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Let's Make A Deal

In Acts chapter eight Simon the sorcerer observed Peter and John imparting spiritual gifts to some of the Samaritans who had been converted. Seeing an opportunity, Simon offered the apostles money to purchase this ability as well. Simon had made a living deceiving the people who were convinced that he was some great power (**Acts 8.10**). From a worldly perspective, Simon sensed true power and in a way wanted to initiate a franchise arrangement. Peter rebuked Simon severely for this and the magician asked that Peter pray for him that he might be forgiven. Simon did not understand what was going on and applied human reasoning to the situation. Being newly converted, his worldly ways were still with him and his lack of understanding was pointed out in very clear terms. Today, how many folks lacking spiritual knowledge get the notion that salvation or spirituality is negotiable with God. We have all seen and heard stories of people, who in times of severe duress, try to make a deal with God. As we turn to the scriptures we find that salvation is not something that can be bought or earned, nor can we broker a deal with God. There is nothing that we have that will cause God to enter into any arrangement with humans on worldly terms that will buy us the favor of the Lord. The scriptures tell us that salvation is indeed a free gift provided through the sacrifice of Christ (**John 3.16**). Along with that are conditions to access this gift that God has revealed in the scriptures. Unfortunately, many neglect the ability to access this by reading the word of God or seeking someone who will guide them into understanding the scriptures. In every person's life tragedy and trial will strike at some point and at that time one may be called upon to think of things that may have only briefly crossed their minds. Death and illness are two of the most common occurrences that provoke deeper thinking when one is faced with their own mortality or that of someone they care for. Natural disasters, such as have been seen around the world over the past several years, also cause us to think in terms that take into account the fragile nature of our existence. God is aware of this as well and this is precisely why he sent Christ into

the world and inspired writers to record the message that we now have in the scriptures. We sometimes stress that the scriptures are a means of living in such a way that will prevent the negative consequences of spiritual negligence. The Bible also is a means of preparation. If we are living a life that is right in the sight of God, we will have a different perspective on the various dilemmas that face us. Faith in God provides us with peace of mind and we are equipped to take on the struggles of mortal life with the assurance that there is a better place to go when we die. We will also develop the ability through this perspective of overcoming life's problems or managing them with the contentment that comes from realizing that God cares for us. Paul told the Colossians, "***If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.***" (**Col 3.1-3**). The faithful, some of whose lives are summarized in Hebrews chapter eleven, saw that their life was not based on worldly things but looked forward to the promises of God, waiting for something better. "***These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.***" (**Heb 11.13**). The vision that is necessary comes from preparing oneself for the inevitabilities of life by faithfulness to God. When things are going well we need to be preparing ourselves for the future. This is done through studying God's word and doing what we find there. Many human ailments such as anxiety, depression and fear can be better managed when we have a more spiritual understanding of ourselves, God and the hope that we can have through faithful service to him. The only deals to be made are those that include educating ourselves on the terms and conditions of salvation outlined in the New Testament. These requirements were issued by God and are not something that will allow us to attempt to broker a different or better deal. Believing in Christ, repenting of our sins, confessing our belief in Jesus as the savior and then being immersed in water for the remission of sins is the only deal on the table. **TLC**