

IS BAPTISM NECESSARY FOR SALVATION?

Religion and many denominations have made an idol out of baptism, an idol that cannot save. They have elevated this ritual above the cross work of the Lord Jesus Christ and have turned a silent ear to the last words spoken by Christ on Calvary's cross, "*It is finished*".

To believe that an individual can be born again and cleansed from his sins by water baptism, or that one cannot be truly born again without water baptism, is a good indication one does not understand the gospel of Christ. One has no idea what true Bible salvation (being born again the Bible way) really means. Baptism cannot save, nor is it mandatory for salvation. If you are trusting in baptism for your salvation, it is obvious you do not have Bible salvation.

If you believe faith plus works is needed for salvation, dear reader, you are adding to the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and are guilty of the sin of legalism. Legalism is adding works of righteousness (baptism, deeds of the Law, doing good works) to faith in order to obtain salvation. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul was warning the dear saints about in Galatia. Beware of the prophets of legalism! The Holy Spirit tells us "*not by works of righteousness*". There is only one gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation to those who believe. Nowhere in the gospel of Christ does it state you need to be baptized in order to be saved.

Those who promote the necessity of baptism in order to be saved are preaching another gospel, which is not another. They are telling God and the human race that God's sacrifice at Calvary was not good enough to save. They are denying the blood of Christ. How insulting!

In every dispensation man has always been saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in Him alone. Let us compare Scripture with Scripture, obeying God's rules of interpretation, to find the answer to the question, "Is Baptism Necessary For Salvation?" *"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* (2 Peter 1:20-21). We do not want to be guilty of taking verses out of context to make the interpretation fit our preconceived ideas. We also do not want to defend those who have built a denomination on false doctrines based on their private interpretations.

Let us look unto the Lord for His divine guidance.

Oh, dear God, how I beseech Thee, that Thy Holy Spirit will open the eyes of those whose minds are blinded by the god of this world, and that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ would shine unto these dear readers, that they may believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16). The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes; not to everyone that receives water baptism; not to everyone that does works of righteousness.

Salvation is not of works. Salvation comes by God's grace (God's Riches At Christ's Expense) through faith. It is a free gift of God to hell deserving sinners. We know a gift is something that is completely based on the love of the giver. So, if the recipient decided to work for the gift it is no longer a gift. Even though the recipient's actions are sincere, it is still

insulting to the giver. *“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.”* (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Based on God’s Word, works of any kind cannot be a part of one’s salvation. This would annul the grace of God and allow sinful man to boast and hinder the work of the Holy Spirit.

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;” (Romans 3:23-25). *“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”* (Romans 3:28)

“For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Romans 4:2-5)

“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).

Many are confused about being saved by grace through faith. Once we are saved, we prove our saving faith by our works of righteousness. Good works is the product of salvation; salvation is not the product of good works. Salvation is first, followed by works. *“For we are his workmanship, created in*

Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10). “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.” (Titus 3:8). Salvation is faith plus nothing! “...Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house..” (Acts 16:30-31).

The Holy Spirit gives us the reason why the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation and exactly what the gospel of Christ is so there is no misunderstanding. No one has any excuse for not believing the truth. There is only one gospel whereby one must believe in order to be saved. *“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:” (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:8-9)*

The gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. *“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;” (1 Corinthians 15:3).* This one verse covers from Genesis to Calvary. *“Who, being in the form of God, thought it*

not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:6-8). The Lord Jesus was the only One that was able to pay that great sin debt. Jesus was God's sacrifice for all our sins. “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” (John 1:1-2). “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” (1 Timothy 3:16)

Scripture teaches and declares the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and without any controversy, Jesus Christ is God! God died for our sins. *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28). Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners so men would not have to go to hell, which was prepared for Satan and his angels. Because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, sin entered into the world. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Romans 5:12).*

Our standing before God is that of condemned sinners. We are dead in trespasses and sins and are hell bound. Whether or not we want to admit it, it does not change the fact. We are sinners and Christ Jesus died for our sins according to the Word of God. *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is*

eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23). “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;” (Isaiah 64:6). “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8)

On Calvary's cross Jesus cried with a loud voice *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* Because of God's holiness, God cannot look upon sin. All sin must be judged. It was a divine necessity that God the Father, turn His head from God the Son, when He was bearing the sin of the entire world, paying the sin debt for all mankind.

Here we are at the heart of the atonement, when God the Father made Christ Jesus, God the Son, who knew no sin, to be sin for us. *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21).* It was then that God laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Jesus took our place and endured the wrath of God for all our sins: our past, our present, and our future sins. *“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” (1 Peter 2:24). “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:5-6)*

When Jesus knew that all things were now accomplished, He cried out *“It is finished”*, the three greatest words ever spoken. If one really understands the meaning of these words, one would fully realize that trying to do works of righteousness in order to obtain salvation is insulting to the finished cross work

of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was telling all creation for all eternity: Redemption is now completed! I have paid that great sin debt and crushed the serpent's head! I have satisfied every jot and tittle of the law and fulfilled all the prophesies that *"were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me"*. I have finished My Father's work!

When Jesus the mighty conqueror cried out *"It is finished"*, the veil of the temple was rent in twain. *"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;"* (Matthew 27:50-51).

The veil of the temple was used to conceal the Holy of Holies where the mercy seat resided. Only the high priest was allowed to view and enter in. All others were struck dead. The high priest would enter into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle the blood of the sin offering upon the mercy seat. *"Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:"* (Leviticus 16:15). Notice that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom exposing the holy of holies and the mercy seat the moment Jesus cried out *"It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."* Redemption is now completed; there is nothing that needs to be added. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Rightful and only High Priest. *"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."* (Hebrews 4:14). Christ is the end of the law. *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."* (Romans 10:4). Calvary was God's sin offering for the sins of all mankind. This was the only sacrifice that was acceptable to God. *"And he is the*

propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2). “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” (Romans 5:9). “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;” (Ephesians 1:7).

Not only did the Lord Jesus Christ shed His precious blood at Calvary, but also, as our great High Priest, He entered into the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle in heaven. *“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,” (Revelation 1:5). “And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:” (Revelation 15:5).* Just as the high priest of Israel would enter into the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the blood of the sin sacrifice on the mercy seat, so the Lord Jesus Christ poured His own blood on the mercy seat in heaven, making our redemption secure and complete for all eternity.

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:11-14). “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of

God;” (Hebrews 10:12). *“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”* (Hebrews 10:14)

Dear reader, how can you even think for one moment that your carnal works of righteousness can add one thing to the finished work of our great God and Saviour? Our salvation is based upon the finished cross work and the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. *“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”* (Hebrews 1:3).

Scripture tells us that our righteousness is as filthy rags. That is why we must submit to the righteousness of God. Those of us who are born again are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”* (Isaiah 64:6). *“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:”* (Philippians 3:9).

Nowhere in Scripture is there any mention of Old Testament saints being baptized. Scripture teaches that in every dispensation, mankind has always been saved by faith in Jesus Christ alone. *“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which*

things the angels desire to look into.” (1 Peter 1:10-12). “For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.” (Hebrews 4:2). Notice the last part of the verse: “not being mixed with faith in them that heard it”, indicating that we are saved by faith and not works of righteousness. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,” (Titus 2:11). God said all men and the word “men” in this verse is referring to human beings. It is the same word used in 1 Timothy 2:4, “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” So, if baptism is necessary for salvation, why did the Holy Spirit not mention it at all in the Old Testament? All mankind has to be saved the same way. There is only one way to be saved and that is the Bible way - by faith in Jesus Christ alone. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

We do not read in God’s Word about the baptism of Adam and Eve. Please take the time to carefully read Hebrews, chapter 11, the great faith chapter. Those individuals that are mentioned: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and the many others, when and where were they baptized? “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.” (John 8:56). “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” (Romans 4:3). If baptism is necessary for salvation, I believe the Holy Spirit would have mentioned it. When was Noah baptized? Some say that Noah was baptized when he and his family entered the ark. However, Genesis 6 tells us that Noah was saved before he entered into the ark. When was Abraham baptized? Seeing that the nation of Israel started with Abraham and that Scripture tells us that he was a friend of God, why is there no mention of

Abraham's water baptism? What about the thief on the cross? When did he get baptized? *"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."* (Luke 23:39-43). The answer is simple: water baptism is not part of anyone's salvation.

Baptism symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, no matter how symbolic, symbols do not save. If one is not truly born again, he can be baptized a hundred times and still be just as lost as before he was baptized. Just like the Old Testament sacrifices were symbolic and pointed to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, they did not save. The Old Testament saints offered the sacrifices as commanded because of their faith in Christ. *"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never*

take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;” (Hebrews 10:4-12).

Scripture mentions four different kinds of baptism: the Baptism of John, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Baptism of Fire (only mentioned twice, Matthew 3:13 and Luke 3:17), and Believer’s Baptism. Matthew, chapter 3 is the very first time the words baptism and baptized are used, and not all references to these two words point to water baptism.

The Baptism of John is the baptism unto repentance. Repentance literally means to think differently; to reconsider; to change one’s mind; to change one’s direction. To repent from unbelief is to believe. Repentance and salvation are not the same. “...repent ye, and believe the gospel.” (Mark 1:15). “...Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,” (Acts 3:19).

John made it clear he only baptized with water, but Christ will baptize you with the Holy Ghost. “*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*” (Matthew 3:11-12). “*Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*” (Acts 11:16). This is very significant! What is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit? What is the Baptism of Fire? Let us first discuss the Baptism of Fire.

What did John mean when he said, “*and with fire*”? Fire speaks of judgment! It is obvious, based on Matthew 3:12 and other verses in Scripture, that John was referring to the eternal damnation of the lost - the fire of hell! Those who die without Christ end up in hell and then the lake of fire for all eternity. Those in hell are baptized in fire. Our booklet, Where Do The Dead Go, covers this in great detail. Those in hell are submerged (baptized), completely surrounded (baptized), by the literal, unquenchable fire of hell. Those who are born again receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit the moment they are born again. The lost receive the Baptism of Fire when they die.

A lot of false teachings have been fabricated by the many different religious groups pertaining to baptism. The Charismatics promote their unscriptural teachings on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. They claim it is a second blessing which the new convert receives the different gifts of the Holy Spirit at a later date. Catholicism, Lutheranism, Mormonism, the Church of Christ, the Seventh-Day Adventists and other similar groups, promote their own unscriptural teachings pertaining to water baptism. Even though there are some differences between them, they all treat water baptism as a sacrament that is necessary for salvation. Their teachings are contrary to God’s Word and they are guilty of promoting the false gospel of good works.

It is the responsibility of every born again believer to beware of the leaven and apostasy that is being propagated by Christendom and to contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. This is why it is so important not to neglect the studying of God’s Word, so Christians do not allow themselves to be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. The Holy Spirit has given us the exact definition in Scripture which makes reference to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, so the

children of God will be able to rightly divide the word of truth. (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:6; Romans 6:1-4; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12)

In order to understand the importance of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, one should know the various works of the Holy Spirit in relation to salvation. It is of great importance to be very careful not to confuse the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with: the act of regeneration, the sealing of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or the filling of the Holy Spirit. These are all separate works of the Holy Spirit and all fitly join together and all occur at the very moment of salvation. To attribute the works of the Holy Spirit to water baptism is contrary to sound, Biblical teaching.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is very significant in this present Dispensation of Grace. It sheds light on the mystery of the New Testament Church, *“Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:”* (Ephesians 3:5-6). The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a second blessing or filling that happens at a later date after one’s salvation. It occurs at the moment of one’s conversion. The believer becomes a member of the body of Christ, the New Testament Church which is also the Bride of Christ. Please take the time to read Ephesians 5:22-33. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is when the believer is baptized into (placed into) the body of Christ, the New Testament Church, which Jesus Christ is the head and foundation. *“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 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.” (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” (Ephesians 5:30)

The words ‘baptism and baptized’ mean to be placed into; submerged; completely surrounded. Noah was baptized into the ark. The ark is a picture of Christ. When Noah entered into the ark he was placed into; completely surrounded; submerged into; baptized into the ark. We are baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit: *“One Lord, one faith, one baptism,”* (Ephesians 4:5). There is only one baptism and comparing Scripture with Scripture this is referring to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Do not confuse the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with Believer’s Baptism.

Regeneration is not reformation! This is where most people get confused. They think by cleaning up their lives, turning over a new leaf, doing works of righteousness, joining some religion or denomination, means they are now born again. Let us discuss the difference between reformation and regeneration.

Romans 10:3 defines the act of reformation. *“For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”* The word reform means to correct, change or improve. Reformation is the process where one tries to reform, change his behavior and tries to establish his own righteousness. However, this reformation is brought on by one who is relying completely on his own power, completely ignoring God. In reality, what we end up with is the unregenerate man trying to establish his own righteousness by conforming to the principles of the religion of his choice, hoping to bring on some kind of reform. This is

only an outward change and will only last as long as the individual stays committed to or is able to resist the temptation. Relying on one's own strength is a formula for defeat.

Regeneration is an act of the Holy Spirit resulting in the new birth, a miracle of God, which happens immediately the lost sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16). *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."* (John 6:47). *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."* (1 John 5:13). *"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* (John 1:13). *"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). Take note that the Word of God states, *"by the washing of regeneration"* - not by water baptism!

The word regeneration means born again; reborn; new birth; born of God; transformed. This happens the very moment one is born again. When one believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and accepts Him as his personal Saviour (Titus 3:5, regeneration) he is a new creation in Christ Jesus. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Corinthians 5:17). Scripture also links regeneration to a spiritual resurrection. *"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."* (Romans 6:13). *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:” (Ephesians 2:1-6).

A perfect example: an alcoholic decides he wants to be free from the addiction of alcohol. He decides to join Alcoholics Anonymous and by committing to their principles this will cause a reformation in his life. He is now a reformed alcoholic (still an alcoholic); his ability to stay dry, free from alcohol, is totally dependent upon his commitment to fight off the desire to have a drink. This act of reformation has not brought on any real lasting change from within. This person is still an alcoholic because he is only reformed and not transformed (regeneration), so the desire for the alcohol is still there. This reform is only as good as this person’s ability to fight off the desire. It is only a matter of time before this poor alcoholic goes back to the booze. Reformation does not change one’s old nature. Leopards don’t change their spots. *“But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” (2 Peter 2:22)*

Regeneration, being born again, is an act of the Holy Spirit and not based on our works of righteousness. The alcoholic acknowledges he is a sinner in need of a Saviour. He believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and receives Him as his personal

Saviour and repents. He is now born again; a new creature in Christ. He is no longer an alcoholic. The old things no longer appeal to him. Even though the alcohol and the temptation is still there, the desire for the alcohol is gone. Water baptism does not bring forth the miracle of regeneration.

In this Dispensation of Grace, also known as the Church Age, (which began at Pentecost and will end with the rapture of the Church), the Holy Spirit dwells within all those who are born again at the moment of their salvation. *“Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”* (1 John 4:13). In previous dispensations, the Holy Spirit would rest upon the believer. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a vital part of our salvation and was promised by the Lord Jesus Christ. Please take the time to read John, chapters 14 and 16. The Holy Spirit takes up residence in each and every believer and guides each one in all truth. *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”* (1 Corinthian 6:19). *“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”* (Galatians 4:6). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is an indication that one is truly born again, a child of God. *“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”* (Romans 8:9). *“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”* (1 John 3:24). *“Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”* (1 John 4:13). *“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”* (1 John 4:4)

When one hears the gospel and trusts in the shed blood and the finished cross work of the Lord Jesus Christ, he is born again, born of the Spirit, and at that very moment sealed by the Holy Spirit. He is born of the Holy Spirit and sealed by the Holy Spirit. These are two separate events occurring at the exact same time. *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,”* (Ephesians 1:13). The Holy Spirit Himself is the seal in which the child of God is identified as belonging to Christ. *“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”* (Ephesians 4:30). The believer is God’s purchased possession, *“which he hath purchased with his own blood”* and has put His seal upon all His children. *“Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”* (2 Corinthians 1:22). The word *“sealed”* in these verses is used to convey the meaning to stamp with a signet or privately mark for security or preservation. What a blessed assurance this brings to the heart of every blood-washed, born again child of God, knowing that he is preserved in Christ Jesus. *“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:”* (Jude 1).

As we have just seen from Scripture, the moment one is born again he is born of the Holy Spirit, baptized by the Holy Spirit, sealed by the Holy Spirit, indwelt by the Holy Spirit and is commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Holy Spirit is not a second blessing as some teach. Christians are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit which is to completely surrender our body, mind and soul. The believers must allow the Holy Spirit to empty their hearts of everything pertaining to the world, the flesh and the devil, so the Holy Spirit can have full control over their lives, making them a vessel that will bring honor and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;” (Ephesians 5:18). The word “filled” has the meaning of complete fullness, influence over, controlling force. When one is drunk, he is filled with intoxicating drink which has a controlling force over the individual. His mind and body is filled with the influence and control of the intoxication of the fermented wine. The Holy Spirit is grieved by any presence of sin in our lives and Christians are instructed not to grieve the Holy Spirit. *“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”* (Ephesians 4:30). Believers are found guilty of quenching the Holy Spirit when they refuse to allow the Holy Spirit to have full control over their lives. *“Quench not the Spirit.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:19). *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”* (Galatians 5:16)

As a believer matures in the Lord, he realizes the importance of yielding more and more to the Holy Spirit. When the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit, he is able and willing to live a life that is pleasing and honoring to God, our heavenly Father. *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”* (Romans 12:1-2). That is why it is of great necessity that the born again believer be filled with the Holy Spirit. *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”* (Galatians 6:7-8). *“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your*

members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” (Romans 6:13)

Believer’s Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the only two ordinances given to the New Testament Church by the Lord Jesus Christ. Neither one is a sacrament; neither one has any saving grace. The only prerequisite is one must be born again. The Lord’s Supper is a memorial remembering the Lord Jesus Christ’s death until He returns for His Bride. *“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.” (1 Corinthians 11:26)*

Therefore, if baptism does not save, it is not necessary for salvation and has no saving grace, why should one be baptized? The answer is twofold. First of all, it is in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. After one’s conversion, one should be baptized and partake of the Lord’s Supper. Secondly, baptism is a public testimony symbolizing that one is being identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. Believer’s Baptism is an outward profession of an inward faith. Symbols do not save.

Water baptism does not baptize the believer into Jesus Christ or into His death as some teach, using Romans 6:3 as their basis. *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?”* Romans 6:3 is not referring to water baptism, but to the Baptism of the Spirit. The death referred to in Romans 6:3 is the death of Christ on Calvary’s cross. Our baptism into His death took place the moment we believed, that very second we were placed into His body by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. *“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” (Ephesians 5:30).* There is no way water baptism can place us into the body of Christ where we are baptized into His death at Calvary. Being placed into the body of Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit.

In every instance, Scripture teaches one must be born again before he can receive Believer's Baptism. The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch is a perfect illustration. (Acts 8:26-38).

“26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”

In verse 35 Philip “preached unto him Jesus”, beginning at Isaiah 53:7, giving him the gospel. Pay close attention to verses 36 - 38. “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” Philip answers him in verse 37, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest” and the eunuch’s response to Philip’s question, “And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”. The eunuch, not knowing who Isaiah the prophet was referring to, now cries out “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”.

In verse 38 the eunuch was baptized. Baptism followed salvation.

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 16:13-17)

The conversion of the Apostle Paul is recorded in Acts 9:17-18. “And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou

camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.” Look at the order: baptism followed salvation. Paul filled with the Holy Ghost, indicating that he was born again, saved, before he was baptized.

The conversion of Cornelius, his kinsmen and friends is recorded in Acts 10.

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.” (Acts 10:44-48)

Notice! They were born again, the new birth, the miracle of regeneration before they were baptized. An unregenerate man cannot receive the Holy Spirit. Once again, Scripture shows us that the prerequisite for Believer’s Baptism is one must be born again.

Jesus cried out ***“It is finished”!***