

## Baptism and Salvation

“Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is a sign of regeneration, or the new birth.” (Article 17, **Methodist Discipline**, 1910 edition). “Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of ‘baptismal regeneration’; but it is essential to obedience, since Christ has commanded it. It is also essential to a public confession of Christ before the world, and to membership in the church which is His body. And no true lover of his Lord will refuse these acts of Obedience and tokens of affection.” (**The Standard Manual For Baptist Churches**, by Edward T. Hiscox, pages 20,21).

The preceding statements are but samples of similar statements that could be cited regarding the general attitude and teaching regarding baptism. Though they are worded differently, they have one thing in common; they each deny the necessity of baptism for salvation. The second statement boldly says “baptism is not essential to salvation...” The first says baptism “is a SIGN (caps mine, B.W.) of regeneration, or the new birth.” The idea implied is that the individual is already regenerated, that he has already experienced the new birth and that baptism is a “sign of profession” and a “sign of regeneration.” This is similar to the common statement that “baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace” — the “inward grace” referring to the fact that the person is already saved **before** he submits to baptism, the “outward sign.” This means that baptism is nothing but a wedge of division and a work of show! As a wedge of division, it distinguishes Christians “from others that are not baptized,” and its “mode” (an unbiblical word in both origin and meaning) serves to divide those who immerse from those who sprinkle and pour. As a work of show, it in no way affects the soul of the person being baptized; it is simply an outward sign or a way of saying to the world that “I am righteous” or that “I am a Christian.”

Those who dare teach such a doctrine should cower in shame and quake in their boots! They actually take a command of the Lord Himself, to which Christ connected salvation, and deny its necessity! “But,” someone may say, “you have only made assertions; you have not proven your point.” True. I haven’t. Not yet. But before I do, let me ask you: Do you believe the Bible? Do you believe one must obey the commands of Christ? Do you believe that one must contact His blood in order to be saved? If your answer to these questions is “no,” then further reading of this article will be a waste of time and effort. You need more help than I can give in one bulletin. However, if your answer to any of these questions is “yes,” then please read further. Baptism is necessary to salvation because of **where** it stands.

### **Baptism Stands Between:**

**1. The sinner and salvation.** “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*” (Mark 16:16).

**2. The sinner and remission of sins.** “*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 2:38).

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

**4. The sinner and his entering into Christ.** “*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*” (Gal. 3:27).

**5. The sinner and his contacting the death of Christ** wherein His blood was shed.

*“Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?”* (Rom. 6:3).

**6. The sinner and his walking in newness of life.** *“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.”* (Rom. 6:4).

**7. The sinner and his entering the one body** wherein is reconciliation (cf. Eph. 2:16). *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”* (I Cor. 12:13).

Notwithstanding the preceding scriptures, many remain convinced that baptism does not save and has nothing to do with salvation. If you are one who thus contends, we bid you to:

**Ask These if Baptism is Important:**

1. **Jesus** Who said *“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”* (John 3:5),. And *“He that believeth **and** is baptized shall be saved...”* (Mark 16:16). And *“go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”* (Matt. 28:19),.

2. **Peter** who said *“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). And who also wrote, saying, *“the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the flesh of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”* (I Peter 3:21).

3. **Paul** who said *“For as many of you as have been baptized **into** Christ have put on Christ”* (Gal. 3:27). And who said *“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost”* (Titus 3:5).

4. **Ananias** who said to the believing, penitent, praying Saul of Tarsus: *And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (Acts 22:16).

5. The **Samaritans** who *“when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women”* (Acts 8:12).

6. The **eunuch** from Ethiopia, who said to Philip, *“See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”* (Acts 8:36).

7. The Philippian **Jailor** who *took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway”* (Acts 16:33).

8. **Lydia**, *“whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul...and..was baptized”* (Acts 16:14,15).

9. The **Corinthians** who *“hearing, believed, and were baptized”* (Acts 18:8).

10. The **Ephesians** who were sanctified and cleansed *“with the washing of water by the word”* (Eph., 5:16).

11. The **Colossians** who were “*buried with him in baptism,*” and were forgiven of “*all trespasses*” (Col. 2:12,13).

12. The Romans who were “*baptized into His death,*” and raised to “*walk in newness of life,*” being “*then made free from sin,*” having obeyed that “*form of doctrine*” (Rom. 6:3,4,17,18).

13. The **Galatians** who being “*baptized into Christ...put on Christ,*” became “*heirs according to the promise*” (Gal. 3:26-29).

### **Conclusion:**

In this article we have not discussed the grace of God, whether or not we are saved by faith, by Jesus Christ, by the blood of Christ, by confession, or repentance. We affirm that all these items are also necessary. But who is man to remove from the Lord’s plan of salvation for lost sinners anything that He (**Christ!**) put in? To do so is to lead people astray, to become a teacher of error, and ultimately to receive the curse of God (Gal. 1:7,8; Rev., 22:18,19).

Do you desire salvation? Then remember that Jesus is “*the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him*” (Heb. 5:9), and then act accordingly.

\*\*\* —Bobby Witherington

“It is impossible to bury the truth forever.”