

Do you have a question about Bethlehem, the Bible, God, accepting Jesus Christ or some other important issue? Ask one of us, or contact the church office (937-373-4533) or [bethlehemchurch1@yahoo.com](mailto:bethlehemchurch1@yahoo.com).

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### Mark Your Calendars

(More information is available in the weekly bulletins)

- March 19-20 - Man Camp at Butler Springs for men and boys of all ages.
- March 22-27 - Bethlehem Service Week (cleaning, projects, repairs)
- March 23 - Senior High providing supper for group of 17 teens & adults from Cincinnati's BLOC Ministries, who will be serving in our area.
- March 28 - Special guest from Grundy Mountain Mission School (9:30 & 10:30 am)
- March 31 - Adult & Teen Bible classes, 7:00 pm
- April 3 - Easter Egg Hunt, 1:00 pm
- April 4 - Resurrection Sunday
- April 7 - Adult & Teen Bible classes, 7:00 pm
- April 8, 15, 22, 29 - Spring class at Person to Person Ministries in Hillsboro. Tom Claibourne will teach on "The Rougher Edges of Love."
- April 9-10 - CIY Superstart / Believe retreat for grades 4-8. We will participate with 2 other congregations.
- April 13 - Bethlehem will host the FI-County preachers' breakfast and meeting.
- April 14 - Shepherding Meeting, 7:00 pm
- April 21 - Adult & Teen Bible classes, 7:00 pm

**Sorrow looks back.  
Worry looks around.  
Faith looks up.**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED  
Bethlehem Church of Christ  
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ELDERS/PASTORS: Pat Bihl, Terry Parker, Duane Scott, David Tatman, and Kyle Truesdell (Elder Emeritus: Floyd Morris)  
MINISTERS: Tom Claibourne & Christian Martin  
SECRETARY: Donna Woods

Bible Study & Nursery  
Worship & Nursery  
Children's Worship  
Prayer & Praise  
Youth & Adult Programming  
Adult Choir

9:30 A.M.  
10:30 A.M.  
10:30 A.M.  
6:00 P.M.  
6:15 P.M.  
7:15 P.M.

# The Bethlehem Star

March / April, 2021

## A Challenge Letter For Family and Friends

### Theme: Salvation

Few themes or concepts in life are more welcome and appreciated than salvation. In its most basic sense, salvation refers to deliverance from any kind of evil, whether physical or spiritual.

Salvation is being rescued from danger, bondage, disease, or sin. Of course the one that really matters most in the end is being released from the clutches of sin since our sin separates us from the holy Lord God.

In this issue of the STAR we celebrate the amazing gift of salvation from sin, made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on a cross.

### God of Salvation

- *The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation.*" (Ex. 15:2)
- *Salvation comes from the Lord.*" (Ex. 15:2)
- *The Lord is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life — of whom shall I be afraid?*" Ps. 27:1)
- *But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for He has been good to me.* (Ps. 13:5,6)

### Celebration of Salvation

#### Resurrection Sunday April 4

- 9:30 - Bible classes for all ages
- 10:30 - A great celebration of new life and hope through the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

We did not get to celebrate the resurrection together in person last year, so let's fill our building and make this a new beginning as victorious followers of Jesus Christ !

(There will be no evening programming that day)

### God Sent Us a Savior

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator.  
If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist.  
If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist.  
If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer.  
But our greatest need was forgiveness, So God sent us a Savior.

## Thoughts From Tom

### **“The Cross & Us”**

The Bible repeatedly emphasizes that Jesus died on the cross for us since we could not save ourselves from our sins.

Christ suffered and died ...

- .. To become a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45)
- .. For the forgiveness of our sins. (Matt 26:28)
- .. To make us holy, blameless and perfect (Heb. 10:14; Col. 1:22)
- .. To deliver us from the present evil age. (Gal. 1:4)
- .. To reconcile us to God. (Rom. 5:10)
- .. To free us from the slavery of sin. (Rev. 1:5-6)

Jesus’ goal was to restore us to an intimate relationship with God the Father.

Some of the other reasons Jesus died vividly remind us of the importance of our active response to His sacrifice.

Christ suffered and died ...

- .. So that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. (1 Peter 2:24)
- .. To enable us to live for Christ and not ourselves. (II Cor. 5:15)
- .. To give marriage its deepest meaning. (Eph. 5:25)
- .. To create a people passionate for good works. (Titus 2:14)
- .. To secure our resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 6:5; 8:11)

**Are you living like Jesus died for you?**

**What’s your next step?**

## God’s Plan in One Chapter

Acts 2 records the first message explaining salvation after Jesus’ acts of redemption.

Acts 2:22-36 — **The Gospel:** Who Jesus is and what He did.

Acts 2:37-41 — **The Response:** How we should respond and become Christians.

Acts 2:42-47 — **The Christian Community:** How we should live together as Jesus’ followers.

### The Word on Salvation

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.”* — Ephesians 2:8-9

*“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”* — Galatians 3:26-27

### The Cross and Baptism

God has given us the wonderful privilege of responding to His amazing grace in a way that exalts Jesus’ sacrifice for us.

Our baptism not only imitates Jesus’ own baptism, but it reflects His death, burial, and resurrection as we die to our sins and rise to a new life.

*Or don’t you know that all of us who are baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”* — Romans 6:3,4

## The Word on Jesus and Salvation

- Joseph was told by an angel, regarding the son to be born to Mary, *“You are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.”* (Matt. 1:21)
- *“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord.”* (Lk. 2:11)
- *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”* (Apostle Peter, speaking by the Holy Spirit in Acts 4:12)

### Paying a Debt for Our Salvation

Many Americans dread the coming of the April 15 tax deadline. Just imagine if you owed more tax money than you could ever pay. You are helpless to cover the debt. Then to your amazement and relief someone offers to pay all you owe.

That is what Jesus did for us on the cross. The old chorus describes it well:

*He paid a debt He did not owe;  
I owed a debt I could not pay;  
I needed someone to wash my sins away.  
And now I sing a brand new song;  
“Amazing Grace,” all day long;  
Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay!*

### A Wonderful Process of Life-change

FAITH — a change of heart  
REPENTANCE — a change of life  
BAPTISM — a change of relationship

## Salvation: The Only Way

If you or I could earn eternal life —

- by being a nice person;
- by going to church;
- by doing good for others;
- or by being religious ...

... then, the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus would have been unnecessary.

But we cannot save ourselves, or in any way earn God’s forgiveness. All we can do is accept or reject God’s perfect gift.

### The Word on the Urgency of Salvation

- ▶ *“How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?”* (Heb. 2:3)
- ▶ *“In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.’ I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.”* (II Cor. 6:2)

### Salvation: What Should You Do?

- ◆ Learn more about it.
- ◆ Accept it God’s way.
- ◆ Celebrate it.
- ◆ Live like you’re grateful for it.
- ◆ Share it with those who don’t have it.
- ◆ Be more holy, loving, and forgiving because of it.
- ◆ Share it with those who do have it.