

Salvation ... the Roman Road or the Jerusalem Road?

Let's begin by talking about the Roman Road Plan of Salvation, which by the way, is used by virtually ALL denominations (their ministers and lay workers) today. Afterward, we will compare that to the Jerusalem Road Plan of Salvation, which is very clearly established in the Bible, as first implemented, and consistently used, by the "original" New Testament leaders and "foot print followers" of our Lord Jesus Christ and documented in numerous places in the New Testament.

Before getting started, I would like to mention something which is very important to understanding my purpose in doing this. I would like to begin this by drawing a parallel between me telling someone how to be saved (or how to make it to Heaven), with that of me telling someone who wants to go from Bogie Chitto, MS to Orlando, FL, to take I-55 South ... and to really be sincere when they did it; to believe in their heart that will definitely make it to Orlando, FL and to NOT let anyone try to convince them otherwise.

While telling them to take I-55 South out of Bogie Chitto MS would NOT be a lie, it would be only PART of the truth. Furthermore, ****IF**** telling them to take I-55 South was the only thing I told them (and they didn't receive ADDITIONAL truth somewhere by someone or by some means) they would not make it to Orlando, FL because I-55 does NOT go to Orlando, FL. And, that's what concerns me about what multitudes are being told by trained ministers and lay workers today, who have been indoctrinated ... trained and taught ... to "parrot" the Roman Road Plan of Salvation regarding how to be "saved" ... or how to make it to Heaven.

Now, having said all of that, ****IF**** I have an axe to grind, spiritually speaking, it would be with those who have come face to face with the Apostles' One God Monotheistic Doctrine, but they totally reject it AND fight against it, and continue to tell people only PART OF THE TRUTH, clinging to their traditions and doctrines of man, instead. Now, that gets me worked up.

For anyone to assure someone that they will definitely make it to Orlando, FL by merely taking I-55 South out of Bogie Chitto, MS ... and to oppose someone like me OR to try and discourage someone from listening to someone like me (who very definitely knows there is a whole lot more to it than merely taking I-55 South out of Bogie Chitto, MS, to make it to Orlando, FL), is a very serious matter. Now, let me quickly add something: I believe all of the Bible and only "some" of what is proclaimed by those who are on the heavy traveled "wide road" as they practice the Roman Road Plan of Salvation. How we use the Scriptures and what we "say" in relation to them had better harmonize with the preponderance of the Scripture evidence, found written verbatim upon the pages of God's Holy Word, or it is NOT Truth IN ITS ENTIRETY. That's where the problems come in. Part Truths can be just as destructive as an outright lie. Therefore, because of what I have independently researched and studied in the Word of God, over the years, I know there is more to it than the Roman Road. As a matter of fact, there's an entirely different Road ... the Jerusalem Road. It is the way that is "strait and narrow" and few find it and travel it. Think about that: According to Jesus, Himself, the crowd is WRONG! That should be a clue.

At any rate, it disturbs me that those who use the Roman Road Plan of Salvation will tell a lost person, who sincerely recites the words of one of the various versions of the "Sinner's Prayer", that they are ready to go to Heaven, right then and there ... POOF ... just like that! And, we'll get more into that in just a minute.

By the way, I am neither Protestant NOR Catholic. Instead, I am an independent Bible student and teacher. And, I am, indeed, a non-denominational layman, who uses the Holy Bible as the rule and guide of my faith and moral conduct, NOT the publications, creeds, articles of faith and by-laws of any religious organization or denomination. In other words, I base my faith upon the preponderance of Scriptural evidence found written verbatim upon the pages of the King James Version of the Word of God ... which is the final authority on any subject of faith and practice as far as I am concerned.

While we are talking about the Roman Road, PLEASE bear in mind that the Book of Romans was addressed, and written, to CHRISTIANS AT ROME (people who were already saved ... NOT TO UNSAVED, RANK, SINNERS). Therefore, why anyone uses admonitions to Christians to establish a Plan of Salvation for rank sinners is really a strange approach to take. But, Christians at Rome being targeted audience of the Book of Romans is the very FIRST thing that MUST be considered and clearly understood. Now, with that in mind, here's the Roman Road Plan of Salvation (and if you doubt or question this presentation, all you have to do is look it up in an encyclopedia or just go to a search engine on the Internet and type in the words "Roman Road Plan of Salvation", and you will see for yourself). Also, if you have been down that "Roman Road", as I have, you'll know ... or will soon find out ... that I am really telling it like it is.

The following is how most people are taught to use the Roman Road Plan of Salvation: They will tell a person it is very easy to be saved (which is a true statement). Then, they will walk them through the following steps:

Step 1. They'll tell the person to realize they are a sinner. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" (Romans 3:23) ... which is very true.

Step 2. Then, they'll tell them to realize that a price must be paid for their sin. "...and without shedding of blood is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22) "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" (Romans 5:12) ... still, all very true.

Step 3. Next, they'll tell them to realize that a price had to be paid for their sin AND that the price has already been paid by Jesus Christ! "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23) "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) ... again, all very true.

Step 4. Then, they'll tell the person to ask Jesus to come into their heart and save their soul, and to accept His sacrifice as the punishment for their sin. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9) ... here's where the trip down I-55 South (so to speak) begins.

Step 5. At this point, they'll ask the person if they would like to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior right then. If so, they will ask the person to repeat after them the words of one of the versions of the "The Sinner's Prayer". And, they are saved at that very moment! Right then and there. POOF! Just like that!

Here's one of the versions of "The Sinner's Prayer": "Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I know that without you I will spend eternity in Hell when I die. But, you said that you would save me if I would call upon You! Please cleanse me of all my sins Lord, and come into my heart. I thank you for saving me, help me now to live a life that's pleasing to You! I pray this in Your Name, Amen."

In addition, the person will probably be told that it is not the "accuracy" of every word that they've just said that's important, ... but rather, it is the "sincerity of their heart" that really matters!

And, after a person has gone through the steps of "accepting Christ as their personal savior", praying the sinner's prayer or walking down the aisle, shaking a preacher's hand and making a public profession of faith, the Roman Road minister or lay worker will usually conclude by welcoming that person into the Family of God. And, depending upon the situation, will either announce to the congregation, and ask for a motion and a second for them to be accepted into that particular "Roman Road Church" ... OR, if not in a church setting, will give them some literature and encourage them to get connected to a church in their area ... which of course uses the Roman Road Plan of Salvation.

Water baptism is very seldom if ever mentioned up front. If it is, it is presented like optional equipment on a car, which is not actually necessary for salvation. You can take it or leave it. And, depending upon the denomination, a person can be immersed or sprinkled in the "titles" of "Father, Son and Holy Ghost" (or Holy Spirit). At any rate, the Roman Road Plan of Salvation does not mention repentance, water baptism or being born again of water and of the Spirit ... being endued with power from on high ... the BIBLE WAY.

So, this gets me to what I want to get across to the multitudes who are in the valley of decision and those who are on ... or have "traveled down ... the Roman Road" with the hope that I can encourage them to get on the "Jerusalem Road", instead ... REGARDLESS of the denomination they consider themselves to be because it is NOT going to matter what the name on the sign out front is when that long awaited trumpet sounds!

In addition to being some essential things missing in the Roman Road Plan of Salvation, it's "easy believeism" is popular and widely held ... and more often than not consists of faith without works, which according to the Book of James is "dead". It is by grace we are saved and not of works lest any man should boast. But, true faith will produce works just as surely as a living plant ... or vine ... or tree ... will produce fruit. I realize that there are multitudes traveling down the Roman Road, which is why the Lord put it upon my heart years ago to put bill boards up along the way to commend them on their desire to serve the Lord, and to let them know that they need to get on the Jerusalem Road to actually make it to Heaven. And, while the Roman Road can certainly be a starting place, it, alone, will not take you all the way to Heaven. There is more to it than that.

Also, I want it clearly understood that people who are bound (spiritually speaking) and I once was, need a life transformation ... not just a reformation. They need deliverance ... not just a few words spoken to them in an attempt to pacify their guilty conscience or ease their troubled mind. As I've already stated, I am NOT against someone reciting the words to one of the various versions of "The Sinner's Prayer" ... and I'm NOT against someone "accepting the Lord as their personal Savior" ... and I'm NOT even against someone walking down the aisle in front of a congregation of people and making a public profession of faith. All of these rituals can "starting places" for anyone who desires to turn their life around, and develop a right relationship with God. But, there's a lot more to it than that. None of these rituals, alone, can transform, or deliver, a person who is bound. Also, none of these rituals actually confirm that the person has fulfilled any of the very basic requirements of repentance and being "born again" of water AND of the Spirit, as unequivocally established by our Lord.

Please consider the following ...

The Jerusalem Road Plan of Salvation was presented by Peter, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, on the Day of Pentecost in Acts Chapter 2 ... following Jesus' death, burial, resurrection and ascension. Upon being specifically asked what sinners must do, here's what God inspired Peter to say, as recorded in 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." A gift is not something earned. But, Peter didn't stop there. In the very next verse (verse 39) he said, "For the promise is to you, your children, to those that are afar off, even as many as the Lord OUR GOD shall call". So, my question for those who say this is not for us today, or those who oppose the Apostles' One God Monotheistic Doctrine, is this: "Has God stopped calling?" ABSOLUTELY NOT!

Remember, Peter had been given the "keys" of the Kingdom by Jesus prior to this. Now, to confirm the fact that Acts 2:38 is the Jerusalem Road Plan of Salvation, please carefully and prayerfully consider and evaluate this presentation of the Jerusalem Road Plan of Salvation ...

Step 1. Repentance of sins

Jesus said in Luke 13:3 "... except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And He COMMANDED in Luke 24:47 that REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS should be preached in HIS NAME among ALL nations, BEGINNING at Jerusalem.

What is repentance? It is coming to God as you are ... but NOT staying as you are. Repentance is being so sorrowful and grieved for your sins and transgressions that it initiates a change in your direction ... in your thoughts, your attitude and your actions ... OR doing an about face ... or a 180 as some people call it. Turning away from the things that the Word of God and the Spirit of

God admonishes us to abstain from, NOT continuing to wallow in it or to just sweep it under the rug. Once a person understands who Jesus "really" is, Repentance is the first step in their approach to God. Unfortunately, many people are never told anything whatsoever about the importance of repentance or what it means to truly repent.

Step 2. Water Baptism in the precious name of Jesus ..

The "name" which Jesus alluded to in Matthew 28:19 is JESUS. And, those who had ears to hear did hear. The name of Jesus is to be applied in water baptism, as documented in Acts 2:37-41; Acts 8:14-17; Acts 10:44-48; and Acts 19:1-6, and is for the remission of sins. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:1-8 that unless a person is "born again" of water AND of the Spirit, they cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. And, He said in Mark 16:16 "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The Greek word that was translated into English as "baptize" means to fully wet, immerse, submerge, plunge into, dip or bury. Whereas repentance symbolizes the death of Christ, water baptism symbolizes His burial ... which is a complete entombment not just sprinkling a little dirt on a corpse.

Repentance and Baptism in the precious name of Jesus for the "remissions of sins" and receiving the "gift" of the Holy Ghost is what God inspired Peter to say in Acts 2:38, in response to those who asked him what they must do. Water can't wash away sins, but invoking the name of Jesus in faith at water baptism sure can .. and does.

We are admonished in the Bible that whatsoever we do in word AND deed, we are to do all of in the NAME of Jesus. And, that includes water baptism ... something that many people don't even believe is important in regard to salvation. However, our Lord ... God Incarnate .. (God manifest in the flesh (according to 1 Timothy 3:16) traveled about 60 miles either on foot or by animal to be baptized. And, He had no sins to repent of, but said it was to "fulfill all righteousness". He is the example which we are to pattern ourselves after. ****IF**** it was THAT important to Him, it should certainly be important to you and me. And, let me insert something here, the thief on the cross is used as a example by many who don't believe baptism is important. But, the thief died in the period of time of the Old Testament Law, and BEFORE the birth of the New Testament Church on the Day of Pentecost in Acts Chapter 2. The man in the middle was our example for today ... NOT the thief on the cross. By the way, there is no contradiction in the Apostles' carrying out Jesus' Great Commission of Matthew 28:19 by invoking the NAME of Jesus in water baptism instead of invoking the titles of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. They understood what Jesus meant and who Jesus "really" is. However, that is a complete Bible Study in and of itself ... which is covered on my on line Bible Study.

Step 3. Receiving the Holy Spirit (the Bible way)

Many professing Christians are told they have been born again ... endued with power from on

high ... at the very moment they believe or get baptized in water. But, did you know there are documented accounts in the Bible where people received the Holy Ghost AFTER they believed and both BEFORE and AFTER they were baptized??? So, believing and baptism doesn't mean a person has automatically been born again ... the Bible way. However, I'm not aware of anyone being born again ... the Bible way ... prior to repentance since the birth of the New Testament Church in Acts Chapter 2. In Acts Chapter 8, Simon the sorcerer believed and had even been baptized. And, when he saw the demonstration of the Power of the Holy Ghost, he offered them money so he would be able to impart this power to others, too. But, Peter rebuked him and told him to repent because his heart was not right with God.

Also, Jesus told Nicodemus this in John Chapter 3 ...

Verse 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Verse 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Verse 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

According to Jesus, Himself, although you cannot see the wind, or know where it came from or where it is going, there is a "sound" heard when it is present, likewise, there is a "sound" heard when everyone is born of the Spirit. So, my question to those who oppose the Apostles' One God Monotheistic Doctrine is this: "What is the sound to which Jesus referred?"

Multitudes are being told today that they've been born again, and endued with power from on high, the moment they were saved by grace through faith ... when they believed, OR got baptized in water OR accepted Jesus as their personal savior. But, that doesn't harmonize with the PREPONDERANCE of Scriptural evidence found written VERBATIM on the pages of God's Holy Word. While you can see the works of the wind or where the wind has been, you cannot "see" the wind. But, Jesus said, "thou hearest the sound thereof". The "sound" of the wind is the evidence or witness of the wind's presence. At any rate, Jesus used the "sound" of the wind as an analogy to describe EVERY ONE that is born of the Spirit.

While the effects of the wind can be seen and being baptized in water certainly can be seen, the wind, itself and being born of the Spirit is NOT something that is visible. But when a person is born of the Spirit, according to Jesus, Himself, there will be a "sound" heard ... as a witness or as evidence. The "voice" of the wind is the "sound" or the "sound" of the wind is its "voice". And, it was by this witness or evidence which Jesus said would be heard with everyone that is born of the Spirit. Therefore, for anyone who desires the Truth in its entirety ... and not just part truths ... it is absolutely essential to research and study what is documented by the preponderance of Scriptural evidence found written verbatim upon the pages of the Word of God at the moment anyone was born again ... of the Spirit ... from the birth of the New Testament Church in Acts Chapter Two throughout the rest of the New Testament. And, what follows, I submit to you is the preponderance of Scriptural evidence, which by the way, you will notice applied to ALL who were born again of the Spirit ... NOT just applied to some, but not to others ...

1) the 120 in the upper room in Acts 2:1-4, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and

began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

2) the household of Cornelius in Acts 10:44-48, ... While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.

3) the 12 disciples of John in Acts 19:1-6, ... And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

I have never had anyone to show me a single place in the Scriptures since the birth of the New Testament Church in Acts Chapter 2 where anyone received the Holy Ghost and it is specifically stated that they did not speak with tongues. Therefore, it is a misrepresentation of the Word of God for anyone to say someone did not speak in tongues when they received the Holy Ghost just because it was not specifically mentioned ... and to totally disregard or attempt to discredit the documentation of these three specific places I have presented in Acts Chapter 2, Acts Chapter 10 and Acts Chapter 19.

If you have truly read and studied the birth of the New Testament Church in the Second Chapter of the Book of Acts, you know when God poured out His Spirit and they began to speak with other tongues and the Spirit of God them utterance that this caused quite a stir in Jerusalem that day. Many came to see what was going on. There were some who were amazed and in doubt but there were others who mocked and accused them of being drunk. But, Peter's response to them was that this is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel. And, he quoted from the Old Testament Book of Joel Chapter two where God had prophesied hundreds of years before that He was going to pour out His Spirit. In addition to this, it was specifically mentioned in Acts 10:44-48, that speaking in tongues is how the Jews, who had come with Peter to Cornelius' house, knew that the Gentiles had also received the Holy Ghost just like they did ... "for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." Now, let me insert something, having been down the Roman Road, myself, because it is something which is not believed nor understood, most are taught to either flatly deny speaking in tongues for us today, or that speaking in tongues was only for the Apostles and some in the First Century Church to carry the gospel to those who didn't speak their language, or was only used as a sign to unbelievers. Some will even go so far as to say that speaking in tongues today is of the devil. But, that does NOT harmonize with the preponderance of Scriptural evidence found written verbatim upon the pages of the Word of God. And, again, this subject is covered in my on line Bible study ... which has a link on the left side to one of my other web pages "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"

Getting back on track ... the Greek word Jesus used in John 3:8, which was translated into English as "sound" means ...

1) a sound, a tone

a) of inanimate things, as musical instruments

2) a voice

a) of the sound of uttered words

3) speech

a) of a language, tongue

At any rate, the following examples is where the Greek word ... that was translated into English as "sound" in John 3:8 is used in other places ...

Acts 7:31 When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

Acts 9:4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Acts 9:7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

Acts 10:13 And there came a voice to him, Rise , Peter; kill, and eat.

Acts 10:15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

1 Corinthians 14:7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

1 Corinthians 14:8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

1 Corinthians 14:10 There are , it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.

As God's people, we are to be different ... and NOT like the crowd. The crowd is wrong. We're to be different. And, we're different for a reason ... and there's a reason for the difference.

2 Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

Deuteronomy 14:2 for thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.

1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

It is my most earnest and sincere prayer that you will very carefully and prayerfully evaluate this important message and answer the question ... Salvation ... the Roman Road or the Jerusalem Road? Thank you ... and God bless!

Bobby Richardson