

VOL. 1 ISSUE 1 · JANUARY 2023

# THE VINE

Official Newsletter of the Northwest Church of Christ

## ARE YOU READY?

BY ELDER FRED HALL

When Jesus promised His disciples that he would one day return to earth, He Said He would come at a time they did not expect (Matthew 24:44). Therefore, people today who set dates for Christ's second coming is really wasting their time. Jesus never told His followers how to calculate the day of His return. Rather, He emphasized that our main priority is to make sure we're ready for Him, and that we are occupied in His service when He comes (Matthew 24:45-46). A woman who lived by this teaching was shopping in a small country store. Several young people were just standing around doing nothing. Knowing she was a Christian; they began ridiculing her. "We hear you're expecting Jesus to come back." "That's right," she replied brightly. "Do you believe He's coming?" they asked. "Absolutely," she answered. They said, "well, you'd better hurry home and get ready. He might be on the way!" Facing them, she said, "I don't have to get ready – I keep ready!" Are you ready for the arrival of God's Son? Will you be glad to see Jesus when He returns? If not, get ready now. Without delay, turn away from your sin and trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Then keep ready by walking in His will every day. Jesus may come at any time, so be ready all the time. Be blessed in this new year 2023.



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## BIBICAL SALVATION

BY MINISTER JOHN E. BRANCH

Because of sin that entered into the world as a result of the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, mankind is in need of salvation, i.e. to be saved from sin. The word of God declares that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). The question arises then, “How can we be saved from our sins?” There have been many answers given and many ways suggested as to how a man can be saved. For the answer, we must not rely on our own reasoning. We must look to the word of God. It is only then that we can be sure of the answer. It is a dangerous thing to rely on our own reasoning (cf. Prov. 14:12).



As one looks into the word of God, it can be seen that our all-knowing God knew that man would need a savior even before he created man. Thus, the scripture says that he planned to save mankind before the world began. This would be through the death of his Son, Jesus Christ (cf. Ephesians 1:3-7; Titus 1:2; 1 Peter 1:18-20). So, because of His great love for us he gave his only begotten Son as the means of our salvation. His Son came and taught his apostles and prepared them to be the ones who would begin the execution of his plan of teaching man what to do to be saved. They were guided by the Holy Spirit into all truth (John 14:26; John 16:13). The truth is the Word of God (cf. John 17:17); and as they taught, they did not speak or teach using their own interpretation, but they spoke and taught as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:20-21). Now we have the written word that these men of inspiration left us for a guide for what the Lord wants us to know and do to please him. The Lord’s plan of saving mankind is continued to be preached and taught today by faithful followers of Christ.

Jesus Christ came and did exactly what his Father in heaven sent him here to do (John 6:38). He went to the cross and died for the sins of the whole world (Hebrews 2:9). And now all who will take advantage of his death by obeying his will can receive the benefits of salvation that come by the grace of God.

“All have  
sinned and  
fallen short  
of the glory  
of God”

ROMANS 3:23





## BIBICAL SALVATION (cont.)

BY MINISTER JOHN E. BRANCH

Now back to the question of “How can we be saved from our sins”. We must understand that we cannot save ourselves. We cannot be saved by the creeds or manuals that men have established. We must look to the word of God. The greatest question concerning salvation that was ever asked, and that could ever be asked, was asked by those Jews who had been convicted of their sins on the day of Pentecost. They asked Peter after hearing the word of God, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter replied in the next verse 38, “Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” It was necessary to have their sins remitted (forgiven) in order to be saved. Basically, the same question was asked by the Philippian Jailor in Acts 16:30. He said, “Sirs what must I do to be saved?” Paul and Silas told him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and he would be saved. Then the scripture says that they spake unto him and all that were in his house the word of the Lord, and the same hour of the night they were baptized (Acts 16:31-33). Some say that all one has to do to be saved is to believe. But the scripture says that one cannot really believe unless he has heard the word. This is what is taught in Romans 10:14. Paul went on to say that faith or belief cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17). So that is why Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord unto the jailor and his household after telling him to believe. They had to hear the right thing in order to believe the right thing.

So, to answer the question, “How can we be saved from our sins?”, we must examine the scripture. Whatever we find in the word of the Lord we must do. So far we have seen four things that are required for salvation. One other thing that’s taught in the scripture is confessing that Jesus is the Son of God. This can be seen in Acts 8:37. After Philip preached Christ to the Ethiopian eunuch, they came to some water and the eunuch said “here is water what doth hinder me to be baptized?” Philip said, “If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”. The eunuch was then baptized. So, to sum up what is necessary for salvation according to the scripture: (1) we must hear the word, the gospel of Jesus dying for our sins; (2) must believe or put our faith in that good news; (3) Repent or turn from our sins and turn to God; (4) Make the confession that we do believe that Jesus is the Son of God; and (5) Be baptized (buried) in water for the remission of our sins. Once one does that the Lord will add him/her to the church as was done in New Testament times (Acts 2:47). At that point one is saved, but must continue walking in newness of life, and be faithful to the Lord unto death to receive the crown of life (Romans 6:1-6; Revelation 2:10). That is Biblical salvation. And since the Lord is the Savior, I would not trust my salvation by no other means than what his word teaches. We can know that we are saved only if we obey the teaching of the scripture. We will be judged by the scripture in the last day (John 12:48-50).

**“He that  
followeth after  
righteousness  
and mercy  
findeth life,  
righteousness,  
and honour.”**

PROVERBS 21:21





# CHURCH LEADERSHIP



*Come worship with us*



Our ministries are geared to meet the needs of people wherever they are while guiding them to the hope of eternal life.

Included in our ministries are:

- Audit & Compliance Ministry
- Benevolence Ministry
- Building/Grounds Ministry
- College Outreach Ministry
- Education Ministry
- Evangelism and Outreach Ministry
- Finance Ministry
- Media Team Ministry
- Prison Ministry
- Safety and Security Ministry
- Singles Ministry
- Transportation Ministry
- Visitation Ministry
- Women's Ministry
- Youth Ministry

## **Sunday Services**

Bible Class 9:00am

Worship: 10am  
(Live Stream)

## **Bible Classes**

Tuesday- 11am

Wednesday- 6:30pm

Ladies' Bible Class-4pm  
(Every 3rd Sunday)

## **Elders**

Freddy Hall

Willie Malone

Jimmy Stone

## **Ministers**

John E. Branch (Pulpit)

James Williams (Prison)

## **Deacons**

Toney Branch

Reginald Alexander

Dennis Crutcher

Bobby Lewis

Marvin Montgomery

Darrell McCauley

Robert Pope

## **Church Office**

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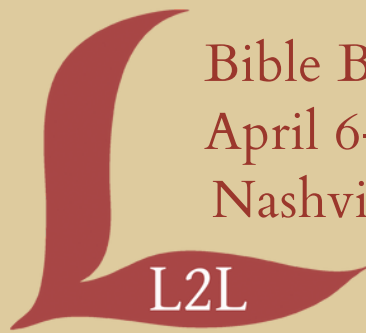


# NORTHWEST CLASSROOM NEWS

Increasing knowledge of scripture while developing applicable understanding of God's word.



## Upcoming Events



BUILDING GODLY LEADERS

Bible Bowl  
April 6-9, 2023  
Nashville, TN



## Any Questions, Contact:

Bro. Reginald Alexander  
Bro. Darrell McCauley  
Bro. Terrance Abrams

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Gathering for Youth Girls at the home of Shanika Thomas.  
(Date to be determined)

The North Alabama/Mississippi/Tennessee Couples Retreat  
February 24-25, 2023, in Decatur, Alabama. Married Couples,  
For more information contact Gladys & John Branch/Helen &  
Toney Branch.

