

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

IS BAPTISM ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION?

By John Isaac Edwards

Many answer this in the negative. It's been said:

“Baptism is not essential to salvation...”

“Is baptism necessary for salvation? I don't beat about the bush about it at all. I come out with a plain, definite, no! No, baptism doesn't save, doesn't help save, and I'll go even further to say that it doesn't have anything in this world to do with the saving of a soul.”

“The Scriptures teach that salvation is by grace through faith, independent of baptism.”

As Paul asked, **“But what saith the answer of God...?”** (Rom. 11:4).

1) Jesus Said It Is. Jesus commissioned His apostles, **“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them...”** (Mt. 28:19). If baptism is not essential to salvation, did He give them a pointless assignment? The Lord also affirmed, **“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...”** (Mk. 16:16). Baptism is as essential to salvation as believing!

2) Apostles Taught It Is. Apostolic teaching shows:

Baptism is a command. Peter commanded, **“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ...”** (Acts 2:38). If baptism is not essential, neither is repentance! At Cornelius' house, Peter **“...commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord”** (Acts 10:48). If saved without baptism, then saved without obedience! (Heb. 5:9).

Baptism is for the remission of sins. The design of baptism is **“...for the remission of sins...”** (Acts 2:38). This is the same end as Christ's shed blood (Mt. 26:28). If salvation is independent of baptism, then salvation is independent of Christ's blood!

Baptism puts one into the death of Christ. Paul asked, **“Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?”** (Rom. 6:3). Jesus shed His blood in His death (Jn. 19:33-34). Thus, when one is baptized into the death of Christ He contacts the sin-remitting (Mt. 26:28), justifying (Rom. 5:9), redeeming, sin-forgiving (Eph. 1:7), nigh-making (Eph. 2:13), peace-making (Col. 1:20), conscience-purging (Heb. 9:14), sanctifying (Heb. 10:29), sin-washing (Rev. 1:5) blood!

Baptism puts one into the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13 reveals, **“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body....”** The one body is the Lord's church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:24). The body of Christ is the circle of the called (Col. 3:15), the realm of the reconciled (Eph. 2:16), and the sphere of the saved (Eph. 5:23).

Baptism puts one into Christ. It is written, **“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”** (Gal. 3:27). If saved without baptism, then saved without Christ; saved without putting on Christ! Yet, redemption (Rom. 3:24), all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3), salvation (2 Tim. 2:10) and the hope and promise of eternal life (Titus 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:25) are all in Christ!

Baptism saves. Peter penned, **“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...”** (1 Pet. 3:21). Could it be any plainer?

3) Disciples Declared It Is. When Saul of Tarsus asked, **“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”**, the Lord said, **“... Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do”** (Acts 9:6). In the Damascus city, Saul was

met by a disciple, Ananias, who declared, ***“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”*** (Acts 22:16). Would you have recognized baptism is a must? If baptism is not essential to salvation, then one can be saved without having his sins washed away (Rev. 1:5), without calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:13-16)!

4) First Century Converts Understood It Is. Consider these examples:

Jews on Pentecost. ***“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls”*** (Acts 2:41). Why be baptized the same day, if baptism doesn’t have anything to do with salvation? When you gladly receive the word, you’ll be baptized as well!

The Samaritans. ***“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women”*** (Acts 8:13).

Simon. ***“Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized...”*** (Acts 8:13).

The Ethiopian eunuch. ***“And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him”*** (Acts 8:38). Why stop the chariot, if baptism is not essential to salvation?

Saul of Tarsus. ***“And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized”*** (Acts 9:18).

Cornelius. ***“And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord....”*** (Acts 10:48).

Lydia. ***“And when she was baptized, and her household...”*** (Acts 16:15).

The jailor. ***“And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway”*** (Acts 16:33). Why be *baptized “the same hour of the night,” “at midnight”* (Acts 16:25), if baptism is not essential to salvation?

The Corinthians. ***“...and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized”*** (Acts 18:8).

The Ephesians. ***“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus”*** (Acts 19:5).

Now, what do you say? ■

Who Will Go To Heaven?

By Jesse Flowers

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (Matt. 7:21-23).

Jesus teaches us a startlingly and sobering truth in this passage. Even “many” religious people who believe in the Lord will be not go to heaven. Even those convinced that they have done so many wonderful things ***“in His name”*** will be rejected by Him in judgment. Why? Jesus tells them because they practiced lawlessness (cf. 1 Jn. 3:4). Practicing ***“lawlessness”*** means they were committing sin by doing things that were contrary to the revealed will of God.

So who will be saved and go to heaven? Jesus clearly stated, ***“he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”*** Yes, we must obey the commandments of God (1 Jn. 5:3). If we love Jesus, we will keep His commandments (Jn. 14:15). For ***“He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him”*** (Heb. 5:9).

Yes, we are saved by God’s grace (Eph. 2:8; Titus 2:11-14), but that’s through faith – i.e., our humble obedience to the teachings of our Lord and Savior (Rom. 6:16-17; 16:26; 1 Pet. 1:22-23). – ***BibleWork.Com***, October 14, 2014. ■

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

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