

The Gospel

“And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Apostle Paul also said, “Now I make known unto you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to the child untimely born, he appeared to me also” (1 Corinthians 15:1-8).

Based upon the eyewitness accounts of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we understand that He, Jesus of Nazareth “was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4). As the Son of God, “know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). He is both Lord, and Christ, and the ruler of the world, and the Messiah of promise: “who only hath immortality” (1 Timothy 6:16), and “who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:10). As the Son of God came into the world to do all the will of the Father, saying, “the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak” (John 12:50), He revealed that which the Father commanded Him, and thus, “In the beginning was

the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). As the “Word” He was the medium through which the Father communicated with the creation, and this “Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

As the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were not only instrumental, but also the originators of God’s plan of salvation, which was delivered unto man through them, and the Apostles and Prophets sent by them, we would be amiss if we did not also speak to “How man can be a recipient of that which God has provided.”

When Jesus commanded the apostles, saying, “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19), Jesus gave them a directive to follow.

When the apostles delivered this directive to the Jews, on the Day of Pentecost, the hearers, “when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:37-38).

In the days, weeks, months, and years to come, you will have, as a result of your further study of the word of God, occasions upon which you will encounter the fulfillment of this directive. As you read the book of Acts you will see that conversion followed a systematic process of hearing the gospel, believing the gospel, accompanied by repentance, and confession, and yes, baptism, of which the Apostle Peter said, is “unto the remission of sins,” and an essential response, as Peter “commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:48). This command, and for the same purpose, was uttered to Saul of Tarsus, by Ananias, saying, “now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16).

As you conclude another year of life, you are encouraged to reflect upon your walk of life, and ask yourself the question, “Will Jehovah say of me, like David, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will’” (Acts 13:22)? If not now, when? ret