

Does Water Baptism Save?

A Biblical Refutation of Baptismal Regeneration

Baptismal Regeneration is the teaching which says that water baptism is an essential requirement for salvation. According to this teaching, if a person desires to be born again (born into God's family) then he must be baptized in water. Those holding to this doctrine teach that apart from water baptism, a person cannot be saved, cannot be born again, cannot see the kingdom, and cannot enter heaven.

Introduction

The following was written to some friends in the Church of Christ (a church that believes that water baptism is necessary for salvation):

Dear Friends,

I wanted to write to you concerning some of the things we talked about, especially concerning salvation and baptism. I'm sure that you would agree that there is no more important subject than that of God's salvation and how a person can obtain this salvation.

Our eternal salvation hinges upon whether or not we understand what God has revealed about the terms of salvation. Long ago the question was asked by a man who was in desperate need: "WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?" (Acts 16:30). How we need to see what God's answer is to that all-important question! The issues at stake are nothing less than life and death, heaven and hell.

I greatly appreciate the desire of you both to follow what the Bible says and what the New Testament teaches, rather than to follow traditionalism and modern day teachings which in most cases have departed from the true teachings found in God's Word. This is my desire as well. There is a great departure from the faith in these days, and our only hope is to go back to the Bible, which is the very Word of God.

I'm going to share several things from the Bible, and I hope that you will give this letter careful thought and that you might search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things be so (compare Acts 17:11). I'm not asking you to take me at my word. I simply want you to take God at His Word and receive whatever He has said as absolute truth. The only question we must ask is this: "What saith the Scriptures?" (Romans 4:3).

The Roman Catholic Church also teaches a form of Baptismal Regeneration. The following is taken from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994):

Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word."

This sacrament signifies and actually brings about the birth of water and the Spirit without which no one "can enter the kingdom of God."
[Sections 1213, 1215]

Baptism is necessary for salvation [Section 1257].

Let us now go to the Scriptures to see what the Bible teaches about salvation, about what a person must do to be saved and about the relationship between salvation and water baptism.

1. The Bible teaches that to be saved a person must "BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."

In Acts 16:30 the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas this crucial question: "What must I do to be saved?" What answer did these men give to this needy jailer? Did they say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized and thou shalt be saved"? If baptism is necessary for salvation, then why is nothing said about baptism in Acts 16:31? It's true that this man was baptized (verse 33), and yet this does not change the fact that Acts 16:31 says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." If water baptism was a condition of salvation, then this would have been the perfect place for Paul to have said so.

2. The Bible teaches throughout the New Testament that FAITH and FAITH ALONE is necessary for salvation.

I would urge you to read carefully and prayerfully the following verses of Scripture:

John 1:12-13
John 3:15
John 3:16
John 3:18
John 3:36
John 5:24
John 6:35
John 6:40
John 6:47
John 7:38-39

John 11:25-26
John 20:31
Acts 2:21
Acts 10:43
Acts 11:17
Acts 13:38-39
Acts 15:11
Acts 16:31
Acts 20:21
Romans 1:16

Romans 3:22
Romans 3:26
Romans 3:28
Romans 3:30
Romans 5:1
Romans 10:9
Romans 10:11
Romans 10:13

1 Corinthians 15:1-2
Galatians 2:16
Galatians 3:2-9
Galatians 3:14
Galatians 3:24
Galatians 3:26

Ephesians 2:8-9
2 Thessalonians 2:10
2 Thessalonians 2:12
1 Timothy 4:10
2 Timothy 3:15

Titus 3:8
1 John 5:1
1 John 5:11-13

In all of these passages FAITH is mentioned as being essential for salvation. In none of these passages is water baptism mentioned. If baptism is a necessary part or an essential part of salvation, then why is nothing said about baptism in these passages? If a man must be baptized to be saved, then why do all these verses fail to say so? For example, in Acts 10:43 why didn't Peter say, "whosoever believeth in Him and is baptized shall receive remission (forgiveness) of sins"?

3. EPHESIANS 2:8-9 is a passage which God has given to answer this key question: **HOW IS A PERSON SAVED?** This important doctrinal verse says nothing about water baptism.

How is a person saved? "For by grace are ye saved THROUGH FAITH, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." Why is there no mention made of baptism? Why didn't Paul say, "For by grace are ye saved THROUGH FAITH AND BAPTISM . . ."?

4. Water baptism is a WORK (something that man does to please God), and yet the Bible teaches again and again that a person is not saved by works.

Here are some examples:

Titus 3:5—"Not by WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS which WE HAVE DONE, but according to His mercy He saved us."

2 Timothy 1:9—"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS."

Ephesians 2:8-9—"For by grace are ye saved THROUGH FAITH and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast."

Romans 3:28—"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith WITHOUT THE DEEDS OF THE LAW."

Romans 4:5—"But to him that WORKETH NOT, but BELIEVETH on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

In other words, salvation is not DOING **something**; it is KNOWING **someone** (John 17:3). Salvation is not based on what we might do; it is based on what Christ has ALREADY DONE (John 19:30). Salvation is not TRYING; it is TRUSTING (John 6:47). If salvation could be earned by anything we do, then Christ's death was a waste (Galatians 2:21). Salvation is not WORKING; it is RESTING on the WORK of Another (Romans 4:5). Good

works are not what a man DOES in order to be SAVED; good works are what a SAVED MAN DOES (Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5-8). God's holiness utterly condemns the best man (Romans 3:10-23); God's grace freely justifies the worst (1 Timothy 1:15)!

5. The **key question** is this: When is a person saved? Is a person saved at the moment he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ or is a person saved the moment he is baptized in water? Is a person saved when he believes or is he saved when he is baptized in water (at a time subsequent to initial faith)?

If a person is saved at the point of faith, then this means that faith alone is necessary for salvation and that water baptism is something that is done after a person is saved. This would also mean that the requirement for salvation is simple faith in Christ. It is not faith plus baptism. The salvation formula would be this:

FAITH + NOTHING = SALVATION

If a person is saved at the point of water baptism, then this means that faith in Christ is not enough for salvation. This means that faith in Christ is part of the requirement but it is not the total requirement. To be saved a person must not only believe in Christ but he must also be baptized in water. The requirement for salvation is faith plus water baptism. This would also mean that it is possible for a person to be a believer in Christ and yet still be unsaved until he is baptized. The person's sins are not washed away until the water baptism takes place. The salvation formula would thus be as follows:

FAITH + WATER BAPTISM = SALVATION

Let us now go to the Scriptures to determine whether a person is saved at the point of faith or at the point of water baptism.

- A) Acts 16:31—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (this statement was made in answer to the question of verse 30, "What must I do to be saved?"). This is a conditional promise. God promises to do something if the sinner does something. If the sinner does his part, God will do His part. So the meaning of Acts 16:31 is this: "If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall be saved." Notice that nothing is said about water baptism being a requirement for salvation. The clear implication is that if a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, he will be saved. Ephesians 2:8-9 is a key passage which tells us how a person is saved: "For **by grace are ye saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Water baptism is not mentioned. Salvation takes place at the point of faith. The gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to all who believe" (Romans 1:16), clearly implying that all who believe are saved.
- B) 1 Corinthians 1:21—"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching **to save them that believe**." God saves those who believe! God would never fail to save someone who believes.

- C) Luke 8:12—“Then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should **believe and be saved.**” The devil knows God’s simple plan of salvation! He does not want people to BELIEVE AND BE SAVED! To foil the devil, the sinner simply needs to believe. If he does that, he will be saved! The devil’s strategy has always been to add certain requirements in order for man to somehow work for and earn God’s salvation. Here’s a simple test to prove this: Ask any member of a religious cult this simple question: “What must I do to be saved?” and then compare his answer with Paul’s answer found in Acts 16:31. You will find that the two answers are not the same! The cultist will invariably add at least one additional requirement.
- D) Hebrews 7:25—“Wherefore **he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.**” He saves all those who come to Him through Jesus Christ. In John 6:35 we learn that COMING TO GOD is synonymous with BELIEVING ON HIM. Thus, God saves to the uttermost all who believe (compare also John 6:37).
- E) John 3:16; John 3:36; John 5:24; John 6:47; John 11:25-26 and other passages clearly teach that those who believe on Christ HAVE eternal LIFE as a present possession (compare also 1 John 5:12). If a person has eternal life the moment he believes on Christ, then this person is saved. It’s unthinkable to speak of a person who has eternal life and yet who is unsaved! All those who receive Jesus Christ by faith have received God’s free gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23), and this free gift becomes theirs at the moment of faith, not at the moment of water baptism.
- F) Acts 10:43—“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission (forgiveness) of sins.” If a person believes on Christ and does not receive forgiveness of sins, then God is a liar! There is no such thing as a true believer whose sins are not forgiven. Those who refuse to believe on Christ will die in their sins (John 8:24), but those who believe in Him will not. Complete forgiveness of all my sins becomes a reality the moment I believe on Christ, not the moment I am baptized in water. If your sins have not been forgiven prior to being baptized in water, then you should not be baptized (because this would mean you are an unbeliever and hence unsaved).
- G) “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that **through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things**, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38-39). All who believe are forgiven and justified from all things! In verse after verse we learn that FAITH is the one condition, the one requirement for salvation and for forgiveness. If you can find a true believer who is not justified from all things, then God would be a liar. God forbid!
- H) Romans 4:3 and 4:5. In Romans 4 we learn how Abraham was saved. Keep in mind that Abraham lived prior to the time of water baptism. In verse 3 we learn that “Abraham **believed God** and it was counted (imputed) unto him for righteousness.” At the moment Abraham believed, God’s righteousness was put to his account. At the moment of faith Abraham was justified. As we come to verse 5 we find that the very same thing happens to a person living today: “But **to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for**

righteousness” (Romans 4:5). If justification takes place at the point of water baptism, then Paul could have clarified this. He could have said something like this: “Even though Abraham received God’s righteousness at the moment he believed, things are different in our day. Today a person does not receive God’s righteousness when he first believes, but he is justified only when he is baptized in water. There is no salvation, no justification, no forgiveness until the believing sinner takes this initial step of obedience and submits to water baptism.” But Paul says nothing of the sort. Paul consistently taught that those who believe are blessed just as Abraham was (Galatians 3:9). God’s Word teaches that “the righteousness of God . . . **is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe**” (Rom. 3:22).” No believer lacks God’s righteousness. Every believer has been justified.

- I) In John 1:12-13 we learn that a person is born of God (is regenerated) and becomes a child of God when he receives Jesus Christ and believes on His Name. “But **as many as received him**, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, **even to them that believe on his name: which were born (regenerated)**, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13). Nothing is here said about baptismal regeneration. It does not say that water brings about this new birth, but it does say that these wonderful things happen when a person believes on Him.
- J) How does a person become adopted by the Father and entitled to all the privileges and benefits of being God’s son? “For **ye are all the children [literally “sons”] of God by faith in Christ Jesus**” (Galatians 3:26). Once again we see that simple faith in Christ is the key.
- K) How is a person purified and made fit for God’s kingdom? “And put no difference between us and them, **purifying their hearts by faith**” (Acts 15:9). Notice that it does not say that their hearts were purified by faith and water baptism. Keep in mind that some people claim to believe in Christ when they really don’t believe in Him at all. They profess Him but they don’t actually possess Him (1 John 5:12). Some of these false professors (mere pretenders) are even baptized in water, but this does nothing to purify their hearts. Only true faith in Jesus Christ can do this. The person must have his heart purified by faith before he or she ever gets into the water, or else water baptism is nothing but a meaningless ritual.
- L) We have already seen that people are saved by faith and forgiven by faith and justified by faith and regenerated by faith, and in Acts 26:18 we learn that people are also SANCTIFIED (set apart unto God) by faith—“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are **sanctified by faith that is in me**” (Acts 26:18). In 1 Corinthians 6:11 we learn of those who are washed, justified and sanctified, and all of these blessings are conditioned on simple faith in Christ. It is impossible to find a true believer in Christ who is unwashed, un-justified and un-sanctified. Such a thought would be Biblically absurd! But according to those who believe in baptismal regeneration, there is a period of time, albeit short, where a person is a believer in Christ and yet is not yet saved and not yet forgiven and not yet cleansed. In their view, this would be the time between when the person believed in Christ and when the person was baptized in water.

Remember, no one is baptized immediately after putting faith in Christ. Some amount of time elapses between the two events, whether it be very short or long.

Thought question: What happens if the person dies after he believes in Christ but before he is baptized in water? If this person is safe with God and among the redeemed, then it is very clear that it was not the water baptism that saved him. [The thief on the cross is often used as an example of this. Here was a man who trusted Jesus Christ and had no opportunity to be baptized in water (even though we recognize that Christian baptism did not begin historically until the Day of Pentecost, about 53 days later). If any additional requirements for salvation had been laid on this man, apart from simple faith in Christ, he would have been in trouble].

- M) The New Testament consistently teaches that a person receives the Spirit by faith. Those who believe in Christ receive the Spirit (according to John 7:37-39). In Galatians chapter 3 we learn that we receive the Spirit, not by any kind of works, but by faith (Gal. 3:2,14). In Romans 8:9 we learn that if a person does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is “none of His” (meaning he is not a Christian, he does not belong to Christ). This implies that all those who have the Spirit belong to Him and are Christians. Indeed a Christian can be defined as one who has received the Spirit by faith. If a person is not indwelt by the Spirit, then this person is not a Christian and is not saved. Since every believer is indwelt by the Spirit and since everyone indwelt by the Spirit is saved, then this strongly points to the fact that a person is saved at the moment of faith. Nowhere in the New Testament does it teach that the reception of the Spirit is contingent upon being baptized in water. We also learn in Ephesians 1:13 that a person is sealed with the Holy Spirit when he believes in Christ [the KJV of this verse can lead to confusion; Darby’s translation: “in whom also, having believed, ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise”]. You can’t be securely saved unless you are sealed, and this sealing takes place at the moment of faith, not at the moment a person is baptized in water.
- N) Salvation is the work of God from beginning to end, as summarized by 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and **belief of the truth**: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Faith is mentioned in this passage (“belief of the truth”) but there is no mention of water baptism.
- O) In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Paul sets forth the content of the gospel. He tells us what the gospel really is. He mentions Christ’s death for our sins (v.3) and Christ’s resurrection (v.4) and the necessity of genuine faith (v.1-2), but he says absolutely nothing about water baptism. If water baptism were an essential requirement for salvation, then how could Paul have omitted this from his explanation of the gospel? Furthermore, in 1 Corinthians 1:14-16 Paul was thankful that he did not personally baptize the Corinthians, except for a few people. He then made this remarkable statement—“For **Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel**: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect” (**1 Cor. 1:17** and compare 1 Cor. 1:21). How could Paul say such a thing if water

baptism were essential for salvation? The clear implication here is that water baptism, though clearly practiced by the apostles, was not part and parcel of the gospel message. But if water baptism were essential for salvation, then we would expect it to be at the very heart of the gospel message. But water baptism is not something that a person does to be saved; it is something that a saved person does. This is a crucial distinction. [See also 1 Corinthians 4:15. The Corinthians owed their regeneration to Paul, the human instrument, and to the gospel (Eph. 1:13) but not to water baptism. Paul did not say, "I have begotten you through the gospel and through water baptism."]

- P) In the early church there were legalistic false teachers who were saying, "Except ye be circumcised, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). This teaching was strongly condemned by the apostles and the Jerusalem council. Today there are those who teach this: "Except ye be baptized in water, ye cannot be saved." Should this teaching be likewise condemned?
- Q) **Conclusion to this section:** In the book of Acts we have frequent examples of water baptism. As we study the book of Acts we learn that the order was always this: 1) **First**, the person heard the gospel and believed on Christ; 2) **Then**, the person was baptized. According to the Bible, a person is saved when he believes on Christ (Acts 16:31; 1 Cor. 1:21), and therefore those who were baptized in the book of Acts were already saved before they entered the water.

We just studied numerous passages of Scripture showing that a person is saved and justified and forgiven and sanctified and purified and regenerated and sealed and indwelt the moment he believes on Christ. We also looked at numerous salvation verses under Section 2 of this study. All of these verses declare that a person is saved the moment he believes on Christ. The Lord Jesus Himself said, "He that believeth on Me HATH (HAS) everlasting life" (John 6:47). If a person confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes in his heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, that person is SAVED (Romans 10:9). If he is not saved, then God is a liar. God saves those who believe (1 Cor. 1:21). Saved people have their sins forgiven and forgiveness is something that a person receives the moment he believes (Acts 10:43). Therefore, baptism is **not** something that a person does to be saved; baptism is something that a saved person does. It is something that a believing person does after he is saved and after he is forgiven. An unsaved person should never be baptized. There is no such thing as an UNSAVED BELIEVER. The Bible knows of only two groups of people: BELIEVERS (those who are saved) and UNBELIEVERS (those who are not saved). See John 3:18; 3:36; 1 John 5:12. Only **saved believers** should be baptized in water, in obedience to Christ's command. [Note: A "saved believer" is a redundancy but we use it to over-emphasize our point].

6. *Is water baptism essential?* The answer is both NO and YES. It is not essential for salvation, as we have already studied. God's single requirement for salvation is FAITH in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling!" On the other hand, water baptism is essential for OBEDIENCE once a person is saved. How can we not obey the Lord who died to save us? Water baptism is one of the first things that God tells a believer to do after he is saved. It is Lesson Number 1 in God's School of Obedience. It is something that

God has commanded that his believers should do (Acts 10:48; Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:19-20). We should gladly obey our Lord and not be ashamed to publicly identify ourselves with Jesus Christ our Saviour and with other believers who love and honor Him.

According to "Church Of Christ" theology, no one can be saved while repenting and believing in Christ on their knees in the privacy of their bedroom, no one can be saved while sitting at their kitchen table crying out to Christ for salvation, no soldier can be saved by asking the Lord for salvation while dying from a gunshot wound on the battle field, no astronaut soon to die in outer space from a heart attack can be saved by simply believing in the Lord, no one trapped in a burning house can be saved by asking Christ for mercy, no one dying of injuries from a car crash can be saved by simply believing the Gospel message. None of these persons can be saved according to "Church Of Christ" theology, unless they can be baptized for remission of sins. Now, if a "Church Of Christ" person would say there are some exceptions that would allow some persons to be saved without baptism, it proves baptism is not necessary for salvation. —by Bruce Oyen

1. *If a person is not baptized in water, is he saved?* This question needs to be answered carefully. There are different reasons why a person may not be baptized. He may be a new believer and perhaps no one has taught him the importance and the significance of water baptism. Remember, Philip had to teach the Ethiopian Eunuch about baptism (Acts 8). There may also be unusual circumstances which would make water baptism very difficult. For example, a man could come to know Christ on his hospital death-bed, and be physically unable to be baptized in water. God certainly understands the circumstances.

I knew a Pastor who was sound in the faith in almost every area. He had a heart for the lost and was an excellent Bible teacher. But he had a doctrinal quirk. For some strange reason he believed that water baptism was not for today (even though he was not ultradispensational) and thus he never baptized those who got saved. This man led many precious souls to a saving knowledge of Christ and I have no doubt that they were genuinely saved. Had they been correctly taught about baptism, I'm sure they would have submitted to the ordinance. This pastor will have to give an account to Christ for his incorrect teaching concerning water baptism, but we can thank God that he preached Christ and many were saved through this man's ministry (compare Philippians 1:18).

What about the person who is correctly taught about baptism, knows that he should be baptized, understands its significance and yet refuses to obey Christ in this area? Would not this indicate a major spiritual problem? Our Lord asked this searching question: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Obedience is the fruit of saving faith. We are not saved because we obey, but we obey because we are saved. As blood bought believers, it is sadly true that there are times when we fail to obey our Lord and Master and we need to confess this sin of disobedience (1 John 1:9). But the general pattern of our new life in Christ should be one of obedience. It was said of the original disciples that "they kept His Word" (John 17:6) even though we know that they

did not always keep His Word (think of Peter's denial, as an obvious example). If you took a snapshot of Peter denying Christ, you would have a picture of his terrible sin and disobedience. But if you watched a video of his entire life as a believer, it would show a general pattern of obedience and faithful service to Christ. In spite of times of failure, the overall pattern of a saved person's life should be one of obedience. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3-4). If a person knows and understands the importance and significance of water baptism and refuses to obey Christ's command in this regard, then it would not be wrong of us to seriously question this person's salvation.

2. Passages That Seem to Teach that Water Baptism Saves

We have examined the mass of Biblical evidence which clearly teaches that a person is saved at the moment of faith, and not at the moment of water baptism. The verses we looked at were simple and clear and unmistakable in their meaning. How can it be put any more simply or any more clearly than this: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31); "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47); Etc. ?

We now want to look at a few verses which at first glance may seem to teach that water baptism saves. Do these verses really teach baptismal regeneration or do these verses actually harmonize with the scores of passages which we have already looked at?

Mark 16:16

**"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;
but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark
16:16).**

In light of this verse consider the following groups of people:

- 1) Those people who have believed on Christ and who have been baptized in water. According to Mark 16:16, these people are saved.
- 2) Those people who have believed on Christ but who have not been baptized in water. Nothing is said about this group of people in Mark 16:16. If this verse had said, "He that believeth and is not baptized is not saved," then this would be a strong argument for those holding to baptismal regeneration. But it doesn't say this. Actually unbaptized believers were practically unheard of in the days of the early church. According to the book of Acts, when people believed on Christ they were baptized in water, and this usually took place without much delay. So it is not surprising that this verse in Mark has nothing to say about unbaptized believers. The believers of the first century were willing to go so far as to die for Christ, and they were certainly willing to be baptized. I can find no example in the book of Acts of true believers who refused to be baptized in water after they learned its

importance and its symbolism.

- 3) Those people who have not believed in Christ and who have not been baptized. According to Mark 16:16 such people are damned (condemned, judged).
- 4) Those people who have not believed in Christ and yet have been baptized. These people will be damned also. Mark 16:16 clearly implies that all unbelievers will be damned whether they have been baptized or not. This is in harmony with John 3:18 and 2 Thessalonians 2:12 and other passages which teach that men are condemned because of their unbelief. In Acts 8:9-24 we have an example of an unbeliever who was baptized. He is known as Simon the Sorcerer. Even though it says he believed (v.13), verses 20-23 indicate that his faith was not genuine saving faith. He was a professing believer but not a true believer. **Does water baptism save?** One thing we know for sure! Water baptism has never saved an unbeliever. Those who do not believe will die in their sins (John 8:24).

One final word about Mark 16:16. It is absolutely true that the person who believes and is baptized shall be saved. This is true in my own life. I believed in Christ and I was baptized in water, and I am saved. But the Scriptures teach, as we have previously established, that the essential ingredient and requirement of salvation is not baptism, but faith. Faith is essential for salvation. Water baptism is essential for obedience because as a believer I must be careful to observe to do all things whatsoever Christ has commanded me (Matthew 28:19-20), and water baptism is one of the first things He has told me to do. However, the water did not save me, Christ did (Matthew 1:21)!

John 3:5

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee,
Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he
cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

This passage is talking about how a person is born again or how a person is regenerated. Those who believe in baptismal regeneration believe that the “water” mentioned in this verse refers to water baptism. But is this really the case?

First, we should remember that when Jesus said these words, Christian baptism had not yet been instituted. Christian baptism was first mentioned by Christ in Matthew 28:19-20 and it was not practiced until Acts chapter 2 (the day of Pentecost, see especially verse 41). That there was a clear difference between the baptism of John and Christian baptism is obvious from Acts 19:1-7 (compare also Acts 18:25). So Jesus in John 3:5 could not have been referring to Christian baptism because such did not exist at that time.

If He was not referring to baptism, then what was our Lord referring to when He taught that a person must be “born of water”? The main point that Jesus was making is this: You cannot enter God’s kingdom unless you are CLEAN. Filthy disciples (those who are unclean, unforgiven, uncleansed) will not be allowed to enter. Our Lord was not talking about physical water which can only cleanse a person on the outside. In John 3:5 Jesus

was talking about SPIRITUAL CLEANSING (something that must happen on the inside of a person). To be clean on the outside a person must take a bath and use soap and water! To be clean on the inside there is another kind of bath that is needed. Soap and water can never remove the filth of sin! God must do something on the inside of a person. Let us now see what the Bible says about being born of water and of the Spirit.

John 3:3 says that if a person is going to see the kingdom he must be born again. John 3:5 says that if a person is going to enter the kingdom he must be born of water and of the Spirit. Therefore, being born again means the same thing as being born of water and of the Spirit. If a person has been born again, then this person has been born of water and of the Spirit.

[Note: Some think that “water” refers to our natural birth when we were born as a baby and “Spirit” refers to our spiritual birth when we are born again. But this view does not fit the context. Since every person has been born physically, it would be stating the obvious to say that to enter the kingdom a person must be born of water. This would be like saying, A person cannot enter the kingdom unless he is a person.]

Water is the one thing we use whenever we wash something. Water is the universal cleansing agent. If you wash your car, water is used. If you wash your face, water is used. To make your clothes bright and clean, you use water. To make your teeth clean, you not only use toothpaste, but water as well. Whatever we wash, water is somehow involved. It is easy to see how WATER can be symbolic of CLEANSING (making something clean)!

Sinners need to be washed and made clean. Jesus wanted Nicodemus to know something very important: **No unclean person can enter God's kingdom!** Paul says it this way: “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, **nor unclean person**, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, **hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God**” (Ephesians 5:5 and see also Galatians 5:21 and Revelation 21:27). To enter the kingdom a person must be CLEAN and WASHED on the inside (sins forgiven!). No unwashed people will be admitted! No unclean person will enter the kingdom of God. Only cleansed sinners will be allowed! Compare Psalm 24:3-4. You must be born of water! You must be washed!

Consider 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. Will any unclean or unrighteous people inherit the kingdom? Will washed sinners enter the kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:11)? There is hope for the filthy, but only if they get washed, and this washing does not refer to water baptism. It refers to an inner work that only God can do. In verse 11 we have the two ingredients of John 3:5 mentioned: the WATER (“washed”) and the SPIRIT (“by the Spirit of our God”).

Whenever you think of John 3:5 you should also think of Titus 3:5. The latter explains the former. Both of these verses are found in chapter 3 verse 5, so they are easy to remember! Both of these verses talk about being BORN AGAIN (the word “REGENERATION” in Titus 3:5 means “born again”). Both of these verses talk about the WATER and the SPIRIT. Look at Titus 3:5: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by **the washing of regeneration** (the WATER) and **renewing of the Holy Spirit** (the SPIRIT).” The born again person is the person who has been thoroughly cleansed and renewed by the Spirit of God!

All of these verses are talking about that wonderful work which God does on the inside of

a person, making it possible for him to enter God's kingdom!

Notice the water in John 13:5. Jesus was using this water to be a symbolic picture of an important spiritual truth. Was Peter a "washed" disciple? Was Peter CLEAN on the inside (see John 13:9-10)? Who was the disciple who was never born of water? Judas was the disciple who was unwashed and unclean and who had never been born again (John 13:10-11 and compare John 13:2)? This man would never enter the kingdom.

The WATER is also mentioned in Ephesians 5:25-26: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with **the washing of water by the word**" (Eph. 5:25-26). How is a person washed? BY THE WORD! The WORD OF GOD is an essential part of the cleansing process. The WORD OF GOD is the mirror that shows us how dirty we really are (because of sin). Not only does the Bible show us our sin, but it also points out the only Saviour and His many promises to save those who truly believe on Him. Without the Word of God a person could never be saved and could never be born again. The following verses show how important God's Word is when it comes to salvation and regeneration and cleansing:

1) Psalm 119:9 - "Wherewithal (how) shall a young man **cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.**"

2) John 15:3 - "Now ye are **clean through the word** which I have spoken unto you."

3) 1 Peter 1:23-25 - "Being **born again** (regeneration!) not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God** which liveth and abideth for ever."

4) James 1:18 - "Of His own will **begat He us with the word of truth.**" "Begot" is another term that relates to regeneration.

God's Word does two things: 1) It shows man how great a sinner he is (Romans 3:10-23) and 2) It show man how great a Saviour Christ is (Romans 3:24-26)!

Nicodemus was a Jew who should have been familiar with the Old Testament. In John 3:9 we see that Nicodemus still did not understand what Jesus was talking about. In John 3:10 Jesus told Nicodemus that he should have known these things! He should have understood about the WATER and the SPIRIT! He should have been familiar with EZEKIEL 36:25-29. Does this passage talk about the WATER? Does this passage talk about being CLEAN and being CLEANSED? Does this passage talk about the SPIRIT? In this passage God promised to do a wonderful work ON THE INSIDE (see Ezekiel 36:26-27)! See also Jeremiah 4:14 and Isaiah 1:16.

My friend, based on these many passages, if God has not cleansed you on the inside, then you will not enter the kingdom. You must be born again! Water baptism is not the answer. You need to be cleansed before you ever get baptized in water. You need to have your heart purified **by faith** (Acts 15:9).

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” (Acts 2:38).

This passage has become one of the favorite verses of those who teach baptismal regeneration. In a motel room there was a Gideon Bible and near the front it had a section with John 3:16 written out in many different languages. In this particular Bible someone had crossed out all of the John 3:16 verses and in big letters had written ACTS 2:38. The person who had defaced this Bible was communicating something like this: "You are deceived if you think that John 3:16 presents the true gospel. It doesn't present the true gospel at all. It's not enough to believe in Christ. To be saved and to be forgiven a person also needs to be baptized in water. The true gospel is much better presented in ACTS 2:38!"

When it comes to having sins forgiven, what must a person do? The Bible teaches that it is faith and repentance that brings about forgiveness. Repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin. You can't have true repentance without having true faith. You can't have true faith without having true repentance. They go together. The Bible sometimes mentions repentance as the only condition of salvation. One example of this would be Luke 13:3, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." See also Luke 15:7, 10 and Acts 17:30. A few times both repentance and faith are mentioned in the same verse (Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21). There are many, many verses which mention only faith as the condition of salvation (John 1:12; 3:16; 5:24; Acts 16:31; etc.). When only repentance is mentioned, faith is implied or assumed. When only faith is mentioned, repentance is implied or assumed. Where you have one you must have the other.

What is repentance? The word means "a change of mind." It means to change your mind about sin, self and the Saviour. It especially has to do with one's recognition of his true condition before God. One Biblical definition of repentance is found in Job 42:4. Job said, "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." According to this verse, to repent is to abhor oneself, to discover how vile we are (see Job 40:4), to discover our utter wretchedness and sinfulness. No one can be saved unless he changes his mind about sin and self and recognizes how sinful he really is in God's sight.

Harry Ironside explained repentance as follows: "'Repentance is just the sick man's acknowledgment of his illness. It is simply the sinner recognizing his guilt and confessing his need of deliverance....(repentance) is judging oneself in the presence of God; turning right about-face, turning to God with a sincere, earnest desire to be completely delivered from sin. And when a man takes that attitude toward God and puts his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he finds salvation" (Luke, pp. 253-254).

In another place Ironside said, "Literally [repentance] means 'a change of mind.' It actually implies a complete reversal of one's inward attitude. To repent is to change one's attitude toward self, toward sin, toward God, toward Christ....So to face these tremendous facts is to change one's mind completely, so that the pleasure lover sees and confesses the folly

of his empty life; the self-indulgent learns to hate the passions that express the corruption of his nature; the self-righteous sees himself a condemned sinner in the eyes of a holy God; the man who has been hiding from God seeks to find a hiding place in Him; the Christ-rejector realizes and owns his need of a Redeemer, and so believes unto life and salvation" (Except Ye Repent, pages 15-16).

True faith requires repentance because to be saved a person must recognize his lost estate and see himself as lost and helpless and vile and wicked and utterly sinful. True repentance requires faith because the man who repents believes what God has said about his true condition (Romans 3:10-23) and he also believes that God has provided a perfect solution in the person of His Son, God's only Saviour.

Now let us return to our discussion of Acts 2:38. We have already seen that faith (which would include repentance), not baptism, is essential for the forgiveness of sins. This is clearly seen in Peter's very next sermon, found in Acts 3:19_ "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Notice that in this verse Peter says nothing about water baptism. If water baptism is essential for the forgiveness of sins, why did Peter say nothing of this in Acts 3:19? If water baptism is essential for forgiveness of sins, why did Peter say nothing of this in Acts 10:43 ("To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission (forgiveness) of sins"). If water baptism is an essential part of the preaching of salvation, then why does Luke 24:46-47 mention repentance and the remission (forgiveness) of sins but say nothing about water baptism? Even in the days of John the Baptist, it was repentance that was for the remission of sins, not water baptism (see Mark 1:4). John's baptism was an outward demonstration to show publicly that repentance had already taken place.

Forgiveness is received at the point of repentance/faith, not at the point of water baptism. Those who are not forgiven should not be baptized. They are yet in their sins. One simple parenthesis helps us to understand what Acts 2:38 is really saying, "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."

The real question centers on the meaning of the preposition eis (translated "for" in the KJV). It is possible to show examples where eis can mean "because of" (Matthew 12:41--"at") or "on the basis of" or "with reference to," and all of these are certainly grammatically possible. However, it seems more natural and more probable that in Acts 2:38 this preposition indicates purpose or result. Peter was preaching to unsaved Jews who were guilty of crucifying Christ. They desperately needed the forgiveness of sins (as we all do). Peter was telling them what they must do in order to have forgiveness (see Acts 2:37---"What shall we do?").

The translations seem to support this meaning. The KJV, NASB, Amplified, NEB, RSV all give the rendering "for." The Revised Version has "unto." The NIV has "so that your sins will be forgiven" (although in later editions this was changed to "for"). You can see how a person believing in baptismal regeneration could easily use all of these translations to support his view.

The lexicons seem to support this meaning. Arndt & Gingrich say that the preposition here denotes purpose ("in order to") and they render the phrase: "for forgiveness of sins, so that sins might be forgiven." Thayer has a similar rendering "to obtain the forgiveness of

sins" (his discussion under baptizo). Thus those who believe that a man is saved by water baptism would gladly appeal to these authorities.

Acts 3:19 seems to support this meaning. This is the very next sermon that Peter gives, and again he tells the Jews what they must do to have forgiveness. We would expect that what Peter told the Jews in Acts 3 would be similar to what he told them in Acts 2. In both cases he was preaching to unsaved Jews under similar circumstances. In Acts 3:19 once again the preposition eis is used, and the KJV translates it "so that your sins might be blotted out." Of course, those who teach baptismal regeneration do not make much of this verse because water baptism is not even mentioned.

The grammarians also concede that the preposition may be translated "for the purpose of" or "in order that" (see Dana & Mantey, p. 104). Those such as A.T. Robinson and Julius Mantey who render it "because of" or "on the basis of" do so primarily on the basis of theology, not grammar. They suggest a rare usage for the term in order to not make the verse teach baptismal regeneration. But are we really forced to depart from what seems to be the more natural and more common rendering?

Most commentators, regardless of the view they hold, understand the prepositional phrase ("for the remission of sins") as belonging with the verb "be baptized." It is possible, however, that the phrase is actually part of a chiasmus (inverted parallelism) and should be connected not with the command "Be baptized" but with the command "Repent." The verse contains two commands and two prepositional phrases which can be represented by the following chiasmus:

A	Repent
	B
	Be Baptized
	B
	In the Name of Jesus Christ
A	For the remission of sins

In English we would best represent this structure by using a parenthesis: "Repent (and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ) for the remission of sins." This is exactly what Acts 3:19 teaches (only Peter there omits the parenthesis). In Acts 3:19 Peter could have said, "Repent (and be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ) so that your sins may be blotted out!"

Indeed, the Bible consistently connects "repentance" with "the forgiveness of sins" (see Luke 24:47 where Peter received his commission; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 5:31). On the day of Pentecost the Jews would have understood this because the only baptism that they knew about was the baptism of John which was a baptism of repentance UNTO (eis) the remission of sins.

The strengths of this view are as follows: 1) it is theologically sound and avoids the error of making water baptism a condition for forgiveness; 2) it harmonizes with the other passages which speak about repentance and the forgiveness of sins; 3) it understands the preposition *eis* in its most natural meaning (though other meanings are possible); 4) it agrees with the parallel passage of Acts 3:19; 5) it best suits the context of Acts 2:38 where Peter is offering forgiveness to Christ-rejecting Jews. Peter was not speaking "with reference to" or "because of" or "on the basis of" a forgiveness which they did not yet have! 6) it employs a figure of speech (chiasmus) that was not uncommon or unusual to the Semitic mind, though in English it may seem somewhat awkward. [For a detailed study of chiasmus, see our study entitled *Englishman's Greek*].

Stanley D. Toussaint (The Book of Acts in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 359) gives several reasons why the parenthetical view is the correct view:

Several factors support this interpretation: (a) The verb makes a distinction between singular and plural verbs and nouns. The verb "repent" is plural ["repent ye"] and so is the pronoun "your" in the clause, "so that your sins may be forgiven" (lit., "unto the remission of your sins," (*eis aphesis ton hamartion humon*). Therefore the verb "repent" must go with the purpose of forgiveness of sins. On the other hand the imperative "be baptized" is singular, setting it off from the rest of the sentence. (b) This concept fits with Peter's proclamation in Acts 10:43 in which the same expression "sins may be forgiven" (*aphesis hamartion*) occurs. There it is granted on the basis of faith alone. (c) In Luke 24:47 and Acts 5:31 the same writer, Luke, indicates that repentance results in remission of sins.

Acts 22:16

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized,
and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the
Lord” (Acts 22:16).

In this passage Paul is recounting his conversion experience. According to Acts chapter 9, Saul of Tarsus (Paul) met the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. It was at this point that Saul was blinded. It was not until three days later that God sent Ananias to Saul, he received his sight and he was baptized in water. The verse given above is what Ananias told Saul to do three days after he had seen the Lord on the road to Damascus.

The key question is similar to our key question under Section 5 (“**When is a person saved?**”). Here the key question is this: **When was Saul (Paul) saved?** Was he saved and converted on the road to Damascus or was he saved three days later at the time of his baptism in water?

The following are reasons why we know that Saul was saved and forgiven (sins washed away) before he was ever baptized in water:

1) As a result of meeting the risen Lord on the road to Damascus, Saul confessed with his mouth that Jesus was Lord (see Acts 22:10) and believed in his heart that God raised Him from the dead (compare Romans 10:9). His confession that Christ was Lord (Acts 22:10) was significant because the One who appeared to him had just revealed Himself as

“Jesus” (Acts 22:8) the One Saul hated and whose servants he had persecuted. And yet Saul, knowing it was Jesus, immediately called Him LORD! Compare 1 Corinthians 12:3. This involves a drastic change of mind (“repentance”) concerning who Jesus Christ really was.

2) Before he was baptized, Saul apparently was filled with the Spirit (Acts 9:17). Saved people are filled with the Spirit, not unsaved people. *Note: Acts 9 does not specifically tell us when Saul was filled with the Spirit, but verse 17 connects his being filled with the Spirit with the receiving of his sight. We know that he received his sight prior to his water baptism.*

3) Before Saul was baptized, Ananias referred to him as “Brother Saul” (Acts 9:17) indicating that Ananias recognized him as a brother in Christ.

4) There is no record that Ananias preached the gospel to Saul or exhorted him to “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Saul had already done this. He had already been saved.

5) Before he was baptized, Saul called upon the name of the Lord and was saved (compare Romans 10:13). We learn this from Acts 22:16. Charles Ryrie helps us with the Greek construction of this verse:

Verse 16 should be translated literally as follows: “**Having arisen** (aorist participle), be baptized; and wash away your sins, **having called** (aorist participle) on the name of the Lord.” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 112).

Kenneth Wuest, a former Greek teacher, translates the verse as follows: “Having arisen, be baptized and wash away your sins, having previously called upon His Name.” Three days before Saul was baptized, he had called upon the name of the Lord and was gloriously saved (compare Romans 10:13) and inwardly cleansed, all of his sins being forgiven and washed away at the point of faith (Acts 10:43).

What then is the meaning of Acts 22:16? If Saul had already been saved and his sins had already been washed away, then why was he told three days later to “be baptized and wash away your sins”? Because Saul was already cleansed spiritually, these words must refer to the symbolism of baptism. He was to be baptized in token of and as an outward sign of the washing away of his sins which had already taken place. Water baptism is meant to be a wonderful picture of God’s great salvation, including the washing away of sins. When a person is being baptized he is presenting a public testimony to show what happened to him when he was saved. As David Brown has said, “Remission of sins is obtained solely through faith in the Lord Jesus (Acts 10:43) but baptism being the visible seal of this, it is here and elsewhere naturally transferred from the inward act of faith to that which publicly and formally proclaims it” (namely, the symbolic act of water baptism).

When a person is being baptized he is presenting this message: “I am being baptized today in obedience to Christ’s command, to publicly show my identification with the Lord Jesus Christ and to present a picture of the new life that I have in Him. I want you all to know that because of what my Saviour did for me on the cross, I am a new creature in Him and all of my sins have been washed away. I now desire to follow Christ and to walk in newness of life, as He enables me to do so. My salvation depends on Christ’s work alone.”

But how contrary to the gospel it would be if a person were to say something like this: “I am

being baptized today because even though I have believed on Christ I am not yet saved. I am still in my sins and my sins will not be washed away until I am baptized in water. So although I now stand before you as a filthy, unforgiven sinner, in just a moment I'm going to come up out of the water saved and forgiven. My salvation depends not only on Christ's work, but also on my work. My salvation is conditioned, not only on faith, but on my being obedient to water baptism." This is a perversion of the grace of God (see Romans 11:6).

1 Peter 3:20-21

"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 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 Peter 3:20-21).

Water baptism does not save a person, but there is a baptism which does. The moment a person believes in Christ he is baptized (immersed) or placed into Christ. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you **as have been baptized into Christ** have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27). Being baptized or placed into Jesus Christ is not something that man can do but it is something that only God can do for the believing heart. The result of this baptism is that the believer has a brand new position. Having been placed into Jesus Christ he is now "in Christ" (a phrase that is found repeatedly in the New Testament Epistles). "If any man be IN CHRIST, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17). How did we get to be "in Christ"? God, in His grace, placed us into His dear Son the moment we believed on Him.

In the days of Noah, eight people were saved. The rest of the world perished. They were saved because they were in a location which was absolutely safe and secure. They were in the ark. Everyone outside of the ark perished. Today Jesus Christ is our Ark of safety. There is no safer place to be than "in Christ"—"There is therefore now **no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus**" (Romans 8:1). Those outside of Christ are in great danger. How did we get into Christ our Ark of safety? We were baptized into Jesus Christ the moment we were saved. God placed us into His Son, and in Him we are safe and secure forever. Water baptism is meant to be a picture of the real baptism (sometimes referred to as spiritual baptism or Spirit baptism) that took place the moment we were saved. Water baptism is meant to be a picture of this new position and new relationship we now have in Christ, having been totally identified with Him, with His Person and His work.

9. Mistakes That Baptismal Regenerationists Often Make

1) They Confuse **real baptism** with **ritual** (water baptism) **baptism**.

They assume that whenever the New Testament speaks of baptism that it means water baptism. However, this is not always the case as discussed above. The following

passages refer to REAL BAPTISM (spiritual baptism or Spirit baptism) which happens to a person the moment he is saved. It involves being placed into Christ or into His body:

Matthew 3:11

Acts 1:5

Acts 11:16

Romans 6:3-5 (notice it doesn't say, "baptized into water")

1 Corinthians 12:13 (notice it doesn't say, "baptized into water")

Galatians 3:27 (notice it doesn't say, "baptized into water")

Ephesians 4:5 (water baptism is a picture of this one real spiritual baptism)

Colossians 2:12

Water baptism is a symbolic representation of the real baptism that is described in the above verses, but the picture should not be confused with the real thing.

2) They misunderstand the grace of God by teaching that salvation, at least in part, is something that we must do.

"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28-29).

If salvation is based (at least in part) on what I do, then my salvation can never be secure because I may do something to lose my salvation. If I am responsible to keep myself saved, then I may fall short, lose my salvation and be lost forever. Thus we are not surprised to discover that people in the "Church of Christ" do not believe in eternal security but believe that a person can do certain things to forfeit salvation. It would be very rare to find someone who believes in baptismal regeneration who also believes in eternal security.

3) They err when it comes to faith because they confuse the root with the fruit.

When those who believe in baptismal regeneration are shown the multitude of verses which condition salvation on faith alone, they usually say something like this: "You need to understand what "believe" really means. True faith involves obedience. This means that believing in Jesus Christ also includes obedience to the Lord's command to be baptized. If a person really believes, then he will obey."

We will not deny that obedience to Christ is the fruit of saving faith, but we need to be very careful not to confuse faith with its fruit. Faith results in many things, but it is terribly wrong to then make these things the requirements of salvation. Faith results in love (Galatians 5:6), but we are not saved by love, but by faith. Faith results in good works (Ephesians 2:8-10), but we are not saved by good works, but by faith. Don't put the cart before the horse.

10. Conclusion.

The conclusion to our paper on Lordship salvation [*Saved By Grace Alone*] is appropriate at this point also:

My obedience to His Word does not save me. CHRIST SAVES ME BY HIS GRACE. My obedience to water baptism does not save me. CHRIST SAVES ME BY HIS GRACE. My commitment to Jesus Christ does not save me. CHRIST SAVES ME BY HIS GRACE. My surrender to His Lordship does not save me.

CHRIST SAVES ME BY HIS GRACE. My love for the Saviour does not save me. CHRIST SAVES ME BY HIS GRACE. My ability to fulfill all the demands of discipleship does not save me. CHRIST SAVES ME BY HIS GRACE. My behavior and my conduct do not save me. CHRIST SAVES ME BY HIS GRACE.

God's saving grace is to be found in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ WHO ALONE CAN SATISFY GOD'S HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS and be to the believing heart God's "so great salvation"! "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12; all verbs are in the present tense).

Have you been justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus? Is your hope based **upon what you have done** or is your hope based upon Jesus' blood and righteousness? "I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but WHOLLY LEAN ON JESUS' NAME!" May we be standing fully on Christ the solid Rock, not upon the sinking sand of our own fragile commitment.