

WATER {baptism}

{Two Legs}

Healthy men walk on two legs. Likewise, walking in true faith in Jesus Christ requires two legs. One leg is faith, the other one deeds. The two are required to propel one forward in and toward the salvation of Christ. This is why James wrote that faith without deeds is dead. When one leg is weak the person walks in a circle, and if one leg is gone, little progress can be made on the narrow road. That is why those who preach anything but what Peter proclaimed have a faith that keeps them walking in circles or hopping on one leg. Indeed, just as no man can be alive in the flesh without a spirit, so too no man has true faith in Jesus without deeds.

As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. James 2:26

Therefore can a man be saved apart from water baptism? The complete answer lies in what we just read in James.

{The Do}

What men must do to be saved is a question many have asked over generations. The definitive question and answer was found in the salvation sermon Peter preached at Pentecost, when the people cried out to the apostles... “Brothers, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter replied in this model sermon, and all preachers and ministries must reply in a like manner: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,” (Acts 2:38). Again, what must a man do “for the forgiveness of” sin? “Repent and be baptized” was Peter’s clear, solid answer.

It comes down to rebellion or humble submission to God. Either a man continues in his religious rebellion towards God’s will, or chooses, in brokenness, to surrender to His perfect



plan of salvation. Those who teach that you only have to ask Jesus into your heart to receive salvation, preach, at best, a shallow message of God’s grace. While there is more to God’s plan of salvation than just getting wet, which we do not have time to explore in this publication, the overriding point is that churches refuse to submit to God’s plan of righteousness. Instead, as Romans declares, they seek to “establish their own.”

Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. Romans 10:3

Such religious rebellion toward God is quickly uncovered when they whine that water baptism is salvation by works. Their hypocrisy and devious duplicity becomes clear when we realize that they too preach one must do something to be saved. Their do is that a person must ask Jesus into their hearts and say a prayer in order to receive salvation. Therefore both Peter and the “ask-Jesus-into-your-heart” crowd preach that one must do something in order to be saved. To say that being baptized is salvation by works, you might as well condemn the sinner’s prayer as salvation by works as well.

The question shouldn’t be whether doing something constitutes salvation by works but what does God require for a man to be saved? The answer is very simple and easy to comprehend. No where in the Bible is it recorded that anyone just asked Jesus into his or her heart to gain the salvation of God. In every situation and case, water baptism was the means, method, and direction pointed to. Peter wrote about water baptism that it “now saves you also.”

...and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 3:21

{Complete Salvation?}

In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 3:20b-21

We just read in the scripture above that water baptism “now saves” us by the “resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Unless one desires to remove the resurrection of Jesus from Christianity, he cannot remove baptism from God’s method of saving a man. For God declares the resurrection of Jesus, His Son, gives power to water baptism. One is never baptized to join a church or as a reflection of their faith—that is merely to take a religious bath.

Water baptism points us to the mercy shown to all men when Jesus died on the cross and rose again. To state that water baptism symbolizes our faith that already saves us denotes arguing against God about the death and resurrection of His Son. Not only does this show a small understanding about real faith in Jesus, it is rebellion against God of the highest degree.

Jesus came and brought complete salvation to men, that is why scripture declares that Christ came by water, blood, and Spirit. This tract quickly looks at the water aspect, where God works His salvation plan in those who submit to God’s righteousness.

This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because

the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. 1 John 5:6-8

No more than we would think of leaving out the blood of Jesus, or the Holy Spirit should we think of leaving out the water. To do so blasphemes against the Trinity nature of God and preaches an incomplete message about the grace of Jesus. It denotes that one can have the blood of Jesus that saves us from the wrath of God, and be filled with the Holy Spirit without being cleansed from a bad conscience. This is why God told Peter to preach the “full message,” and not the current wide gate, easy believism, whitewash sinner’s prayer.

“Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people the full message of this new life.” Acts 5:20

Those who preach anything less than what Peter preached are not declaring the full message of new life in Christ.

{Pharaoh’s Army}

Since Jesus came by blood, water, and Spirit, scripture speaks of a baptism. For there is one baptism that symbolizes the Trinity of God whereby our salvation is sprinkled by the blood, baptized in the Spirit, and cleansed by water. Even the Old Testament reflected this truth when the Israelites, in order to be saved, had to sprinkle blood on their door frames, be empowered by the Spirit to leave Egypt, and then baptized at the Red Sea.

They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 1 Corinthians 10:2

Water on both sides and a cloud of water, truly if a people were ever water baptized, it was the Israelites. Can’t you imagine the rebel crowd of today standing at the parted sea and whining, “Moses, you are making this salvation by works! We will not go. We are already saved.” Moses certainly would have said, “Fine, you stand there in your false salvation and see how far it gets you.” Pharaoh’s army would have slaughtered them because God would not have protected and saved them. In order for them to find salvation they had to get down into the Red Sea and be baptized. Only then was Egypt, in other words the world, cleansed from them and their pledge to keep a good conscience began. Had they not submitted to this grace God sought to work, their faith would have been in vain and they would have died without ever finding complete salvation.

{Message of the Cross}

Since the offensive message of the cross has been deafened by those who claim the salvation of Jesus, the true meaning of baptism has all but disappeared. Even those who believe in water baptism reject the power of the cross that makes it a holy experience. Many who have been baptized sadly discover later their baptism was the baptism of John—the cleaning up of one’s life by human effort. This message of the cross is introduced and God’s plan of salvation fully laid out in the book *Even the Demons Believe*. For now, let us take a quick look at the meaning of baptism.

Baptism is the moment when a man dies to who he is and allows God to create a brand new person. In short, at the moment of baptism someone is born again. Saying the sinner’s prayer can by no exaggeration of imagination be considered a baptism of any sort. How iron-

ic that those who preach the believers prayer like to quote Romans, but it is the book of Romans, that Paul wrote, that utterly destroys such a thing.

Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. Romans 6:3-8

Rightly baptized people join Jesus in His death just as if they went down into the tomb with Him. Then as they come up out of the water they too are “raised from the dead through the glory of the Father.” Paul tells us in Romans so that “we too may live a new life.” Only those who die with Christ “like this” begin the resurrected life. For this reason Jesus said that we must be born of the water and the Spirit, (John 3:5) after a man has chosen to hate his own life, (John 12:25).

We see this fully in the way Paul himself was born again. Ananias told Paul what he must do to be saved and in baptism to “wash your sins away.” If Paul had said, “I will just say a prayer,” Ananias would have declared Paul an unrepentant rebel worthy of being cursed by God.

You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’ Acts 22:15-16

After baptism Paul began “calling on his name.” Those who teach that we can call upon the Lord for a salvation experience, have the cart before the horse. They push the cart rather than allowing the horse to pull, refusing to let God’s perfect salvation plan lead individuals to salvation. They push men into their religious schemes rather than letting Jesus shepherd them.

Indeed, such people misunderstand the very fundamentals of salvation. They falsely think that once a person asks Jesus into their heart they receive salvation and there is nothing more to it. They are like a runner in a race that believes a delusion that he won without ever actually running the race. Every day and every hour we must call upon Jesus, the true meaning of Romans 10:9. This passage doesn’t apply to a man’s life until after he has been saved and chooses to become a disciple of Jesus. A man who refuses to call upon the name of the Lord while he, by grace, runs the race of faith will lose his salvation. After all, faith without deeds is a dead faith that cannot save a man from hell.

You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? James 2:19-20

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