

# Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

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## You Cannot Become A Christian By Praying To God or Christ!

(Part Two)

### What Does "Calling On The Name Of The Lord" Mean?

by Ted J. Clarke

#### Review

Last month's article discussed the most common way that people are told to be saved, namely, by praying the "sinner's prayer." Religious tracts written by some well known religious evangelists and circulated by a large number of denominations teach this practice. One can also hear this encouraged by radio and T.V. preachers, as though the Bible teaches it so plainly that everyone ought to accept it without question. However, we pointed out last month that there is not a single verse in the New Testament which commands this practice, there is no example of it, nor is there any implication that people in the Bible became Christians by so doing! No one was ever told to pray a "sinner's prayer" in order to become a child of God. We showed that Scriptures commonly used to support the "sinner's prayer" do not even deal with the issue. Luke 18:13 is talking about people who were already children of God under the law of Moses; John 1:12 does not even discuss prayer; and Revelation 3:20 is talking to people who were already Christians in the church at Laodicea, not mentioning prayer either. The "sinner's prayer" is an invention of men who choose to ignore what God's word really says one must do to become a Christian. Such doctrines will cause the destruction of those who make them and those who believe and practice them (Matthew 15:9, 13-14).

#### "Calling on the Name of the Lord"

Most religious tracts and books which teach the "sinner's prayer" as the way to salvation also use Romans 10:13 to support this popular idea. The apostle Paul says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Supposedly, this means to call upon the name of the Lord by praying the sinner's prayer. Several things show us that this is **not** what Paul was teaching by this passage.

First, Paul nowhere connected calling on the name of the Lord with the "sinner's prayer." He did not command it nor practice it. Second, in Paul's letter to the Romans he clearly shows what he expected them to have done and what others must do to be saved. In Romans 1-3 he demonstrates to them that all people (Jews and Gentiles) are guilty of sin, which will cause them to be lost eternally without salvation in Christ (Romans 1:16-17; 3:23). In chapters 4-5 he emphasizes the necessity of faith in Christ. In chapter 6 he connects this faith with baptism in the new birth, showing that through God's grace we die to sin, are buried with Christ in baptism, and rise to walk "in newness of life" (a new birth - John 3:3-5) [Romans 6:1-5]. See also Paul's teaching in Galatians 3:26-27, that we become God's children because we have through faith been baptized into Christ, having "put on Christ" in that act of obedience. It is with this background that Paul speaks in Romans 10:9-10 of confessing Christ as Lord and believing with the heart unto salvation. His admonition to "call upon the name of the Lord" to be saved includes **obedience** to demands of the gospel, for Paul says in verse 16, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel." Paul mentions faith, confession, and baptism as the way to this salvation (see verses above), but he does not mention any "sinner's prayer," either in Romans or elsewhere.

Third, consider what Paul himself did in obeying the gospel and having his sins forgiven. There are three accounts of this in Acts 9, 22, 26. Since Paul was to be apostle to the Gentiles, it was necessary that the Lord appear to him personally (Acts 26:14-18). Still, the Lord did not tell Paul specifically what to do to be saved, except to go into Damascus where he would be told "what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). The Lord sent Ananias to tell

Paul what he "must do" (Acts 22:12-16). Even though the Lord told Ananias that Saul (Paul) was praying (Acts 9:11), He did not tell Ananias to tell Paul to pray the "sinner's prayer" and invite Jesus into his heart. Paul's prayer was in indication of his faith and repentance, but he was not yet a Christian for his sins were not forgiven. We know that because Ananias (a man sent by the Lord) told him, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Please notice that **Paul was "calling on the name of the Lord" in rising and being baptized**, not in saying the popular "sinner's prayer" which is encouraged today. Paul's statement that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" was also made out of his own conversion experience. Was Paul a sinner? Yes. Was he praying? Yes. However that was not the manner in which his sins were forgiven and he became a Christian. Surely it is significant that neither the Lord nor Ananias (whom the Lord sent) told Paul to pray the "sinner's prayer." Paul's faith and repentance were necessary before his baptism, but it was in his obedience in rising to be baptized that the Lord washed away his sins. His forgiveness was not just based on his baptism, for without faith and repentance baptism means nothing. But it is in the act of faith in being baptized that one calls upon the name of the Lord to forgive one's sins, and the Lord honors His promise to do that. Why is it that men today cannot just preach and teach these things from God's own word, instead of making up substitutes like the "sinner's prayer"?

#### Some Additional Scriptures

For further evidence of what it means to "call upon the name of the Lord," consider the following. First, notice that the apostle Peter uses this same phrase in Acts 2:21 as he quotes from the Old Testament prophecy of Joel. Acts 2 is the first gospel sermon in the name of Christ and Peter here tells men for the first time what to do to have sins forgiven in the name of Christ. After telling his audience that "whosoever shall call

(Continued on page 2)

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P. O. Box 251

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Ted J. Clarke ..... EDITOR

Phone ..... (501) 625-3217

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on the name of the Lord shall be saved," Peter tells them **how** they may call on the name of the Lord. He first gives them a sermon on why they should have faith in Christ, telling them that they could "know assuredly" (or believe with all confidence) that God made Jesus "both Lord and Christ" (verses 22-36). When the hearers expressed their **faith** in verse 37, as they asked "what shall we do?", Peter told them, "**Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (forgiveness) of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**" Please recall that this is also what Paul was taught when he obeyed the gospel, as well as what he taught to be the meaning of calling on the name of the Lord in his letter to the Romans. Notice too that when the Jews on Pentecost asked, "What shall we do?" Peter **did not** tell them to pray the "sinner's prayer" and invite Jesus to come into their hearts! The most obvious reason why Peter did not tell them that was because it is not the way the Lord chose to save mankind. Peter was an inspired man and he told them what the Lord directed him to preach. Peter told them they could be saved by calling on the name of the Lord and then told them what it means to call on His name. We cannot call on the name of the Lord today unless we call on Him according to His will! Are you going to listen to the commands of men or to the Lord?

Second, the exact same phrase "shall be saved" was used by Jesus Himself in giving the Great Commission in Mark

16:16, when He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Who is it that "**shall be saved**"? "He that believeth and is baptized **shall be saved.**" Who did the apostles Peter and Paul say "**shall be saved**"? "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord **shall be saved.**" In comparing the two phrases, it becomes obvious that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord" is equal to "he that believeth and is baptized." When one "calls on the name of the Lord," one will express faith and be baptized in His name. This is the way in which a non-Christian sinner calls on the name of the Lord for forgiveness of sins and becomes a Christian, not in saying the "sinner's prayer."

Conclusion

One might be a sincere non-Christian and pray the suggested "sinner's prayer," thinking that he has been forgiven of his sins because false teachers have led him to believe erroneously that this is God's way. However, one's sincerity does not change the truth of God's word. No one was ever saved and became a New Testament Christian by saying the "sinner's prayer." Psalm 145:18 reminds us, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, **to all that call upon Him in truth.**" When you call upon Him through the doctrines and commandments of men He does not honor that calling, for it is not according to His truth. We are sanctified by God's truth (John 17:17). Those who say the "sinner's prayer" will save the non-Christian are not speaking God's truth!

*[Our final lesson in this series will discuss other cases of conversion in the book of Acts to see what role prayer had in the salvation of Lydia and Cornelius. Were these people told to pray the sinner's prayer? We will also discuss the place of prayer for forgiveness in the life of a Christian.]*

## Training Our Children To Worship God

by Ben F. Vick, Jr.

Isaac asked his father, Abraham, "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Gen. 22:7). This inquiry was made as Abraham and Isaac journeyed to the place where the latter was to be offered by the former. The exact age of Isaac is unknown. However, he was old enough to carry the wood for the offering (Gen. 22:8). It should be of note that Isaac knew something about what was involved in worshiping God. Evidently, he had observed his father as

the family worshiped God under the Patriarchal dispensation. This shows the importance of children learning how to worship God. Children, as well as some adults, must be taught how to worship God.

Solomon, the wisest of the ages, except for our Lord, wrote, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). The word "train" means, literally, "to narrow"; figuratively, it means "to initiate or discipline." Abraham did this. God said of him, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18:19). The word "child" spans the years from infancy to maturity. The expression "in the way he should go" means a course of life or mode of action. Parents need to discipline their children to follow the Lord's way. This is done both by precept and example. When this is obeyed, children will not turn from the Lord. This is the rule, but there may be exceptions to the rule. They should be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). If that is the meaning, we know that there have been some exceptions to the rule.

A knowledge of how to worship God is not inborn. Though the capacity to worship God exists in the hearts of everyone who has reached the age of accountability, all must still be taught how to worship God. Jesus said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (Jno. 4:23-24). The writer of Hebrews said, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:" (Heb. 12:28). One learns how to worship God by both instructions and examples.

Children, as well as adults, need to understand that when we worship God, we are in the presence of God. Moses was in the presence of God at the burning bush (Ex. 3:1-6). God appeared to Israel at smoking, shaking Sinai (Ex. 19, 20). The Psalmist said, "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him" (Psa. 89:7). The prophet Habakkuk wrote, "But the Lord

is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Hab. 2:20). At the dedication of the temple we read, "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord" (I Kings 8:10-11).

Children cannot learn how to worship if they are not in the worship services. Children were to observe the commemoration of the Passover. Moses wrote, "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped" (Ex. 12:26-27). In the repeating of the law, Moses said, "And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord they God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it" (Deut. 31:10-13). For further contemplation along this line consider these passages: Joshua 8:34-35; II Chron. 20:13; 31:18; Ezra 8:21; Neh. 12:43; Matt. 21:15.

**Some Suggestions For Teaching Our Children How to Worship**

1. Begin in the home. Teach them to be quiet and listen when the word of God is being read. Teach them to bow their heads during prayer. Turn off distraction, like the radio or television, during prayers and worship.
2. Take them to the restroom before services begin.
3. Do not allow them to run in the aisles or run up and down between the pews.
4. Have them sit beside you until they have proven that they can behave. When my feet would not touch the floor as I was sitting down, I would want to swing my legs. Mother did not allow that.

5. Do not let them crawl on the floor or under the pew during services.
6. Leave the toys, especially noisy ones, in the car. Bring paper and crayons or pencils for the little ones. Do not let them color or write in the song books or Bibles.
7. Do not allow them to talk aloud during the services. That means you, as a parent, must not talk aloud or whisper loudly. I think some adults and children have learned to whisper at a sawmill or while the vacuum cleaner was running.
8. Face the front. Discourage your children from "rubbernecking" to see what is going on behind them. That means you must set the example.
9. If you are late (and some are invariably so), do not come bursting through the doors during the middle of a prayer, Scripture reading, song, or other act of worship. Wait until there is a pause, then come in quietly and be seated.
10. Do not leave until the congregation is dismissed.
11. Sometimes it is necessary to take a child out of the assembly for disciplinary purposes, but such occasions should never be joyous. I well remember my mother's having carried a leather belt in her purse and having put it to good use on a few occasions. The board of education applied to the seat of knowledge does wonders for conduct.
12. Children should not be allowed to play when they are taken out of the worship services. I have heard that some parents will allow their children to play in the foyer or hall while services are being conducted. That is not teaching them to worship God.

Parents, but especially mothers, have a big task in teaching children how to worship properly. There are times, no doubt, when a mother has asked herself, "Why did I even try to go to worship this morning?" But remember, your consistent efforts will pay rich dividends. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

4915 Shelbyville Road  
Indianapolis, IN 46237

*No distance of place or lapse of time can lessen the friendship of those who are thoroughly persuaded of each other's worth.*  
- Robert Southey

**NO SLEEP - NO NARCOTICS**

by Brett Johnson

Have you ever been in a lot of pain - long, agonizing pain - just wishing it would go away? Every minute seems like ten. It consumes all your thoughts. Imagine that the doctor tells you that there is nothing he can do for the pain. You cannot go to sleep. You cannot get relief from drugs. And you will always have it **until you die**. Imagine your panic! Now imagine your panic when he tells you... **you will never die!**

There are no narcotics in hell, no anesthetics; there is no sleep, no way to get away from the pain! The pain won't stop! You can't even escape by death! We don't like to think about hell, and that is understandable. I personally don't like to think about things that might cause me pain, and most other people don't, either. But there are times when we would save ourselves and others some grief if we did. *"And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh,"* (Jude 23).

Many of our squeemish brethren disapprove of the "hell-fire and brimstone" preaching that was so typical of the church years ago. But the Bible recommends, even commands, this kind of preaching in some cases. I'm afraid that the mores and rules we make up about what is and is not acceptable teaching sometimes condemn Jesus Christ himself. Jesus taught about hell. He described it in vivid detail. And He spoke very plainly about who would be there, and why, regardless of who He might "offend" and "run off."

Fear, even trembling, is good for us. *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."* (Phillippians 2:12).

I Corinthians 9:25-27 describes the Christian race nicely: *"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."* No, Paul wasn't "running scared" of hell; though, he did fear it. He was using it as part of his motivation to help him run the race... **and it worked!** Can't we do the same?

2802 Woodland Hills East  
Columbia, SC 29210

## THE GOSPEL PREACHER

by Louis Mahaffey

"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..." 2 Cor. 5:11. The fear of the Lord has become an out-dated topic. We listen as older members speak of the days when hell, fire and brimstone spewed from the pulpits across the land. These days we have seminars instead of gospel meeting, since many of our meetings have become discouraging for brethren. The harvest is not the same as in days gone by.

In 2 Cor. 5:9-11 the apostle is talking about the judgment, Christ on the throne, and rewards and punishments. The fascinating word in verse eleven, for me, is the word *persuade*. Paul says he knows about the terror of not being prepared to stand before Christ. And then he says he uses this fact to persuade men! Maybe we have been putting the cart before the horse. It seems the apostles first preached about hell-fire and then preached grace, mercy and love. Today, we preach grace, mercy and love, while ignoring the doctrine of hell. My daddy called it milktoast preaching. My daddy was a wise man.

108 Meade  
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It doesn't matter where we pray,  
If we honestly mean the words we say,  
For God is always listening to hear,  
The prayers that are made by a heart  
that's sincere.

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## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We deeply appreciate all of our readers. Your letters are what keep us going at times. As long as we feel that we are providing a valuable service for those who receive the **Fulton County Gospel News** we will do our best to keep publishing it. The Church of Christ at Mammoth Spring has printed this paper for 41 years beginning this January. The brethren here have sacrificed time and money to keep it circulating without cost or obligation to those who receive it. We have been greatly assisted by those churches and individuals which financially support this work, some on a monthly basis and others when they have the ability and means to do so. We are sending out about 8500 copies of the paper each month. **Thank You So Much For Your Willing Assistance!**

Postage prices have soared for periodicals such as **Fulton County Gospel News**. There has been a thirty percent increase in the last year. This January the rates increased 20%. In order to cut costs for mailing we are asking that you notify us if you are receiving the paper and do not want it; if you are receiving two copies or more that you do not need; and please notify us if you have a change of address due to implementing the 911 emergency system in your area, if your present address is incorrect, or if you are moving. It costs us 50¢ each time we get an address correction from the Post Office and we receive from 50 to 100 each month. We want to mail the paper to you, if you want it, and we want you to feel free to submit names of those whom you believe will read it. We will continue to do this without charge or obligation as long as we are able to do so. **Remember to send those changes of address to us!**  
**Thank you.**

Ted J. Clarke, Editor

## THE LORD HAD ALREADY CALLED

A call came on Sunday morning: "Tell mother not to go to worship this morning; we are coming." But mother went right on to Bible study and worship anyway. The daughter was furious when she arrived and no one was home to meet her. She said, "I called you and told you that I was coming and you went to worship anyway..." The mother replied, "I'm sorry, dear, but the Lord had already called."

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37-38).

- Steve Snider

## GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

## THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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