



**Front Cover**

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## Foreword

As I write this small book, everyone should understand that it is being written with love for my fellow men. I do not expect any reward except to please God and Christ. If it is responsible for the saving of one soul, I would say that is reward enough.

After studying the Bible for many years, I have come to the conclusion that either people do not care about eternal life, or they are being "brainwashed" by teachers and preachers who are pandering to their "itching" ears.

The Bible is very explicit as to how to become a Christian and the plan of salvation.

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## HOW TO PLEASE GOD AS A CHRISTIAN

The New Testament states clearly: (1) that the Old Testament was for our learning, but was fulfilled when Christ died on the cross (Hebrews 10:9-10); (2) that the Old Law was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14); (3) that Christ has been given authority over all things in heaven and earth; and (4) that Christ will judge us on the last day (Matthew 28:18 and John 12:48).

The New Testament brings out the danger of following man made doctrines and the traditions of men (Colossians 2:21-23).

Christ said, "... on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it ...". He said He would give Peter the keys to the kingdom with the authority to bind or loose both on earth and in heaven (Matthew 16:18-19). If you reads Acts 2:38, you will find the keys to heaven as referred to by Christ.

How we can have 500 different denominations all claiming to be followers of Christ is beyond my comprehension. The Bible clearly states that Christ is to be given preeminence in all things (Colossians 1:18). Still, most of the churches have some other name on them, and even the name does not give a true account of their doctrine.

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Some of the churches have mixed Old Testament rituals with New Testament ones, and, in many cases, have added many manmade doctrines not covered by any passages or verses in the Bible. Others claim to be New Testament churches, but then negate certain scriptures and their meanings.

We will attempt to clear up these misunderstandings by quoting the every verses in the Bible that are applicable to the plan of salvation, how to live as a Christian, and how you can know you will have a home in heaven.

### 2

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## IS THERE A SURE WAY TO HEAVEN?

Do you want a new start in life?

Do you want to make sure of eternal life?

Christ said in Matthew 15:9, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

Everyone should understand that the Old Testament is not in force today and that we are now living in the latter days under the New Testament. God gave Jesus Christ the authority over everything in heaven and on earth. Christ will judge us on the last day (Matthew 28:18; John 12:48).

Our first point to consider is in I John 5:13 where we find an assurance from the Bible that Christians can know they have eternal life. In fact, any Christian can read I John and, if he lives according to these scriptures, know he will have a home in heaven with the Lord. "These things have I written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:13). This is the same John who wrote John 3:16 which is so widely quoted that belief or faith is the only requirement for being saved. As you read I John, you will certainly understand that obedient faith is required. In I John 2:3-4, the verses read as follows: "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

In Revelation 21:8, the word of God puts all liars in the same category as the unbelieving, murderers, sorcerers, and idolaters. That is, they will be cast into the lake of fire!

A short synopsis of I John follows, but we suggest you read this book over many times. It explains how a Christian can really know he is saved.

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The first five verses of I John point out that John knew Jesus Christ the Son of God personally, and confirm to one and all that Jesus is the Son of God. The second five verses point out that God is light and that, as believers, we must walk in the light and have fellowship with our Christian brothers if we expect to have our sins forgiven. If we die in our sins, our case is hopeless. If we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth!

The second chapter states that, as Christians, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (I John 2:1-2). The following verses from chapters 2 through 5 emphasize that relationship:

1. I John 2:3: "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments."
2. I John 2:4: "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."
3. I John 2:9: "He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness till now."
4. I John 2:15: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."
5. I John 2:17: "And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."
6. I John 3:11: "For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another."

7. I John 3:18: "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."
8. I John 3:23: "And this is His commandment: that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment."
9. I John 3:24: "Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."

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10. I John 4:4: "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."
11. I John 4:12: "No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us."
12. I John 4:20: "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?"
13. I John 5:3: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome."
14. I John 5:12: "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." This thought is also expressed in Acts 4:12: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." As you study I John, you can readily see that this book or epistle was written for the benefit of those who were Christians.

How do you become a Christian? Jesus Christ made it very clear that we must believe, repent, confess, and be baptized if we are to obey the commandments toward salvation and become a Christian.

In John 8:24, He stated the following: "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

In Luke 13:3, Christ said, "I tell you, no, but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

In Luke 24:47, Christ commands, "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

In Matthew 10:32-33, Christ said, "Therefore, whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father

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who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven." Add to this what the inspired writer wrote in Romans 10:10, "For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation."

In Mark 16:15-16, Christ said, "...Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.' "

Can we do less than our Savior commands and still expect to be saved? In addition to the plan of salvation, Jesus explains the need for obedience if we expect a heavenly home.

In Hebrews 5:9, Jesus became the author of salvation to all those who obey Him.

In Luke 6:46, He complains, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things that I say?"

In Luke 6:47–48, He likens a man that is obedient to His sayings to a man who built his house on a rock which could not be shaken by the storm.

In Luke 6:49, He likens a man that hears his sayings and does nothing to a man who built his house on sand, and, when the storm came, the house was destroyed.

In Matthew 7:21–23, Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

In Matthew 7:13–14, Jesus warns that just a few will find eternal life. Matthew 7:13: "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it." Matthew 7:14: "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

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Since the beginning of time, God has instructed men and women of what He requires of them. It was simple for Adam and Even. They only had to refrain from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They disobeyed God and sinned with the consequent result of pain, suffering, and death for all mankind.

Down through the ages of the Old Testament, the same thing occurred many times. God commanded and man disobeyed and was consequently punished. Even God's chosen people on many occasions practiced idolatry or disobeyed His commandments and were punished by having their nation destroyed and being cast to the four corners of the earth.

So, it continues to this day. God gave us His holy, inspired word and requested that we not add to it or take away from it. Have we obeyed His commandments? Let's look at baptism, for example.

Let's begin with Christ Himself. In Matthew 3:13–17: "Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him. Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" "

Christ came from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. Why? Had He sinned? Of course not! He tells you in plain words it was done to fulfill all righteousness. Also, notice He came up out of the water. Surely He had to be immersed first to be able to come up out of the water. Then, notice the Holy Spirit descended on Him.

Inasmuch as He was sinless and knew He was the Son of God, it is apparent that Christ was setting an example for all of us to follow. In John 3:5: "Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'" " How else can you be born again of water and Spirit except by baptism in obedience to Christ's commands?

In Acts 2:38–39, Peter, who was given the keys to the kingdom by Christ, let the world know what *keys* meant when he was questioned by the assembled multitude and said: "... Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call." Notice the fulfillment of the four steps of salvation are included in what Peter said: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" includes believing that Christ is the Son of God and confessing Christ as Lord and Savior. You are then born again by water and you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit even to this day.

In Acts 22:16, Ananias gave Paul the Lord's message: "And now why are you waiting? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

In Romans 6:3–6, the inspired writer tells us how we must be baptized: "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin."

"There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21).

Is there a question in anyone's mind that baptism means immersion? When you are buried or planted with Him, you have obeyed the right doctrine. Sprinkling or pouring is a man-made substitute for true baptism and falls into the same category as all other man-made doctrines.

"If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (I Peter 4:18). Christ said in Matthew

16:26, "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses His own soul?" Is not eternal life more important than a few years of life on this earth?

The writer of the Ephesian letter says, "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:22–23).

Colossians 1:18 further states: "And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."

In Ephesians 4:4–6, we find: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Can we not understand from the previous verses that the church is the body of Christ, that Christ is the head of the body, and is to be given the preeminence in all things? Can we not find in Acts 2:47, that the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved?

God does not make mistakes. When the perfect law of liberty was completed, it became the Bible for all the people; for the Jews and for the Gentiles. In II Timothy 3:16–17, God's word says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Does this not tell everyone that God's word is all that is needed to become a Christian, to organize a church, and to worship God in a manner that is pleasing to Him?

In John 17:20, Christ prays to the Father that all those who believe on Him through the word shall be one. However, if you read of the seven churches in Asia in the book of Revelation, you will find that four of the seven were in danger of condemnation for changing their methods of worship or leaving their first love. Do you think that 1900 years of changes to God's commandments by men would result in condemnation?

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That is the reason men with a lot more wisdom than I have decided that the only way to please God is to go back to His word and establish the church with the same doctrine that was in effect in the first century. This was done in the first part of the nineteenth century. This church is in existence today and is correctly named the Church of Christ. There is no other doctrine but the Bible. There is no hierarchy. Each congregation is ruled by elders, has deacons and evangelists or ministers, and attempts to please God in its manner of worship.

Adding to or taking away from the Word of God leads to apostasy and a multiplicity of religious faiths. This fact has been proven over the many years since Christ established His church.

Yes, there is a sure way to heaven:

1. Become a Christian according to God's word.
2. Put God first in your life.
3. Love your neighbor as yourself.
4. Have obedient faith.
5. Eliminate man-made doctrines.

You have a choice:

1. Follow God's way, or
2. Follow man-made doctrines that are so prevalent today.

If you study the Bible, you will find God saw the end from the beginning. He is infallible and His final visit to man was through Jesus Christ. His word, the Bible, is all we need. Do not listen to those preachers who are only indulging those with "itching" ears.

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables "(II Timothy 4:3–4).

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