

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Baptism Comes Before Salvation

By David Padfield

I have been accused of over emphasizing the part baptism plays in the salvation of sinners. In view of what the Bible teaches, I do not see how this could be possible.

There are five passages in the New Testament which mention both baptism and salvation in the same verse (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:4; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). In all of these passages, water baptism precedes the remission of sins. Do you know of a passage where the order is reversed?

Mark 16:16 contains two conditions for salvation: faith and baptism. It also contains the conditions for damnation: a lack of faith. If you want to know what you must do to be lost, it will tell you – all that is necessary is a lack of faith. If you want to know what to do to be saved from your past sins – it commands you to believe and be baptized.

In Acts 2:38 Peter told a group of believers to “*repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*” Our Baptist friends often focus on the word “*for*” in this passage and insist it means “because of,” even though it is never translated that way in any reputable translation of the Bible. We have to remind them that if baptism is “because of” the remission of sins, then so is repentance. Baptism and repentance are joined by the little word “*and.*” Whatever one is “*for*” the other is “*for.*”

After we are buried with Christ in baptism, we are raised to walk in a newness of life (Romans 6:1-4). This new life comes after baptism in water. Many preachers want to “*bury*” the “*new man,*” since they claim the newness of life comes before our “*burial.*”

Three days after the Lord appeared to Saul of Tarsus, Ananias told Saul to “*arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins*” (Acts 22:16). Many preachers today claim Saul was saved three days before Ananias met him. Ananias must not have known it, for he told Saul how to “*wash away*” his sins. If Saul had been saved on the road as some preachers claim, he must have been the most miserable saved man in the Bible. Saul was blind and spent three days praying and fasting until Ananias arrived.

1 Peter 3:21 states “*baptism doth also now save us.*” However, baptism is not the only condition for the salvation of the alien sinner. Other requirements must be met, like faith, repentance and love. I do not know of anything “alone” that will save a sinner, not even faith (Jas. 2:24). – *Christian Blog, Wednesday, August 2, 2017.* ■

“Opening And Alleging”

By Larry Ray Hafley

Christians often are criticized for “arguing and debating.” Say our religious adversaries, “*You people just want to stir up a fuss. You’re not interested in anything except causing trouble and running down other churches.*” How shall we respond to this charge?

First, any reply will be seen as evidence of the charge, for to meet it, we must contend against it. So, our answers and arguments against it will be used as proof of their assertion.

Second, shall we say that those who make the accusation are only interested in running down those who run

others down? Would that be a fair assessment of them? However, if the fact that we reason and present our position with scriptural arguments proves that we are only interested in “attacking others,” would not their reasoning against us prove that they are only interested in attacking those who attack others?

Third, Jesus often “stirred up a fuss” and created controversy as he taught (Matt. 15:12; Lk. 4:28; 6:11; 13:17; Jn. 7:12, 43). Shall we say that is all he was “interested in”? The same is true with respect to the apostles and prophets of the New Testament (Acts 7; 9:29; 13:50-52; 17:2-10; 18:12; 19:23-29; 1 Thess. 2:2). Were they only seeking to “run down” idolatry and to “pick a fight” with unbelieving Jews?

Fourth, when those who make the charge against us seek to convert evolutionists, Muslims, Jews and other unbelievers, are they “only trying to cause trouble by running down the religion of other people”?

Fifth, many people misunderstand what it means to “argue.” It is assumed that an argument is always a negative thing. That is not necessarily true. Look in the dictionary. Synonyms of *argue* are “discuss,” and “reason.” Even now, these sentences are “arguing” the case for the meaning of the term, “argue.” When some protest against our arguments, they are arguing against arguing.

Note, in particular, Acts 17:2, 3—***“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.”*** The New King James Version says Paul was ***“explaining and demonstrating.”*** The New International Version says he was ***“explaining and proving.”*** The New American Standard Bible says he was ***“explaining and giving evidence.”*** In Acts 17, ***“Paul was bringing forward passages from ‘the Scriptures’...to prove...that the Messiah had to suffer and be resurrected. Only then could he declare effectively that Jesus was really the Messiah”*** (Ralph Earle, ***Word Meanings In The New Testament***, p. 113).

Here Paul was arguing his case. Did he do wrong? Because trouble arose, did Paul do wrong? Who will say he did? Likewise, today, when we “explain and prove,” when we “explain and give evidence” for the method and purpose of baptism, or for the true nature and character of the work, worship, and organization of the church, and contrast the Bible order with that of churches built by men, why are we criticized and condemned for doing essentially what Paul did?

Finally, in the end, if we are doing right before God, it matters not what men may say. We have a duty to preach the word and to reprove and rebuke error (2 Tim. 4:2). Let us kindly answer our critics when we can, but let us not be deterred from our responsibility to ***“speak the things which befit sound doctrine”*** (Titus 2:1). ***“Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you”*** (Titus 2:15). ■



Anyway

Author unknown

People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centered. Love them ***anyway***.

If you do good, folks will accuse you of selfish and ulterior motives. Do good ***anyway***.

If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies. Succeed ***anyway***.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank ***anyway***.

People favor underdogs and follow only top dogs. Fight for some underdogs ***anyway***.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. Build ***anyway***.

Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth. Give the world your best ***ANYWAY!***

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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