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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING IN CHRIST!

In 2nd Timothy 2:10 the Apostle Paul makes the following statement: *"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."* According to this verse, salvation is found only in Christ. This truth is supported by such statements as John 14:6 where Jesus said *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man can come unto the Father, but by me."* It is also supported by Peter's statement in Acts 4:12 which says: *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* And so it stands to reason that if *"salvation is found only in Christ"*, then one *"must be in Christ in order to be saved!"* The scriptures clearly tell us how a person gets into Christ where salvation is located. Galatians 3:26-27 says this: *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."* Romans 6:3-4 teaches the same thing as well. Therefore if a person wishes to be saved, then he or she *"must be baptized into Christ for that is where salvation is found"* according to the scriptures! This therefore makes baptism essential to salvation in spite of what the religious world has to say!

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S BIBLE QUESTIONS:

It was the prophet Micah in the Old Testament who spoke of the birthplace of Jesus 700 years before it took place. He said that Jesus would be born in "*Bethlehem Ephratah*" and he was correct. (Micah 5:2/Matthew 2:1-6) It is interesting to note that there were two cities known as Bethlehem in the Bible and yet Micah was right on the money when he specified "*Bethlehem Ephratah*" instead of the Bethlehem in the land of Zebulan. (Joshua 19:15-16)

The two men that had a part in the burial of Jesus were Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea. (John 19:38-40) The tomb that Jesus was buried in belonged to Joseph himself according to Matthew 27:57-60)

QUESTIONS FOR THIS MONTH:

What is the name of the priest who found a copy of the Law of Moses during the reign of Josiah the king? (What did Josiah do next?)

Can you name all of the individuals in the New Testament who at one time or another are spoken of as Apostles?

WE MUST FORGIVE IN ORDER TO BE FORGIVEN!

This lesson is very clearly and emphatically taught by Jesus in Matthew 18:21-35. Please read this story for yourself and think carefully about what takes place. We need to understand what Jesus is teaching us in this story: "*If we do not forgive our fellowman when he sins against us, then what right do we have to expect God to forgive us when we sin against Him?*" This lesson is also taught by Jesus in Matthew 6:9-15, especially verses 14-15 which say: "*For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*" Ephesians 4:32 reinforces this lesson also.

"FOR THE SAKE OF THE CROWDS."

I have recently read an article in which a church of Christ and a Christian church are talking of a merger for the sake of religious unity. In order to deal with their differences they have decided to have six songs during their worship services, 3 of which will be sung with instruments and 3 will be sung without instruments. No doubt all of this is being done "*for the sake of the crowds.*"

I have recently heard of a charismatic denominational church that has decided to rent some big screen TV's and put them in their auditorium so that their members can watch the Super Bowl and have worship services at halftime. This they do "*for the sake of the crowds.*"

The Oak Hills Church of Christ in San Antonio has decided to drop the designation "*church of Christ*" and simply be called the Oak Hills Church and to also stop preaching that baptism is necessary for salvation. This they are doing of course "*for the sake of the crowds.*"

Let me tell you what Jesus did "*for the sake of the crowds.*" He went to "*Calvary's cross to die for the sins of the crowds.*" (Matthew 26:28/1ST Peter 2:21-25) On the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" He preached this message of truth "*for the sake of the crowds.*" The Apostles were arrested for doing this kind of preaching and yet they would not compromise with God's truth! (Acts 4-5, Acts 21-22)

Today, you and I as Christians have this same duty to preach the truth of God's word without compromise. (2nd Timothy 4:1-4) We will not use mechanical instruments of music in worship, watch the Super Bowl in the assembly, or drop the name "*church of Christ*" from the sign in front of our building "*for the sake of the crowds.*" We will however continue to "*earnestly contend for the faith*" so that we can please our Father in heaven! (Jude 3)

