



THE VINE

NORTHWEST CHURCH OF CHRIST // ISSUE 1 // VOLUME 1/JANUARY 2025



**BRO. JOHN E. BRANCH,
MINISTER**

FROM THE MINISTER'S CORNER "IS BAPTISM REALLY NECESSARY?"

In the religious world there is much confusion and controversy over whether one needs to be baptized to be saved. Some believe that it is not necessary for salvation while others believe that it is necessary for obedience. Still others believe that it is optional (i.e., one can choose to do so or not do so). And there are those who believe that it is indeed necessary for salvation – I am among this group. The ones who believe that it is necessary for obedience but not for salvation apparently do not understand that anything that is necessary for obedience is also necessary for salvation. To help to clarify this subject let me speak to the nature, purpose and necessity of baptism.

First of all, baptism is a command from Jesus. When he commissioned his apostles to preach the gospel to all the world, he included in his instructions the command to baptize. Notice the scripture in Matthew 28:18-19, **"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"**, and also in Mark 16:15-16 he states, **"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"**. So, in both cases Jesus commanded baptism. To say that baptism is not necessary for salvation is to say that that Jesus either gave a nonessential command or he didn't know what was necessary for salvation. We dare not say that he didn't know! He is the savior of the world so surely he knows what it takes to save us. So, since it is a command, to be saved we must obey the command to be baptized (as well as all other commands that he has given). Speaking concerning Christ, in Hebrews 5:8-9 we are taught, **"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"**. Therefore, whatever command that he has given we must obey, including baptism, to be saved.

It can be further seen that if one is not baptized, their sins will not be remitted or washed away. On the day of Pentecost the apostle Peter preached the first gospel sermon and people were convinced and convicted of their sins. We read in Acts 2:37-38, **"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 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"**. Also looking at Saul's conversion in Acts 22:16 he was told by the preacher Ananias, **"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"**. In both of these cases, they were told to be baptized for the remission of sins or to have their sins washed away. For one to believe that baptism is not necessary to be saved is to say that a person can be saved in their sins. This can't be true because that's why Jesus came to shed his blood to take away our sins. And we get the benefit of his shed blood only by repenting and being baptized. It is in baptism that we come in contact with his shed blood. He shed his blood in his death and Paul writes in Romans 6:3-6, **"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin"**. So, it is in baptism where our sin problem is taken care of, and without it we would forever be in our sins.



May all who read this realize the necessity of baptism. It was commanded by our Lord. Knowing that the Lord who committed no sin yet willingly gave his life blood on the cruel cross for our sins, should motivate us to gladly obey his command as those did on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41), **"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls"**.

"WISDOM FROM THE ELDERS' CORNER" A NEW YEAR ATTITUDE

Happy New year Northwest family and Friends. The psalmist says in **Psalms 90:12 (CSB)**: "Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts." After the most wonderful time of the year, comes preparation for the year to come. Needless to say, we often anticipate the new year with excitement. We see the new as an opportunity to do away with the old. Ideally, we move toward the new year looking forward to better things. This sounds great, but the issue with a New Year attitude is that anything new eventually wears off. We often lose our initial excitement and all the new we had previously replaced, sadly makes a comeback. However, chances are you have implemented change in your life that lasted for more than a season. You realized the need for change and the change became permanent. The truth is, we don't actually have to wait until next year to improve ourselves.

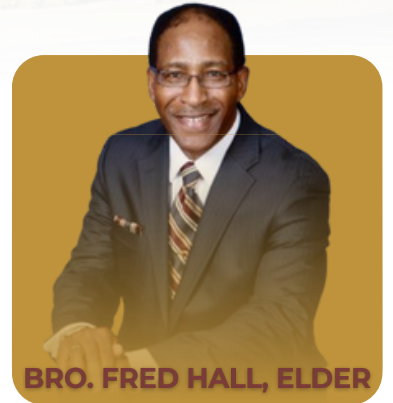
We shouldn't. Jesus said that our life is, but a "mist," here today and gone tomorrow (**James 4:14**). That means our time is limited. Why wait for the new year to become better, when the chance to change is available today? A New Year attitude is one we should strive to hold every day. Scripture tells us that we are called to do away with the "old self," that the old has been crucified with Christ, and we have been raised to new life (**Romans 6:6**). With that in mind, here's how you can start your new year before the new year.

Recognize the need for change: Why assume our lives are guaranteed to be long? Why assume that tomorrow is always available when we feel the desire to change today?

Seek Wisdom: After you desire change, you'll want to know what you should change. As believers, the one we should always turn to is God. The Bible says that He will grant wisdom to those who seek it (**James 1:5**).

Reward Yourself: Some say that growing is a reward in and of itself, and that's true. However, giving yourself incentives to continue to make positive change is not unbiblical.

When You Fail, Try Again: Change might be inevitable in life, but it's also extremely difficult to manage when you're in charge of it. The key is to not give up. God blesses us for our righteousness and becoming more like Christ is nothing but righteousness. There is not a certain time of year to aspire to be more like Jesus. God wants us to start today, so don't wait. Start the new year before you enter the new year.



BRO. FRED HALL, ELDER

Worship

Sunday
Bible Class:
9:00am
Morning Worship:
10:00am

Bible Classes

Tuesday 11:00am
Wednesday Night: 6:30pm

Elders

Freddy Hall
Wille Malone
Jimmy Stone

Ministers

Pulpit Minister:
John E. Branch

Prison Minister:
James Williams

Youth Minister:
Terrance Abrams

Deacons

Reginald Alexander
Toney Branch
Dennis Crutcher
Bobby Lewis, Sr.
Darrell McCauley
Marvin Montgomery
Robert Pope

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Conference Call Line:
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About Us

Northwest Church of Christ invites you to join us in fellowship as we continue to grow. Generations have grown with us, there is something for everyone- whether you are a college student, newly married, or young at heart. We would love for you to become a part of our church family. Since 1978, John E. Branch has served as the minister for Northwest Church of Christ. The congregation currently consists of 180 members and is active in local and foreign ministries. Northwest is currently an active supporter of agape of north Alabama, southwestern Christian college, Forkland Church of Christ, and three churches of Christ and one school in Monrovia, Liberia. Also, it has an active prison ministry at Limestone Correctional Facility in Harvest, Alabama. It is with the warmest of hearts and most joyful of minds that we welcome you to the Northwest Church of Christ Family!



It is with the warmest of hearts and most joyful of minds that we welcome you to the Northwest Church of Christ Family! It is a great blessing to welcome you as a new member into our congregation, and we are eager to share our faith in the Lord with you.

We hope that you look forward to being a part of our congregation. In that case, you may wish to get involved in some of our regular church ministries. Our ministries are geared to meet the needs of people wherever they are while guiding them to the hope of eternal life. Included in our ministries are:

NORTHWEST MINISTRIES

- Audit & Compliance Ministry
- Benevolence Ministry
- Building/Grounds Ministry
- College Outreach Ministry
- Education Ministry
- Evangelism & Outreach Ministry
- Finance Ministry
- Technology & Media Ministry
- Prison Ministry
- Safety and Security Ministry
- Singles Ministry
- Transportation Ministry
- Visitation Ministry
- Women's Ministry
- Youth Ministry





Youth IN ACTION

We are excited to welcome children of all ages to get involved in the life of Northwest Church of Christ! Whether it's through participating in community service projects, helping with church functions, or joining in special events and activities, there's something for everyone to enjoy and contribute. Our goal is to create a fun and welcoming environment where every child feels valued, connected, and encouraged to grow in faith. No matter their age, we invite all children to discover their unique place in our church family. Let's grow and celebrate together!

The Goal of the youth ministry is to grow the next generation of strong spirit-filled Christian in the Lord's Church. We look to achieve this through vibrant, lively, fun and spiritual activities.



- New ministry taking advantage of the nationally established program for training young people in the word of God.
- Participating in the National conventions.
 - Bible Bowl
 - Art
 - Puppets
 - Public Speaking
 - Song Leading



Relatively New activity with young men (growing to young women, hopefully) spending with a weekend in the great outdoors having fun, learning about themselves and Christ.



- In conjunction with the Education Department
- Annual big Weekend Event with classes for all ages
- Outdoor activities
- Food
- Games

NORTHWEST COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Follow Us on
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Visit our **Website** for
more information:

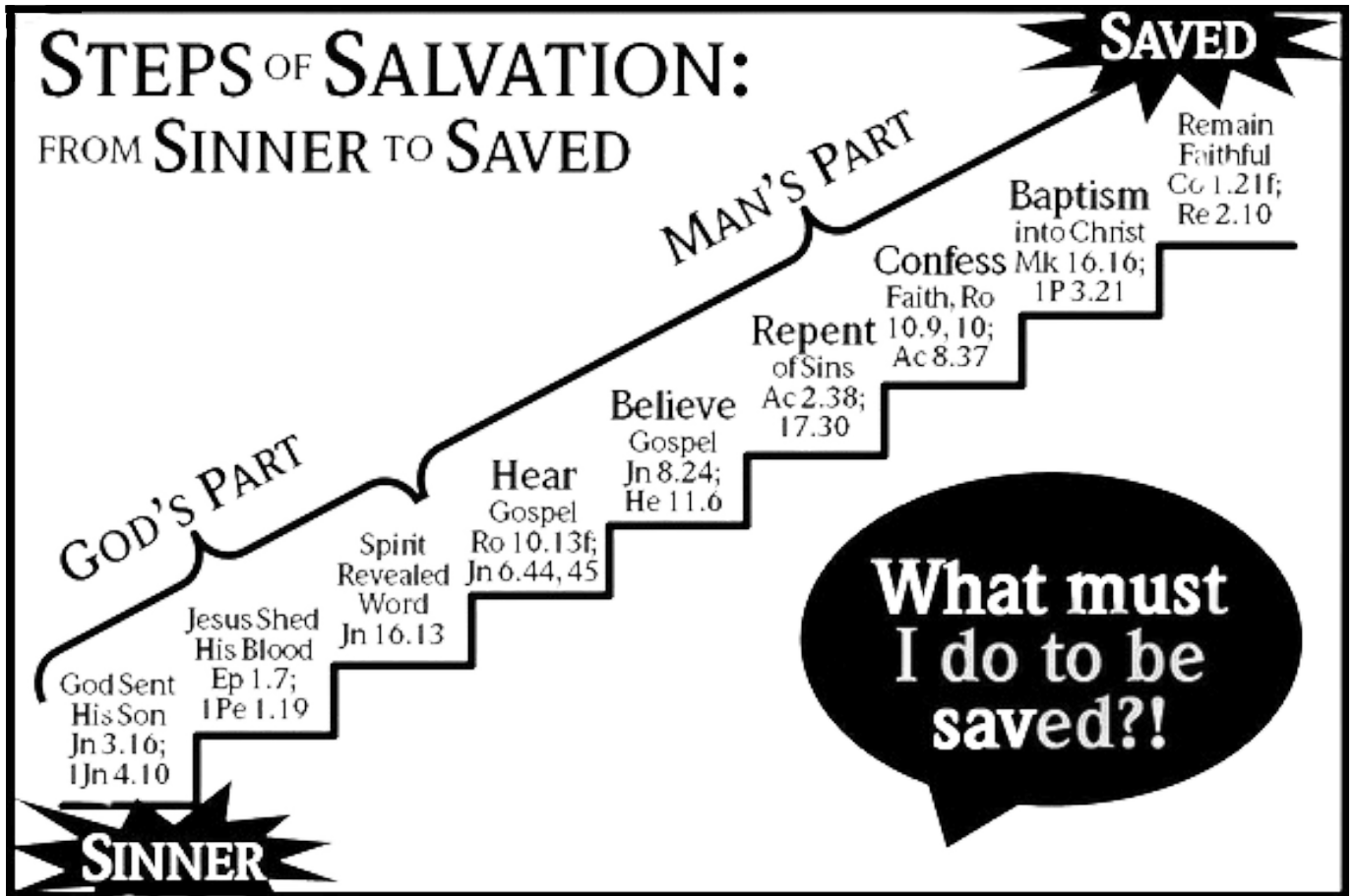
www.northwestcoc.org



Stay connected
beyond Sunday! Follow
us on all social media
platforms for
inspiration, updates,
and community!



HOW ARE WE SAVED?



2024 BAPTISMS

Name	Date
Sharrod Wilson	4/14/24
Kristion Jasiah Montgomery	5/29/24
Christian Cortez Burton	8/25/24
Malikih Montgomery	11/24/24
Tyrese Burton	12/1/24
Danny Wright, Jr.	12/1/24
Makhel Omari Montgomery	12/4/24
Shamarous Pope	12/8/24
Jordan Ryan Pope	12/8/24



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