

THE GOOD NEWS: THE LORD GOD SHED HIS BLOOD FOR OUR SALVATION

(John 20:28; Acts 20:28; Romans 10:9)

by Duane Magnani of Witness, Inc.

One day, Jesus asked the most important question men have ever heard:

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 16:15-17)

God's answer is the resolution to all the problems of men. The mission of Witness Inc. is to share that answer with those lost in the world of the cults. The question requests the identity of Jesus. The answer informs us of *who* He is (the Son of God) and *what* He came to do, the work of salvation (the Christ). This answer is called "the Gospel." We can know about the Gospel by going to the Word of God on the subject of salvation.

Why do we need to be saved?

We are all sinners (spiritually dead) in need of salvation (eternal life) through the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:23; 5:12; 6:22-23).

How are we saved?

Jesus is the *only* Savior and mediator between God and men (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5-6). To know Him is to have life (John 8:32; 17:3). We are saved by God's grace through *faith* in Christ, not by any of our works (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). This is how we are "justified" (pardoned and accepted) by God (Rom. 3:28; 4:5; Gal. 2:16).

When are we saved?

Dr. John Witmer, comments on Romans 10:9-13 (emphasis in italic):

In these verses Paul stated the content of that message concerning faith. Confessing with the mouth that Jesus is Lord is mentioned first to conform to the order of the quotation from Deuteronomy 30:14 in Romans 10:8. The confession is an acknowledgement that God has been incarnated in Jesus (cf. v. 6), that Jesus Christ is God. Also essential is heart-faith that God raised Him from the dead (cf. v. 7). The result is salvation...*Yet these are not two separate steps to salvation. They are chronologically together. Salvation comes through acknowledging to God that Christ is God and believing in Him.*

(John Witmer, *Romans, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament*, John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, Eds., Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor, 1983, p. 481).

What is *faith*?

Paul asks: "How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And

how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14) Faith that saves believes the preaching of the "word of faith" (Rom. 10:8). Therefore, one must first "hear" to believe. To be saved, one believes "in his heart" which is manifested by confession that Jesus is truly the "Lord" (Rom. 10:9). *Faith is trust in the evidence.* The evidence is *the Gospel* (1 Pet. 1:23,25).

What is the *Gospel*?

To believe the Gospel, the good news about Christ—is to be saved (Rom. 1:16). There is factual content in the Gospel. What is it? To the Corinthians, Paul declared "Christ" as the One who died and rose *bodily* for our salvation (1 Cor. 15:3-4; John 2:18-22; 10:17-18). All this is about "Christ." However, not everyone accepts the Gospel (1 Cor. 2:13-14), even though people can comprehend the message. It wouldn't be preached if it couldn't be understood (Acts 16:31). One way that God reveals the identification of the Savior is by the very titles of Jesus.

Who was *Christ* Jesus to Paul?

Paul preached "the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Cor. 4:4). When Jesus looks in a mirror, He sees the glory of God (Heb. 1:3). This "Christ" is He "who is over all, God blessed forever" (Rom. 9:5).

Who was the *Lord* Jesus to Paul?

Paul explains his mission: "For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord" (2 Cor. 4:5a). Therefore, it should be no surprise that just a few verses after declaring Jesus "God" to his Roman brethren (9:5), he stresses that for salvation, one must see and confess this God is the same "Lord" of the Old Testament (Rom. 10:9-13; verse 13 quotes Joel 2:32; cf. Peter's first sermon at Acts 2:21). That's why Jesus is "*Lord of all*" (Acts 10:36)!

Who was the *Son of God* to the apostles?

The Jews attempted to murder Jesus on a number of occasions. John reported that they wanted to kill Him because He: "was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal to God (John 5:18b; cf. 10:30-33; 19:7). They were upset about the claims of Christ because they knew God didn't share His glory with anyone (Isa. 42:8). Jesus reacted by declaring Himself equal with God by deserving the very same "honor" that Yahweh received—otherwise the Father Himself is dishonored (John 5:23). Someday the Father will receive the "glory" that is due to Him—when everyone confesses Jesus is "Lord" (Phil. 2:9-11).

Any gospel which doesn't acknowledge the deity of Christ is *false* (2 Cor. 11:3-4; Gal. 1:6-9). It is just as *non-Christian* as one not acknowledging the deity of the Father. The true Gospel clearly declares Jesus is the "Son of God" (Rom. 1:1-4) who died for our sins (John 3:16). This is the first thing Paul preached (Acts 9:20; Gal. 1:11-16) and the primary thing John wanted people to know (John 20:31).

Who was the *Savior* to the apostles?

The world needs to hear about the One that saves—the only Savior, God Himself (Isa.

43:11; 45:21-22). This One Savior says: “You are my Witnesses,” declares the Lord, And My servant whom I have chosen, In order that you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me.” (Isa. 43:10). Therefore, He punished Israel for worshipping false gods (Acts 7:43). The Christians knew that. So, every one of them would only worship the true God—the Lord Jesus Christ. In worship, they called upon His name (1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 10:12-14; example Acts 7:59-60). “Jesus” is the name above all. The Father receives “glory”—when, and only when, we worship the Son. And some day everyone will (Phil. 2:9-11). But is better to worship Him now, before it is too late. For there is *no name* under heaven except the name “Jesus” by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

The common faith of the Church is “by the righteousness of our *God and Savior*, Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. 1:1; cf. 1:11; 2:20). Thomas no longer doubted Christ’s resurrection when he testified to Jesus: “My Lord and my God.” (John 20:28). At that time He truly obeyed the first commandment: “You shall love the Lord your God” (Matt. 22:36). Paul was commanded to preach by the Father, who is “God the Savior” (Titus 1:3). Until our preaching is done, we are “looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of our great *God and Savior*, Jesus Christ.” (Titus 2:13) The one who preaches the identity of this *real* Savior and no one else, is a “witness” for Jesus (Acts 1:8). We must “witness” this message that the world needs now. So, that’s why we call ourselves Witness Inc.