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## *Who Saves Us ?*

Many times we may be asked what our church teaches on a particular subject. Often this is in regard to one of the many political and social issues of the day. This denotes a concept of what the church is and it's role. One role that is misunderstood by some is that of salvation and it's relationship to the church. In the religious world there are "pastors" and priests who are viewed as being able to administer salvation. Some might get the idea this is a quality that can be dispensed by one who is "ordained" to do so. As we turn to the scriptures we find that we must understand what salvation is, who gives justification, and what the church is in relation to this.

It is not the "church" nor it's representatives that are able to grant salvation, or withhold it from those who seek God. The Gospel is the power of God that leads one to be saved (**Rom 1.16**). It is then the answer of a good conscience that leads one to obey and meet the conditions that God has set forth (**1 Pet 3.20-21**). The justification that one then receives comes from God, not the one who teaches or baptizes etc. Luke brings this out clearly in his writing about those who responded to the gospel call on the day of Pentecost and afterward. "***And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.***" (**Acts 2.47**). This demonstrates two things.

First is the fact that those who were saved are those who responded to the preaching of Peter and the apostles. We are told that they then continued in the doctrine of the apostles (**Acts 2.42**). This doctrine they received from God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as Christ had promised (**John 16.12-13**). Later inspired writers recorded this message as they were moved to do so by the Spirit as well which we have with us today.

The second thing that we can learn from this is that when one believes and obeys, it is God, not the preacher, priest etc., who then takes one's sins away and places the true believer in the church, the body of those who have met the requirements for justification in God's sight. It is therefore God who takes the sin away removing it from his mind (**Col 1.12-13**).

This also further defines the nature of the church, the body of Christ. When one believes and obeys, God places us in the church, the body of all those who have obeyed, and who continue faithfully in those things that we are instructed to keep. Salvation, in light of what the scriptures teach, is not something that can be granted, administered or applied by any human. The justification is an act of God as we turn to him in repentance and true belief. It does not matter what anyone tries to tell us in the religious world concerning the process by which we are saved. It is not in the hand of man to make that determination. It is also not possible for any human to grant, or withhold forgiveness if one truly repents and obeys. Unfortunately, most religious organizations add their own requirements for acceptance by God, and leave others out. This is condemned by God and those who turn to manmade doctrines and organizations for forgiveness are being led astray. Only God can forgive and once forgiven, when we truly believe, are part of the body of Christ, the church. The church is the body of those who have obeyed and continue to remain faithful to God through his word, not the administrator of salvation.

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