

### THE LORD OF THE LIVING

January 24, 2016

The Holy Spirit doesn't provide a single instance where anyone ever died in the presence of the Lord. We only have three occasions recorded for us where Christ raised someone from the dead: He returned the widow's only son to her (Lk. 7:11-18); He took Jairus' daughter by the hand, and she arose from the slumber of death; and He spoke, and His good friend Lazarus' soul was united with his body, and he walked from his tomb (Jn. 11:1-46). If only on three occasions He did this greatest of miracles, how can He be called the Lord of the living?

The Messiah is the Lord of the living because those who accept Him as their Saviour through obedience to the gospel will live eternally. Christ made this very plain when speaking to the Sadducees, "which say that there is no resurrection" (Mt. 22:23). He stated, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Mt. 22:32). The only people that die in the presence of the Lord are those that **choose not to live**. The New Testament is the doctrine of Christ (2 Jn. 1:9) and within its pages, we have the process through which eternal life is gained.

Paul said the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16) because the gospel is what produces faith in the heart of the believer (Rom. 10:17). Upon learning about Jesus and the salvation that is found in Him, one will feel the pain of godly sorrow that produces the necessary repentance needed for salvation (2 Cor. 7:10). After the Ethiopian Eunuch learned about Christ, he showed his repentance and also made the good confession (Acts 8:37) of which Paul spoke (Rom. 10:10), that Christ is the only begotten Son of God. Notice that Paul said the confession of Christ was UNTO salvation, not the point where salvation is attained. Christ taught at what point one is saved when he said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:16).

After Saul (Paul) was struck blind on the road to Damascus he was instructed by Jesus to go into the city and THERE he would be told what to do (Acts 9:6). Upon his arrival, he neither ate nor drank anything for three days (Acts 9:9), which indicates that he was fasting. He was also praying (Acts 9:11). Ananias came to him with the promised information and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized" (Acts 9:17-18).

WAIT! Luke didn't record in chapter nine what the necessary information was, but he did in chapter twenty-two. As Paul retold the account of what happened in Damascus, he repeated the instructions of Ananias, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:12-16).

Ananias taught Saul that the final step into salvation was baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). The same act that removes past sins places one in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4). Calling on the name of the Lord must be acting in obedience to His teachings just as Paul did. Remember, Paul showed repentance in his fasting, so it is apparent that he was sorry for his life of sin. We also need to remember that his prayers did not save him either. He had to **do** something to gain the salvation that Jesus told him he would find in Damascus.

God truly is the God of the living. However, we must be willing to choose life and to live for Him each day. It must always be remembered, only those who choose to die in the presence of God do, choose today to live for Him. During the time of miracles, physical death could be reversed by men of God, but spiritual death has never been granted that privilege. Once the rich man “*lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom*” (Lk. 16:23), there was no reprieve from that death. It was at that point, he heard Abraham say, “*between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence*” (Lk. 16:26). When we breathe our last breath in this life our fate is sealed, let us all make sure we join Lazarus in the comfort of God’s glory on that day, and live in the presence of our Lord!