

## DIALOGUE WITH A BAPTIST (FROM THE CHRISTIAN RESTORATION ASSOCIATION)

*The Christian preacher had just given the invitation inviting people to come to Christ for salvation. He had quoted Mark 16:16, encouraging them to believe and be baptized.*

*Now it so happened that a Baptist heard the message. He and his wife lingered at the door till everyone was gone. He then confronted the minister.*

**Baptist:** I liked your sermon, but I didn't like your invitation to the lost.

**Christian:** (Smiling) Oh, and why not?

**Baptist:** You left the impression that you have to believe and be baptized to be saved. I believe that baptism is the wrong emphasis.

**Christian:** What makes you think that I emphasized baptism?

**Baptist:** Well, you quoted Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

**Christian:** (Smiling) Well, I am surprised to hear that you think just quoting that text without comment emphasizes the command to be baptized.

**Baptist:** Well, I think you have to believe to be saved, but I don't believe you have to be baptized to be saved.

**Christian:** Well, I have always been told that "and" is a conjunction and "connects two things equal to each other." The command is to believe and be baptized and the promise is that you shall be saved.

**Baptist:** Well, you do have to believe to be saved, but you do not have to be baptized. You will note that Jesus did not say “He that is not baptized shall be damned.” He said, “He that believeth not shall be damned.”

**Christian:** So, you would agree with me that you would have to be baptized if he had said, “He that believeth and is not baptized shall be damned.”?

**Baptist:** Yes, but it doesn’t say that.

**Christian:** You are right about that! It doesn’t say that, but for a good reason. But what if it did?

**Baptist:** (Smiling) But it doesn’t.

**Christian:** No, but for argument’s sake, let’s say it did. Suppose it said, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believes not and is not baptized shall be damned.”

**Baptist:** (Smiling) But it doesn’t.

**Christian:** No, but let’s suppose it did. If it did say that, what would you have to do to be saved?

**Baptist:** You would have to believe and be baptized to be saved.

**Christian:** That’s right. The first part of the sentence wouldn’t change the command or the promise at all, would it? But if it did say, “He that believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned,” what would you have to do to be damned?

**Baptist:** You would have to not believe and not be baptized to be damned, if it said that.

**Christian:** Right. Now, what if Jesus had said that, and you believed and were not baptized, would you be saved?

**Baptist:** No.

**Christian:** What if Jesus had said that and you were not baptized, would you then be saved?

**Baptist:** No.

**Christian:** What if Jesus has said that, and you believed and was not baptized or was baptized and did not believe, would you be saved?

**Baptist:** No.

**Christian:** Would you be damned?

**Baptist:** No.

**Christian:** Why not?

**Baptist:** Well, all you have to do is not believe and you would be damned.

**Christian:** (Smiling) No, that is not true, John. If Jesus said, "He that believes not and is not baptized, shall be damned," it would be necessary to be both an unbeliever and unbaptized in order to be damned.

**Baptist:** I don't follow you.

**Christian:** Now think. If Jesus would have said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," you would still have to do both to be saved. However, if He said, "He that believes not and is not baptized shall be damned." it would demand that you be both an unbeliever and an unimmersed before you would be damned. You would neither be saved nor damned. You would neither be saved nor damned if you did only one of these two requirements. Do you see why Jesus worded it the way he did?

It is not necessary to be unbaptized to be damned, just simple disbelief. It only takes unbelief to damn you. It is not necessary to do both to be damned. Do you believe in Purgatory?

**Baptist:** No, of course not.

**Christian:** Well, where would the person go if he was neither saved nor damned?

**Baptist:** Well, I have never seen it that way before. However, it is against the tenor of the Scriptures for you to have to do anything to be saved. Salvation is not of works but grace.

**Christian:** I agree. Salvation is of grace, and not works which we have done.

**Baptist:** But you preached that you have to do a work to be saved.

**Christian:** (Smiling) John, I think you are like the Jews who were upset with Jesus doing work on the Sabbath. Jesus did not do anything. He was passive. He just spoke and touched the people and the Jews called it "work". The person being Baptized is not working. He is passive. It says, "He baptized him!" The "baptizer" is doing the "work". The believer is totally passive. In fact, he plays the role of a man dead with Christ. Does a dead man work?

**Baptist:** (Smiling) I am not so sure that you are not just clever with words. Salvation is not of works lest we boast. You cannot earn your salvation. It is not by deeds of righteousness we have done but according to His mercy He saves us. We are saved by faith only.

**Christian:** “Faith without works is dead.” We are saved by an obedient faith, not a dead faith. In fact, Paul says, “Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest & by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:” Romans 16:25.

**Baptist:** All you have to do is invite Jesus into your heart.

**Christian:** (Smiling) I can’t find that in my Bible. Can you find that in yours?

**Baptist:** Why the Reformation was built on the fact that we are not saved by works of righteousness, and that you cannot earn your salvation.

**Christian:** Yes, it was, but men have run so far from Rome’s “salvation by works” that they have passed by Jerusalem’s message of “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.”

**Baptist:** Well, I know people who are unimmersed who are better Christians than the people in your Church who have been immersed.

**Christian:** What do you mean “Better Christians?”

**Baptist:** They are more faithful at Church, they give more, pray more, call more, go help their neighbors, and do much more good works than some of those in your congregation. They should be saved more than the uninvolved immersed people.

**Christian:** Then you are leaving your former position that salvation is not by good works?

**Baptist:** What do you mean, “leaving my position?”

**Christian:** You said that we are not saved by good works. Now you are saying that some unimmersed are more apt to be saved because they do more good works than those immersed. Which is it? Are you saved by deeds of righteousness that you have done or not?

**Baptist:** Well, the pious unimmersed are often better people and better neighbors, and do many more good works than those immersed.

**Christian:** I do not deny that, but I thought we both agreed that good works do not save us. You can do good works without being a Christian, but you cannot be a Christian without doing good works.

**Baptist:** Well, look at Mother Teresa. She probably was not immersed.

**Christian:** No, probably not, but we were already agreed that we are not saved by good works.

**Baptist:** Well, if she isn't saved after all the good works she has done, no one is saved.

**Christian:** (Smiling) Your words are strange words for a person who thinks you cannot earn your way to Heaven.

**Baptist:** Well, we are saved by our relationship with Jesus.

**Christian:** I agree. We are saved by knowing Christ and being in Christ.

**Baptist:** Well, you sure don't get in Christ by being baptized.

**Christian:** Well, John that is exactly how we do get into Christ. “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” “We are baptized into his death.” “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?”

**Baptist:** Chuck Swindoll says there is not an ounce of water in Romans 6.

**Christian:** (Smiling) Well, is I may be so bold, there isn't an ounce of truth or good sense in what Chuck says.

**Baptist:** Well, he is the president of Dallas Theological Seminary.

**Christian:** (Smiling) Well, Paul is an inspired apostle of Jesus Christ. I think those are better credentials, don't you?

**Baptist:** Well, we just can't agree. You preach “works salvation.” We are saved by “faith only.”

**Christian:** Let me ask you a question. You think the pious unimmersed are saved because they often do more good works than those who are immersed. Do you think the pious unbelievers are saved?

**Baptist:** There ain't no way!

**Christian:** Well, haven't you met people who were unbelievers that are much better people and neighbors, and do more good works than some believers in your church?

**Baptist:** Yeah, I reckon I have met some unbelievers who are better than some believers.

**Christian:** Are they saved?

**Baptist:** No way! Jesus said that you have to believe on Him to be saved.

**Christian:** Let me ask you another question. Do you believe a man is saved without repentance?

**Baptist:** No way! "Repent or perish!" Jesus said.

**Christian:** So, you admit that a fellow has to do more than just believe, and that 3:16 isn't the only verse in the Bible?

**Baptist:** Yes. A person has to have faith and repentance toward God.

**Christian:** Have you not known people who don't believe in God who make changes in their life without repentance toward God? They simply made a decision to change for their wife or kids' sake, or health's sake, or just because they wanted to turn over a new leaf. Don't you think some of these fellows do more good works than some people in the church who believe and have repented?

**Baptist:** Yes, I have known a few people who were agnostics and atheists who were great men morally and ethically.

**Christian:** Are they saved without coming to Christ?

**Baptist:** No way.

**Christian:** Why? They are better than some members of your church that have believed and repented.

**Baptist:** So, what are you saying?

**Christian:** (Smiling) I want to show you what you have said. You said the pious unimmersed are going to be saved because they are doers of good works more than some of those immersed believers here in this church. But then when I point out that some agnostics or unbelievers who have not repented toward God are doers of more good works than repentant believers in the Baptist Church, you deny that they are saved.



My question is” How can you say that “immersion is not essential” because unimmersed people do more good works than immersed people, but will not admit atheists are saved when they do more good works than many repentant believers. I especially want to know this, in light of the fact that we’ve agreed that good works cannot save us.

**Baptist:** (Smiling) Well, all I know is that you have to know Jesus to be saved. You have got to have a relationship with Him and baptism is not a relationship.

**Christian:** I agree on both counts. But it says in 1 John 2:4, “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

**Baptist:** Well, a man ought to be baptized, but it is not necessary to be saved.

**Christian:** So, let’s see, Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” But you Baptists say, “He that believeth and is saved should be baptized.”

The Catholics and others who sprinkle babies say, “He that is baptized and is saved, should believe when they get older.

The Universalists say, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be saved also.”

I think I shall just keep on preaching it the way Jesus said it, instead of rearranging His commandments and denying His promises.

**Baptist:** Well, suppose a man is on an airplane and he talks to a fellow on the plane. During the conversation the man led him to Christ, and he planned to be baptized when they landed, but the plane blows up in the air, and he is killed. You mean you would say he was lost just because of not being baptized?

**Christian:** Well, let's suppose that I am talking to a Jew. After an hour's conversation, he says, "You have me wondering about Jesus being the Messiah, but there is one reason left why I can't believe in Jesus," he states the objection. I know the answer. I say, "Oh, that is simple enough.' But before I could tell him, the plane blows up. He died seconds before faith. Do you mean God is going to send Him to Hell just because he didn't believe that Jesus was His Savior?

**Baptist:** But how many chances did he have to believe before the explosion?

**Christian:** The same amount of chances the other one had to be obedient in baptism. The truth is, neither man has a promise from God that they will be saved. The command is to believe and be baptized, and the promise is "shall be saved." Neither one of them have that promise because they both did not fulfill Jesus' command.

**Baptist:** Well, I've got to go. We will talk again. I appreciate your time and kind spirit.

**Christian:** And I yours, sir. Let's do talk again.