

## God Has Spoken

### *Why Should I Be Baptized?*

**B**elievers in God disagree on the name, organization & work of the church, and on the nature, purpose and application of the Bible in general. One of the more often discussed – and sometimes the more heated disagreements – concerns the necessity, action & purpose of baptism. Is it pre-requisite to salvation? Is it sprinkling, pouring or immersion? Is it for babies, youth or adults?

Those who understand and obey the Bible have no disagreement that the Bible is God's word revealed to all mankind: *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works* (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Those who understand and obey the Bible have no disagreement that the New Testament is the law which is binding upon all persons living today: *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance* (Heb. 9:15).

Those who understand and obey the Bible have no disagreement that the Bible speaks the same message to all people: *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ* (Eph. 3:4).

With the confidence, then, that we can understand the Bible because God wants us to understand – and because He wrote it so that we can understand it – let us first consider Romans chapter six.

*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds*  
(Hebrews 1:1-2)

## **Romans 6:2-11**

2 *God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

3 *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*

4 *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.*

5 *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

6 *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that hence-forth we should not serve sin.*

7 *For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

8 *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:*

9 *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*

10 *For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

11 *Likewise reckon ye also your-selves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

In verse 2 Paul speaks of those “*that are dead to sin.*” We might ask, how did they become dead to sin? Keep in mind also as we examine the passage, that he is speaking only of those who have already reached that state of being “dead to sin.”

Verse 3 says of this group of people that “*so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death.*” Here another fact is established of them: that they were baptized into Jesus Christ. The Bible tells no other way to get into Christ, as is confirmed in Galatians 3:27 – *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* Paul further states in verse 3 that they were “*baptized into his (Christ’s) death.*” If we read further, through verse 10, we see that, “*in that he died, he died unto sin.*” Therefore, when those baptized were in his death, they were *dead to sin*, as Paul said in verse 2.

To review, how did they become dead to sin? They were baptized into that death. Until they were dead to sin, they were alive to sin (verse 11). The word “death” as used in the Bible refers to a separation: typically a separation of body and spirit, but it is used in other applications as well. The people to whom Paul wrote the epistle to the Romans were baptized into death to sin (separation from sin), so until they were baptized they were alive to sin (in company with sin).

Look again at verse 4. They were “*buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead ... we also should walk in newness of life.*” Their newness of life began upon their resurrection from baptism. Therefore, before they were baptized they were in their old life of sin (see verses 6 & 11).

In verse 6 Paul wrote to those people, the church in Rome, and included himself among them: “*our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve in.*”

How was their old man (old pattern of life) crucified? They weren’t nailed to a cross with Jesus to join him in his death, but they were “*baptized into his death*” (verse 3). Why were they baptized into his death? “*That the body of sin might be destroyed* (verse 6).” The sin in their lives was not destroyed before or without their being baptized. Therefore, until and before they were baptized, sin was still in them, separating them from Christ and God (see Romans 3:23). From the point of their baptism forward they were not serving sin. Before baptism they served sin; after it they did not.

Baptism, then, is the point of separation between sinfulness and sinlessness.

It is obvious, as Paul states in verse 7, that “*he that is dead is freed from sin.*” A deceased person can sin no more, and a person “dead to sin” is no longer guilty of the sins that had been his. Death in the context of the statement had come to them by means of their baptism (verse 3).

The personal application of the facts is made by Paul in verse 8: “*if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.*” Their hope of eternal life with Christ was contingent upon their being dead with him. How were they dead with him? By baptism – verses 3-4. Thus, in verse 11 Paul is able to assure them, “*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves*

*to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

The considerations upon which they were reckoned to be “*dead to sin*” are those considerations named and discussed in the context of this statement – *i.e.* that they had been baptized into Christ’s death. The considerations upon which they were reckoned to be “*alive unto God*” are those considerations named and discussed in the context of this statement – *i.e.* that they had arisen from baptism to walk in newness of life. They were dead unto sin, but alive unto God “*through Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

What is meant by “*through Jesus*”? How was this death and life accomplished “*through Jesus*”? The only contextual relationship with Jesus on the basis of which it might be said that anything resulted “*through Jesus*” is that they “*were baptized into Jesus Christ*” (verse 3).

### **Ephesians 1:3**

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

### **II Timothy 2:10**

*Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

Consider the argument of scripture in Ephesians 1:3 and II Timothy 2:10 – “*God ... hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ – and – salvation ... is in Christ Jesus.* All spiritual blessings, including salvation, are “*in Christ.*” It is essential that we know how to get into Christ. If we are not in Christ we do not have any spiritual blessing, for all of them are in Christ. Receiving Christ gives us *power to become* sons of God (John 1:12) but does not *make* us sons of God. Repentance (turning) from sin is *unto* life (Acts 11:18), but it does not bring one *into* eternal life. Confession is made *unto* salvation (Romans 10:10), but this also is not the step which brings one *into* salvation.

All these carry a sinner in the direction toward Jesus Christ and salvation, but having taken these steps that sinner is not yet either in Christ or saved, nor is he a son of God having eternal life. The New Testament is clear in telling us to:

✓ *believe and be baptized* - Mark 16:16

✓ *repent and be baptized* - Acts 2:38

✓ *confess Christ and be baptized* - Acts 8:36-38

Neither faith, nor repentance nor confession alone – nor all of them together – will save us from sin, put us into Christ, give us eternal life or make us children of God. Only twice does the Bible explicitly tell us what brings a soul “into Christ.” In Galatians 3:27 and Romans 6:3 we read of being “*baptized into Jesus Christ.*” No mentally competent soul is in Christ, a child of God, an heir of eternal life or saved from sin who was not baptized into that state. This is what we read in the Bible – the word of God.

### **I Peter 3:21**

*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:*

Consider next First Peter 3:21. The “*figure*” of which Peter writes is the salvation of Noah by water when the water raised up his boat and separated him from the sin of the world (verse 20). Peter says that, “*like*” that, “*baptism doth also now save us*” (in modern English: “baptism does save us,” or “baptism saves us”). Many who claim today to be Christians contradict the word of Him whom they profess to serve when they teach (either explicitly or implicitly) that “baptism does *not* save us.”

But salvation is not a matter of the water. In the same sentence Peter makes it clear that it is “*not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.*” Some mock the truth by accusing us of trusting in “water salvation.” Apparently, mockers were present in the early churches also, for Peter in this phrase clarifies and specifies that it is not the *water* of baptism that saves. If not the water, then what?

Salvation results from “*the answer of a good conscience toward God.*” The conscience is the judge of a person’s words and actions compared to that person’s knowledge of truth. Thus a person is saved when – knowing that baptism is required in order to be saved – he is baptized in obedience to God and in order to receive the promised salvation. Salvation is a matter of obedience. Will anyone argue that salvation is the answer of a bad conscience – or the rejection of a good conscience (if any such there

could be) – toward God? And yet, the power to save is not in man's obedience, for Peter adds that it is "*by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*" Burial in water of itself has no intrinsic spiritual value or benefit. Jesus was raised by the power of God (Ephesians 1:15-20) as proof that He is the Son of God (Romans 1:4). When a person, because he believes this proof, obeys the word of Jesus (Galatians 3:1) that person is saved (Hebrews 5:9).

Salvation, then, results, not from the strength of man's actions or will, and not from any power in the water, but from the grace of God working through the faith of man (Ephesians 2:8-9), which is evidenced by his taking action in accord with that word of God which he believes.

Despite this carefully worded and inspired explanation of the doctrine of Christ in the New Testament, many continue to teach that baptism is not a prerequisite to salvation. Consider the inconsistency of such teaching as we compare the language of baptism with similar language of other requirements of God.

#### **Mark 16:15-16**

*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.*

Many teach that "he who believes ... shall be saved" (belief properly coming before baptism). Why do they not teach that "*he who ... is baptized shall be saved*" (baptism coming before salvation)? Both are taught in one sentence. Why do all not teach that "*he who believes and is baptized shall be saved*" (both belief and baptism coming before salvation)? Why do men not *speak as the oracles of God* (I Peter 4:11)?

#### **John 8:24**

*I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*

Without belief that Jesus is the Son of God, a person is dead (separated from God) in his sins. Why do men teach this truth, but not teach from the same New Testament that "*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*" (Romans 6:4)? By what reasoning does anyone teach John 8:24, and deny Romans 6:4? Both are

inspired of God, and both use the same language regarding man's death "in sin" and death "to sin."

### **Luke 13:3**

*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

Jesus said that without repentance a soul perishes. Clearly salvation is not by "faith only," as some teach that it is, because if one has faith in (believes) Jesus, he must admit that repentance is also required. But many do require repentance, as Jesus plainly does. Why then is it a common doctrine among religious people that salvation comes before and without baptism? Did not Peter preach by the inspiration of God, "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*" (Acts 2:38)? Why do men today preach a different doctrine?

### **Matthew 10:32-33**

*Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*

Without confession of Christ a soul is denied in Heaven, so clearly salvation is not by "faith only"; salvation is by faith and confession. But there is more; everything the Lord says about salvation is not written in this verse. Repentance is not mentioned here. May we conclude that one may be saved from sin without repenting from sin? Why then does anyone teach that a soul may be saved without being baptized into Christ, where salvation is (II Tim. 2:10)?

When a person is baptized in water as an obedient response to Jesus Christ:

- his sins are washed away (Acts 22:16),
- he becomes dead to sin (Romans 6:2),
- he comes into Christ (Galatians 3:27),
- he rises to newness of life (Romans 6:4),
- he is saved (I Peter 3:21).

Believe that God is in Heaven and that Jesus is his Son. Let that belief move you to cast off every false way and to respect and obey the word of God. Your answer of a good conscience will bring you the peace of mind

and spirit that only God can give. And He gives it abundantly to all who are baptized into Jesus Christ.

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