

“...strengthen thy brethren”



Luke 22:32

CHURCH OF CHRIST

of Genesee County

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2 Tim 4:2 "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

A RETURN TO THE BIBLE ON ALL MATTERS OF FAITH

The teaching of the churches of Christ is very simple. It is a desire to "go back to the Bible" and let it be the guide for all that we say and do. Actually, this is a Biblical plea that has been true ever since the Old Testament era. During the days of Jeremiah the prophet, six hundred years before Christ, we read, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16). God has always desired that men follow His way in every generation of time -- from the beginning of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, to the present, and on until life on the earth will be no more when Jesus comes again. All men today will be judged according to "the old paths" which is the New Testament. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48; cf. Revelation 20:12). Friend, are you ready? Are you prepared to meet God? Only when we lay aside the creeds, disciplines and tenets of denominationalism and go back to the New Testament can we be right with the Lord. We must accept God's "old paths" as our rule of faith and practice. Let us go "back to the Bible." This teaching is...

A RETURN TO NEW TESTAMENT ORGANIZATION

There was no hierarchy in New Testament times as is seen today in denominations of men. There is no clergy/laity system in the scriptures. The organization of the church in the Bible was simple in its arrangement. No one congregation had any authority over any other congregation. Each one was autonomous (self governing).

There were **elders** (also called bishops and pastors) who were the overseers of their own local congregation of which they were members (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3). God has given them the charge to see to it that what is done is done according to His Word. There were **deacons** who were special servants of the church (1 Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-4). There were **members** who were baptized penitent believers (Acts 2:38,41,47; Ephesians 4:25). There were **evangelists** who preached the Word (1 Corinthians 9:16; Ephesians 4:11).

Let us return to this Biblically authorized arrangement. This plea is...

A RETURN TO THE PLAN OF SALVATION

Our teaching is a return to the Lord's plan of salvation. It is not my plan or any man's plan. It is God's plan. We do not have the authority to add to it, nor do we have the authority to take from it.

Luke 19:10 says Jesus came to *"seek and save the lost."* Salvation is only in his name. *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). Jesus said, *"...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6). He died for our sins according to the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3; Hebrews 2:9). He was raised from the dead for our justification (Romans 4:25). He alone is the author and giver of salvation (Hebrews 5:8-9). He has the authority to speak about salvation and how to obtain it (Matthew 28:18). Why not let the Lord himself speak and tell us what to do to be saved?

Jesus said everyone must **believe** in him as the Christ, the Son of God. *"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye **believe** not..."*

Phil 2:11 *"And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"* Confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This is the great confession.

Jesus said we must repent and be baptized *"repent and be baptized for the remission of sins"* Repentance means we change to serve Jesus Christ. It involves stopping the sin. *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). Jesus said, *"...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"*

Matt 28:19-20 *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, **baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:** 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

Acts 8:12-13 *"But when they **believed** Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, **they were baptized**, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done"*

Acts 18:8 *"And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians **hearing believed, and were baptized"***

Mark 16:16 *"He that **believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"***

Acts 2:38 *"Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"***

From the scriptures above and an honest study of God's Word we learn what we must do to be saved. The pattern is to **HEAR, BELIEVE, REPENT, CONFESS**, and be **BAPTIZED in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.**