

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XVII

October 5, 2008

No. 40

## Receiving The Free Gift

Jerry Fite

**E**ternal life is a free gift of God. The Bible plainly affirms this as fact. “*For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life...*” (Romans 6:23). Since eternal life or salvation is a free gift, does everyone automatically receive it? If not, how does one receive the free gift?

John writes, “*But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God...*” (John 1:12). Receiving Christ, is the key to salvation from our sins, becoming children of God and eternal life. Jesus is the true and living way, and the only way to the Father in Heaven (John 14:6). How does one then, receive Christ and enjoy the blessings of the free gift?

It is noteworthy to read how the religious world answers this question. In a little pamphlet handed out entitled, *Good News For Everyone*, their answer is found in *Revelation 3:20*. “*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him...*”. Opening the door of you heart and inviting Jesus into to your life is the pamphlet’s an-

swer to our question. Yet, this same pamphlet instructs readers that since eternal life is a free gift, one cannot earn it by one’s good works, such as “*going to church, or by baptism, or anything else*”. Has one earned the free gift, because they must open their heart, invite Jesus in, and say the sinner’s prayer?

Doing something is essential to receiving the gift, even though it is “free”. The writer of the pamphlet rightly understands that there is a difference between earning one’s salvation (our own merit) and receiving the free gift (meeting the conditions). If not, the writer contradicts himself or herself in the same tiny pamphlet.

Some will make a distinction between faith, believing on Jesus, and works, being baptized, by saying as the pamphlet indicates, that baptism is a “work” and faith does not fall into the same category. According to Jesus, this is not true, for He said to the multitude, “*This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent*” (John 6:29). Belief or faith is a work, and it is approved by God. Being baptized is also a work approved by God, and essential to salvation. (Mark 16:16). In

the New Testament, faith is contrasted with “works of law” (Romans 3:20), not “works of obedience”. In fact, deeds of obedience are essential to perfecting saving faith. In the context of Abraham’s example of “works” of obedience, James writes, “*Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect*” (James 2:22).

The question is not, does one have to do something in order to receive the free gift, but what must one do. The pamphlet teaches one must pray a sinner’s prayer where one confesses that he or she is a sinner, believes Jesus is the only way, and receives Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Inspired men, guided by the Holy Spirit, commended men and women to “confess Jesus as Lord”, “repent” of ones sins, and “be baptized for the remission of sins” (Romans 10:9, Acts 17:30, Acts 2:38).

One must do something to receive the free gift of eternal life. We exhort you to comply with the conditions revealed by inspired men, approved by the Lord, and not that of uninspired men and women.