

## **THE DIVISIVE ISSUE OF BAPTISM (Romans 6:3-4)**

### **I. The cause for baptism.**

- A. There is no disputing the cause of baptism - God commanded it to be done.
  - 1. Every religious group that practices any form of baptism acknowledges that God instituted baptism as some form of rite.
  - 2. Our Lord stated that one had to be baptized along with believing in order to be saved (Mark 16:16).
  - 3. He also gave the Great Commission which states that men are to preach and baptize (Matthew 28:18-20).
- B. The cause for baptism is different than the cause of baptism.
- C. There is a reason people are to be baptized and the New Testament tells us that reason is to have sins washed away.
  - 1. Saul was told by Ananias to be baptized to have his sins washed away (Acts 22:16).
  - 2. Paul told Titus we are saved by the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5).
  - 3. Those who are a part of the bride of Christ have been cleansed by the washing of water (Ephesians 5:26).
  - 4. Some of the Corinthians had been vile sinners but they had been washed (1 Corinthians 6:11).
  - 5. In order to draw near to God we need to have had our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22).
- D. You and I need to be baptized in order to have our sins washed away.
- E. Sadly, this is where some depart from the scriptures in their beliefs about baptism.
  - 1. Some religious groups teach that baptism is a sign of one already being saved.
  - 2. Herschel Hobbs, who helped write the 1963 version of the Southern Baptism manual known as the Baptist Faith and Message, wrote in another book: "Since it is by grace, it obviously cannot be produced, aided, or completed by baptism. Baptism is the symbol of the experience, not its source or means."
  - 3. Another Baptist writer penned these words: "Baptism, in the New Testament, is an external sign of an internal work of grace already attained in the heart of the believer."
  - 4. On the website of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod there is this statement, "The LCMS does not believe that baptism is absolutely necessary for salvation."
  - 5. On the website of the United Methodist Church there is a page about baptism that has frequently asked questions and it has the following: "Question: Do I have to be baptized in order to be saved? Answer: No, but baptism is a gift of God's grace to be received as part of the journey of salvation. To refuse to accept

- baptism is to reject one of the means of grace that God offers us.”
6. A website sponsored by members of the Anglican church has this to say about baptism: “Neither this verse nor the rest of the Bible teaches that baptism is absolutely necessary for salvation. The thief on the cross (see Luke 23:43) was clearly saved, but there is no reason to think he had been baptized.”
  7. These are just a few of the major denominational views of baptism and what is accomplished by baptism.
- F. Again, the cause of baptism is our need for our sins to be washed away.

## II. **The candidates for baptism.**

- A. Jesus said, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).
1. This tells us that one who is a candidate for baptism must be one who is able to believe in Christ and act on that belief in obedience.
  2. Also, one must be able to hear the gospel in order to obey it (Romans 10:14).
    - a. Hearing is vital but one must understand what is being heard.
    - b. The soil of the way side in the parable of the sower had the problem of not understanding (Matthew 13:19).
    - c. Philip asked the Ethiopian, “Understandest what thou readest” (Acts 8:30).
    - d. Infants may be able to hear but they cannot understand what they hear nor can they read.
  3. Also the New Testament teaches that one must repent before He is baptized (Acts 2:38).
    - a. One has to be able to repent in order to be baptized.
    - b. In order to repent, one must understand what sin is and be able to commit sin, which children cannot do.
  4. Also, one is to confess with the mouth Jesus as Lord and babies can’t do this (Romans 10:9-10).
- B. The New Testament teaches that one who is a candidate for baptism must be able to hear, believe, repent and confess before one is baptized.
1. Lutherans, Anglicans, Catholics and others baptize infants.
  2. Herschel Hobbs, quoted earlier, had this to say about infant baptism in the Baptist Church: “The New Testament knows nothing of infant baptism...”

## III. **The connection.**

- A. Baptism is a washing away of sins as mentioned earlier, but what does the washing?
1. Water does not wash away sins or we would be cleansed every time we went swimming.
  2. It is the blood of Christ that washes us (Revelation 1:5).
- B. What is the connection between the blood of Christ and baptism?
- C. At baptism, we obey a likeness of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:3-4).

1. We are baptized into the death of Christ.
  2. It was at His death where His blood was shed (John 19:34).
- D. At baptism, we put on Christ (Galatians 3:26-27).
1. One must be in Christ to receive spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3).
  2. Salvation is in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10).
- E. At baptism, the Lord adds us to His church (Acts 2:47).
- F. Sadly, many in the denominational world teach that one is saved before baptism, but they do teach that one must be baptized to be a part of their denomination.
1. For instance, in the book *Why I Am A Baptist*, Stan Norman wrote, "Although insisting baptism is unnecessary for salvation, Baptists contend that it is important and necessary for church membership."
  2. In other words, one can be a member of the Lord's church without baptism, but not the Baptist Church.