

**SALVATION BY GRACE
NOT BY BAPTISM!**

I Peter 3:20- 21

INTRODUCTION:

We absolutely reject the doctrine that states water baptism is essential to salvation from the penalty of sin. Those who believe baptism is designed to save a person, misinterpret the Scriptures.

The purpose of this lesson is to honestly examine the passages of Scripture used to try and prove that baptism is a way, or a help with the salvation of a lost sinner.

I. IF THE BIBLE TEACHES SALVATION FROM THE PENALTY OF SIN IS BY BAPTISM (which it doesn't) THEN IT CONTRADICTS ITSELF:

A. By Type And Symbol, Implication, And Direct Statement, The Bible Teaches Man Is Justified Before God By Faith Alone.

1. *Romans 4:5 – "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."*
2. *Romans 5:1 – "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*
3. *Ephesians 2:8-9 - "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."*
4. *Acts 16:31 – "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."*
5. The apostle Paul believed and taught that his justification before God was wholly apart from anything he had ever personally done. - *Phil. 3:4-9.*
6. Note: *John 3:15-16; John 3:36; Titus 3:5; I Cor. 1:21.*

B. The Bible Clearly Teaches There Is But One Way To Be Saved From The Penalty Of Sin.

1. Jesus Said, - *"I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* – *John 14:6.*
2. *Acts 4:12 - "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."*
3. *I Timothy 2:5 – "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and Man, the man Christ Jesus."*

4. *Romans 11:6* - Makes it very clear that salvation is by one means or another, but not by two or three different ways – *"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."*

C. If The Bible Does Teach That Water Baptism Is Essential To Eternal Life, Then That Makes Two Plans Of Salvation. It Also Means That The Inspired Word Of God Contradicts Itself When It Teaches There Is Only One Way Of Salvation.

1. There would be one by faith, as so many scriptures clearly state; then there would be one by water baptism; and every body knows that $1 + 1 = 2$.
2. This would mean Jesus was in error in *John 14:6* when Jesus said He was *"the way"* – *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* And if God's Word is in error on this subject, then we are all deceived.
3. If one argues that regeneration comes only by water baptism then that nullifies and contradicts all the Scriptures that plainly teach salvation is by faith alone.
4. Those, who teach baptism to be necessary for salvation, back themselves into the position of making the Bible contradict itself, when they take their argument to its logical conclusion.

D. Jesus Spoke The Truth And There Is No Contradiction In God's Holy Word, When It Declares You Are *"Saved Through Faith"* – *Ephesians 2:8*.

II. MISINTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE:

A. *Mark 16:16* – *"He That Believeth And Is Baptized Shall Be Saved But He That Believeth Not Shall Be Damned."*

1. To suppose that this scripture teaches that baptism is necessary for one to be saved is gross error.
 - a. Mark made a simple statement of truth.
 - b. He could have said he that believeth and is baptized, joins a scriptural church, takes the Lord's Supper, and studies his Bible and gives tithes, and prays, etc. etc., shall be saved.
 - 1} No one argues that a believer should not do these things.
 - 2} But, which, if any of these obedient acts of Christianity are absolutely essential to escape damnation?
 - a} The answer is plainly stated - *"but he that believeth not shall be damned."*
 - b} IF Baptism were necessary for a person to be saved, Mark would have said, "He that

believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned."

2. If baptism does save one's soul, it follows that the absence of baptism is what condemns along with believing.
 - a. *John 3:18* – "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."
 - b. This passage in Mark is in agreement with all Scripture that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ apart from baptism.
3. The thief on the cross was not baptized.
 - a. Yet, Jesus declares him to be saved.
 - b. Did Jesus make an exception with this thief?
 - c. If we believe in making exceptions to what God has said, we are not any better than the pagan religion or cult, which changes the Scriptures to meet their needs.

B. *Acts 2:38* – "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."

1. Their faith that baptism gives us the remission of sins is based upon the thought that the word "*for*" in this passage means, "in order to get".
 - a. This may look like baptismal regeneration, except for the fact that "*for*" is used in different ways. It does not always mean, "in order to get".
 - b. The Apostle Peter uses the preposition "*for*" in *Acts 2:38*, as it is nearly always used in the Bible, to mean, "because of". The Greek word "eis".
 - 1} We say, "He was arrested for speeding", "He was rewarded for bravery", "He was grateful for a favor", and so on.
 - 2} In these cases:
 - a} The speeding caused the arrest, (as the remission of sins led to baptism).
 - b} The bravery resulted in a reward, (as forgiveness resulted in baptism).
 - c} And the favor done caused gratitude, (as salvation caused gratitude expressed in baptism).
 - 3} Remission of sins called for baptism, resulted in baptism, and was the occasion for baptism.
 - c. In this passage of Scripture the word "*for*" means – "because of" according to the Greek work, "eis". Let's read it again, - "*Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ because of the remission of sin.*"
 - 1} Peter urged the people to repent of their sins and because of this repentance, to be baptized.

- 2} It firmly says for people to repent and be save, and goes on to say, then be baptized.
- 2. *Mark 1:40-44* – We must read this passage of scripture in order to help us understand this word “for”.
 - a. Remember *Acts 2:38* – “*For*” – because of conversion, NOT “in order to get”.
 - b. The leper was told to show himself to the priest “*for*” his cleansing and “*for*” a testimony. He was already cleansed, but he needed a certificate.
 - c. Salvation, (eternal life) was experienced before he was baptized, but he was baptized as a testimony of the salvation he had already received by faith.
- 3. Before leaving *Acts 2:38*, let me ask one favor of anyone who believes they must be baptized in order to be saved.
 - a. Look at *Matthew 3:8* – “*Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.*”
 - 1} Who will say we’re to bring forth fruit in order to get repentance?
 - 2} John the Baptist is here dealing with the Sadducees and Pharisees, *V:7*, who wanted to be baptized.
 - b. John would not baptize them until first they brought forth fruit to prove that they had repented. Then he would baptize them.

C. *The Perversion Of - Acts 22:16 – “And Now Why Tarriest Thou? Arise, And Be Baptized, And Wash Away Thy Sins, Calling On The Name Of The Lord.”*

- 1. As you must suppose, hundreds of people assume from this verse that a man can literally wash away his sins by water in baptism. Such a view is not logical; let alone scriptural.
 - a. Many suppose this text says the waters of baptism literally wash away the sins that we have.
 - b. The Bible clearly states where our sins are.
- 2. If sins were on the outer surface of our bodies maybe water could wash them away as it does dirt. However, sin is much deeper than dirt.
 - a. Only the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ can wash away our sins. *I John 1:7* – “*And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin.*”
 - b. Man’s sins lie deep within.
 - 1} Jeremiah realized this when he said, - “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it.*”
 - 2} Moses tells us in *Genesis 6:5* – “*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*”
 - 3} The waters of baptism cannot reach these parts of man, where sins lie. Even if they could, the water has

no power to cleanse them. If the water could, why did Christ have to die?

3. Read the scripture more carefully and you will find that Saul of Tarsus was saved without baptism.
 - a. He already had been saved from sin's penalty on the road to Damascus before he ever arrived in Jerusalem and spoke to Ananias – *Acts 9:6-10*.
 - 1} He had called Jesus "Lord".
 - a} *Acts 9:6 – "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."*
 - b} *I Corinthians 12:3 – "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."*
 - 2} He was praying before his baptism; and Ananias called him "brother".
 - 3} These three unquestionable evidences of salvation were all present before baptism.
 - 4} Further, Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit before baptism.
 - 5} The word "calling" – *Acts 22:16*, in the Greek is an "aorist participle", (epikalesamenos), and means, "having called upon the name of the Lord.
 - b. When he arrived in Jerusalem and God's servant, Ananias began to instruct him what he should do as a new believer. He told him exactly what Jesus had said ought to be told new believers. *Matthew 28:19* - He told him to be baptized.

D. The Perversion Of *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."

1. This passage is used and misrepresented by those who believe baptism saves. These people hasten to use this passage; but it says too much to be any real service to them.
2. The passage does say baptism saves, but it tells just how and in what sense it saves.
 - a. *V: 21* -Not by "*the putting away of the filth of the flesh.*"
 - 1} Only those who are more interested in their own ideas than they are in the truth will take the absurd position that Peter referred in an indirect way to the physical body in using flesh.
 - 2} Not referring to the flesh but the carnal nature; and therefore it can be seen, the passage plainly says baptism does not literally take away sin.

- b. It saves only in the same sense ("*like figure*"), that the water of the flood saved the occupants of the ark. Note:
- 1} The floodwaters did not save the occupants of the ark by putting them in the ark.
 - a} They went in before the water came.
 - b} If they had waited, hoping that the water would put them in the ark, they would have perished.
 - c} In the same manner baptism does not actually put us in Christ.
 - 2} Water did not save the occupants of the ark by making them any safer after the flood came than they were before it came.
 - 3} Water saved those in the ark in only a declarative or demonstrative sense.
 - a} By lifting the ark and carrying it on its bosom, the water manifested that God's favor rested on those inside the ark.
 - b} Baptism likewise, manifests and declares our salvation and our safety in the ark, the Lord Jesus Christ.

E. *Galatians 3:27 – "For As Many Of You As Have Been Baptized Into Christ Have Put On Christ."*

1. Those who believe baptism is necessary for salvation say this scripture teaches water baptism and is literally the way a man gets into Christ; therefore, without water baptism he cannot be in Christ.
2. Note: *V: 26* – clearly states that believers are sons of God by faith, not by baptism.
 - a. Baptism is like a uniform, which a newly-inducted soldier puts on to show which nation and which branch of service he is to serve.
 - b. The uniform did not make him a soldier any more than baptism makes one a Christian.
 - c. He wears the uniform because he is a soldier, and so believers "*put on Christ*" in baptism because they are already Christians.
 - 1} Baptism is to put on of Christ.
 - 2} It is a public declaration of our discipleship.
 - 3} It is assuming before the world the obligation to live for Christ.

F. *What Does "Baptism For The Dead" Mean? I Corinthians 15:29 – "Else What Shall They Do Which Are Baptized For The Dead, If The Dead Rise Not At All? Why Are They Then Baptized For The Dead"*

1. Negatively – The view held by the "Latter Day Saints or Mormons and a few others is the apostle means baptism in itself is a saving ordinances. Apart from this, none will ever be saved. Since a great many have died without having the opportunity of being baptized, somebody else must be baptized for them if they are going to be

saved. They say the apostle is referring to living Christians being baptized on behalf of people who have died un-baptized. In fact, they have many temples in which they carry out the ceremony of baptism for the dead. People are urged to be baptized, some over and over and over again, for dead people who were never baptized in this life. (*I Corinthians*; H.A. Ironside; pages 493-495).

2. Positively – There are over thirty different ideas and interpretations of this passage, but I wish to give the one I believe fits in the context of the passage of Scripture in which it is found.
 - a. One thing we know *I Corinthians 15* deals with the resurrection of the body. Therefore, we might expect to find baptism included in the argument.
 - 1} Paul is compiling proofs of the resurrection and he includes baptism to support his reasoning. This agrees perfectly with many other New Testament passages where baptism points to the resurrection.
 - 2} Note: "*Else what shall they do which are baptized with the promise of rising from the dead?*"
 - b. Paul did teach the resurrection strongly, both here and in *Romans 6*, and baptism helps one believe it.
 - 1} For baptism IS a resurrection as well as a burial.
 - 2} One commentary has it – "baptized in the belief of the resurrection of the dead, their emersion from the baptismal waters not only commemorating Christ's resurrection, but anticipating their own."

The conclusion to misinterpretation of scripture: A question to be asked before we continue. If baptism washes away sin what happened to the sins of the people in the Old Testament times when the ordinance of baptism did not exist? Where they lost?

III. BAPTISM AND GOSPEL SEPARATION:

A. Baptism Does Not Save, But Is a Design To Show What Has Already Taken Place (namely salvation) Is Very Well Proven By The Apostle In *I Corinthians 1:17* – "*For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*"

1. Paul absolutely says that baptism and the gospel are two separate things.
 - a. Paul was sent by Christ not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.
 - b. We are told what the gospel is in *I Corinthians 15:1-4*.
 - c. If baptism was necessary for salvation what did Paul mean when he said, "*I thank God that I baptized none of you . . .*" He goes on and names only three people he did baptize.
 - (1) How could Paul be thankful that he baptized on only three at Corinth if baptism was necessary in order to be saved?

(2) Point is he preached the gospel which, *"is the power of God unto salvation"* – *Romans 1:16*.

2. Paul says it is the gospel by which ye are saved.
 - a. The gospel he says is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
 - b. *If* then we are saved this way, it follows that baptism does not save nor has any part in our salvation for it is not a part of the gospel.

B. Positive Proof

1. When considering the thought of baptism saving us, we should look at the verses in the Bible that speak of salvation.
2. We will never find the mention of baptism in order to be saved in the Word of God.
 - a. *Acts 16:30* – *"And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* - Here was a man desiring to be saved and seeking to know how to be saved, asking the direct question to the apostles.
 - b. Remember, it is God answering the question through inspiration. Therefore, we find God's answer to this question.
3. Many would rather believe the answer of Alexander Campbell rather than believe God.
 - a. Alexander Campbell answers the question thus, "In and by the act of immersion, as our bodies are put under the water – at that very instant – all our former or old sins are washed away." (His book on Christians Baptism – page 100)
 - b. God's answer comes forth thus, - *"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thou house."*
 - c. *John 3:16* – Not one mention of baptism in this verse.

CONCLUSION:

Man can make many mistakes in this life and he will suffer consequences in this lifetime. However, to make a mistake by believing the lie of the devil about God's plan of salvation can be the difference between heaven.

The rich man in *Luke 16:19-31*, who had spent his life in luxury without time for God or salvation, realizing too late that hell, was real. As you read *verse 30* of this passage, you will see him pleading for someone to carry the gospel to his five brothers who were still alive. As you look at this verse, you will see he realized too late that repentance was all that was required for his brothers to be saved.

The Bible very clearly presents the facts that salvation is by repentance of sin and faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ plus and minus nothing.

Who are you going to believe? I am going to believe God. *"God forbid: Yes, let God be true, but every man a liar. " - Romans 3:4.*

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