What Must I Do To Be Saved?

(Kent Heaton)

 The question of salvation can only be answered by what the Holy Spirit has revealed to man in God’s word. A desire to be saved implies an understanding of one being in a lost state or in a relationship with the Lord that jeopardizes eternal life. Only those who believe and are willing to accept the will of God will find value in the question and comfort in the answer. However, the “god of this age has blinded [those] who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

 Jesus gave a charge to His disciples to preach the gospel of salvation. In Matthew 28:18-20 He said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Salvation came from the words of men spoken to other men teaching them the words of Jesus. To be a disciple of Christ one must be baptized. Men must continue to obey the words of Jesus after they become Christians. These are the words of Jesus.

The gospel writer Mark records the commission of Jesus in Mark 16:15-18. “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” The disciples did go into the world and preach the good news to all men. When men believed on the words spoken by the followers of Jesus, they were baptized for salvation. If men did not believe, they would be condemned. These men refused the good news of Jesus Christ and the necessity of baptism for salvation. The signs Jesus spoke of in verses 17, 18 are explained in verse 20: “And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.”

 Luke tells us that Jesus instructed His disciples that “repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47). That came about in Acts 2 when the Day of Pentecost came in the city of Jerusalem. Following the sermon by Peter and the rest of the apostles, many in the crowd cried out, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” Acts 2:37-38). Repentance for forgiveness of sins comes about when one is baptized into Christ. On that same day, “the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).

 Peter wrote in his final epistle that being a disciple of Christ requires growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (2 Peter 3:18). Salvation is possible today if you follow the words of Jesus (among many more found in God’s word). Are you a disciple of Christ? Have you followed the pattern of the New Testament to become a Christian? The Bible clearly reveals what you must do. Salvation comes from doing the will of the Father (Matthew 7:21). Obey Him today!

**Was Jesus Exclusive?**

(Kent Heaton)

 As Jesus prepared His disciples for His death, He wanted to give them assurance that while He was “going away” they would not be left alone. In John 14, Thomas says, “‘Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also’” (John 14:5-7a). It would not have seemed as important then as this passage has become through the revealing of God’s will to man in preceding generations.

 The groundwork for the kingdom of God was clearly laid by the Son of God. Entrance into the blessings of God was limited; so much so that entrance into salvation was exclusive. When we think of something as being “exclusive,” we realize there is a sense of preventing participation in a certain thing. An exclusive club is one that allows certain people to be a part of the club; an exclusive interview is allowing only a finite opportunity to question an individual. Jesus made salvation exclusive.

 If men are to seek the way to God, to understand the truth of God and find life in the blessings of God; Jesus is the only way – exclusive. Jesus said He was the way and offered no other avenues to the Father. “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). He affirmed that truth would only come through Him. “If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus” (Ephesians 4:21). Life eternal would only be granted through His life. “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” (1 John 5:11).

 The exclusive nature of Jesus’ statement is that no one can come to the Father except through Him. Jesus is the only one who can call Jehovah God – “Father” – in the manner He did. “No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him … And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form” (John 1:18; 5:37). No man has seen the Father. The exclusive nature of salvation is that only through the Son of God can man find salvation in God. Jesus alone has seen the Father.

 Gamaliel spoke of men who rose up to draw men to themselves but came to no avail (Acts 5:34-39). His admonition was to let the apostles alone for if their work was of God it cannot be overthrown. Many men have risen up in the generations since time began to declare they have the path to God but only one – exclusive – only one is the avenue to God: JESUS CHRIST. There is only one avenue to the Father and that excludes Buddha, Mohammed, Luther, Joseph Smith, the Pope, you and me and any other man that thinks himself to be something.

 There is only one way to Heaven and that is through the avenue laid down by Jesus Christ. There is only one truth and that truth is found in the Bible alone (excluding the Koran and Book of Mormon, etc). There is only one life that can be received in eternity and that is through the blood of Jesus Christ (John 6:53, 54). Is God exclusive? He always has been (Exodus 20:1-6; Matthew 22:37; 1 John 5:1-5). His Son is exclusive (Matthew 7:21-23). There is only one way (Ephesians 4:1-6).