

## ON THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM

With the prolificacy of New Testament references to the importance of water baptism, it seems almost ridiculous that so many would balk, reject and denounce the necessity of baptism in order to get to heaven, but balk, reject and denounce they do. It is attributed to Cled Wallace that he said, "The Lord put baptism at the door of the church to allow believers in and to keep unbelievers out".

It is not only important that we point out the necessity of baptism to the alien sinner, but the brethren need to be reminded regularly. Just this week we received news of a split in a congregation, with some not believing in the necessity of baptism. Note just a few simple examples of statements from God's word that can not be misunderstood (at least not without some help).

1. One is to be baptized "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Now, since it is baptism that one must submit to in order to have the remission of sins, then if one has not been baptized, he is still in his sins! Now, one has to admit that if this is the case, one is either lost until after they are baptized or they are saved while still in their sins. Really, one must have some help in order to misunderstand that.

2. One is "baptized into Christ" (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). Since being baptized is the act that puts one "into" Christ Jesus, then one must be baptized in order to be saved or one is saved outside of Christ Jesus. You'll need a lot of help to misunderstand this.

3. "Baptism doth also now save us" (I Pet. 3:21). This statement by the inspired apostle Peter will require some changes in order to keep baptism out of salvation. One must either believe baptism saves us or that baptism does not save us, there is no third choice, it has to be one or the other. Peter says, "baptism doth also now save us", man says "baptism does not save us". Now, who has the truth of it, man or the inspired apostle?

4. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Two things are placed ahead of salvation in this text, belief and baptism. Man places one ahead (faith) and one behind (baptism). Now, who do you believe, man or the Son of God?

So, why is it that so many balk, reject and denounce baptism? Each of the three passages shown above prove without a doubt that baptism is essential to salvation. One cannot be saved prior to baptism.

## WALKING TOGETHER OR STANDING APART?

I recently heard a radio preacher pray, giving thanks to God for the many denominations that man might find the one that best suited him. Now, the very word "denomination" speaks of division, for it denotes a part of something larger. Isn't it strange that this man who purports to be a herald of the Lord's word, would pray for something conflicting with a prayer of the Lord Himself on the same subject? Our Lord prayed, "*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in them, that they also may be one in us...*" (John 17:20-21).

The prophet Amos asked the rhetorical question, "*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*" (Amos 3:3). If one is not in agreement with the Lord, then that person is not walking with the Lord! The word "fellowship" needs to be considered as well. Fellowship is a joint participation in a common interest or activity. The apostle John wrote, "*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*" (I John 1:3). Thus, if we follow not the word of the Lord, we have not fellowship with those who do faithfully follow the word, nor do we have fellowship with the Lord Himself.

As noted, our Lord prayed for the unity of all believers (John 17:21). His prayer was not that they all might divide up into "denominations" of varying sizes with varying doctrines and practices. His prayer was that they all be one, "*as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee*". Some twenty-five years later, the inspired apostle Paul inculcated this same sentiment to the church at Corinth. He wrote, "*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (I Corinthians 1:10).

Friend, there is no need to thank God for the denominations, for He did not give them to us; man made them! The Lord would that all men lay aside all their beliefs, opinions, traditions and feelings, and turn back to the only source of Christian unity and ultimately, salvation. That source is the word of God, the Bible.