

21st CENTURY TRUTHS

Volume 1

(*Need for Baptism*)

Issue 8

OBJECTIONS TO BAPTISM?

The Bible is very clear in its teaching on baptism's role in our salvation. It is an act of obedience that is required of us by God "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). The Bible does not teach that baptism is "an outward sign of an inward grace." Neither does it teach that baptism is the only thing necessary in our salvation. There are other conditions of pardon, which are hearing, belief/faith, repentance, and confession of Christ (Rom. 10:9-10, Luke 13:3). We do **NOT** have the right to question what the Lord demands. We must obediently accept it with the same attitude of Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears" (I Sam. 3:9), and unconditional acceptance of Christ who said "not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). If we want to do the will of the Lord, then we will submit to the teaching of the Bible by being baptized for the reason that the Bible gives.

There are many in the world today which still have reservations and seek to change what God has demanded. Although Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16 state that baptism is for the remission of sins, Rom. 6:3-4 and Gal. 3:26-27 teach baptism puts us into Christ, and I Peter 3:21 assures us that baptism doth also now save us, man wants to dispute God's requirement of baptism. Let us look at some of these false beliefs against the necessity of baptism.

OBJECTION: "The Bible says that we are not saved by works (Eph. 2:8-9, Rom. 11:6). If baptism is essential to salvation, salvation would be of works." RESPONSE: We are no more saved by works than a man with a broken back, broken legs, and down in a deep well could save himself by his own actions. However, someone might drop him a rope with a hook on the end and instruct him to hook it onto his belt and they would pull him out. If he "obeys" their instructions, could he "boast" that by his own actions he had "saved" himself? Of course not! But was his obedience essential to his "salvation" from the well? YES! Even so, we do not earn our salvation when we obey God. But obedience is clearly essential to man's salvation (Hebr. 5:9, II Thess. 1:7-8).

OBJECTION: "We are saved by grace. It is a gift of God. Gifts are free. If baptism is required, then salvation is no longer a gift.." RESPONSE: Gifts are free but our reception of them is often condition upon thing that we must do in accepting them. Consider an advertisement which said, "return this card with your address and telephone number and receive a free gift". We understand that we do not get the "free gift" until we have met the required conditions. Then why is it so difficult to see that God's gift of salvation is free but has conditions which must be met. (Hebr. 11:1-30, James 1:22-25, 2:14-26).

OBJECTION: "Before I was baptized, one night, when I was praying, I felt God's presence as he spoke to my heart. Right then I knew I was saved." RESPONSE: Such an objection is contrary to the teaching of I Peter 1:22 which states "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart..." We only know that we are saved by knowing we have "purified your souls in obeying the truth" In I John 2:4, we find "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." How we feel does not prove anything about our salvation (Prov. 14:12). Our feelings are merely a product of what we believe. If we believe the wrong things, we feel the wrong things (Gen. 37:26, 27, 31-35, Acts 23:1, I Tim. 1:12-16)

Have you complied with the conditions of obedience taught in the Bible? Have you held some of the erroneous beliefs that baptism is not essential? If you have not fully obeyed God, won't you now before it is too late.

Randy M. Meyer

FOLLOWING THE PLAN MATTERS!

Consider for a moment a situation where you have decided to build your perfect dream home. You deliver the perfect plans to a qualified builder with the instructions to build it according to the plans. While constructing your home, the contractor decides you should have 1 bathroom rather than 2 1/2, 2 huge bedrooms rather than 4, and a two story "doll house" with no basement rather than a one level "ranch" with a basement. You would find such a blatant disregard for your plans and instructions completely unacceptable.

these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; that that believing ye might have life through His name." (John 20:30-31). In Romans 10:17, Paul emphasizes the need for hearing in that "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." We can also view the 1st century examples of such hearing in Acts 2:22, 37, 8:30-31, and 15:7.

However, many today do the exact same thing with respect to God's plan of salvation. It is nothing short of a complete arrogance on the part of the creature (man) to think they can alter the creator's (God's) divine plan and still be acceptable to Him. Before the world was formed, God determined His plan of salvation and it is up to us to "build" our spiritual lives accordingly.

When one hears God's word with a sincere heart, they begin the second step in God's plan of salvation by **Believing**. "I (Christ) 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" (John 8:24). Christ further stated the all familiar passage in "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Without belief, we can expect no greater than damnation on the final judgment day. (Also see Mark 16:16 and Acts 8:36-37)

"...whereunto even baptism doth also now save us..." (I Peter 3:21)

It is understood that for one to follow a plan one must first hear such. This is also the case in God's plan. One begins by **Hearing** His word. In Acts 18:8, we find "...and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." John also states that Christ performed many other signs "But

The belief that we begin to form in following God's plan of

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CONFESSİON IS NEEDED TO SAVE YOUR SOUL!

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salvation will lead us to the understanding that we have sinned and separated ourselves from God (Rom. 3:23, I John 3:4, 5:17, James 1:13-15). This will cause a remorse within our hearts and a desire to turn away from sinning against Him. We will desire to be pleasing in His sight and therefore we will **Repent**. Those on the day of Pentecost were convicted by hearing the words spoken by the apostles and desired to know "...what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized..." (Acts 2:37-38). When Simon sinned in Acts 8, Peter told him "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness..." (Acts 8:22). Our turning away from sin is not an option. The scriptures state that God "now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30) (Also see Luke 15:21, Acts 2:38)

Once we have heard, believed and repented of our sins, we find that God's plan of salvation further includes **Confession**. As has been stated in an earlier issue, this confession is not that one is a sinner, but rather the confession stated by Peter in Matt. 16:16 in that "...Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Christ stated that we must confess Him before men (Matt. 10:32, Luke 12:8) This is exactly what the Ethiopian eunuch did as recorded in Acts 8. "And Phillip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8:37) Paul admonishes us that "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10) It is impossible to leave this step out of God's plan of salvation and yet be

acceptable.

Although many would like to stop the plan at this point, a common requirement running through God's steps in His plan of salvation is the fifth step of **Baptism**. Although many may deny, the Bible reveals the fact that baptism is a vital part of salvation. Peter instructed those on the day of Pentecost "...Repent, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 2:38) It is through a watery burial and "resurrection" (baptism) that we crucify our old sinful self. (Rom. 6:3-18, Col. 2:12). The necessity of baptism in God's plan of salvation is made very clear in that "...whereunto even baptism doth also now save us..." (I Peter 3:21) (Also see examples found in Acts 2:41, 8:12, 8:38, 9:18, 16:15 & 33)

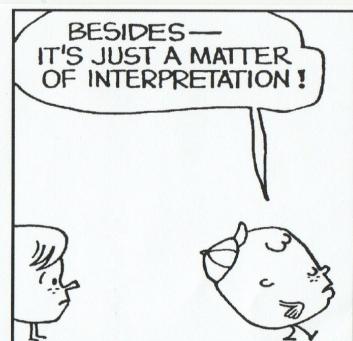
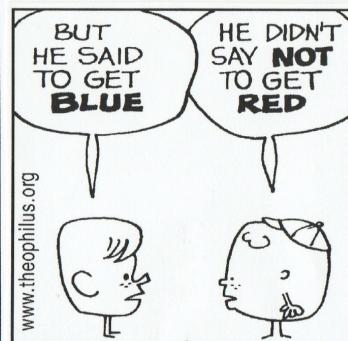
For one to attempt to alter **ANY** part of God's plan of salvation will find no more pleasure with Him than our example of the contractors alteration of the dream house plans. Have you completely followed God's plan. You have now heard His message "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30) The Lord is not wishing that any perish but that all should come to repentance (II Peter 3:9). Won't you accept His call by following His complete plan today. Please contact us at any time to assist you in beginning life anew by adhering to all His commands!

Randy M. Meyer

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