**Identifying the One Church (3) – Plan of Salvation**

2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Acts 26:15-18

**Introduction**

1. The single most important question anyone can ask is, “What must I do to be saved?”
2. ***“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47b).***
   1. To be saved is to be added to the church.
   2. To be added to the church is to be saved.
3. Logically, to identify the one church of the New Testament one must consider her **Plan of Salvation**, then find the church that believes and teaches that plan.
4. What was the **Plan of Salvation** preached and followed by those recorded in the New Testament which added them to the one church?
5. Ministry of Reconciliation **(2 Corinthians 5:17-21)**
6. Reconciliation
   1. **2 Corinthians 5:17** – Created anew spiritually. (**cf. Ephesians 2:8-10** – saved by grace, created in Christ Jesus.)
   2. **New creature – Salvation – Reconciled to God:**
      1. **(v. 18)** – Paul reconciled to God – given ministry of reconciling men to God.
      2. **(v. 19)** – God reconciles men to Him through Christ.
         1. He is mediator between God and man – **1 Timothy 2:5**
         2. **(v. 21)** – Through Christ in that Christ was crucified for our sins – ***“gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:6).***
         3. **(v. 19)** – not imputing their trespasses.
            1. **Cf. Isaiah 59:2** – iniquity separates from God.
            2. Not putting trespasses to account because Jesus died for them – saved from sins – brought back to, or reconciled to God.
         4. **Reconciliation to God = salvation.**
7. Word of Reconciliation
   1. **(v. 19b-20)** – there is a word of reconciliation committed to Paul, and other apostles. (word that reconciles – word that saves, **cf. Romans 1:16** – gospel)
   2. ***“be reconciled to God” (v. 20)*** – God is reconciling, but we must be reconciled to Him.
   3. Something we must do, thus – “what must I do to be saved/reconciled?”
   4. **Follow that word of reconciliation committed to Paul** (*this is the* ***Plan of Salvation*** *believed and taught by the one church of the NT)* 🡪
8. Plan of Salvation (**Acts 26:15-18)**
9. Paul Appointed to the Ministry
   1. Paul before Agrippa **(Acts 26:2-3).**
   2. Appearance of Jesus on journey to Damascus **(vv. 12-15).**
   3. **(vv. 16-17)** – Paul is appointed to the ministry of reconciliation.
   4. The ministry is that of reconciliation *because of the description Jesus gives for sending Paul* **(v. 18).**
   5. **He was sent to the Gentiles to bring them to salvation, or reconcile them to God.**
   6. How this would occur is explained in **v. 18**, and is the **Plan of Salvation** of the one church of the NT.
10. ***“Open their eyes”*** (**Hear** – the word of reconciliation; **Believe** – turn from darkness to light)
    1. ***“open their eyes”*** – figuratively – i.e. to see truth.
    2. ***“in order to turn them from darkness to light”*** – darkness of ignorance, to light of understanding.
       1. **2 Corinthians 4:4** – Those blinded by Satan – god of this age. (With sin, lusts…)
       2. **Romans 1:18-24** – Gentiles whose hearts are darkened, as the suppress the truth in unrighteousness.
          1. **Suppress** – hold down. (With their practice of sin.)
          2. **(v. 24)** – They wanted sin, and God gave them up to do what they want.
       3. **Ephesians 4:18-19** – understanding darkened – *separated from God (need reconciliation)* – **blind because of sin** – **v. 19.**
    3. **Open their eyes with the *“word of reconciliation”* – the gospel:**
       1. **2 Corinthians 4:6** – ministry given apostles to shine light – in face of Christ.
       2. **John 3:19-21** – **Jesus is that light** **(1:4-9).** Shine light on darkness of sin so that people might turn to light, instead of ignoring it.
       3. **Acts 8:34-35, 37b** – Philip preached Jesus to him. (Reading from **Isaiah 53** – died for our sin…) (*eyes opened, turned from darkness to light, believed in Jesus/trusted in Jesus for salvation, reconciliation*)
11. ***“in order to turn them”*** (**Repent** – turn from dominion of Satan, sin, to God)
    1. Not just from darkness to light, but ***“in order to turn them…from the power of Satan to God.”***
       1. **Power** – dominion of Satan. (Same as **Matthew 28:18** – authority, *exousia*).
       2. **Cf. Romans 6:16** – slaves to whom you obey.
       3. ***“power of Satan”*** – ***“power of darkness” (Colossians 1:13*** – delivered from, to kingdom).
    2. **Turn from submitting to Satan to submitting to God:**
       1. **Ephesians 2:1-3** – you once walked in sin, submitting to Satan, and doing whatever you wanted to.
          1. **Prince of the power of the air** – Satan (Power, *exousia*) (what does it look like to submit to Satan’s power? 🡪)
          2. **Spirit** – disposition – as those who are disobedient.
          3. **Nature** – by practice, not hereditary.
       2. **Need to turn from that power, to the power (authority, dominion) of God 🡪**
       3. **Acts 3:19** – told those who were guilty of Jesus’ death to repent and be converted.
          1. **Repent** – *metanoeō*; to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider.
             1. Of sin committed, and rebellion against God.
             2. **2 Corinthians 7:10-11** – A change of mind that is shown in action.
             3. ***“bear fruits worthy of repentance” (Matthew 3:8*** – John the Baptist preached).
          2. **Converted** – *epistrephō* – to turn to.
             1. Turn to who? – ***“from the power of Satan to God”***
             2. **Galatians 2:19-20** – Paul converted (turned) from the law, to living to God by faith in Jesus. (Gave himself over to do that which God requires.)
12. ***“that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance”*** (**Confess** – unto salvation; **Baptism** – for remission of sins; Born again – to a living hope – **inheritance**)
    1. This turning from Satan’s power to God’s is ***“that they may receive forgiveness of sins.”***
       1. Sins separate from God – sins forgiven – reconciled to God.
       2. Sins forgiven – salvation.
    2. **Acts 3:19** – repent and be converted. *(Not saying anything different than before 🡪)*
    3. **Acts 2:38** – Repent and be baptized.
       1. **Repent** – change of mind about sin.
       2. **Be baptized** – turning to God.
          1. **Hebrews 9:14** – blood of Christ – cleanse from dead works (sin) – to serve God.
          2. **Hebrews 10:22** – blood contacted in baptism.
          3. Baptism – converted – turned to power (authority, dominion) of God.
       3. **For** – *eis*; to or into. (the remission of sins)
    4. Also – **Romans 10:9-10** – confession to salvation.
       1. This precedes baptism.
       2. **Acts 8:36-38** – Eunuch makes confession, and baptized.
    5. ***“and [receive] an inheritance”*** – confessed – converted/baptized – inheritance.
       1. **Baptism** – born again – **John 3:5** – of water and Spirit.
       2. **1 Peter 1:3-5** – begotten again – born again.
          1. Inheritance – described as what it is not.
          2. **(v. 5)** – kept by God through faith (**Must live faithfully!**)
13. ***“among those who are sanctified by faith in Me”***
    1. Those who ***“receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance”*** – those who have open eyes, have turned from darkness to light, and from power of Satan to God.
    2. Those who ***“are sanctified by faith in [Christ]”*** – those who have received forgiveness and an inheritance.
    3. Those who ***“are sanctified by faith in [Christ]”*** – same – those who have open eyes, have turned from darkness to light, and from power of Satan to God.
    4. **Faith** – includes all that was necessary to receive forgiveness and inheritance. (**A part for the whole – metonymy**).
14. Is that the plan?
15. **Christ’s church** – hear, believe, repent, confess, baptized, saved. (**cf. Acts 26:17-18)**
16. **Catholics** – baptized, saved, believe. (Infant baptism – original sin)
17. **Denominations** – believe, saved, baptism. (Outward sign of an inward grace?)

**Conclusion**

1. Those saved are added to the church by the Lord **(cf. Acts 2:47).**
2. There is only ONE plan of salvation.
3. **The church that believes, has obeyed, and teaches that ONE plan is the ONE church of the NT.**