

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION: THE TERMS & CONDITIONS

by David Lee Burris



Lady of the Lake Baptism.

Ivan the Terrible was one of the great rulers of Russia. He was so busy trying to annex territory to his country that he had no time for his own social life. His advisers became worried because he had not married. Ivan suggested that they find him a wife, and he would accept their recommendation. They searched far and wide for a girl who was beautiful, intelligent, and a king's daughter. They found her in Athens, Greece; her name was Sophia, the daughter of the King of Greece. Ivan asked the King for the daughter's hand; the King demanded that Ivan join the Greek Orthodox Church. This he did. He had gone to Greece with five hundred of his

best soldiers, and when Ivan joined the church, they desired to join also. A catechizer, one who taught religious practices, outlined the articles of the creed to everyone of them, but with one exception. One of the articles stated that if they joined the church, they could not be professional soldiers. They asked the catechizer to give them time to think it over. They pondered the problem; "How can we join the Church and remain in the army at the same time?" They concocted a plan, and when they were to be baptized they marched into the water, five hundred of them, together with five hundred priests. Shortly before each priest took his candidate under, each soldier grabbed for his sword, and lifted it up in the air, and each soldier was baptized except for his fighting arm and a gleaming sword that jugged out of the water. Those who witnessed the mass baptism spectacle said that they saw five hundred dry arms and five hundred glittering swords sticking out of the water. The soldier had fallen up on the plan—"We can join the church with our bodies, but we will allow the fighting arm to remain in possession of the state." – *Internet Search*

Naaman the Leper



1 In the days of the prophet Elisha, the commander of the army of Syria—one of the countries next to Israel—was a man whose name was Naaman.



2 Naaman was very famous in Syria. He was a great soldier; he and his army had won many victories. But there was something wrong with Naaman. He had a terrible skin disease called leprosy.



3 Now, a little Israelite girl who had been captured by the Syrians lived in Naaman's house. She said to Naaman's wife, "I wish my master could go to Israel. There's a prophet there who could cure him."



4 So Naaman got permission from the king of Syria to go to Israel. He took a gift of silver and gold and fine clothing. The king also gave him a letter which ordered the king of Israel to heal Naaman.



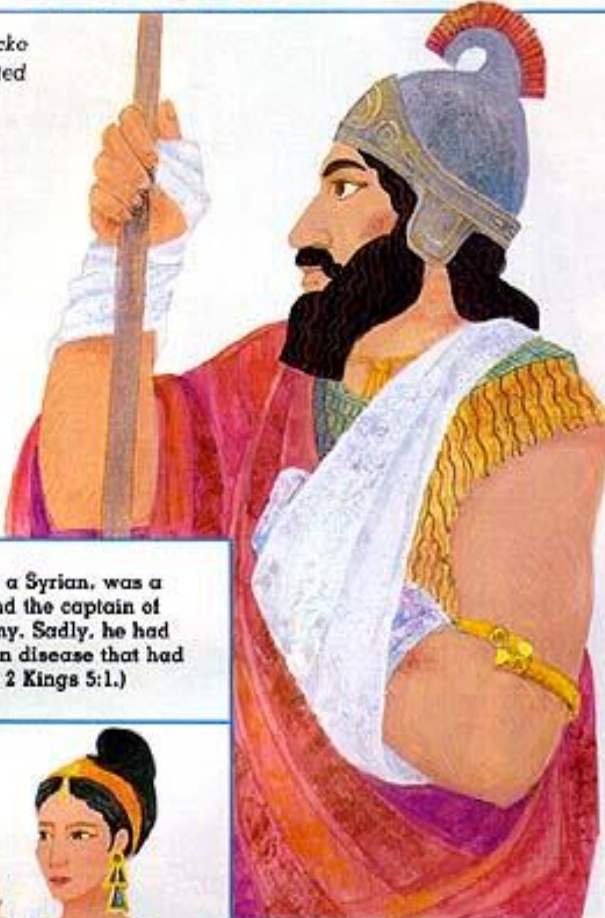
5 The king of Israel was very upset when he read this letter. "How can he expect me to cure this man?" he said. "Who does he think I am— God? He must be trying to start a fight."



6 Elisha the prophet found out about Naaman and the letter. He said to the king of Israel: "Send the man to me. I will show him that there is a prophet in Israel."

ELISHA AND NAAMAN

By Beverly Webecko
Ahlstrom/Illustrated
by Phyllis Luch

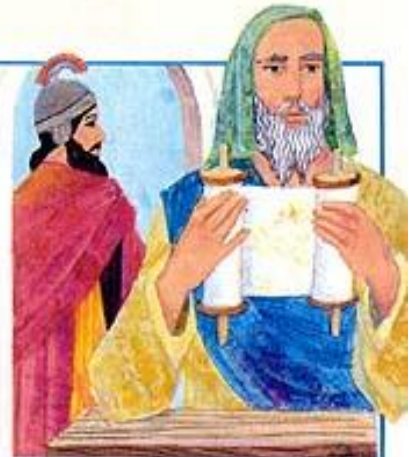


1. Naaman, a Syrian, was a brave man and the captain of his king's army. Sadly, he had leprosy, a skin disease that had no cure. (See 2 Kings 5:1.)



2. His wife's Israelite maid told her mistress about a prophet in Israel who could heal Naaman. When the king of Syria heard this, he sent Naaman with a letter to the king of Israel, asking him to cure the Syrian captain. (See 2 Kings 5:2-6.)

3. The king of Israel could not cure Naaman. He was frightened that Syria would start a war with Israel if Naaman was not healed. The King was so unhappy that he tore his clothes. (See 2 Kings 5:7.)



4. Elisha was then the prophet. He told the king to send Naaman to him. So the captain went to see Elisha. (See 2 Kings 5:8-9.)



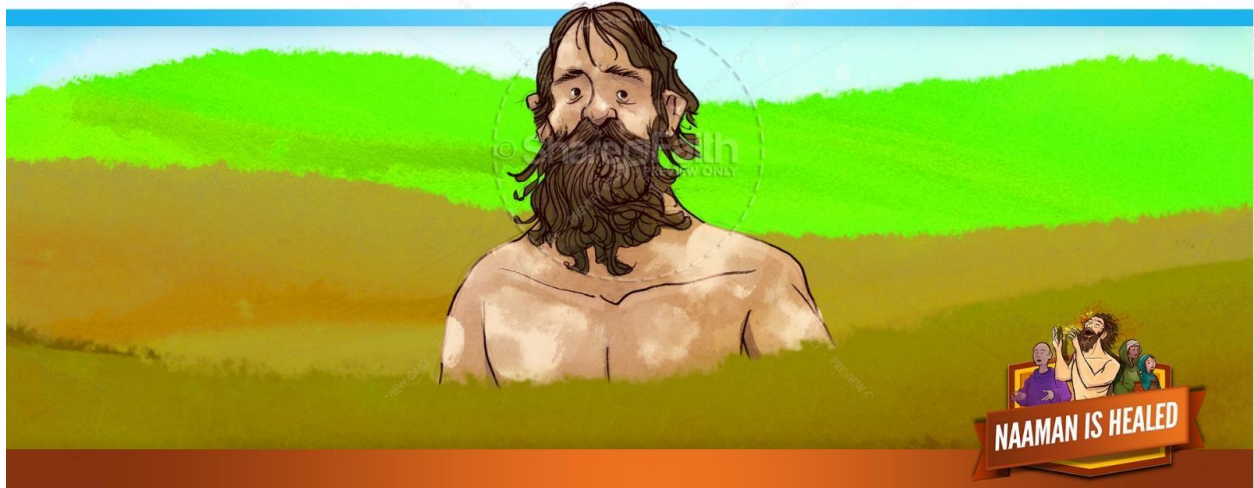
5. When Elisha told Naaman that he would be healed if he washed seven times in the Jordan River, Naaman was angry. He said that there were better rivers in Syria. Why couldn't he just wash in those rivers? He decided not to do what the prophet counseled. (See 2 Kings 5:10-12.)



6. But Naaman's servants asked him why, if he would have done something difficult to be healed, he wouldn't do something easy. Naaman repented and obeyed Elisha's instructions, and he was cured. And from then on, although he had been worshipping false gods, he worshipped only the Lord. (See 2 Kings 5:13-17.)



**What happened after the seventh time
Naaman washed in the river?**



Naaman The Syrian

By Irvin Himmel

The lessons of the old Testament are for our learning (Rom. 15:4). A study of characters who lived in ages past can be both profitable and interesting. Naaman lived in the days of Elisha the prophet. His story is related in 2 Kings 5.

Naaman was captain of the Syrian army. Syria was Israel's neighbor to the north. Although he was considered great, honorable, and mighty in valor or courage, Naaman was afflicted with a dreaded disease of leprosy. The Syrians had gone oft in companies and raided the Israelites. In one of those hostile attacks they had captured a little maid. The girl became the servant of Naaman's wife. One day she remarked that if he could be healed in Samaria with the prophet of God, Naaman could be healed of his leprosy.

In time, Naaman went into the land of Israel, and after some confusion he appeared before the prophet. When the Syrian arrived with horses and chariots, Elisha sent a messenger, saying, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." Naaman was full of anger and reacted according to the emotion that flooded his heart.

Despite his being noted for courage, Naaman lacked humility – a characteristic necessary for any man who seeks God's blessing. Naaman was wroth because he expected the prophet to come out, stand, call on the name of the Lord, strike his hand over the place, and thus recover the leper. He said, "Behold, I thought. . ." His mistake was in supposing that God should operate according to Naaman's plan. He expected show and ceremony.

Many people in our times are like Naaman in attitude. They expect God to conform to their plans. They stumble at His simple commands in their zeal for ceremony and elaborate schemes. They will either have their way about things or die and to go hell.

Naaman argued that if it was necessary to dip in a river, he should at least be permitted to choose the river. After all, water is water, and Abana and Pharpar, rivers in his own country, appeared better and cleaner than the muddy Jordan. Overlooking the fact that the difference was in God's choice in the matter, and ignoring the command given through the prophet by the messenger, "he turned arid went away in a rage."

Before we become too harsh in censuring Naaman, let's ask ourselves if we have not acted in much the same way at times. The New Testament commands baptism for forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1st Peter 3:21). Has anyone ever scoffed at baptism and argued that it's non-essential? The Bible calls baptism a burial followed by a resurrection. Has anyone ever chosen to ignore Romans 6:3-5 and Colossians 2:12, reasoning that sprinkling and pouring will suffice, and either would be much more convenient than immersion? Has anyone ever turned away, perhaps even in a rage, when it was insisted that God means exactly what the Bible says?

Naaman's servants reasoned with him, reminding him that if he had been asked to do some great thing he would have complied. But think how simple and easy the command of God was! The mighty Syrian captain humbled himself and dipped seven times in Jordan, according to God's will, "and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

The waters of Jordan did not cleanse Naaman. God did it. But God would not cleanse him until he obeyed. When a person is baptized today, the water does not remit his sins. It is God who forgives sins. But God has not promised remission of sins until one obeys in baptism. As God used water to test the faith of Naaman, water is used to test our faith now. How strong is your faith?

Let us learn from Naaman that it pays to comply with God's requirements. Let us humble ourselves, trust and obey the Lord. Our eternal salvation is at stake.

Guardian of Truth XXVII: 6, pp. 171-172
March 17, 1983

Naaman the Leper

Naaman was a leper; a disease that only God could cure!

- A chronic, slowly progressing, mildly infectious disease, marked by destruction of tissue (Webster's College Dictionary).
- Their tissue rots (wastes away) from the inside till death!

"Walking Dead!"

Today: People are lost in sin; a condition that only God can cure, by the blood of Christ!

- *Rom. 3:23*
- *Rom. 6:23*


"Walking Dead!"

Eph. 2:1-2

1. And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,
2. in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Naaman and people of today have one thing in common: A condition that only God provides the cure for!

Naaman's Cure For Leprosy



Behold, I Thought

Posted by [Mark Mayberry](#) August 6, 2012

By J. Wiley Adams

Kings 5 is a classic account of man's wisdom versus the wisdom of God. In Isaiah 55:8,9 we learn that God's thoughts and ways are not man's thoughts and ways. His thoughts and ways are higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth. What may seem right to man is not the criterion for pleasing God (Prov. 14:12).

In the earlier days of this century, gospel meetings used to include such basic topics as why we sing but do not play, strange fire, the comparison of the Old and New Testaments, morality, and nearly every preacher had a sermon on Naaman, the leper. Under such preaching the stories of the Bible came alive. Brethren were well-taught. Even the children sat speechless at the Bible accounts of Noah and the ark, David and Goliath, as well as the wise man and the foolish man. It has changed but it needs to be revived.

Such a subject has been assigned to this writer for this special issue. It is about Naaman, the leper reported in 2 Kings 5. No one ever preached it better than the late Fred Dennis of the upper Ohio Valley. I can hear him now as he preached the plain and simple story of the need to let God have his way — the need to obey him rather than man.

Naaman was the captain of the Syrian host. He was the Syrian king's chief-of-staff. He was a great, honorable and brave man. At times he fought against Israel and took captives from among them. One of these captives was a little maid who waited on Naaman's wife.

It was discovered that Naaman had the dread disease called leprosy. He was a leper. He sought desperately to find a cure. He was willing to try anything to get well. When the little maid from Israel knew that her master had leprosy, she told her mistress there was a prophet in Samaria (Elisha) who could heal him. The king of Syria heard of this possibility and told him to go with a letter from him to the king of Israel. He sent many gifts to get on the good side of him and he in effect demanded that he be healed. This nearly scared the king of Israel to death. He thought the king of Syria was trying to pick a fight with him. He tore his clothes in frustration. He said, “Am I God to kill and make alive?” No one had ever been healed of leprosy before (see Lk. 4:27).

But when Elisha, the man of God, heard the king of Israel had torn his clothes in despair he said, “Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So, this important man and all his company came to Elisha’s door. Normal courtesy was not extended. After all, this man was an enemy of Israel. Instead of asking him into his house or going out to roll out the red carpet for him, the prophet sent a messenger with the simple message to dip seven times in the Jordan river and he would be healed of his leprosy. Sometimes we tell people we don’t like to go jump in the lake. It may have sounded like that to Naaman. He was outraged. He said in his wrath, “Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.”

What a simple thing the prophet had required of him to do. He took issue about the superiority of the rivers of Syria over the muddy Jordan. His pride was badly injured. He either had to get rid of his pride or his leprosy. In a rage he turned away. One of his servants was a wise man and appealed to him to try this simple procedure — wash and be clean. He decided to swallow his pride and obey the prophet of God. When he had dipped seven times in Jordan he was cleansed “and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.”

The lessons we learn from this Bible account are several. First, we must go to the right source for help the prophet and not the king. Second, one must then have faith enough to do what is required — not argue the point. Third, we must not challenge God’s will at any point — we must yield. And fourth, we must obey God to obtain the desired end salvation. Sin is worse than leprosy. Only the blood of Christ will take it away when we obey the gospel (Rom. 1:16).

As long as Naaman fought the will of God, he remained a leper. What a lesson for those of us who live on this side of the cross. God requires the hearing of his word to gain faith (Rom. 10:17), confessing the deity of Christ (Rom. 10:10), repenting of sins (Acts 2:38), and being baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). This is plain and simple. Many like Naaman are outraged at its simplicity and turn away but they are still in their sins. Those who submit and turn to God will go away with sins removed — saved.

Are you like Naaman? Many are. Why not be like the three thousand on Pentecost (Acts 2) or the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8)?

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

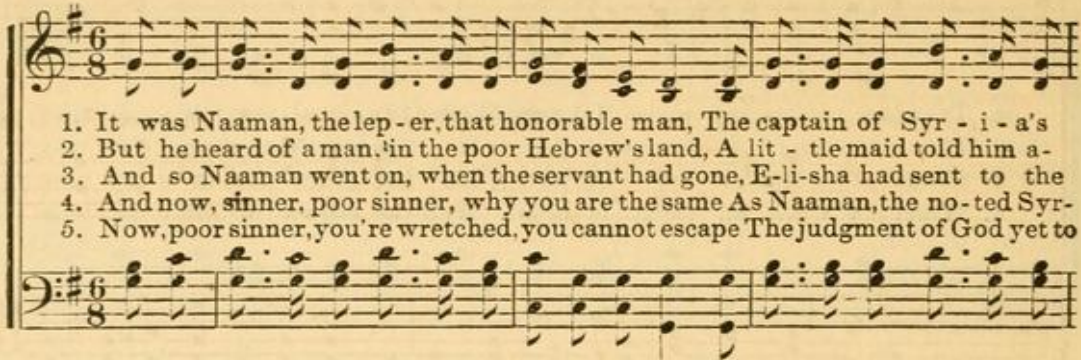
Guardian of Truth XXXVII: 3, p. 5
February 4, 1993

19. Naaman the Leper.

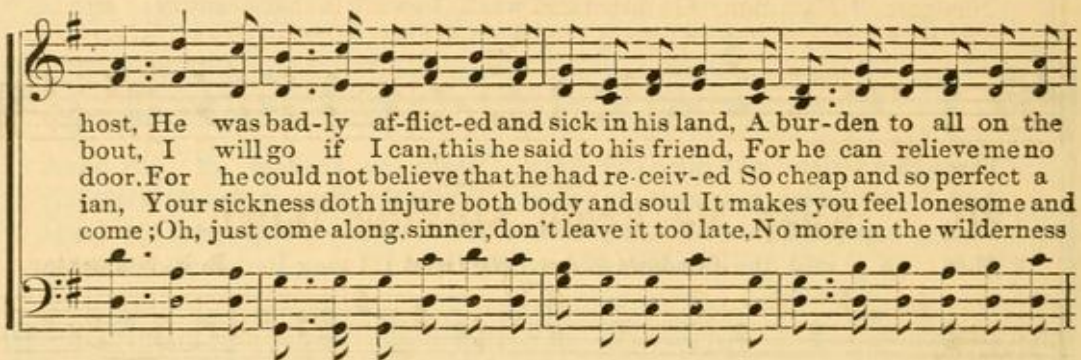
Words Arr.

2d Kings, 5th chapter.

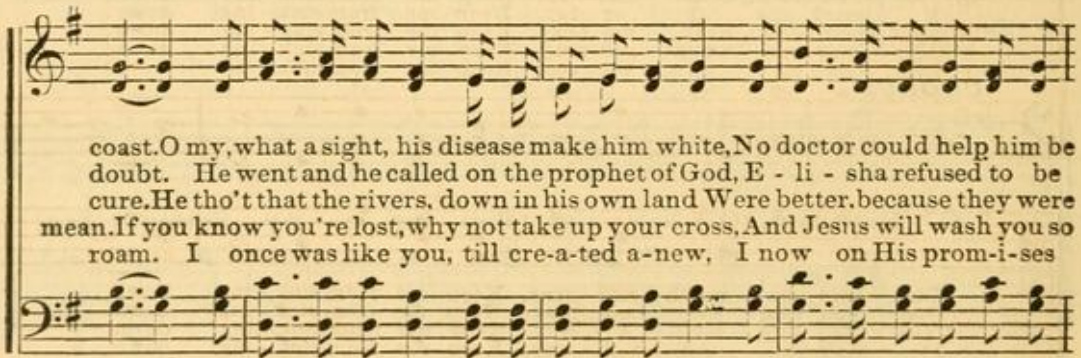
E. E. NICKERSON.




1. It was Naaman, the lep - er, that honorable man, The captain of Syr - i - a's
 2. But he heard of a man, in the poor Hebrew's land, A lit - tle maid told him a -
 3. And so Naaman went on, when the servant had gone, E - li - sha had sent to the
 4. And now, sinner, poor sinner, why you are the same As Naaman, the no - ted Syr -
 5. Now, poor sinner, you're wretched, you cannot escape The judgment of God yet to



host, He was bad - ly af - flict - ed and sick in his land, A bur - den to all on the
 bout, I will go if I can, this he said to his friend, For he can relieve me no
 door. For he could not believe that he had re - ceiv - ed So cheap and so perfect a
 ian, Your sickness doth injure both body and soul It makes you feel lonesome and
 come; Oh, just come along, sinner, don't leave it too late, No more in the wilderness



coast. O my, what a sight, his disease make him white, No doctor could help him be
 doubt. He went and he called on the prophet of God, E - li - sha refused to be
 cure. He tho't that the rivers, down in his own land Were better, because they were
 mean. If you know you're lost, why not take up your cross, And Jesus will wash you so
 roam. I once was like you, till cre - a - ted a - new, I now on His prom - i - ses



clean. For they never did pray, and they knew not the way To get in that beau - ti - ful stream.
 seen. He lift - ed his bur - den, and sent him to Jor - dan, To wash in the beau - ti - ful stream.
 clean. It was just about night, when he walk'd in the light, And plung'd in that beautiful stream.
 clean. If you know you are sick why, just come along quick, And plunge in the beautiful stream.
 lean. When I for - sook sinning, I then began praying, And washed in the beautiful stream.

Copyright, 1889, by E. E. Nickerson, Boston, Mass. Used by permission

Is Full Immersion Necessary For Baptism?

BY JACK WELLMAN

•

Does the Bible say that baptism is by full submersion in water? What about sprinkling or when there is no water available?

The Importance of Baptism

Every believer in Christ should be baptized after they've repented and believed. Peter says "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) so the condition for receiving the Holy Spirit is to repent of your sins and then get baptized and in the name of Jesus Christ and His atoning death, you will receive the forgiveness of your sins. No one would repent unless they first believed. Everyone that does so receives the free gift of eternal life (Eph 2:8-9) and the Spirit then indwells them. One key point in this verse is that the new believer is baptized or identified in the name of Jesus Christ. This is what Paul meant when he wrote that all of Israel was "baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" because they were identified with him (1 Cor 10:2) and no one would say that they were "sprinkled" into Moses because that would make absolutely no sense. The point here is that even though we are saved only by grace through faith and not any works, including baptism (Eph 2:8-9), everyone who is saved is commanded to be baptized as Peter wrote (Acts 2:38).

What Baptism Is

The Greek word for baptism is “baptizō” and the word means “to immerse, to submerge” and was used by the Greeks when referring to vessels that had sunken. The word doesn’t mean to get wet or to get sprinkled but to be submerged, meaning all of an object or person is placed under the water which is what immersion is. Submersion is defined as the “the act of being completely held under water (or liquid) for a long time. This is what scuba divers do since submersion involves long, deep dives and not just getting wet or having water splashed or sprinkled on them. If you still think we are told to repent and get sprinkled, then you don’t see the literal meaning of the Greek word. To tell a scuba diver to be submerged into the water, he wouldn’t ever expect to simply get wet but understand that he or she must jump into the water and descend below the surface level. There is not one single Bible verse or baptism experience in the Bible where someone was not submerged or immersed into and under the water.

FOLLOWING BELL-WETHERED PATHWAYS OF THE HUMAN MIND -

One day, through the primeval wood, A calf walked home, as good calves should; But made a trail all bent askew, A crooked trail as all calves do. Since three hundred years have fled, And I infer, the calf is dead. But still he left behind his trail, And thereby hangs my moral tale. The trail was taken up next day, By a lone dog that passes that way; And then a wise bell-wether sheep, Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep, And drew the flock behind him, too. As good bell-wethers always do. And from that day, o'er hill and glade, Through those old woods a path was made. And many men wound in and out, And dodged, and turned, and bent about And uttered words of righteous wrath, Because 'twas such a crooked path.

But still they followed - do not laugh - The first migrations of that calf, And through this winding woodway stalked, Because he wobbled when he walked. This forest path became a lane, That bent, and turned, and turned again; This crooked lane became a road, Where many a poor horse with his load, Toiled on beneath the burning sun, And traveled some three miles in one. And thus a century and a half, They trod the footsteps of that calf. The years passed on in swiftness fleet, The road became a village street; And this, before men were aware, A city's crowded thoroughfare; And soon the central street was this, Of a renowned metropolis; And men two centuries and a half, Trod in the footsteps of that calf. Each day a hundred thousand rout Followed the zigzag calf about; And o'er his crooked journey went, The traffic of a continent.

A hundred thousand men were led By one calf near three centuries dead. They followed still his crooked way, And lost one hundred years a day; For thus such reverence is lent, To well-established precedent, A moral lesson this might teach, Were I ordained and called to preach; For men are prone to go it blind, Along the calf-paths of the mind, And work away from sun to sun, To do what other men have done. They follow in the beaten track, And out and in, and forth and back, And still their devious course pursue, To keep the path that others do. They keep the path a sacred groove, Along which all their lives they move. But how the wise old wood-gods laugh, Who saw the first primeval calf! Ah! Many things this tale might teach – But I am not ordained to preach. - SAM WALTER FOSS

CONVENIENCE NULLIFICATION OF BAPTISMAL TERMS & CONDITIONS:

Church History: Doctrinal Departure in Serial Dilution

Departure Principle: Primary Versus Delegated Authority

Besides the generic and specific classification, there are two kinds of authority: primary and delegated. Primary authority is the original source of all power or authority. It is the authority that resides in the person by right of his relationship to those who are subject to his authority. All divine authority begins with God, the Father!

Besides the generic and specific classification, there are two kinds of authority: primary and delegated. Delegated authority is that which is given to another by the one who has the primary authority. All authority of God has been delegated to his Son, Jesus Christ, and not one single word has been delegated to mankind. In utilizing this authority delegated to the Son, Christ has delegated or granted certain power to others in administering his authority. The apostles received this power. All authority comes from the Son!

Doctrinal Departure Principle: The Law of Expediency

1st Corinthians - Chapter 6 - Verse Twelve: “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”

*First Corinthians Chapter Six & Verse Twelve States - The Lawful Expediency Must Meet Certain Criteria: First, **it must be lawful.***

For something to be lawful, it must make a stand on: command, approved example or necessary conclusion. If there is no means of showing where God commands it, the apostles practiced it, or draw a scriptural conclusion, it is outside authority bounds per 2nd John 9!

Therefore, There Are Two Principles Apparent: Expedients Cannot (1) Be an addition to the word of God -or- (2) Be of a substitution for God's ways. A true expedience, therefore, neither adds to or changes the plan of God!

*The Lawful Expediency Must Meet Certain Criteria: Secondly, **it cannot be explicitly stated**.* This is an evident conclusion from the first point. When God speaks, man is not left to use his judgment & reasoning ability to determine if he is going to act. When God speaks, obedience by faith must be forthcoming from man, and he cannot decide if he wants to do what God has commanded. Yet, with the area of thoughtful expediency, human wisdom can be utilized in that realm where God has left man free to use his own individual and collective judgment.

Thirdly, to be an expedience, **it must edify the church**. From First Corinthians 14: 26 - We can see that when matters of personal judgment pierce the Lord's body, then we had better examine our Bibles & hearts for the correct answers!

In summation, most of the heresy, false doctrine, and apostate formulations of human religious tradition – can be traced and time tracked in terms of a serial dilution of sound precept and principle – gradual and generational.

Baptism and Salvation in the Early Church

“He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.” Titus 3:5

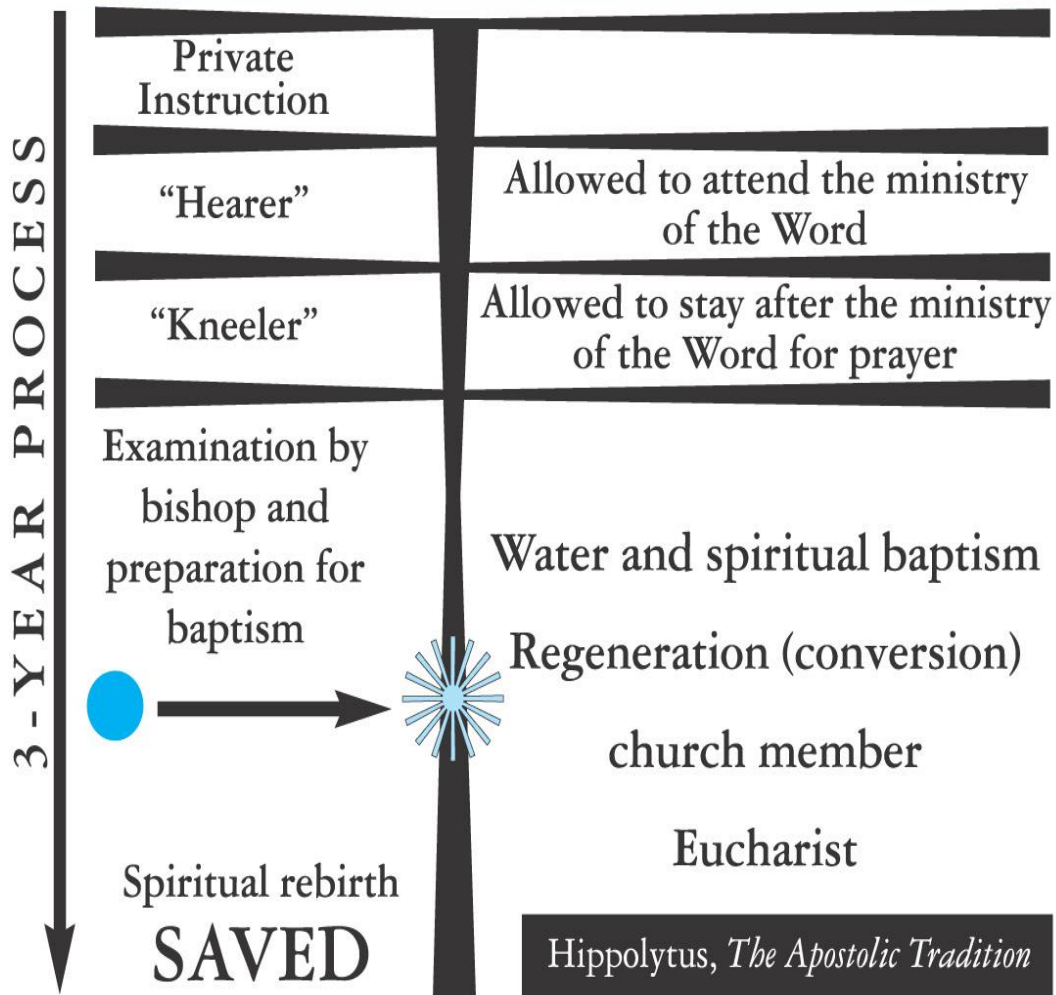


Chart 40

In 100 YEARS: Preaching Crucifixion to Catechetical Teaching

Egypt's Alexandria was the center of early learning, having a large university with a voluminous library. In the last quarter of the second century, churchmen established a catechetical (learning by the questioning process) school in Alexandria. In other words, according to the *Didache*, obedience in baptism transitioned from event to process – procedure to ceremony.¹

Convenience Compromises: **Adult Baptism** & Worship Service

POURING was permitted by the Didache and practiced in regard to one on his sickbed (Cyprian), but the normal practice was immersion, in fact, trine (3 times) immersion (Tertullian).

THE EFFICACY of baptism in bringing the remission of sins was not questioned, hence many put off baptism long as possible, lest such a powerful act be wasted before the sin life was over.

Great elaboration in the BAPTISM RITUAL took place (Tertullian, *On Baptism* and Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*), testifying to the high regard the ceremony was held.

The earliest definitive reference to INFANT BAPTISM is in Tertullian, who opposed the practice, but it became common in the third century and was advocated by Cyprian.

¹ Allen, G. C. (Trans.). (1903). [*The Didache or The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles Translated with Notes*](#) (p. 5). London: The Astolat Press.

In the third century, Cyprian insisted that HERETICAL BAPTISM (i.e. administered by one not a member of the catholic church) was not valid but Bishop Stephen responded of Rome's view that it is valid (if performed with trinitarian formula) prevailed.

Reasons for Reformation Resistance to Adult Re-Baptism -

“Traditio” – ritual handed down generation to generation supposedly from church fathers. A situation similar to the twisted traditions addressed by Jesus Christ in the Beatitudes; Ritual Tradition – incremental from deathbed exception to routine norm. The necessity of clinical baptism of Constantine by pouring was now the convenient option preferred by the healthy. The family baptism of believers in the early church is now an infant initiation equivalent to that of the circumcision administered by the priesthood of the old law. Practically, both paedo-communion and paedo-baptism become commonplace. [NOTE: Difficult Argument. Only boy babies were circumcised.]

Not any understanding adults have been baptized by immersion and as an act of obedient conscience for about 1,000 years. Incrementalism of Dialectic Synthesis along with Negative Cascading Consequences of wrong previous decisions explain Luther's argument that to accept this Anabaptist tenet would be to suggest that no one had been saved in a millennium & all were burning in Hell. This is inconceivable to him. He believes the infant practice an “adiaphora” or an innovation indifferent to God. He was especially against it due to the introspection associated with such an act.

Additionally, Luther feared the possibility people would want to repeat a ceremony meant to be done only once. Furthermore, there was a consensus in the conventional wisdom of the time that everyone should be baptized only once.

Moreover, Zwingli also was incensed and added to the debate. Zwingli went so far as to suggest that infants can have faith - quoting as passage proof – Luke 1: 41. Agreeing to the re-baptism proposition to take care of oneself seems at the same time to be admitting that our dearly departed loved ones have in an innocent ignorance earned an eternal punishment. Furthermore, this is was not an asymmetrical argument with the AnaBaptists that could be somehow compromised. They even utilized this concept aggressively by way of an evangelism tool with a terrible tendency and unfortunate consequences. Their expressed conviction did at the least close many doors of opportunity – however, it usually aroused anger and sometimes heated hostility. Re-baptism, although absolutely accurate theologically – in the Middle Ages went against the grain - both emotionally and intellectually. The Dark Age mentality could not even admit to the witness of their own eyes when Galileo proved Aristotle wrong – their thinking had become locked and completely entrained.

Ritual Rationale – An argument of attack was seldom made according to spiritual rescue – a regime cleansing from an inheritance of original sin. Rather more frequently a weaker defensive position was taken identical to that offered for the “benign custom” of arranged childhood marriage. Both were treated as legally valid although empty signs that were not rendered efficacious until respectively either confirmed or consummated. Another after marriage illustration of easy comparison noted that after being matched as children any incidents of infidelity and adultery could be straightened simply by way of a willingness to forgive and/or reconcile – it did not require contractual remarriage – because the childhood marriage was still valid according to law.

The Swiss Reformed specifically stated that infant baptism was a sign of future faith like was circumcision – an indication that the child will be raised in covenant community and loving family as a Christian and valid until the youth makes profession of faith which makes them also a member of the universal church. I speculate that this also is most probably that time period commencing the Roman Catholic practice of newborn Godparent selection. I do not believe there is any fixed date of doctrinal departure for this specific practice so this is only an educated guess on my part.

“Ex Opera Operato” – It was valid as ritual because it was worked in a certain way and with specific words repeated.

Sequence of Sacramental Sin Structure: 1) Baptism Itself the External Sign; 2) Signifies the Inner Gift of Rebirth In Christ; 3) Faith Brings Outward Sign & Inner Gift Together.

Christian Identity Based Not on Belief but by “Christening” Served Institutional Interest:

In state-church systems membership in the civil religion from birth was like an inheritance of ascribed citizenship. It proved the benefits of social control thru intertwined complementary hierarchies – one of the temporal sword and one of the spiritual sword. The Lutheran & Anglican Reformations were especially Magisterial – along with territorial realignments of church and state with trade in triad determining dominance.



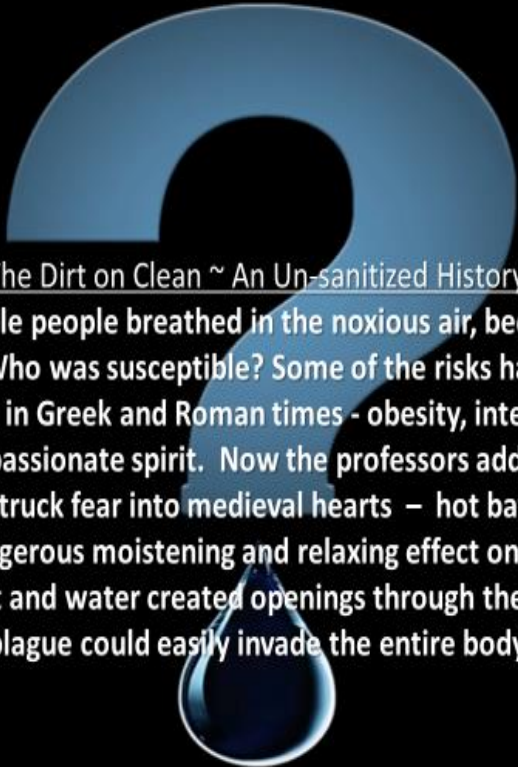
THE BLACK DEATH COLORS DEBATE OVER BAPTISMAL IMMERSION

The Dirt on Clean ~ An Un-sanitized History:

In 1348, Philippe VI of France asked the medical faculty of the University of Paris to investigate the origins of the plague.

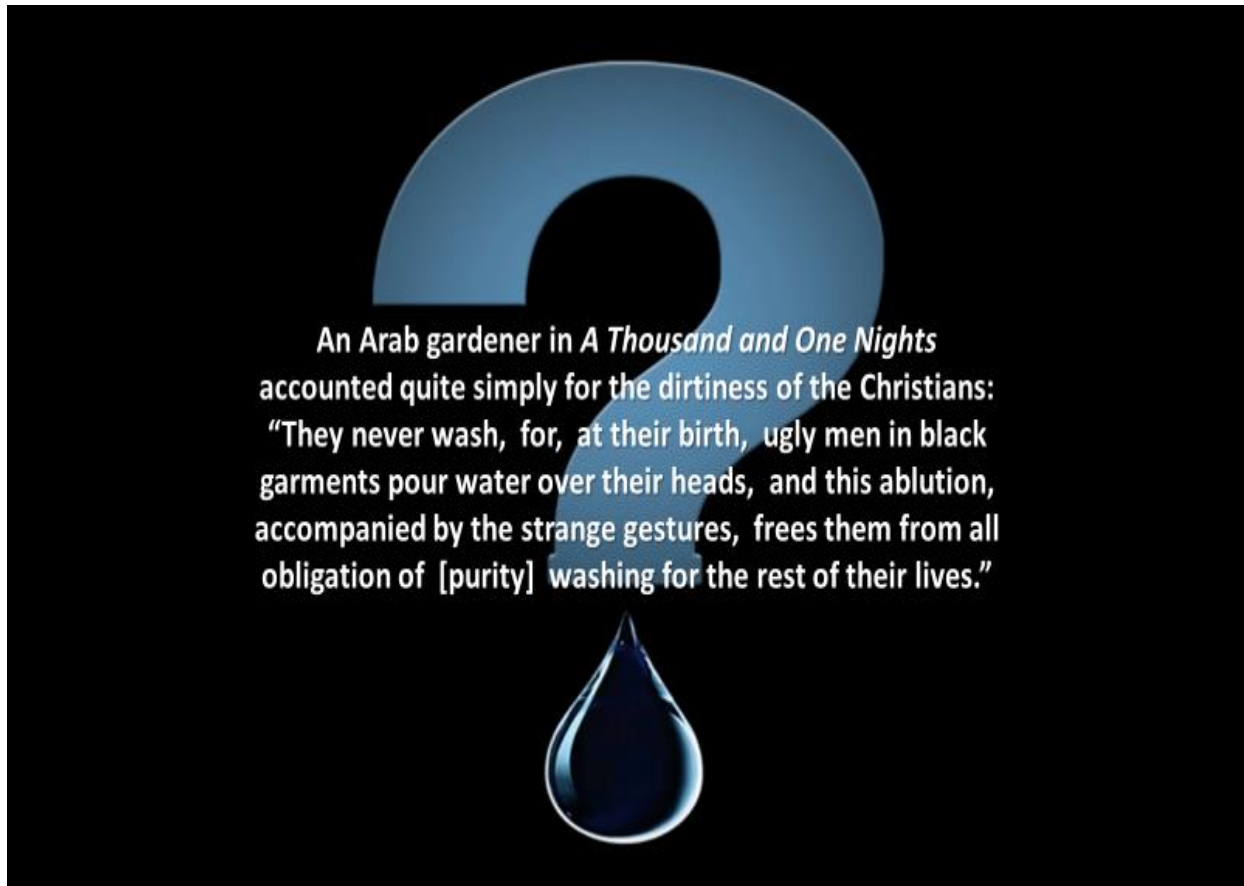
Their far-reaching *Opinion* began with a disastrous conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter and Mars that caused disease-infected vapors to rise out of the earth and waters and poison the air.

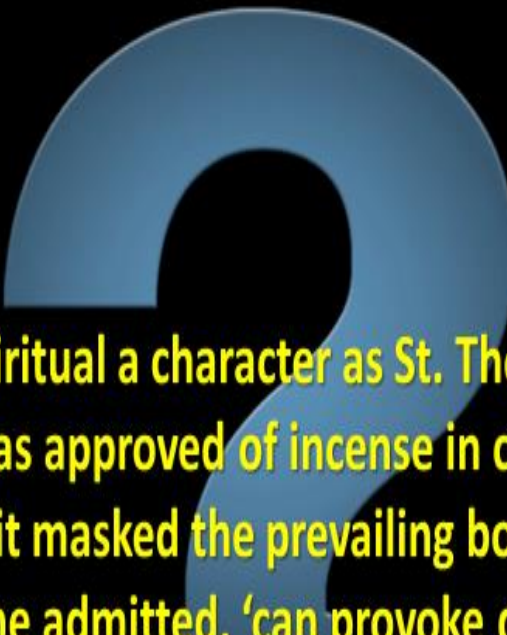




The Dirt on Clean ~ An Un-sanitized History:
Susceptible people breathed in the noxious air, became ill & died. Who was susceptible? Some of the risks had been recognized in Greek and Roman times - obesity, intemperance, an over-passionate spirit. Now the professors added a new one that struck fear into medieval hearts – hot baths, which had a dangerous moistening and relaxing effect on the body. Once heat and water created openings through the skin, the plague could easily invade the entire body.







So spiritual a character as St. Thomas Aquinas approved of incense in church because it masked the prevailing body odor, which, he admitted, 'can provoke disgust.'



THEN THERE ARE ALWAYS THOSE THAT PRESENT THEIR OWN TERMS:

The Thief on the Cross

Law of Moses was Still in Effect
Galatians 4:4 • Matthew 5:7

Thief Under was Law of Moses
Romans 7:1-8 • John 1:17

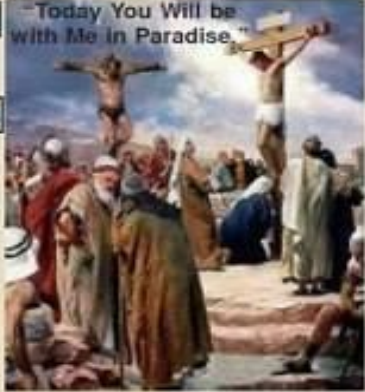
Law Nailed to the Cross
Colossians 2:13-14 • Ephesians 2:14-16

Testator Can Ignore Will
John 10:28 • Mark 2:10-11


Testament of No Strength
Hebrews 9:16-17 • Hebrews 10:9-10

Thief a Possible Backslider
Mark 1:4-5 • Luke 7:29-30

Died Before Will Probated
Romans 4:14 • Galatians 3:18



“Today You Will be with Me in Paradise.”



New Testament is In Force
Jeremiah 31:31-34 • Isaiah 2:2-3

We Are Now Under Christ
Romans 7:1-8 • Galatians 3:23-29

The Purpose of the Law
Galatians 3:19-24 • Romans 7:7

Inherit by terms of the Will
Hebrews 5:8-9 • Colossians 3:24

Christ's Will Now Effective
Hebrews 7:18-19 • Hebrews 9:15-17

Heirs According to His Will
Galatians 3:26-29 • Galatians 4:7

Examples for Alien Sinners
Acts 2:36-41 • Acts 8:35-39

The Thief on the Cross

When the religious world hears you say that baptism is necessary for salvation, they almost always ask, “What about the thief on the cross?” Though the thief on the cross is an important part of the Biblical record, he cannot be used as an example for the Christian today. Why?



1. He lived under the O.T. system during a special time when a transition was about to be made to the N.T. system.
2. While Jesus was on the earth, He had the authority to forgive people of their sins (Mk. 2:5; 9-10; Lk. 7:37-50). So, whether the thief had been baptized or not (though he may have been Mt. 3:5-6) would not have mattered because Jesus had the authority to tell the man he would be with Him in paradise.
3. The main reason we cannot use the thief as our example today is because the **ONLY** baptism he could have been baptized with was John's baptism because the baptism Jesus commanded was not commanded until AFTER the thief was dead (Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:16). The first time we see this new baptism commanded by Jesus being proclaimed was on the day of Pentecost, ***“Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38)***. Notice, the baptism Jesus commanded His disciples to teach was **FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS**.

So, stop trying to use the thief on the cross as an example for the Christian today and start believing what Jesus and His disciples clearly taught about the necessity of water baptism.

The Thief on the Cross and Baptism

Does the Thief on the Cross Prove Baptism is Not Essential?



People who believe in salvation by "faith only" often claim that the thief on the cross proves that baptism is not necessary to receive the forgiveness of sins according to the Bible. Was the thief saved under the gospel of Jesus Christ? Does the Bible teach that people today can be forgiven by faith alone without being baptized?

Introduction:

Luke 23:39-43 - Jesus was crucified between two criminals (thieves). As the three of them were suspended, one thief ridiculed Jesus, but the other defended Him. Jesus promised this one would be in Paradise that day. This saying of Jesus has become a center of controversy. Many believe Jesus saves people on the basis of "faith alone," so baptism is not essential to receive forgiveness of sins. When the subject is discussed, people commonly bring up the thief as someone who was saved without baptism. They conclude that if Jesus would save this man without baptism, He would also save us without baptism. Let us consider further. What does this case teach us about the terms of forgiveness under the gospel?

1. Do We Really Know that the Thief Was Never Baptized?

This point is not as significant as others we will consider. Obviously, the thief wasn't baptized on the cross, but does that prove he had never been baptized beforehand? Jesus wasn't baptized on the cross either, but does that prove He had never been baptized? No, He was baptized by John the Baptist.

Matthew 3:5,6 - People from Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region round-about were baptized by John. John 4:1,2 - Later, Jesus' disciples began baptizing people to make them Jesus' disciples. In fact, Jesus baptized more disciples than John did.

True, some people were not baptized by John or by Jesus' disciples. But if the thief had been among those who were baptized and then later fell into sin, then he would have been an erring child of God not in need of baptism.

Someone may ask, "Can you prove the thief was baptized?" But, remember, I'm not using the thief to prove baptism one way or the other. We will see that the importance of baptism is proved by many other passages. But if people want to use the thief to prove baptism is *not* necessary, then to be fair, don't they first have to know that he was never baptized? If there is a reasonable chance that he may have been baptized, then have they really proved their point?

Someone may point out that the thief could not have received the baptism of the gospel like we must receive today, but we will see that the thief also did not have the same kind of faith we must have today. The reason the thief could not receive the same baptism we do is that the terms of salvation under the gospel were not yet in effect when the thief was crucified. So, the example of the thief actually teaches nothing about the specific steps that we must take to be saved today.

2. The Thief Cannot Be Used as an Example of Salvation by Gospel Faith.

The reason people try to use the thief to prove that people can be saved without baptism is that they believe in salvation by faith alone. But did the thief have the kind of faith we must have to be saved under the gospel? Romans 10:9 - If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God *has raised him from the dead*, you will be saved. So, to have the faith required by the gospel, we must believe that God "*has raised*" Jesus from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 - Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection are the fundamental facts of the gospel that we must receive, believe, and hold fast in order to be saved. The thief on the cross could not possibly believe Jesus had been raised from the dead, because He had not yet died, let alone been buried and raised.

So, if it is true that the thief could not have received the baptism of the gospel, then it is also true that he could not have possessed the same faith that the gospel requires of us today. The gospel requires us to believe that Jesus *has* died, been buried, and been raised. The thief could not have believed this, because it had not happened. All that he could have believed would be to look forward to these events, even as John's baptism looked forward to them (Acts 19:1-5).

The thief was no more saved by the faith of the gospel than he was saved by the baptism of the gospel. Would it be proper for people to try to use the thief to prove that people can be saved today without believing that Jesus has been raised from the dead? No, and likewise it is not proper to use the thief to prove people today can be saved without baptism. The point is that the thief was saved before the terms of the gospel came into effect. So, we cannot use his case to prove one way or the other what people must do today to be saved.

3. Many Scriptures Teach that Baptism Is Essential to Receive Forgiveness under the Gospel.

In order to understand what salvation requires today, we must study the terms of the gospel itself. Many passages state that, in addition to faith, repentance, and confession, the gospel requires people to be baptized to be saved.

Mark 16:16,15 - The gospel teaches that he who believes and is baptized will be saved.

Acts 2:38 - Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Acts 22:16 - Be baptized and wash away your sins. Romans 6:3,4; Galatians 3:26,27 - We are baptized into Christ, into His death. We have newness of life after we have been baptized (John 3:3,5).

1 Peter 3:21 - Baptism now saves us.

Note carefully that all these passages state terms of salvation under the *gospel* - not the terms of salvation for people before the gospel came into effect. The gospel clearly teaches that baptism is essential to receive remission. God's word does not contradict itself. The case of the thief could not possibly prove that people are saved without baptism, because that would contradict other gospel passages.

4. The Thief Was Forgiven before the Gospel Came into Effect.

The truth is that the thief was not saved under the same law and dispensation that we are under. He was still under the Old Testament, not the gospel. That is why he was not required to believe what we must believe nor to receive the same baptism that we must receive. The terms of his forgiveness teach us nothing about what we must do to be saved.

The Old Testament was in effect when the thief was forgiven.

Galatians 4:4 - Jesus Himself was born and lived under the Old Testament law till He died. That is why He taught people, in His lifetime, to obey the Old Law, including circumcision, the Sabbath, animal sacrifices, etc. (Luke 4:16; 2:21; 2:22-24; Matt. 8:4; Mark 1:44; Luke 2:22ff; cf. Lev. 14:1-32; etc.). Must we do these things today to be saved? Matthew 5:17,18 - He said not one jot or tittle would pass from the law till He had fulfilled it all. But He had not fulfilled it all till He died and rose from the dead. Colossians 2:14 - Jesus removed the first ordinances nailing them to His cross. So, the Jews remained subject to the Old Testament until Jesus died.

Ephesians 2:13-16 - He abolished the Old Law through His blood on the cross (13,16). Hebrews 10:9,10; 9:16,17 - Jesus removed the first testament and replaced it with His new covenant, the gospel. It is under this New Testament that we are saved by Jesus' death. But Jesus had to die to bring this about. [Cf. Gal. 3:13; Rom. 7:4.] So, the Old Law was in effect until Jesus died. But the thief was forgiven before Jesus died, while the first covenant was still in effect. The conditions he had to meet to be forgiven prove nothing about the conditions under which we are forgiven under the gospel.

The case of the thief proves no more about how we should be saved than do David, Moses, Noah, or Abraham. Why not use these examples to try to show that baptism is not necessary today? Because these people lived under a different covenant. But the same is true of the thief. None of these people were required to believe what we do, nor were they required to be baptized like we are, because they did not live under the same covenant as we do.

The terms of salvation under the gospel were first preached as being in effect after Jesus' resurrection.

Mark 16:15,16; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46,47 - Only after He died and was raised did Jesus teach His disciples to take the message of salvation under the gospel to all mankind. That message was first preached as being in effect on Pentecost in Acts 2. This is the message that requires gospel faith and gospel baptism. 1st Corinthians 15:1-7 - Salvation under the gospel is based on Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, so it could not have been preached as being in effect before those events occurred.

Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12, 13 - In fact, the gospel teaches us to be baptized into Christ's death and resurrection. So, no one could have received the baptism of the gospel before Jesus' resurrection. The thief did not receive gospel baptism for the simple reason that it was not in effect when he was forgiven, just as the other terms of the gospel were not yet in effect.

5. Before His Death, Jesus Forgave People Directly as He Chose. After Death, We Must Meet the Terms of His Will to Be Forgiven.

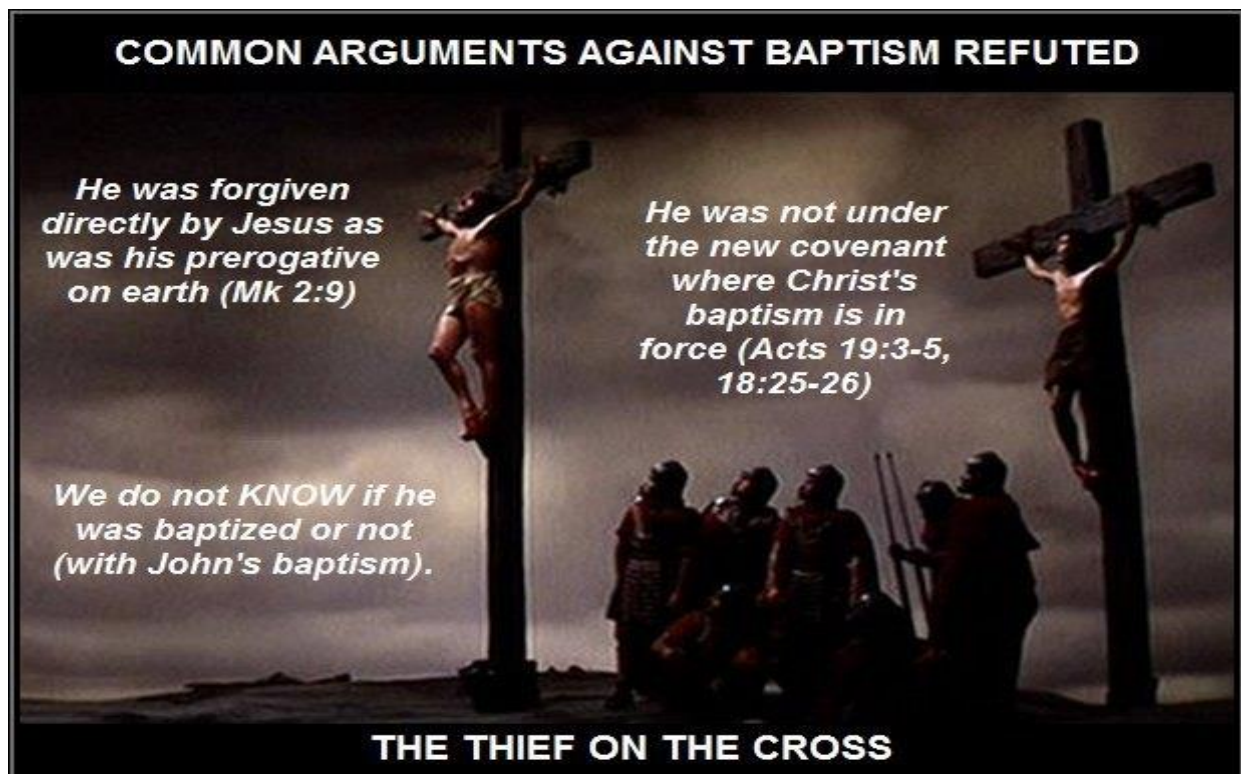
Mark 2:5-12; Luke 7:48,49; cf. John 8:1-11 - Before His death Jesus directly granted forgiveness to several people. Apparently, the thief is another such case. But He did not forgive any of these people under the terms of the gospel, since the gospel was not yet in effect.

Hebrews 9:16,17 - Jesus' death not only removed the Old Law, but it was necessary to institute the terms of the New Testament. As with any will or testament, Jesus had to die to bring His testament into force.

During his lifetime, a man may distribute his possessions to anyone he wishes in any way he wishes. But after the man's death, no one has any right to receive any of his possessions except according to the terms of his will or testament. The will does not come into effect till He dies.

In the same way, Jesus directly forgave people during His lifetime (apparently based on His ability to read their hearts and observe their lives). His New Testament, the gospel, came into effect after He died and arose. People today receive forgiveness only by complying with the terms of Jesus' will. Those terms require baptism, as well as faith, as shown in the verses already listed.

(C) Copyright 1999, David E. Pratte



The Thief on the Cross

by [Dave Miller, Ph.D.](#)

Legion are those who dismiss water baptism as prerequisite to salvation on the grounds that “the thief on the cross was not baptized.” The thought is that since the thief was suspended on the cross when Jesus said to him, “Today you will be with Me in paradise” (Luke 23:43), he was being pronounced as saved by Christ without being required to be baptized. As one well-known preacher put it, “There was no water within 10 miles of the cross.” Please give consideration to two important observations.

First, the thief may well have been baptized **prior** to being placed on the cross. Considerable scriptural evidence points to this conclusion (Matthew 3:5-6; Mark 1:4-5; Luke 3:21; 7:29-30). If he was, in fact, baptized, he would have been baptized with the baptism administered by John the baptizer. John’s baptism was temporary (i.e., in force only during his personal ministry, terminating at the death of Christ). However, even John’s baptism was “for the remission of sins” (Mark 1:4) and, hence, essential for salvation for those to whom it was addressed. John’s baptism, like the one administered by Jesus while He was on Earth (John 3:22,26; 4:1-2), was unique and temporary.

It was addressed **only** to Jews, and only to the Jews who populated the vicinity of **Jerusalem and Judea**. It was designed to prepare the **Jewish** people for the arrival of the Messiah. But John’s baptism must not be confused with **New Testament** baptism that is addressed to everybody, and that did not take effect until **after** the cross of Christ. If the thief was a Jew, and if he already had submitted to John’s baptism, there would have been no need for him to be re-baptized. He simply would have needed to repent of his post-baptism thievery and acknowledge his sins—which the text plainly indicates that he did.

Second, and most important, the real issue pertains to an extremely crucial feature of Bible interpretation. This hermeneutical feature is so critical that, if a person does not grasp it, his effort to sort out Bible teaching, in order to arrive at correct conclusions, will be inevitably hampered. This principle was spotlighted by Paul when he wrote to Timothy and told him he must “rightly divide the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

In other words, if one simply takes the entire Bible—all 66 books—and treats them as if everything that is said applies directly and equally to everyone, his effort to be in harmony with God’s Word will be hopeless & futile. For example, if a person turned to Genesis 6 and read where God instructed Noah to build a boat, if he did not study enough to determine whether such instruction applied to himself, he would end up building his **own** boat—the entire time thinking that God wanted him to do so! The Bible is literally filled with commands, instructions, and requirements that were **not intended to be duplicated** by people living today. Does God forbid you and me from eating a certain fruit (Genesis 2:17; 3:3)? Are we to refrain from boiling a baby goat in its mother’s milk (Exodus 23:19)? Does God want you and me to offer our son as a burnt offering (Genesis 22:2)? Are we commanded to load up & leave our homeland (Genesis 12:1)? Moving to the New Testament, does God want you to sell everything you have & give it to the poor (Matthew 19:21)? Does God expect you to leave everything, quit your job, and devote yourself full time to spiritual pursuits (Matthew 4:20; 19:27; Mark 10:28; Luke 5:28)? Does God intend for you to “desire spiritual gifts” (1 Corinthians 14:1) seek to possess miraculous abilities? The point is that the entire Bible applies to the entire human race. However, careful and diligent study is necessary to determine **how** it applies. We must understand the biblical distinction between the application of the **principles** of the Bible and the **specific details**.

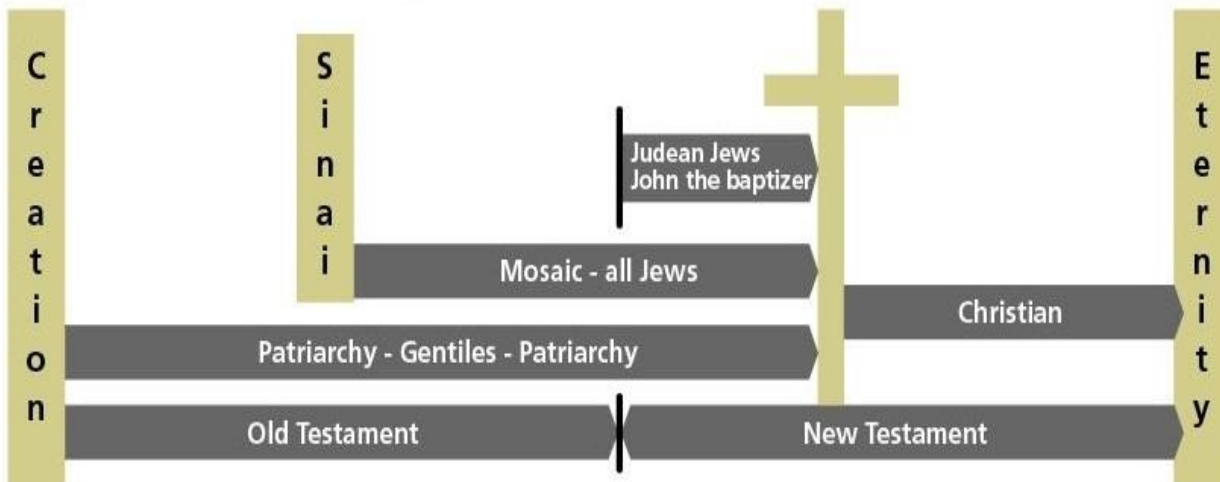
Here, then, is the central point as it pertains to the relevance of the thief on the cross: Beginning at Creation, all humans were amenable to the laws of God that were given to them at that time. Bible students typically call this period of time the Patriarchal Dispensation. During this period, which lasted from Creation to roughly the time of the cross, non-Jews were subject to a body of legislation passed down by God through the fathers of family clans (cf. Hebrews 11:1). In approximately 1,500 B.C., God removed the genetic descendants of Abraham from Egyptian bondage, took them out into the Sinai desert, and gave them their own law code (the Law of Moses). Jews were subject to that body of legal information from that time until it, too, was terminated at the cross of Christ. The following passages substantiate these assertions: Matthew 27:51; Romans 2:12-16; Galatians 3:7-29; Ephesians 2:11-22; Colossians 2:11-17. The book of Hebrews addresses this subject extensively. To get to the heart of the matter quickly, read especially Hebrews 9:15-17.

When one “correctly handles the Word of truth,” one sees that the Bible teaches that when Christ died on the cross, Mosaic law came to an end, and patriarchal law shortly thereafter. At that point, all humans on the planet became amenable to **the law of Christ** (cf. Galatians 6:2). The law of Christ consists strictly of information that is intended to be in effect **after** the death of Christ. It includes **some** of the things that Jesus and His disciples taught while He was still on Earth. But as regards the **specifics** of salvation, one must go to Acts 2 and the rest of the New Testament (especially the book of Acts) in order to determine what one must do today to be saved. Beginning in Acts 2, the new covenant of Christ took effect, and every single individual who responded correctly to the preaching of the gospel was **baptized in water in order to be forgiven of sin by the blood of Christ**. Every detail of an individual’s conversion is not always mentioned, but perusal of the Acts of the Apostles demonstrates decisively that water immersion was a **prerequisite** to forgiveness, along with faith, repentance, and confession of the deity of Christ (Acts 2:38,41; 8:12,13,16,36-38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15,33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16).

The thief was not subject to the New Testament command to be baptized into Christ’s death (Romans 6:3-4), just as Moses, Abraham, and David were not amenable to it. They all lived **prior** to the cross under different law codes. They could not have been baptized into Christ’s death—**because He had not yet died!** The establishment of the church of Christ and the launching of the Christian religion didn’t occur until **after** Christ’s death, on the day of Pentecost in the year A.D. 30 in the city of Jerusalem (Acts 2). An honest and accurate appraisal of the biblical data forces us to conclude that the thief on the cross is **not an appropriate example of how people are to be saved this side of the cross.**

A Comparison of the Baptisms of John and Jesus with New Testament Baptism

Administered by John	Administered by Jesus' Disciples	Administered Under Christianity
Remission of Sins (Mark 1:4)		Remission of Sins (Acts 2:38)
Prior Repentance Required (Matthew 3:8)	Prior Repentance Required (Matthew 4:17)	Prior Repentance Required (Acts 2:38)
Pointed to Christ/ Kingdom/Church (John 1:15,29; Matthew 3:2)	Pointed to Kingdom (Matthew 4:17; 10:7; Mark 1:14-15; John 3:22; 4:1-2)	Put one into Christ/ Kingdom/Church (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 1:13-14)
Identified the Christ (John 1:19-34; Matthew 3:16-17; Acts 19:4)		
Confession of Sins (Matthew 3:6)		Confession of Christ (Romans 10:9-10)
For Judean Jews Only (Luke 1:16,76-80; Matthew 10:6; 15:24; John 1:3)	For Judean Jews Only (John 3:22; 4:3)	For All People (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15)



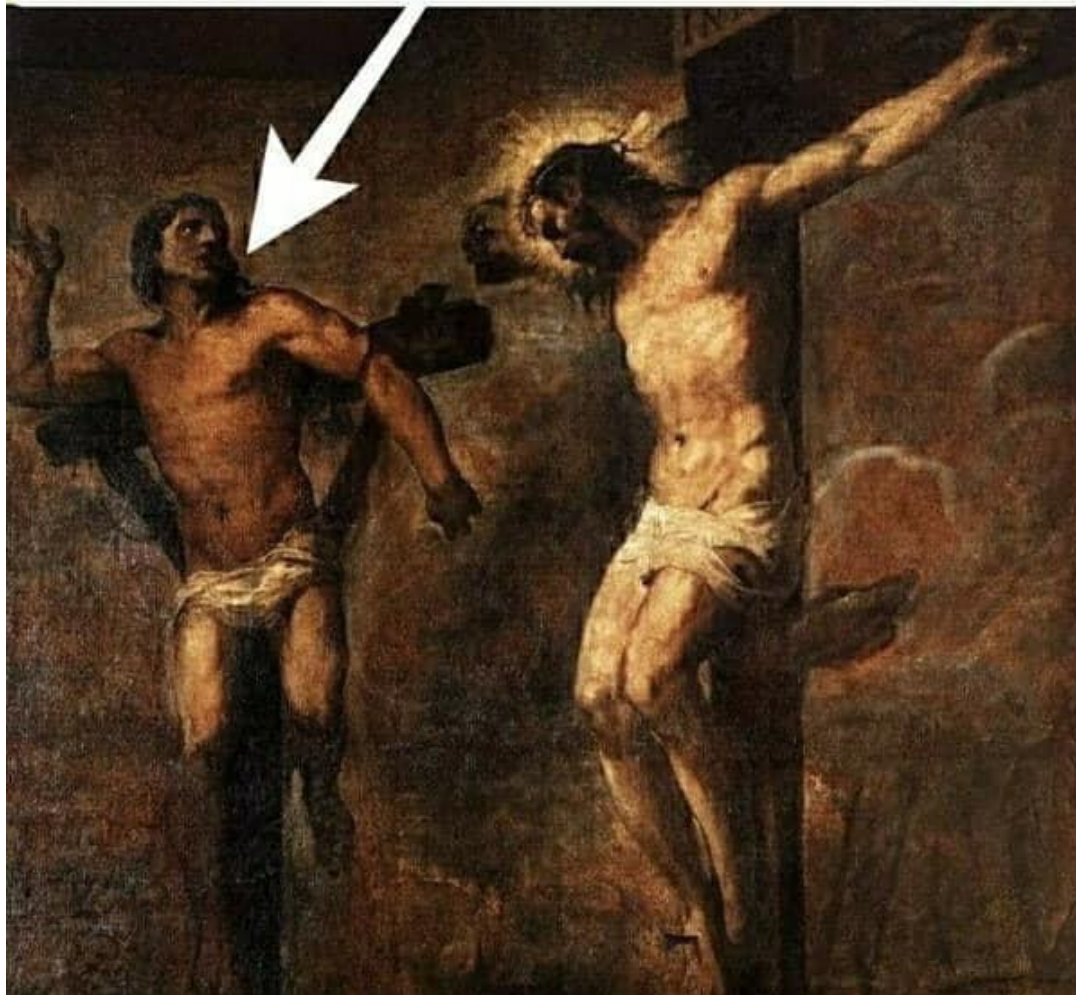
So you want to be saved like the thief.

Here is what you must do...

- 1.) Go back in time before Jesus dies
- 2.) Steal something
- 3.) Get sentenced to die beside Christ
- 4.) When hanging next to Jesus say;

**"Lord, remember me
when you come into your kingdom"**

- 5) Get both your legs broke (John 19:32)
That should do it....or you can just obey the gospel
which has the power to save your soul (Rom 1:16)



People looking to the

THIEF ON THE CROSS

*as a loophole to avoid
obedience to the gospel...*

ARE LOOKING AT THE WRONG CROSS

*“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach **THE GOSPEL** to every creature. **HE WHO BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED** will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. *Mark 16:15-16**

**IF ONE DOES NOT BELIEVE WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT BAPTISM
THEY ARE GUILTY OF THE DISBELIEF THAT CONDEMNS.**

PLEASE BELIEVE
JESUS

**THIS IS NOT A BAG
OF TRAIL MIX.**



**YOU CAN'T JUST
PICK OUT THE PIECES
YOU LIKE AND IGNORE
THE REST!**

Men will teach that one does not need to be baptized in order to be saved, but scripture says otherwise. We don't have the authority to use some verses and leave others out, we must obey all of Jesus' commands in order to be saved (John 14:21).

Mark 16:16, 1 Peter 3:21, Acts 22:16, Galatians 3:27 and many others confirm that one must be baptized.

Making Sense of Baptism

by [Eric Lyons, M.Min.](#)

One reason why some religious people do not feel that baptism in water is a prerequisite for salvation is because “it doesn’t make any sense.” Why would God demand that a sinner be immersed in water in order to receive the abundant amount of heavenly blessings found “in Christ” (cf. Galatians 3:27; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:34-40; 2 Timothy 2:10; Colossians 1:14)? “The necessity of baptism seems so arbitrary,” they say. “The need to confess faith in Jesus as the Son of God makes good sense. It also is logical to repent of one’s sins. But what good is baptism? What meaning does it have? And why should getting wet physically, make one clean spiritually?”

First, regardless of whether God’s instructions seem sensible to us or not, God expects His orders to be obeyed. One of the many lessons that a person learns from studying the Old Testament is that God oftentimes gave commands that seemed somewhat illogical to man. Not long after the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt, God commanded Moses to strike a rock in order to receive water (Exodus 17:1-7). Although digging a well would seem to be the more reasonable thing to do, God wanted Moses to strike a rock with his rod before receiving water from the rock. Forty years later, as the Israelites began their conquest of Canaan, Jehovah instructed the Israelites to march around the city of Jericho one time a day for six days, and seven times on the seventh day in order to conquer the city (Joshua 6:1-5). God said of the Israelites: “It shall come to pass,” on the seventh day, “when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat” (6:5). The idea of an army defeating an enemy simply by walking around a city, yelling, and blowing horns, seems irrational. It makes no sense to the average person. Yet, this is what God demanded of His people if they wanted to be victorious. A few hundred years later, Elisha, a prophet from God, instructed a leprous man named Naaman to “wash in the Jordan seven times” in order to be cleansed of his disease (2 Kings 5:10).

Considering the waters of the Jordan had no healing power, this command made little sense to Naaman then, and may not be very sensible to some Bible readers today. Why would God want a leper to dip himself in a river? And why seven times? What medicinal power did the river have? Why not simply have the prophet say to Naaman, “Your faith has made you well”?

Today, if a sinner wants to receive “the victory through...Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57), the Scriptures are clear: in addition to confessing faith in Christ and repenting of his sins (John 8:24; Romans 10:9-10; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38), he must be baptized (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21). For people to reject the command to be immersed in water simply because they feel that baptism and eternal salvation are totally unrelated, is as wrong as it would have been for Moses, the Israelites, and Naaman to reject God’s commands years ago (cf. Isaiah 55:8-9).

The truth of the matter is, however, one’s immersion into water is not the “illogical instruction” some have made it out to be. God’s plan to save man, and the conditions upon which salvation is accepted (including baptism), were in the mind of God “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). God always has known of this plan “which He accomplished in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 3:11). To speak of baptism as some flippant, fly-by-night ritual insults the eternal plan of God. It is meaningful, first, because God says it is. And second, if one truly takes the time to observe some of the passages that discuss baptism, he will have a better understanding of its significance. God never intended for a person to think that the power to forgive sins is in the water, any more than He expected Naaman to believe the power to cleanse his leprosy was in the Jordan River. In fact, the apostle Peter was very clear about this matter when he wrote that baptism is “not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God” (1 Peter 3:21).

Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia, saying, “For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27, emp. added). When this passage is coupled with Romans 6:3ff., one learns that by being baptized into Christ, we are baptized into His death.

Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin (Romans 6:3-7).

Rather than asking, “Why baptism?,” perhaps we should ask, “Why not?” What other act would so fitly represent the complete ending of a life of sin? In his comments on Romans 6, R.L. Whiteside observed:

In being buried in baptism there is a likeness of his death; so also there is a likeness of his resurrection in our being raised from baptism to a new life. Hence, in being baptized we are united with him in the likeness of this death and resurrection. We are therefore, partakers with him in death, and also in being raised to a new life. Jesus was buried and arose to a new life; we are buried in baptism and arise to a new life. These verses show the act of baptism, and also its spiritual value (1988, p. 132).

It is in the act of baptism that the cross is actualized for the sinner, and brought to have individual significance (Riley, 2000, p. 72). Every time a person becomes a Christian, a sinner dies (“being buried with him in baptism”—Colossians 2:12), and is raised up a saint “through faith in the working of God, who raised Him [Jesus] from the dead” (Colossians 2:12).

Truly, baptism “makes sense” (perfect sense) when we take the time to focus on the One Who gave both His life for us, and the mode of baptism to begin our new life with Him (Matthew 28:18-20). Similar to how Noah’s new life, in a new world, began after having been transported from a world of sin **by water** (1 Peter 3:21; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17), the sinner is carried by water into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. This submissive act ushers us out of the world and into a relationship with God.

Naaman was offered a solution for his leprosy. Dip in the river Jordan seven times. Instead of humble gratitude as would be evidenced by obedience he became angry. He wanted it his way. He wanted different rivers. He wanted the prophet to wave his hand over the leprosy and speak words. II Kings 5 He wanted...

Obey the gospel Acts 2:36-41,47 Immersed in water for salvation

Better waters

Here are some modern day “better waters” that prove a lack of gratitude. A lack of humble obedience.

- 1. I was sprinkled as an infant***
- 2. I was baptized as an outward display of an inward change***
- 3. I had water poured on my head to join a denomination***
- 4. I want to be saved by faith alone***
- 5. I want to be saved like the thief on the cross***

Disclaimer: Not actually better

BEING SPIRITUAL LEPEERS WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO NEGOTIATE:

Leprosy Symbolic

Deuteronomy 24:8, 9

Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that you observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you...

God has intended the material world to be a schoolhouse, and every event a vehicle of moral instruction. The sick-chamber may become an audience-room, where lessons of heavenly wisdom are conveyed by the Spirit of truth. Leprosy was singled out by God to be a visible picture of sin; so that "out of the eater there might come forth meat." Out of seeming evil, good can be distilled.

I. LEPROSY HAD A RELIGIOUS CHARACTER. More was meant by the infliction than was seen by the bodily eye. It was mysterious in its origin, and irresistible in its progress. It gradually spread and covered the whole man. It touched and injured every faculty. The intention was salutary, viz. to lead the sufferer's thoughts to the discovery of a deeper malady, and to awaken desire for a more enduring cure. The outward is an index of the inward. Leprosy is a type and picture of sin.

II. LEPROSY REQUIRED RELIGIOUS TREATMENT. It was vain to seek the offices of an ordinary physician. Earthly remedy **was** and still **is** unknown. The sufferer was required to visit the priest. Direct application to God was to be made. Meanwhile, the leper was to be completely isolated. He might not consort with his fellows. Hereby he might learn the disastrous effects of sin, viz. in disintegrating society; and hereby he might in solitude mourn over sin, and seek its cure. The only possibility of the removal of leprosy was in religious obedience. Every part of the prescription was furnished by God, and was to be applied by God's ministers. **Completest submission was a condition of cure.**

III. LEPROSY, IN ITS CAUSE AND CURE, HAD AN HISTORIC TYPE. This type was furnished by Miriam. Her specific sin was known; it was insubordination to authority. Her chastisement was sudden. It came direct from God in the form of leprosy. The injured man became her intercessor. God graciously responded to the suit of Moses. Temporary separation and strict seclusion were the method of cure. Golden lessons lie here. Every leper may confidently follow this indication of God's will. If he healed Miriam, can he not also heal me?

IV. LEPROSY HEALED WAS CHARGED WITH RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS. As a healed man will cheerfully recompense the physician for his pains, so God required the restored leper to express his gratitude in the form of animal sacrifice. His gratitude could not be expressed in empty words. He was not permitted to bring that "which cost him nothing." In the slaughter of the devoted victim, **the grateful man would confess that he himself had deserved to die, and that God had permitted a substitute.** If the man were fully penitent, the sight of the dying substitute would vividly impress his heart with a sense of God's mercy. In every arrangement which God made, the good of man was sought. The method will often seem strange to our dim vision, but respecting the beneficent end there can be no question. - D. Davies

[Spiritual Leprosy: Recognizing the Symptoms](#)

BY **WMTELL**

“The Blessing of Pain” premise is essentially that pain is a good thing, because without it the body wouldn’t know that there was a problem, or that there was something that it shouldn’t be doing - leprosy is an excellent illustration of why pain can be a blessing.

Leprosy is a topic that really isn’t on our radar screens. For the most part, it doesn’t impact any of us. We all know someone—close to us or not—with a serious disease: cancer, diabetes, cardiac problems, dementia, etc. Because of this, we have a sense of the seriousness and impact these have on people’s day-to-day lives.

I don’t personally know *anyone* with the physical disease of leprosy. Not one person. And I doubt that most people do. That’s why the topic is not on our radar—it isn’t visible in our lives. **But scripture actually gives this disease a fair amount of attention. In the Bible, we can find the word *leprosy* in the bible upwards of 40 times, depending on which translation you’re using.**

Leviticus 13 and 14 is a major section that deals with this disease, a part of the “cleanliness” laws. These chapters are somewhat technical and tedious, and because of that are not my favorite section of the Bible to read. What they essentially cover are the identification of the disease, when to quarantine, and the remediation of the person/clothing/house. So, what are we to get from this? In recent years I feel that I’m getting a glimmer of why this subject is covered so heavily in God’s word.

“...Written for our example...”

Although Paul made the statement in 1 Corinthians 10 specifically about the exodus from Egypt, we can be sure that this concept of scriptures being “written for our example” applies to the rest of the Old Testament scrolls. Paul also described the purpose of the Old Testament scrolls, saying, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).

So, what can we learn about how leprosy can apply to us in a spiritual sense?

The physical impact of leprosy

Let's start with some of the characteristics of the physical disease. As we go through these, you're free to get out ahead and start thinking of the spiritual implications and analogies for what we consider the *ecclesia* of Christ:

- **Leprosy has a long incubation period.** It can take years, even a decade or two, for symptoms to definitively show up.
- **It's actually not easily contagious.** It takes close and repeated contact with someone who has untreated leprosy. Children are more susceptible than adults.
- **Leprosy primarily attacks the nerve endings.** Left unchecked, this will lead to loss of feeling and muscle weakness, leading to atrophy and deterioration.

I always thought that leprosy was this fungus-y, flesh-eating monster. It's really not. The main damage that comes with leprosy is attack on the nerve endings, which will lead to muscle weakness and a loss of feeling—the person literally loses the ability to feel pain, which will eventually lead to the kinds of body abuse (intentional or accidental) that a sane, healthy person wouldn't even consider.

Why is pain necessary?

If you were to spend time reading books, articles, and blogs that deal with leprosy, the stories start to become graphic and even nauseating. Stories abound about bodily harm due to the loss of the pain mechanism (which is necessary for a healthy body). A few examples:

- Reaching into a fire to retrieve a dropped bit of food.
 - The leprosy person did not even react but the doctor knew that damage was done, and it would have to be treated somehow, or infection would set in.
- Many stories of terrible cuts, fingers being crushed, etc.
 - If these weren't treated, infection sets in, there is tissue loss, and eventually bone loss (fingers and toes actually shorten). Again, there is no pain mechanism to curb this behavior.

- Ankles injured to the extent that a normal person couldn't even walk because of the pain.
 - The healthy person would understand that an injury of that sort needs to be treated, rested, and allowed to heal. Not so when there isn't any real pain. The leprous person continues to use the limb, leading to permanent injury.
- Blindness, in advanced cases.
 - Did you know that blinking is not an involuntary action? I didn't. We never really think about blinking; it just happens, so we assume it's involuntary. The eyes need to be constantly lubricated to remain healthy, and this is accomplished by blinking. There are tiny pain receptors on the surface of the eye that give the brain the signal that there better be a blink, or the eye is going to get raw and irritated. Why do you blink a million times when you're in the wind and grit, but only every several seconds when you are in a controlled climate? The pain mechanism is working as it should, but when this malfunctions it can result in irreparable damage to the eyes, leading to blindness.

Spiritual leprosy. The pain mechanism is shot.

All the symptoms are there

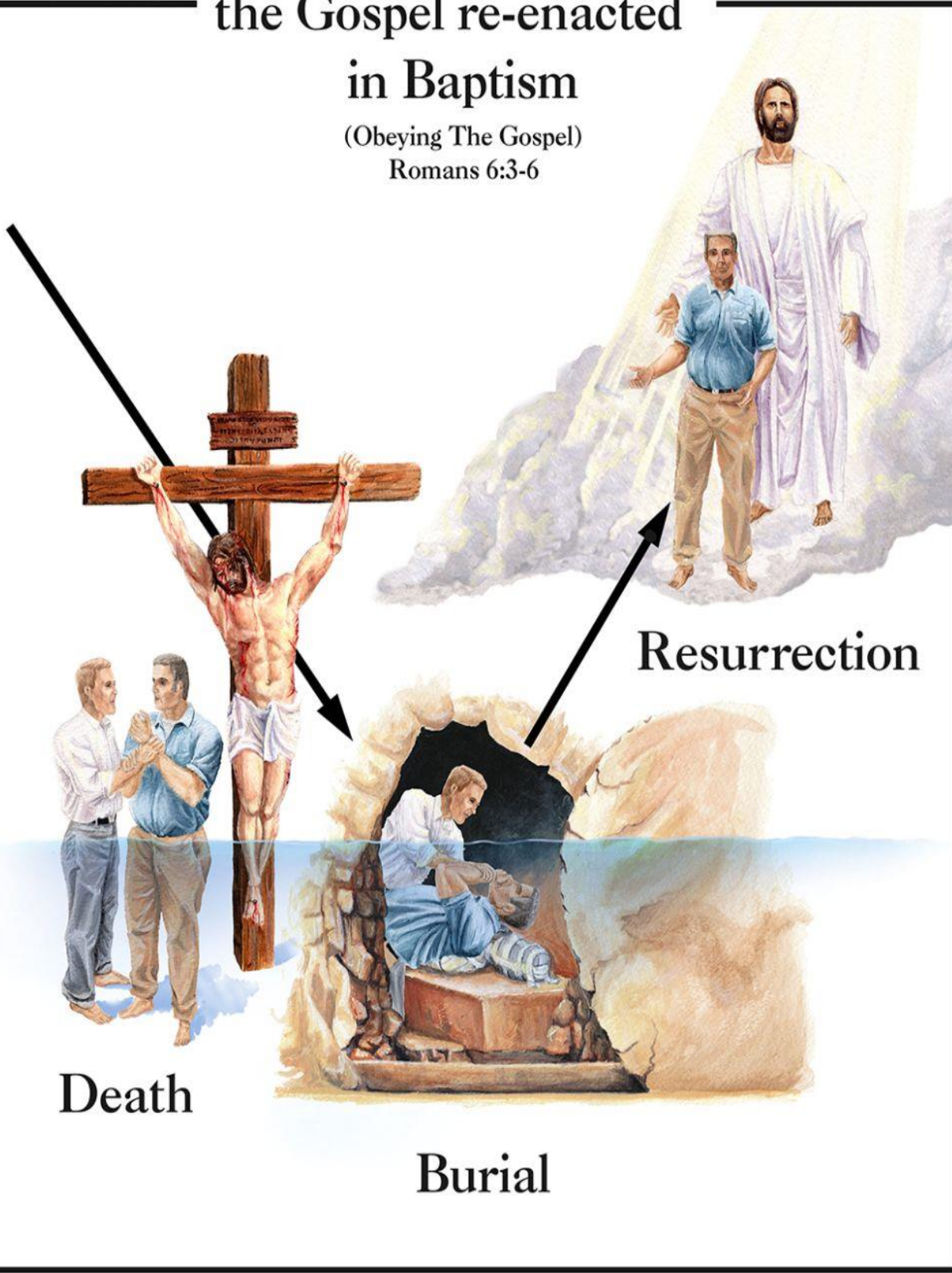
As you'll recall, earlier on we went through a few characteristics of leprosy—a long incubation period, transmission through very close and repeated contact, and nerve damage leading to loss of feeling.

The incubation period has been going on for a long time. It has taken decades for spiritual leprosy to be normalized, but it now is to a large extent. There is no pain when a body part is injured or amputated.

We all need to protect our spiritual nervous system so that the spiritual body can recognize and respond to attacks, pain, wounds, and so on. Ignoring these things just continues to debilitate the body, and the Apostle Paul was pretty clear as to how that will end.

the Gospel re-enacted in Baptism

(Obeying The Gospel)
Romans 6:3-6



Death

Burial

Resurrection

EPHESIANS 2

even as the rest. **4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), **6** and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, **7** so that in

AT BAPTISM....

Ephesians doesn't specifically mention 'baptism', but the language in Ephesians 2 is identical to the language in Colossians 2. When we were dead in sin, at baptism God forgave us and raised us up with Christ by his grace and power. Ephesians says we are saved by grace and Colossians says it was by faith in the power of God.

the circumcision of Christ; **12** having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. **13** When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, **14** having canceled out the

By Dan Mayfield

Colossians 2

Presumptions of Germinal Transformation

Regeneration or the New Birth

Who or what is the cause of this radical spiritual transformation that the Bible refers to as “regeneration” or being “born again”?

Pelagians understand regeneration to be nothing more than reformation, a mere exchange of one set of habits for another set (achieved, of course, by a free act of will). Since man is not constitutionally depraved, that is, depraved by nature, being at worst the innocent victim of bad examples and other circumstances beyond his control, he does not need re-creation, only redirection.

Arminians believe that regeneration is brought to pass by the divine will and human will working in conjunction with one another. Or if they say that God alone regenerates, he does so only when and because the individual believes by a free act of will, or does not resist the overtures of grace. For example, we are told that “God cannot and to say the same thing—*will not* regenerate a heart that will not admit him. God respects the sovereignty-within-limitations with which he endowed man at creation” (William G. MacDonald, “The Spirit of Grace,” in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock [Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975], p. 86).

Calvinists insist that the sole cause of regeneration or being born again is the will of God. God first sovereignly and efficaciously regenerates, and only in consequence of that do we act. Therefore, the individual is passive in regeneration, neither preparing himself nor making himself receptive to what God will do. Regeneration is a change wrought in us by God, not an autonomous act performed by us for ourselves.²

² Storms, S. (2006). [Studies in Divine Election](#). Oklahoma City, OK: Sam Storms.

FORMER LEPERS - BURIED IN BAPTISM - REGENERATED TO NEW LIFE:

Objections to God's Plan of Salvation Considered

by Bert Thompson, Ph.D.

When the topic of salvation is discussed, it is not unusual to hear certain objections to God's designated plan. At times, such objections result from a misunderstanding of the steps involved in the salvation process, or the reason(s) for those steps. On occasion, however, the objections result from a stubborn refusal to acquiesce to God's commands regarding what constitutes salvation. I would like to consider three such objections here.

IS SALVATION THE RESULT OF "BAPTISMAL REGENERATION"?

Is the forgiveness of sins that results from being baptized due to some special power within the water? No. "Baptismal regeneration" is the idea that there is a miraculous power in the water that produces salvation (i.e., regeneration). As Wayne Jackson has noted: "...the notion that baptism is a 'sacrament' which has a sort of mysterious, innate power to remove the contamination of sin—independent of personal faith and a volitional submission to God's plan of redemption"—is plainly at odds with biblical teaching (1997, 32:45). An examination of the Old Testament (which serves as our "tutor" [Galatians 3:24], and which contains things "for our learning" [Romans 15:4]) provides important instruction regarding this principle. When Naaman the leper was told by Elisha to dip seven times in the Jordan River, at first he refused, but eventually obeyed—and was healed. However, there was no meritorious power in the muddy waters of the Jordan. Naaman was healed because He did exactly what God commanded him to do, in exactly the way God commanded him to do it.

This was true of the Israelites' salvation as well. On one occasion when they sinned, and God began to slay them for their unrighteousness, those who wished to repent and be spared were commanded to look upon a brass serpent on a pole in the midst of the camp (Numbers 21:1-9). There was no meritorious power in the serpent. Rather, the Israelites were saved from destruction because they did exactly what God commanded them to do, in exactly the way God commanded them to do it.

The New Testament presents the same principle. Jesus once encountered a man born blind (John 9). Then Jesus spat on the ground, made a spittle/clay potion, and placed it over the man's eyes. He then instructed the man to "go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (John 9:7). Was there medicinal power in Siloam's waters? No. It was the man's obedient faith that produced the end-result, not some miraculous power in the water. What would have happened if the man had refused to obey Christ, or had altered the Lord's command? Suppose the man had reasoned: "If I wash in Siloam, some may think I am trusting in the **water** to be healed. Others may think that I am attempting to perform some kind of 'work' to 'merit' regaining my sight. Therefore I simply will 'have faith in' Christ, but I will **not** dip in the pool of Siloam." Would the man have been healed? Most certainly not! What if Noah, during the construction of the ark, had followed God's instructions to the letter, except for the fact that he decided to build the ark out of a material other than the gopher wood that God had commanded? Would Noah and his family have been saved? Most certainly not! Noah would have been guilty of violating God's commandments, since he had not done **exactly** as God commanded him. Did not Jesus Himself say: "If ye love me, ye will **keep My commandments**" (John 14:15, emp. added)?

Peter used the case of Noah to discuss the relationship of baptism to salvation. He stated unequivocally that baptism is involved in salvation when he noted that, just as Noah and his family were transported from a polluted environment of corruption into a realm of deliverance, so in baptism we are moved from the polluted environment of defilement into a realm of redemption. It is by baptism that one enters “into Christ” (Romans 6:4; Galatians 3:27), wherein salvation is found (2 Timothy 2:10). In Ephesians 5:26 and Titus 3:5, Paul described baptism as a “washing of water” or a “washing of regeneration” wherein the sinner is “cleansed” or “saved.” [Baptist theologian A.T. Robertson admitted that both of these passages refer specifically to water baptism (1931, 4:607).] The power of baptism to remove sin lies not in the water, but in the God Who commanded the sinner to be baptized in the first place.

IS BAPTISM A HUMAN WORK?

Is baptism a meritorious human work? No. But is it required for a person to be saved? Yes. How is this possible? The Bible clearly teaches that we are **not** saved by works (Titus 3:4-7; Ephesians 2:9). Yet the Bible clearly teaches we **are** saved by works (James 2:14-24). Since inspiration guarantees that the Scriptures never will contradict themselves, it is obvious that **two different kinds of works** are under consideration in these passages.

The New Testament mentions at least four kinds of works: (1) works of the Law of Moses (Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:20); (2) works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21); (3) works of merit (Titus 3:4-7); and (4) works resulting from obedience of faith (James 2:14-24). This last category often is referred to as “works of God.” This phrase does not mean works **performed by God**; rather, the intent is “works **required and approved by God**” (Thayer, 1958, p. 248; cf. Jackson, 1997, 32:47). Consider the following example from Jesus’ statements in John 6:27-29:

Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life.... They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may 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.

Within this context, Christ made it clear that there are works which humans must do to receive eternal life. Moreover, the passage affirms that **believing itself is a work** (“This is the **work of God**, that ye **believe** on him whom he hath sent.”). It therefore follows that if one is saved **without any type of works**, then he is saved **without faith**, because **faith is a work**. Such a conclusion would throw the Bible into hopeless confusion!

In addition, it should be noted that repentance from sin is a divinely appointed work for man to perform prior to his reception of salvation. The people of ancient Nineveh “repented” at Jonah’s preaching (Matthew 12:41), yet the Old Testament record relates that “God saw their **works**, that they turned from their evil way” (Jonah 3:10). Thus, if one can be saved without **any kind** of works, he can be saved **without repentance**. Yet Jesus Himself declared that without repentance, one will surely perish (Luke 13:3,5).

But what about baptism? The New Testament **specifically excludes** baptism from the class of human meritorious works unrelated to redemption. The context of Titus 3:4-7 reveals the following information. (1) We **are not saved** by works of righteousness that we do by ourselves (i.e., according to any plan or course of action that we devised—see Thayer, p. 526). (2) We **are saved** by the “washing of regeneration” (i.e., baptism), exactly as 1 Peter 3:21 states. (3) Thus, baptism is excluded from all works of human righteousness that men contrive, but is itself a “work of God” (i.e., required and approved by God) necessary for salvation.

When one is raised from the watery grave of baptism, it is according to the “working of God” (Colossians 2:12), and not any man-made plan. No one can suggest (justifiably) that baptism is a meritorious work of human design. When we are baptized, we are completely passive, and thus hardly can have performed any kind of “work.” Instead, we have obeyed God through saving faith. Our “works of God” were belief, repentance, confession, and baptism—all commanded by the Scriptures of one who would receive salvation as the free gift of God (Romans 6:23).

IS THE BAPTISM ASSOCIATED WITH SALVATION HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM?

To circumvent the connection between water baptism and salvation, some have suggested that the baptism discussed in passages such as Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, and 1 Peter 3:21 is Holy Spirit baptism. But such a position cannot be correct. Christ commanded His followers—after His death and ascension—to go into all the world and “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:18-20). That same command applies no less to Christians today.

During the early parts of the first century, we know there was more than one baptism in existence (e.g., John’s baptism, Holy Spirit baptism, Christ’s baptism, etc.). But by the time Paul wrote his epistle to the Christians in Ephesus, **only one** of those baptisms remained. He stated specifically in Ephesians 4:4-5: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, **one baptism.**” Which **one** baptism remained? One thing we know for certain: Christ never would give His disciples a command that they could not carry out.

The Scriptures, however, teach that Jesus administers baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:15-17). Yet Christians were commanded to baptize those whom they taught, and who believed (John 3:16), repented of their sins (Luke 13:3), and confessed Christ as the Son of God (Matthew 10:32). It is clear, then, that the baptism commanded by Christ was not Holy Spirit baptism. If it were, Christ would be put in the untenable position of having commanded His disciples to do something they could not do—baptize in the Holy Spirit. However, they **could** baptize in **water**, which is exactly what they did. And that is exactly what we still are doing today. Baptism in the Holy Spirit no longer is available; only water baptism remains, and is the one true baptism commanded by Christ for salvation (Ephesians 4:4-5; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

When a person does precisely what the Lord has commanded, he has not “merited” or “earned” salvation. Rather, his obedience is evidence of his faith (James 2:18). Are we saved by God’s grace? Indeed we are (Ephesians 2:8-9). But the fact that we are saved by grace does not negate human responsibility in obeying God’s commands. Every person who wishes to be saved must exhibit the “obedience of faith” commanded within God’s Word (Romans 1:5; 16:26). A part of that obedience is adhering to God’s command to be baptized.

What Is Baptismal Regeneration?

By [Wayne Jackson](#)

•

Is the doctrine of “baptismal regeneration” scriptural? In order to answer such a question, one first must define precisely what he means by that designation.

Exactly what is “baptismal regeneration”? The phrase connotes different things to different people. For some, the expression is merely a bit of inflammatory rhetoric designed to intimidate those who affirm that baptism is a part of the regeneration process. To others, it is the notion that baptism is a “sacrament” which has a sort of mysterious, innate power to remove the contamination of sin — independent of personal faith and a volitional submission to God’s plan of redemption.

The doctrine of baptism’s essentiality has the support of the Bible; the “sacramental” ideology does not. Let us reflect upon this latter concept.

Baptism As a Mystical Sacrament

“Baptism,” as administered by the Roman Catholic Church, reflects a form of “baptismal regeneration” that is wholly at variance with the New Testament. A leading Catholic authority defines “baptism” in the following fashion:

“A sacrament of the New Law instituted by Jesus Christ, in which, as a result of washing with water accompanied by the words ‘I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,’ a human being is spiritually regenerated, and made capable of receiving the other sacraments” (Attwater, 45).

This view involves the idea that “baptism” need not be accompanied by faith, or personal surrender to the Lord. Note these additional citations from the same page of this volume.

“Baptism of the insane may be lawfully performed if such a desire has been expressed in a lucid interval, or in imminent danger of death if, before losing reason, a desire had been manifested. Those who have been insane from birth, or since before attaining the use of reason, may at any time be baptized as infants.”

“Baptism of the unborn. If there is not a probable hope that a child can be baptized after birth, Baptism may be administered in the womb: in the case of a head presentation, on the head; in other presentations on the part presented, but then it has to be again baptized conditionally if it is living on complete delivery. Should the mother die in labour, the child is to be extracted from the womb and, if certainly living, baptized absolutely; if life is doubtful, conditionally. An aborted fetus must also be baptized, unconditionally or conditionally according to the circumstances.”

The sentiments expressed by Attwater (whose book, incidentally, has the [Imprimatur](#) of the Roman Church) are wholly foreign to New Testament doctrine.

But how does the teaching of the New Testament differ from this concept of “baptismal regeneration”?

New Testament Baptism

First, there is nothing in the teaching of the Scriptures which would even remotely suggest that there is some magical essence inherent in the water of baptism that can effect forgiveness of sin. Rather, baptism, i.e., immersion in water, is a rite that is accompanied by both faith (Mark 16:16) and repentance (Acts 2:38). Void of those prerequisites, it has no validity whatever.

Second, baptism is an act of obedience wherein one expresses his confidence in the power of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection to produce pardon. Paul makes it quite clear that when one is buried with Christ through baptism, it is into the Lord’s death, i.e., the benefits of his death, that the sinner comes.

And, just as the Son of God was raised from the dead to the glory of Father, even so, when one is raised from the burial of baptism, he passes into a state characterized as “newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

The power to save is in Jesus' death and resurrection. Penitent believers access that power when they humbly submit to the Lord's requirement to replicate the Savior's burial and resurrection in the action of baptism (cf. Col. 2:12-13).

Third, though we readily acknowledge that there is no "sacramental" power intrinsic to the water of baptism, that does not give us leave to repudiate the sacred connection between the rite of baptism and forgiveness. To do so, is to ignore numerous passages of the plainest import.

Salvation is preceded by both faith and baptism, according to the precise language of Mark 16:16. The Greek text literally suggests: "He who has believed, and who has been immersed, shall be saved." In a parallel passage, baptism is viewed as the culminating act by which one is acknowledged as a disciple (Mt. 28:19 – ASV).

Jesus informed Nicodemus that one does not enter the kingdom of God except by the new birth process (Jn. 3:5), which involves "water," i.e., baptism. Not many would deny that the new birth and "regeneration" are equivalents. Hence, there is a solid connection between regeneration and the birth that involves water. For fifteen centuries it was conceded that the "water" of this passage is an allusion to baptism.

John Calvin introduced the novel view that the "water" must be spiritualized, and he has been followed by numerous advocates of the doctrine of salvation by "faith alone." The historian Philip Schaff observed that Calvin's view was an excessive reaction to the dogma of Catholicism, and that it is impossible to disassociate the "water" in this verse from the rite of baptism (Lange, p. 127).

When asked: "What shall we do?" by sincere folks who had been convicted of their sin guilt, Peter informed them that they must repent and be baptized "for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38). No sectarian quibble can evade the force of this transparent command and the design associated with it. Paul of Tarsus, who had been praying for days — and still was lost, was instructed to: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16).

This was not “baptismal regeneration” in a mystical sense; rather, it was merely submission to an inspired ordinance. It is by baptism that one is said to enter “into Christ” (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:27), wherein salvation is located (2 Timothy 2:10).

Paul describes baptism as “washing of water,” or “washing of regeneration,” in connection with which the sinner is “cleansed” or “saved” (Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5). A.T. Robertson, a Baptist scholar, concedes that both of these passages allude to water baptism (p. 607). And so, while the Roman Catholic dogma of “baptismal regeneration” is false, there is a perfectly legitimate nexus between baptism and regeneration.

Peter unequivocally affirms that baptism is involved in our salvation. Just as Noah & his family were transported from an environment of corruption into a realm of deliverance, so, similarly, in baptism we are moved from the world of defilement into a redeemed relationship with the Lord (1st Peter 3:21).

One does not have to believe in the Catholic concept of “baptismal regeneration” in order to acknowledge that there is a relationship between water immersion and forgiveness, in the passages cited above.

The Principle Involved

Perhaps it would be helpful if we would illustrate, by other cases in the Scriptures, the principle that is involved in this relationship.

The Case of Naaman

Naaman was an officer in the Syrian army, but he was woefully afflicted with the dreaded disease leprosy. The prophet Elisha bade him go “wash” in the Jordan river, promising that he would be “clean.” Finally, after some equivocation, the captain thus did, and his flesh was restored (2 Kgs. 5:14).

Certainly, there was no merit in Jordan’s water, and there is no textual suggestion that Naaman was disposed to trust in the efficacy of the river; he simply came to a state of confidence in the prophet’s message. There was no “water healing” in this case. But who, thinking rationally, could deny that his restoration was dependent upon submission to the divine command?

The Man Born Blind

Jesus once encountered a man who had been blind since birth. The Lord spat upon the ground and made a clay potion, anointing the man's eyes. He then commissioned the gentleman to: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (Jn. 9:7). The man obeyed; he washed, and came away seeing. Was there medicinal value in Siloam's water? Of course not. Should the blind man have refused the Savior's command? What if he had reasoned in this fashion: "If I go and wash, that will suggest that I am trusting in water. I do not believe in 'washing restoration.' I do not wish to 'merit' my sight. Therefore, I will simply trust in Jesus' power to heal, and refrain from going to Siloam." Just what would have been the result?

Perhaps the following chart will help to put things in focus with reference to the connection between baptism and salvation, and the order of their occurrence, in the scriptural plan.

The Biblical Order

Baptism
Salvation (Mk. 16:16)
Born of Water
Enter Kingdom (Jn. 3:5)
Baptism
Remission of Sins (Acts 2:38)
Baptism
Washing (Acts 22:16)
Baptism
Death of Christ (Rom. 6:3)
Washed
Justified (1 Cor. 6:11)
Baptism
Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13)
Baptism
Clothed With Christ (Gal. 3:27)
Washing of Water
Cleansed (Eph. 5:26)
Baptism
Working of God (Col. 2:12)
Washing of Regeneration
Saved (Tit. 3:5)
Baptism
Saved (1 Pet. 3:21)

Conclusion

Even when one has done precisely as the Lord commands, he has merited nothing; he has earned nothing. The fact that we are saved by God's grace does not negate human responsibility in accepting Heaven's gift, and one's refusal to do what is clearly commanded by the Son of God, or to assign it a subordinate status, is not justified.

Those who speak in opposition to New Testament baptism, contradicting the sacred writings, will have a heavy judgment to bear.

John 3:5	Spirit	Water	Kingdom
1 Corinthians 12:13	Spirit	Baptized	Body
Ephesians 5:26	Word	Washing/Water	Cleansed Church
Titus 3:5	Renewal of Spirit	Washing of Regeneration	Saved by Mercy

Baptism and the New Birth

by [Dave Miller, Ph.D.](#)

A major cleavage within Christendom pertains to the point at which the “new birth” occurs. Most of Christendom maintains that a person is born again, and thus has sin washed away by the blood of Christ, when that person “accepts Jesus Christ as his personal savior.” By this expression, it is meant that a person must mentally and/or orally decide to embrace Christ as the Lord of his life. Hence, the new birth is seen simply as a determination of the will—a moment in time when the person accepts Christ in his mind and couples that decision with an oral confession. The passage in the New Testament that alludes specifically to being born again pertains to a conversation that Jesus had with a high-ranking Jewish official:

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be **born again**’ ” (John 3:1-7, emp. added).

In an effort to avoid identifying “water” (vs. 5) as water baptism, many within Christendom in the last half century have proposed a variety of novel interpretations. For example, some have proposed that “water” is a reference to the Holy Spirit. While it certainly is true that John uses the word “water” symbolically to represent the Spirit later in his book (7:38-39), that fact had to be explained by the inspired writer. However, in chapter three, the normal, literal meaning is clearly in view, not only because water baptism throughout the New Testament is consistently associated with the salvation event (e.g., Acts 2:38; 8:12-13,36-38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15,33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12; Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21), but even in this context, eighteen verses later, the term clearly has a literal meaning: “Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much **water** there” (John 3:23). Additionally, if “water” in John 3:5 is an allusion to the Holy Spirit, the result would be nonsensical: “unless one is born of the Spirit and the Spirit.”

Another quibble offered in an effort to avoid the clear import of John 3:5 is that “water” is a symbol for the blood of Jesus. Of course, no rationale exists for making such a connection. Elsewhere John refers explicitly to water and blood, but clearly distinguishes them from each other in their import (1 John 5:6). Perhaps the most popular notion, advanced only in recent years, is that “water” is a reference to a pregnant woman’s “water”—i.e., the amniotic fluid that accompanies the physical birth of a child. However, this suggestion likewise fails to fit the context of Jesus’ remarks. In fact, Nicodemus himself thought that Jesus was referring to physical birth (“mother’s womb”). But Jesus corrected his misconception, and contrasted such thinking with the intended meaning of “water and Spirit.” Indeed, Jesus would not have told Nicodemus that he needed to be born physically (“water”). He would not have included the act of physical birth in His listing of prerequisites to entering the kingdom. That would make Jesus say that before a person can enter the kingdom he or she must first be a person! What would be the point of stating such a thing? [Would it perhaps be to ensure that everyone understands that non-humans (i.e., animals) cannot enter the kingdom?!] Later in the same chapter, did John baptize near Salim “because there was much amniotic fluid there”?

If one cares to consult the rest of the New Testament in order to allow the Bible to be its own best interpreter, and in order to allow the Bible to harmonize with itself, additional passages shed light on the meaning of John 3:5. According to the rest of the New Testament, spiritual **conception** occurs when the Gospel (i.e., the seed of the Holy Spirit—Luke 8:11) is implanted in the human heart and mind (James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 4:15; Ephesians 6:17; 1 Peter 1:23). The Word of God, in turn, generates penitent faith in the human heart (Romans 10:17) that leads the individual to obey the Gospel by being baptized in water (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Hebrews 10:22). The resulting condition of the individual is that he or she is now a child of God, a citizen of the kingdom, and member of the church of Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:4).

Additional verses in the New Testament clarify and cinch this meaning of John 3:5, pinpointing the “new birth,” while also allowing us to understand the activity of the Holy Spirit in the act of conversion. Consider the following chart (Jackson, 1988):

John 3:5	Spirit	Water	Kingdom
1 Corinthians 12:13	Spirit	Baptized	Body
Ephesians 5:26	Word	Washing/Water	Cleansed Church
Titus 3:5	Renewal of Spirit	Washing of Regeneration	Saved by Mercy

These verses demonstrate that God achieves conversion through the Gospel message authored by the Holy Spirit. When a person comes to an understanding (Acts 8:30) of the that inspired message, his penitent faith leads him to submit to water immersion for the remission of sins (Acts 8:36,38; 10:47). The result of his obedient response to the Gospel is that he is saved and cleansed from past sin and instantaneously placed into the kingdom of Christ.

Notice that submission to the divine plan of salvation does not mean that humans save themselves by effecting their own salvation. Their obedience does not earn or merit their forgiveness. Rather, the terms or conditions of salvation are stipulated **by God**—not by humans—and are a manifestation of **His** mercy! When people submit to the terms of entrance into the kingdom of Christ, they are saved by the blood of Jesus and the grace of God—not their own effort! Water immersion is not to be viewed as a “work of righteousness which we have done” (Titus 3:5). When we submit to baptism, we are being saved by “the kindness and love of God our Savior” (Titus 3:4). We are being saved “according to His mercy” (Titus 3:5).

REFERENCES

Jackson, Wayne (1988), “The New Birth: What is It?,” *Christian Courier*, 24:14, August.

Factors that cannot effect or change what The Bible reveals that baptism does for us...

1 Peter 3:21
Acts 22:16
Acts 2:38,47

1. A person on their Deathbed.
2. Car wrecks on the way to be baptized.
3. Folks in airplanes who hear the gospel.
4. People in the desert.

Who will be saved according to Jesus?

He that believes
and is baptized. Mark 16:16

Please believe Jesus.

EXCUSES FOR NOT OBEYING THE GOSPEL

Robert Stapleton

“I AM AFRAID OF WHAT PEOPLE WILL SAY” – Too many people are ashamed of the gospel. We need to be as Paul and not allow such to interfere with our dedication (Romans 1:16). Some worry about what parents or friends will say. Of course, we are taught to obey our parents, but not if it is destructive to our souls (Luke 14:26). If our “friends” are true friends then they will support our actions and be happy for us. What we have to remember is, we must give account of ourselves to God (Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10). We cannot be ashamed of Christ or His word and expect Him to confess us at Judgment (Luke 9:26; Matthew 10:32, 33).

“I AM NOT GOOD ENOUGH” OR “I AM TOO MEAN” – How long is it going to take you to become “good enough”? As long as you serve the Devil you will never be “good enough” to serve God (Matthew 6:24; Romans 6:13-16; 2 Timothy 3:13). As we think about being too mean, have you committed sins worse than those in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11? What must be understood is if we were already “good enough” we would not need Jesus (Matthew 9:10-13). Christ died for the ungodly to provide them with the opportunity to be saved (Luke 19:10; Romans 5:8).

“I JUST COULDN’T HOLD OUT FAITHFULLY” – If we are relying on ourselves then we probably can’t. When it comes to the temptations of life, we have a promise of help from God (First Corinthians 10:13). The Apostle Paul endured much and yet remained faithful, teaching us that we can do the same (2nd Corinthians 11:24-28; 2 Timothy 4:6-8). We should do our best and rely upon the grace of God to help us through where that is just not enough (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

“I AM TOO YOUNG” OR “I AM TOO OLD” – Are you old enough to know that you are a sinner? Are you old enough to know that you need a Savior? Are you old enough to know what is required of you to obey and be saved? If so, then you are accountable to God. God wants the young to obey before they entangle themselves in sin (Ecclesiastes 12:1). So often young people think they have to sow their “wild oats” before they obey. What needs to be kept in mind God’s law of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7, 8). We cannot sow wild oats all week, attend services on Sunday, and pray for crop failure. When it comes to being “too old,” whether one obeys at the 2nd hour or the 11th hour they are accepted by God (Matthew 20:6, 9). The danger is in letting opportunities pass, waiting for the 11th hour, until it has already passed.

“I DO NOT KNOW ENOUGH” – If you are waiting to know what the entire Bible has to say, you will never obey. If you read this article, you will know what you must do to be saved. The Eunuch (Acts 8) and the Pentecostians (Acts 2) heard only one sermon and they understood enough to obey. Having heard the gospel, they repented of their sins, confessed Christ, and were baptized for the remission of their sins. Your concern should be with obedience to the gospel and then growth (Ephesians 4:15; 1 Peter 2:2).

“I AM NOT READY TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN” OR “I AM TOO BUSY TO BECOME ONE” – Will you take time out to die? Will you take time out to appear at judgment? Consider the two occasions of those who thought they did not have the time to obey as recorded in the New Testament – The Foolish Virgins @ Matthew 25: 1-13 & Felix @ Acts 24: 25.

There are no excuses permissible by God that will set aside the pronouncement of condemnation at the Judgment for failure to obey. Won’t you carefully consider your soul’s condition and obey while you have the opportunity?

ANDY SOCHOR

“What Prevents Me From Being Baptized?”



After leaving Samaria, Philip met a eunuch from Ethiopia traveling home from Jerusalem and reading from the prophet Isaiah (Acts 8:26-33). This man wanted to understand what he was reading so he asked Philip, “*Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?*” (Acts 8:34). At this point, “*Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him*” (Acts 8:35).

Every conversion, whether recorded in the New Testament or those that occur today, will begin with this. The story of Jesus is the heart of the gospel message (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Jesus is the cornerstone of the foundation upon which we are built (Ephesians 2:19-21). Jesus is “*the way, and the truth, and the life*” (John 14:6). So, Philip preached Jesus, just as we must do today.

The text implies the inclusion of baptism in Philip’s teaching about Jesus. The first thing we see after Luke recorded Philip preaching Jesus is this: “*As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, ‘Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?’*” (Acts 8:36). This would be an odd question if Philip had not already been discussing baptism with the eunuch.

We can see from other passages how baptism fits into the teaching about Jesus. In giving the Great Commission, Jesus said, “*He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved*” (Mark 16:16). As the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is at the core of the gospel, we follow that pattern when we die to sin, are “*buried with Him through baptism,*” and are raised from the waters of baptism in order to “*walk in newness of life*” (Romans 6:2-4).

The eunuch knew he needed to be baptized. Many today might hear the message about Jesus and know they need to be baptized in order to put on Christ (Galatians 3:27) and have their sins forgiven (Acts 22:16), yet for one reason or another they fail to be baptized. Why? The eunuch wanted to know what prevented him from being baptized. There are certainly reasons that prevent people today from being baptized:

- **They worry about what their friends and/or family will think of their decision.**
- **They are unwilling to change their lifestyle in order to meet the conditions of repentance.**
- **They are uncertain that the reward is worth the sacrifice that following Christ will entail.**
- **They hear conflicting teaching from others telling them that they do not need to be baptized.**
- **Like Felix, they are waiting for a convenient time (Acts 24:25), which likely will never come.**

Those are just some examples of the things that prevent people from being baptized today. But notice how Philip answered the eunuch’s question. When the man asked him what prevented him from being baptized, Philip did not say, “If your family is supportive you may,” or, “If this time is convenient you may.” Rather he said, “*If you believe with all your heart, you may*” (Acts 8:37). This was the only thing standing between the eunuch and baptism – wholehearted belief “*Jesus Christ is the Son of God*” (Acts 8:37).

That wholehearted belief in Christ is also the only thing standing between the alien sinner and the waters of baptism today. Any excuse or reason that may be given for not being baptized reflects a lack of faith. Notice again the examples listed above.

- Though our friends and/or family may not be supportive of our decision, a wholehearted faith will result in one applying Jesus’ teaching when He said, “*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me*” (Matthew 10:37). Having this faith, we will put pleasing Christ ahead of pleasing others. As Paul said: “*If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ*” (Galatians 1:10).
- Though repentance is not always easy, because it is required for salvation (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38), one with a wholehearted faith will crucify the old man of sin in order to become a servant of righteousness (Romans 6:6, 17).

- Though the earthy life of a Christian involves suffering (1 Peter 4:12, 16; 2 Timothy 3:12) and is one that appears pitiful to others (1 Corinthians 15:19), a wholehearted faith causes one to recognize that this “*momentary, light affliction*” will later become “*an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison*” (2 Corinthians 4:17).
- Though many will teach that baptism is not necessary for salvation, one with a wholehearted faith will not put his trust in men, but in Jesus who said, “*He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved*” (Mark 16:16). He will listen to the apostle Peter who told the Jews at Pentecost, “*Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins*” (Acts 2:38), and who later wrote, “*Baptism now saves you*” (1 Peter 3:21).
- Though there will always be some reason to think the present would be an inconvenient time to be baptized, a wholehearted faith recognizes that “*now is ‘the acceptable time,’*” and “*now is ‘the day of salvation’*” (2 Corinthians 6:2). This one will seek to be baptized immediately, just as the eunuch did, rather than try to justify any delay.

Any reason that might prevent one from being baptized will be eliminated by a wholehearted faith. This type of faith causes one to recognize that these reasons do not matter. All that matters is being right with the Lord and following Him. Let us all have this type of faith and do all that the Lord expects us to do.



Lady of the Lake Baptism.

Ivan the Terrible was one of the great rulers of Russia. He was so busy trying to annex territory to his country that he had no time for his own social life. His advisers became worried because he had not married. Ivan suggested that they find him a wife, and he would accept their recommendation. They searched far and wide for a girl who was beautiful, intelligent, and a king's daughter. They found her in Athens, Greece; her name was Sophia, the daughter of the King of Greece. Ivan asked the King for the daughter's hand; the King demanded that Ivan join the Greek Orthodox Church. This he did. He had gone to Greece with five hundred of his

best soldiers, and when Ivan joined the church, they desired to join also. A catechizer, one who taught religious practices, outlined the articles of the creed to everyone of them, but with one exception. One of the articles stated that if they joined the church, they could not be professional soldiers. They asked the catechizer to give them time to think it over. They pondered the problem; "How can we join the Church and remain in the army at the same time?" They concocted a plan, and when they were to be baptized they marched into the water, five hundred of them, together with five hundred priests. Shortly before each priest took his candidate under, each soldier grabbed for his sword, and lifted it up in the air, and each soldier was baptized except for his fighting arm and a gleaming sword that jutted out of the water. Those who witnessed the mass baptism spectacle said that they saw five hundred dry arms and five hundred glittering swords sticking out of the water. The soldier had fallen up on the plan—"We can join the church with our bodies, but we will allow the fighting arm to remain in possession of the state." – *Internet Search*

Withholding the Right Hand of Fellowship

THE RIGHT HAND IN BIBLICAL METAPHOR:

Pledged Oath & Allegiance
Personal Power & Strength

What Is Your Sword?

During the crusades, knights were enlisted to fight for the church.

The knight's sword

The story is told that before joining a crusade, a knight was required to be baptized. Baptism was a sign of his surrender, commitment and loyalty to the church.

The knight himself was willing to submit to the church and be baptized. But it did present a problem. In battle the knight placed his trust in his sword and his ability to use it. The knight was not willing to surrender the control his sword to anyone.

As you may know, many knights fought in the crusades. These knights were baptized. But when they were baptized they held their sword above the water, signifying they retained the control of their sword.

The knight's master

Before he was baptized the sword was the knight's object of trust. He placed his faith in his sword and his ability to use it. After he was baptized the sword was still the object of his faith and trust.

When the knight refused to commit his sword to God, baptism for him was merely a ritual that allowed him to pursue his own agenda—joining the battle of the crusades.

Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other" (Matthew 6: 24ff). Holding his sword above the water the knight made the choice of the master he loved and would be devoted to.

Your master

Today many Christians have "swords we hold above the water." It may be our wallet, our family, a relationship, our career, our house, a car or even a dream. A disciple of Christ must be willing to commit everything to the master. He/she can hold nothing back. We may say we have placed our faith and trust in God but when we hold something back it becomes the master we love. It becomes the object of our trust and faith.

Being a disciple of Christ demands surrendering all we are and have to Him, this is the mindset of a steward.

No. 109.

I Surrender All.

J. W. VAN DE VENTER.
SOLO.

W. S. WEEDEN.



1. All to Je - sus I sur-ren-der, All to Him I free-ly give;
2. All to Je - sus I sur-ren-der, Humbly at His feet I bow;
3. All to Je - sus I sur-ren-der, Make me, Saviour, wholly Thine;
4. All to Je - sus I sur-ren-der, Lord, I give my - self to Thee;
5. All to Je - sus I sur-ren-der, Now I feel the sa-cred flame;



I will ev - er love and trust Him, In His presence dai - ly live.
 Worldly pleasures all for-sak - en, Take me, Je - sus, take me now.
 Let me feel the Ho - ly Spir - it, Truly know that Thou art mine.
 Fill me with Thy love and pow - er, Let Thy blessing fall on me.
 Oh, the joy of full sal - va - tion! Glo - ry, glo - ry to His name!



CHORUS.



I sur-ren-der all, I sur-render all;
 I sur-ren-der all, I sur-render all,



All to Thee my bless - ed Sav - iour, I sur-render all.



