

Q & A—IS BAPTISM ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION?

Many deny the necessity of baptism for salvation. Indeed, “faith-only” doctrine has become a dominant force in Protestant religion. Yet, the popularity of a doctrine does not determine its legitimacy. Instead, we must examine the Scriptures to determine what God says about an issue.

First, please notice that “salvation” requires being “saved” from something—our sins. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Unforgiven sin brings eternal death—hell. Thus, one who is granted “salvation” avoiding condemnation is one who has had their sins forgiven through the blood of Christ.

With this in mind, notice two situations we find in the Scriptures. The first is the situation of the Jews gathered to hear Peter preach on Pentecost in Acts 2. Peter has just delivered a rousing sermon on the fact that Jesus is “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:22-36).

Such preaching elicits an emotional response from the crowd as they are “cut to the heart” (Acts 2:37). Yet, an emotional response was not evidence of salvation! Instead, they ask “Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’” (2:37).

Clearly, these people already believe Jesus is Lord and Christ and have been convicted of their sins and the fact Jesus is the Messiah. Yet, there is still something left to do as Peter’s response denotes as he says, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:38). Now, as mentioned earlier, these people already believed. Yet, were their sins forgiven? No, because Peter still details two conditions they must meet “for the remission of sins.” Those two conditions are repentance and baptism. After those conditions were met, remission of sins was offered. Thus, after repentance and baptism salvation was granted!

Notice also the case of Paul in Acts 22. After his conversation with Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul goes to Damascus and waits for a preacher, Ananias to arrive. Why? Was Paul not already saved on the road? He sure did not act like it. He was still blind. He had not eaten for three days (Acts 9:9,18). He was not acting like a saved man. Yet, once Ananias arrives and tells Paul of God’s plan for him he concludes, “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). If Saul was already saved, he was saved while still in his sins. This cannot be so. For, the very purpose of salvation is to save us from sin and its consequences. Thus, Saul was saved and his sins were washed away, after his baptism.

Jesus says our salvation follows belief and baptism (Mark 16:16).
Joshua R. Welch

“FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT” KINDNESS

As Christians give up the “works of the flesh” and produce “the fruit of the Spirit” they will blossom with “kindness” (Galatians 5:22).

The word “kindness” is also translated “gentleness” and is a cousin to “goodness.” One version even translates it as “sweetness.”

One picture of the Christian’s “kindness” has its foundation in God’s “kindness” to us.

Ephesians 2:7 says that God has showed “the exceeding riches of His grace

in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Titus 2:4 says, “...the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared...according to His mercy...through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

In these two passages, God’s kindness is shown as He found a way to meet our needs. Lost in sin and destined for hell we needed a Savior. God met our need through His Son, Jesus Christ. That’s kindness!

As we live our lives,

we should offer such kindness to those around us. Perhaps a discouraged Christian needs a word of encouragement, then give it. Maybe a lonely Christian needs a listening ear, offer it. Perhaps a poor Christian could use some financial help, supply it. Maybe an erring Christian needs to be steered back to the right path—do it.

Sometimes we can see what others need more clearly than they. God saw our need and acted. True kindness will do no less.

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**“BUT THE
FRUIT OF THE
SPIRIT IS...”
(GALATIANS
5:22-23).**

