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From the time God called Abraham to go to a country that he would show him, with a promised blessing when this command was obeyed, God has always required certain people to go to certain places for safety or blessing. None whom God called could reach His blessing without doing what God told him to do.

We call to memory that when God brought a flood upon the earth, He placed salvation from the flood for Noah and his family in the ark and all had to go into the ark to be saved from death. Many good people in our time would argue that God has as much power out of the ark as in the ark. They would argue that going into the ark was unnecessary, and they would have been preaching salvation out of the ark.

In Numbers 21, God promised healing for snake bite only in the brazen serpent that Moses hung upon a pole. But many in our time would claim it is silly for all to have to look at one snake when they could make many snakes and hang them up all over the camp. That way, they would argue, each man could look at the snake of his choice. They would argue that it made no difference which snake you looked at, just so you looked at some snake. They would say if all were not pleased with the snakes they then had, then they could make a snake to suit themselves, for people who

looked at one snake were just as good as those who looked at others.

When God promised Abraham a country that would flow with milk and honey, it was far out of Egypt and far on the other side of the waters of the sea and no one obtained the promise of that country while he remained in Egypt. Israel had to leave Egypt and go where that country was located in order to enjoy its blessings. No one could have enjoyed the fruits of the promised land had they refused to go to that country.

After they went over into the promised land, God located six cities of refuge (Num. 35:9-28). When a man's life was in danger, God provided salvation from the avenger of blood only in these cities and a man had to go to these cities to find protection when danger came.

Under the old dispensation God ordained certain places of worship, and those who rendered scriptural or acceptable worship to God had to go where God recorded His name. All of these examples are from the old dispensations of the Patriarchy and the Mosaic.

Coming now to the New Testament, I call to your attention that Jesus purchased His church with His blood (Acts 20:28). Being purchased by the blood of Christ, it became a divine institution in which Jesus is said to be the head and that church is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). This church is built upon a divine foundation of which Jesus is the

chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20-22). All people who are reconciled to God must be reconciled in this one body or church (Eph. 2:16). The God of heaven has located salvation from all past sins in, not out of His church. There is no promise of any man being saved outside the church of Christ and here is where the great battle comes between Truth and error—between the human churches and the church of Christ.

Some people argue that there are people who are just as good in one church as in another. That is true, but God does not save us on account of our goodness, but on account of our spirituality. Jesus teaches that we must be born again (John 3:3-5). There are good men outside the Masonic Lodge as in it, but no man is buried with Masonic honors who does not belong to the Masonic Lodge. Some say we are saved outside the church, then join the church because we are saved. Paul said Christ purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). So if you are saved outside of the church you are saved outside of the purchased possession, and you must claim salvation apart from the blood of Christ.

Some argue that it is God—not the church—who saves. That's true. But **where** does God save? Paul says we are reconciled in one body (Eph. 2:16) and that this one body is the church (Col. 1:18-24). Now, since God reconciles us

in the church, if you were reconciled outside the church it wasn't God who did the reconciling.

Some will ask, "Won't God save me out of the church?" Let Jesus answer. In Matthew 7, He argues that there are only two classes of builders—those who build on the rock and those who build on the sand. The structures of those who build on the sand will fall, but those on the rock will stand. When Peter confessed the Son of God, Jesus answered and said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Since the church is built upon the rock, if you are building outside it, you are building upon the sand and Jesus said your building will fall.

We are reconciled to God in the church or one body (Eph. 2:16). Then if you are saved outside the church, you are saved outside of reconciliation to God. No one would want that kind of salvation for that is an impossibility. Having now learned where I am reconciled to God, the next question to settle is this: "What must I do to come into the place of reconciliation?" Jesus answers by saying we must "hear" His sayings and "do" them to be like the wise builder (Matt. 7:24). In doing the sayings of Jesus, I must "believe" that He is the Son of God (John 20:30). After believing, I must "repent" of my sins (Luke 13:5). After repenting, I must "confess" Him

before men (Matt. 10:32), and in the great commission Jesus not only taught that I should believe, but that I must be baptized in order to reach salvation (Mark 16:16). This agrees with Paul's statement that "as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). So these five commands taught at different places in the New Testament teach me what I must do to be saved.

But why should I do these? Because my eternal happiness depends upon doing the will of the Lord. "Blessed are they that do his commandments that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

If our entrance into the city of God depends upon our doing His commandments, no one can have a hope of salvation short of complying with the same. I should be willing to not only obey for my own salvation, but for those with whom I may associate along life's pathway. As salvation is located in the only church Christ purchased with His own blood, and the way into that church is made so plain, the only reason one can offer for not being saved is that he simply doesn't want to do God's will.

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