



Basic Bible Course

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GOD'S NEW TESTAMENT PLAN of SALVATION



Lesson Twenty-Three

INTRODUCTION: Slowly and deliberately—step by step—this course of study gradually has unfolded GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE for the loving learners of His Word, the Bible. If you are among the relative few whose interest in divine revelation has carried you all the way through the course faithfully up to this point, you should be now prepared to start making some conclusions, which will affect all the remainder of your religious life on this earth.

My, what a long way we have come in our study together already! After showing how **RIGHTLY TO DIVIDE THE WORD OF TRUTH** and **HOW ALL THINGS BEGAN**, we paid careful attention to the **THREE DISPENSATIONS—PATRIARCHAL, JEWISH, and CHRISTIAN**—contained in the Bible. We discovered that although **GOD HIMSELF** does **NOT** change, yet He **HAS CHANGED HIS WILL** from one dispensation to the next, so that what **WAS BINDING** upon the **PATRIARCHS BEFORE MOSES** was **NOT BINDING ON THE JEWISH NATIONS** after he received God's ten-commandment law from Mount Sinai. In like manner, God's **OLD TESTAMENT (TEN-COMMANDMENT) LAW**, which governed the **JEWISH NATION** for the 1,500 years from Moses to Christ, was, in a figure, "**NAILED TO THE CROSS**," thus becoming of **NO EFFECT** to the **CHRISTIAN**, after the **NEW TESTAMENT** came of force on the day of Pentecost after the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Rather than God joining the **NEW Testament** to the **OLD Testament** and binding **BOTH** of them contradictorily upon the **CHRISTIAN** conscience, we proved conclusively that **CHRISTIANS** (i.e., from Pentecost onward) are **NOT GOVERNED** by the **OLD Testament**, but by the **NEW Testament**. Thus it is that **NOTHING** God bound upon the **JEW** through Moses (including the Ten Commandments) is binding in the **NEW TESTAMENT AGE**.

To illustrate what effect this has, let us consider the **REPENTANT THIEF ON THE CROSS**. In what **DISPENSATION** did he live? The **JEWISH**. Since the New Testament did not become of force until 53 days **LATER**, it follows that this thief **LIVED AND DIED** a **JEW** in the **JEWISH** dispensation. He was **NOT A CHRISTIAN**, since the Christian dispensation had not yet begun! As a Jew, he was governed by the **LAW OF MOSES** (i.e., the **TEN-COMMANDMENT LAW**). Neither Moses' law from Sinai nor the later preaching by John the Baptist required baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. Moreover, since Jesus had power while on earth to forgive sins (Matthew 9:6), if He saw fit to make a special case for this thief, saying, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise," surely that was His business (Luke 23:43). But, when we come **ON PAST THE THIEF** to the **OTHER SIDE OF THE CROSS**, we find the **TEN-COMMANDMENT LAW NO LONGER BINDING** and that from Pentecost in Acts 2 onward, everyone must **NOW BELIEVE** in Jesus Christ and **REPENT** and also "**BE BAPTIZED** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Baptism in Jesus' name was not essential to salvation **FOR THE THIEF**, for he lived and died in the **JEWISH** religion and dispensation, when this baptism was **NOT YET GIVEN**. But **THREE DAYS AFTER** the thief and Jesus Christ both died, Jesus arose from the dead. It was **DURING THE 40-DAY PERIOD HE WAS ALIVE ON THE EARTH, AFTER THE THIEF WAS ALREADY DEAD**, that Jesus **FIRST ANNOUNCED**

the terms of the GREAT COMMISSION. It was in THIS COMMISSION that Jesus FIRST ANNOUNCED BAPTIZING DISCIPLES “IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST” (Matthew 28:19). In Mark’s record of this commission, he shows JESUS’ CONNECTION between THIS BAPTISM and SALVATION, quoting Jesus as saying, “He that BELIEVETH and IS BAPTIZED shall be SAVED” (Mark 16:16). From this commission we learned that, once of force, it was to be binding upon ALL MEN, in ALL NATIONS, in ALL THE WORLD, by ALL AUTHORITY and for ALL TIME TO COME—EVEN “UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.” Thus those who lived and died BEFORE PENTECOST IN ACTS 2 were NOT REQUIRED to be baptized in Jesus’ name at all. But those who have lived and died (or are still alive) FROM THAT DAY ONWARD, “EVERY ONE” must not only BELIEVE and REPENT but also “BE BAPTIZED...FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.” Thus PEOPLE TODAY CANNOT BE SAVED LIKE THE THIEF ON THE CROSS. We are under a DIFFERENT TESTAMENT—the NEW TESTAMENT. Let us see what to do:

I. **First**, WE MUST **hear** THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

- A. WITHOUT the GOSPEL OF CHRIST, there could be NO SALVATION. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4,
 “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the GOSPEL which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; BY WHICH also ye are SAVED, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”
- B. Jesus commanded the GOSPEL to be PREACHED for salvation.
 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and PREACH the GOSPEL to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be SAVED; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).
 “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of PREACHING to SAVE them that believe” (1 Corinthians 1:21).
 “Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee WORDS, whereby thou and all thy house shall be SAVED” (Acts 11:13-14).
- C. The preaching must be HEARD.
 “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be SAVED. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not HEARD? and how shall they HEAR without a PREACHER?” (Romans 10:13-15).
 “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye HEAR in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will NOT HEAR that prophet, shall be DESTROYED from among the people” (Acts 3:22-23).

II. **Second** WE MUST **believe** (i.e., HAVE **faith**) IN JESUS CHRIST.

NOTE: To “BELIEVE” in Jesus Christ and to have “FAITH” in Him is all ONE AND THE SAME. When Jesus told Thomas to examine Him after His resurrection, He commanded him to “be not FAITHLESS, but BELIEVING” (John 20:27). Those who try to distinguish between faith and belief affect a distinction where there is NO DIFFERENCE.

- A. WITHOUT FAITH (i.e., BELIEF) we cannot please God.
 “But without FAITH it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must BELIEVE that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

- B. What IS faith?
 “Now faith is the SUBSTANCE [i.e., assurance] of things HOPED FOR, the EVIDENCE [i.e., conviction] of things NOT seen” (Hebrews 11:1). In other words, we must be convinced that what the gospel says of Jesus Christ is true.
- C. How does faith (i.e., belief) COME?
 “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not BELIEVED? and how shall they BELIEVE in him of whom they have not HEARD? and how shall they HEAR without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14).
 “So then FAITH cometh by HEARING, and HEARING by the WORD of God” (Romans 10:17).
- D. Is BELIEF (i.e., faith) essential to salvation?
 “He that BELIEVETH and is baptized shall be SAVED; but he that BELIEVETH NOT shall be damned” (Mark 16:16).
 “For by grace are ye SAVED through FAITH” (Ephesians 2:8).
- E. Are Christians supposed to WALK by FAITH?
 “For we WALK by FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT: (2 Corinthians 5:7).
- F. What if we DOUBT?
 “whatsoever is NOT of FAITH is SIN” (Romans 14:23).
 “he that BELIEVETH NOT shall be DAMNED” (Mark 16:16).

III. **Third**, WE MUST **repent** OF OUR SINS.

- A. Repentance is COMMANDED of all men everywhere.
 “God...now commandeth ALL men everywhere to REPENT” (Acts 17:30).
- B. Repentance is “FOR REMISSION OF SINS” (i.e., salvation).
 “REPENT and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ FOR the REMISSION OF SINS” (Acts 2:38).
- C. Repentance is ESSENTIAL TO CONVERSION, that SINS be BLOTTED OUT.
 “REPENT ye therefore, and BE CONVERTED that your SINS may be BLOTTED OUT” (Acts 3:19).
- D. What if we will NOT repent?
 “I tell you, Nay: but, EXCEPT ye REPENT, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

IV. **Fourth**, WE MUST **confess** OUR **faith** IN JESUS CHRIST.

- A. CONFESSION is FOR SALVATION.
 “The word is nigh thee, even in thy MOUTH, and in thy HEART: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt CONFESS with thy MOUTH the LORD JESUS, and shalt BELIEVE in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be SAVED. For with the HEART man BELIEVETH unto righteousness; and with the mouth CONFESSION is made unto SALVATION” (Romans 10:8-10).
- B. Alien sinners CONFESS FAITH IN CHRIST before baptism.
 “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou BELIEVEST with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD. And he... baptized him” (Acts 8:35-38).
- C. What if we do **not** confess Christ?
 “Whosoever therefore shall CONFESS me before men, him will I CONFESS also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall DENY me before men, him will I also DENY before my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32-33; Mark 8:38).

V. **Fifth**, WE MUST BE **baptized** INTO CHRIST.

A. SALVATION is IN CHRIST (2 Timothy 2:10).

1. We are BAPTIZED into Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27).

NOTE: Since salvation is IN CHRIST, and we are BAPTIZED INTO Christ, it follows, therefore, that we are BAPTIZED INTO SALVATION!

B. Baptized TO BE SAVED (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:40-41; 1 Peter 3:21).

C. Baptized FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS (Acts 2:38).

D. Baptized TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 2:38).

E. Baptized to REJOICE (Acts 8:38-39; 16:34).

F. Baptized TO WASH AWAY SINS (Acts 22:16).

G. What if we are NOT baptized?

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of WATER and of the SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD” (i.e., cannot be saved, John 3:5).

CONCLUSION: It has become POPULAR among many so-called “Christian” denominations to preach PART of the foregoing New Testament plan as “ESSENTIAL” for salvation, PART as “NON-ESSENTIAL.” God’s Word makes NO SUCH DISTINCTION. Jesus TAUGHT it ALL; let’s PREACH (and DO) it ALL.