

# *Redwater Restorer*

*"The voice of one crying in the wilderness..." (Matthew 3:3)*

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## *The Common Salvation Of The New Testament Church*

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### **Address:**

P.O.Box 229  
Redwater, Tx. 75573

### **Phone:**

(903) 671-2369  
(903) 671-2515

### **E-Mail:**

MILBY2@JUNO.COM

### **Web Address:**

WWW.ARKLATEXGUIDES.  
COM/REDWATERCHURCH

### **Edited By:**

Mark Miller

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In today's article we continue in our examination of the identifying characteristics of the New Testament church as set forth in God's word. In this article and the next we will examine God's plan for the salvation of man and the unity that must exist among Christians concerning this plan.

In Jude verse 3 the brother of our Lord spoke of the "common salvation." "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Because the word "common" in this text is coupled with the word salvation, one is almost immediately drawn to it wondering in what sense the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ can be thought of as "common." In Titus 1:4, Paul used the very same word in addressing Titus, "To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 1:4). Again, one cannot help but wonder how the faith revealed by our Lord Jesus Christ could be, in any sense of the word, "common," as we generally use the word today.

If we look up the word that occurs in the two references that we have just mentioned, we find that it comes from the Greek word "koinos." While the word can

mean earthy or profane, that is not the meaning of the word in the two texts mentioned above. As a matter of fact, the word in the texts above means, "that which is shared by all, or by several people." When Jude spoke of our "common salvation" he meant that it was a salvation that had been shared, even in his day, by hundreds of thousands of people, perhaps even millions. When Paul spoke to Titus of "our common faith," he referred not to something that was earthy or profane in nature, but to something that was, and could be, shared by thousands upon thousands of people all over the earth throughout the Christian era of time. The "common salvation," or "common faith," is that salvation and faith that has been prepared by God to be shared by all the people of the earth regardless of whether they are Jews or Gentiles. That is the very reason why Paul could tell the Ephesian Christians, in the fourth chapter of that book, that there is "one faith," just as there is one Lord, one Spirit, one God, etc.

The salvation that was found under the Law of Moses was not a common salvation because the faith that was found under the Law of Moses was not a common faith. That faith and that salvation were reserved for a very special class of people, which was the nation known as the Israelites to whom the law was addressed and given. In contrast with this, the faith of Christ and the salvation which comes through Christ are not reserved for

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any special group or nation of people. They are designed to be shared by all men upon the face of the earth who will come to Christ by faith. This is the reason why all people have the potential to become "*partakers of the divine nature*" of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4).

There is no need in the world for more than one faith because that faith has been designed by God himself to be a common faith, that is, one that can bring salvation to all who will accept Christ as Savior and Redeemer. There is no need for one faith for one denomination and another faith for another denomination. God has designed one faith to perfectly complete every person upon the face of the earth. It is only by acceptance of "*our common faith*" and experiencing the "*common salvation*" that we can have the unity of all believers for which our Lord prayed (John 17:20-23) and the unity of which Paul spoke (1 Corinthians 1:10-13, Philippians 1:27, 3:16; Ephesians 4:1-4).

How did Christians of the first century attain that "*common salvation*" of which Jude speaks? The Bible relates that in order for one to be saved, he must hear the word of God, *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God* (Rom.10:17). He must believe the Gospel he has heard, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned* (Mark 16:16). He must repent of his sins, *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish* (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30). He must confess Jesus as God's Son, *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation* (Romans 10:10). He must be baptized for the remission of sins, *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* (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom.6:3,4; Gal.3:26,27; 1 Pet.3:21). The plan that saved those in Jerusalem would also save those in Rome. Their salvation was common. The plan that saved people in the first century is able to save man today. Our salvation is common with those of the New Testament church if we obey the same plan.

In the religious world today we see many different "faiths" and many different "plans of salvation." Such is foreign to the unity God demands of His people. Often men will go to one verse that speaks of salvation and lay hold of that command and suppose that through fulfilling that one command that he can attain salvation. As we have enumerated, the Bible sets forth several commands that must be fulfilled in order to attain salvation. No one single command will achieve this goal, but obeying each and every command set forth in connection with salvation will appropriate the common salvation of which Jude wrote. The Bible is not a buffet from which we pick and choose our own personal plan. This approach to God's word only creates confusion and division which is unacceptable to God.

In our next article we will continue to examine the plan of salvation set forth in God's word and its ability to bring us in contact with the precious blood of Christ which was shed for all (1 John 2:2). Until then, *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth* (2 Timothy 2:15).

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**Redwater, Tx. 75573**