saul what Jesus wanted him to tell him? Was Ananias faithful to Christ’s charge, ***“teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you”***?

Philip the evangelist went down to Samaria and preached to Samaritans about Jesus. What did Philip tell the Samaritans they must do to be forgiven, ***“Confess you are a sinner and ask, in prayer, Jesus to forgive you”***? Read what these Samaritans did in response to Philip’s preaching to them in Acts 8:12. In that same city was a sorcerer, a man who was a fraud, who also heard Philip’s preaching. Simon believed what Philip was preaching about Jesus. What did Philip tell this man to do? Read what he did in response to Philip’s instructions to him in Acts 8:13. Philip left the city of Samaria and then met an Ethiopian eunuch who heard Philip preach about Jesus. This man was interested and, seeing a pool of water, asked Philip if he could be baptized. What did Philip tell the Eu-

nuch, “Confess you are a sinner and ask, in prayer, Jesus to forgive you”? Read what the eunuch did in response to what Philip had been preaching to him in Acts 8:38. Paul and Silas were in a Philippian prison when at midnight an earthquake struck the prison and released the bands on all the prisoners. The jailor, awakened by the earthquake, seeing that the prisoners’ bands were released, drew his sword and was about to kill himself when prevented from such by Paul. The jailor sprang in and fell down before them and said, **“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”** Did Paul tell him, “Confess you are a sinner, pray to God and asks him to forgive you of your sins”? To see what the jailor did in following instructions given by Paul read Acts 16:31-33.

The television preacher tells us that Jesus always tells the truth. Well, if Jesus does always tell the truth, why does not that preacher tell sinners who have not been forgiven of their sins what Jesus said: **“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”**? Why, rather than telling men what Jesus said they are to do to be saved, does he say to sinners, “Confess to God that you are a sinner, and ask him in prayer to forgive you”?

In all cases of conversion in the book of Acts sinners were never told, “Confess that you are a sinner and pray to God to forgive you of your sins.” Read for yourself (Acts 2:37-38; 8:4-12, 13, 36-39; 9:8; 22:16; 10:34-48; 16:14-16, 30-33; 18:8). Always the sinner was instructed to **“Repent and be baptized ... to be saved”** (Acts 2:38), to **“arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins”** (Acts 22:16), or **“to believe on the name of the Lord and thou shalt be saved”** (Acts 16:3). This faith included belief that Jesus is the Christ, God’s son, repentance of one’s sins, and baptism (Acts 16:31-33).

It is not difficult to understand what Jesus said: **“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”** (Mark 16:16). The apostles, who heard Jesus speak these words, understood what He meant. On Pentecost, to ones who wanted to be saved, Peter said, **“Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins.”** Jesus always tells the truth. We just must believe what He says, and do it. ■

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## Simple Steps in the Plan of Salvation

By Greg Gwin

Through the years various analogies have been used by gospel preachers to represent the plan of salvation. Some have referred to it as rungs on a ladder, or steps in a stairway. One well remembered evangelist would frequently compare the plan of salvation to a combination lock. He would explain that each step had to be taken in the right order – just like entering the numbers on the combination lock – or success could not be achieved.

It seems that we’ve often gotten away from such simple preaching of the gospel fundamentals. God has made His plan so plain that folks with the most basic of reasoning abilities can understand it. Yet it seems that too often we’ve failed to really educate people with the most important and basic facts concerning their souls and eternity. We need to get back to those **“first principles,”** and teach them in a way that cannot be misunderstood.

And, in case you’ve forgotten, here is that “combination” for salvation...

- Hear the word (Romans 10:17)
- Believe (Hebrews 11:6)
- Repent of sins (Luke 13:3)
- Confess faith in Jesus (Romans 10:10)
- Be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38)

Every Christian should know this plan by heart, and be ready to share it with others. And anyone who has not obeyed these simple steps needs to carefully study the scriptures and obey without further delay. It’s God’s plan – very simple – ultimately important! ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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