

BAPTISM¹

WHO DOES GOD DESIRE TO BE BAPTIZED?

- **ALL TRUE BELIEVERS.** Everyone who has truly turned in repentance from their sin and received Jesus Christ as Savior by faith. - Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 36-38; 10:47; 16:14-15, 31-33; 18:8; etc.
- **WHAT MUST ONE BELIEVE IN ORDER TO BE SAVED?** - Jn. 1:12; 3:1-6, 16; Rom. 3:10, 23; 6:23; 5:8-9; 10:9-10, 13; I Cor. 15:3-4; etc. He must believe that Jesus is God the Son who came to this earth and became a man to die for our sins. That He was buried & on the third day He literally, physically rose from the dead. Further, that everyone who repents of their sins and receives Jesus Christ as their personal Lord & Saviour can have their sins washed under His blood and become a child of God. Such a person will have renounced any trust in their own righteousness or any efforts or “good” works that he has performed (Eph. 2:8-9). Instead he is trusting solely and completely in the righteousness of Jesus Christ alone!
- **IS IT RIGHT FOR BABIES OR VERY YOUNG CHILDREN TO BE BAPTIZED?** Answer: *No*, because:
 - 1) The Bible never mentions the baptism of infants &
 - 2) Infants are not capable of understanding or believing in Jesus Christ.
- **IF A PERSON HAS TRULY RECEIVED CHRIST AS SAVIOUR BUT HAS NOT BEEN BAPTIZED IN WATER, CAN HE GO TO HEAVEN?** Answer: *Yes*, because water baptism is not a condition or part of salvation, nor does it produce the new birth. - Lk. 23:39-43; Jn. 3:16; Acts 16:31
- **IF A PERSON THAT IS SAVED REFUSES TO BE BAPTIZED, IS THAT A SERIOUS MATTER?** Answer: *Yes*, because baptism is commanded by God for those who are born again (Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 10:47-48; 22:16). Anything that God commands us to do is important. Anytime He commands us to do something and we refuse to obey, it is sin (James 4:17).

WHAT IS PICTURED BY BAPTISM?

- **IT'S AN OUTWARD PICTURE OF GOD'S WORK IN THE INNER MAN.** Water baptism is an outward, physical, *acted-out picture* of what has already happened inwardly.
- **BAPTISM (BY IMMERSION) PICTURES OUR DEATH & BURIAL WITH CHRIST.** - Rom. 6:3, 6. Note: This passage most likely refers to the baptism of the Spirit (cf. I Cor. 12:12-13), but the argument and picture contained in the passage is still valid.
- **COMING OUT OF THE WATER PICTURES OUR RESURRECTION AND THE BEGINNING OF OUR NEW LIFE IN & WITH CHRIST.** - Rom. 6:4-5; Gal. 2:19-20
- **PUBLIC BAPTISM IS A TESTIMONY TO THOSE WHO OBSERVE IT.** It's a testimony to others as well as the one being baptized, that he is now dead to sin and it no longer has to have the mastery over him. - Rom. 6:11-13

WHAT MODE OF BAPTISM IS TAUGHT IN THE SCRIPTURE AND THUS APPROVED BY GOD?

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Some "baptize" by pouring or sprinkling water on the candidate's head. Baptists and quite a few others completely immerse the candidate in water. Which mode is taught in the Scripture? Answer: **Immersion**. This is seen by the following proofs:

- **THE MEANING OF THE WORD "BAPTIZE"** - Baptize is a **transliteration** of a Greek word which means: "*to dip, immerse, sink,*" [Abbott-Smith]; "*dip, immerse, dip oneself, wash* (in non-religious literature, also '*plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm,*' etc.)" [Arndt & Gingrich]; "*To dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge,*" [Thayer]; "derived from *bapto* which is '*to whelm,*' i.e. *to cover wholly with a fluid, thus, to make whelmed i.e. fully wet,*" [Strong].²

Here are revealing statements by church leaders from the past,
none of whom it should be noted, were Baptists:

1. **Martin Luther** (Lutheran): "*The term baptism is Greek; in Latin it may be translated immersio; since we immerse anything into water, that the whole may be covered with the water.*"
 2. **John Calvin** (Reformed): "*The word baptize signifies to immerse; and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient Church.*"
 3. **John Wesley** (Methodist): "*Buried with Him--alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion.*"
 4. **Dr. C.M. Mead** (Congregationalist), in a private letter, dated May 27, 1895- "*Though a Congregationalist, I cannot find any Scriptural authorization of paedobaptism (sic), and I admit also that immersion seems to have been the prevalent, if not the universal, form of baptism at the first*"³
- **THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST - Matt. 3:16.** "...*He went up out of the water.*" This is clear evidence that Jesus and John had been down in the water, not standing on the bank having water poured or sprinkled over Him.
 - **JOHN THE BAPTIST'S METHOD OF BAPTIZING OTHERS - John 3:23.** The Scripture states that John went to that particular location "*because there was plenty of water...*" This certainly indicates that John was immersing. If not, there would have been no need for "*plenty of water.*"
 - **PHILIP & THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH - Acts 8:38-39.** "...*both went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water...*" This only makes sense if Philip immersed the Ethiopian.
 - **THE PICTURE INVOLVED - Col. 2:12.** "*Having been buried with him in baptism...*" Notice that sprinkling or pouring does not fit the image or picture of burial. When we bury a dead body we do not place it on top of the ground and sprinkle dirt on it.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUPPORT & EVIDENCE.

² Referring to the meaning of the word *baptize* "Conant, *Appendix to Bible Union Version of Matthew*, 1-64, has examples 'drawn from writers in almost every department of literature and science; from poets, rhetoricians, philosophers, critics, historians, geographers; from writers on husbandry, on medicine, on natural history, on grammar, on theology; from almost every form and style of composition, romances, epistles, orations, fables, odes, epigrams, sermons, narratives: from writers of various nations and religions, Pagan, Jew, and Christian, belonging to many countries and through a long succession of ages. In all, the word has retained its ground-meaning without change. **From the earliest age of Greek literature down to its close, a period of nearly two thousand years, not an example has been found in which the word has any other meaning (other than "immerse"-*mwe*).**" (A.H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*. Fleming H. Revell Company: Old Tappan, NJ., 1907, p., 933).

³ A.H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 952

"The evolution of Christian baptism through the centuries has been recorded in mortar and bricks, paint and mosaics. Among the ruins of early Christian structures, and also in ancient churches still in use, the history of Christian baptism can be traced. Paintings in catacombs and churches, mosaics on floors, walls, and ceilings, sculptured reliefs, and drawings in ancient New Testament manuscripts add details to this history... The record left by these various witnesses overwhelmingly testifies to immersion as the normal mode of baptism in the Christian church during the first ten to fourteen centuries...

"It is not necessary to go beyond the religious heritage in which Christianity has its roots—the religion of Israel. Here we find baptism by immersion already in existence. Gentiles who espoused Judaism were required to enter its fold by circumcision, baptism, and the offering of a sacrifice... It is generally agreed that immersion was practiced at Qumran...

"It would seem, therefore, that John the Baptist, and later the disciples of Jesus, simply followed the mode of baptism that was familiar to the people of that day—immersion... When imperial persecution drove the Christians underground, baptistries were constructed in the catacombs at Rome. The remains of these baptistries stand as the oldest archaeological witness to the rite of Christian baptism. One such baptistry in the catacomb of San Ponziano is four and a half feet long, three and a half feet wide, and three and a half feet deep. A channel diverted water from a nearby stream to fill this font. Wolfred Cote believes it was in use from the first to the fourth century. Neophytes either stood or knelt in the water and were immersed by 'bending forward under the hand of the administrator.' The baptistries in the catacombs of Saint Priscilla and Saint Callixtus also received water through canals, while those in the catacombs of the Vatican and Saint Alexander were fed by natural springs.

"After the conversion of Constantine resulted in the legalization of the church, large buildings for public worship began to appear. Baptismal fonts were constructed in separate enclosures alongside these churches... Cote lists the location of sixty-five baptistries in Italy alone, giving the approximate dates of construction (from the fourth through the fourteenth centuries) and the shapes of the fonts (circular, octagonal, square, twelve-sided, Greek cross, et cetera). Regardless of other differences, all sixty-five were constructed for baptism by immersion"⁴

WHAT ABOUT BAPTISMAL REGENERATION?

It is important here to stop and answer those from various denominations (e.g. Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran) which teach that a child can be baptized, and that when such is done, that their "original sin" is washed away &/or the infant/child is "born again."⁵ We need to also answer others (e.g. Church of Christ, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

⁴ George E. Rice, Ph.D., *Baptism in the Early Church. Ministry*, March 1981, p. 22

⁵ Typical examples include the following authoritative quotes & statements: a) **Lutheran teaching on Baptism:** "If God told you to pick up a straw, or strip a feather,' Luther said on one occasion, 'and to believe that thereby your sins were forgiven, you would do it because God said so.' Baptism is not an option to the believer, merely a good thing to do... Christ instituted and commanded it... How the water is to be applied Scripture does not dictate [**false!-mwe**]... The important thing is Baptism's meaning. *'It is not simple water only, but it is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's Word,'* is the way Luther put it. *Baptism is God's washing of the sinner, into His name... Baptism is a saving washing (1 Pet. 3:21). Baptism washes away sins really. (sic) It is a true means of grace. Therefore, receive it! Believe it! Live in your Baptism! Never doubt that through this washing of regeneration God has marked you as His own, taken you into closest relationship as His forgiven child, empowered you for godly living, and promised eternal blessings..(sic).* Christ's gracious (not legal!) imperative makes the difference, makes Baptism the brightest jewel upon our heads. *By it, 'with the washing of water by the Word' (Eph. 5:26), Christ cleanses for Himself a holy people, His church. 'Be baptized for the remission of sins' is our Lord's precept, we must remember."* (Eugene F. Klug, *Baptism a Must*. Concordia Tract Mission: St. Louis, MO, n.d.) [**a more false & erroneous statement could hardly be found. Baptism does no such thing!** –mwe] A Lutheran pastor & chaplain wrote: "Christ extends the act of saving grace...to the concrete communities and individuals in time and history. By means of His Word and the Sacraments they receive a part in His saving work. His Word and Teaching (sic) brings Christ's salvation in general terms to the people... *The Sacraments bring Christ's salvation directly to the individual...* (sic) Romans 6:3-4 and 1 Corinthians 12:13 state it clearly: *By the act of Baptism we are actually included in His death* [**note: These verses refer to Spirit baptism not water baptism-mwe**]... *In Baptism, therefore, as a sovereign act of His, God receives us into the Body of Christ...* [**totally false-mwe**] *God provides in Christ's life and work and in its conferment to the single individual in Baptism everything so that he/she may live a new life...* Like our physical birth so our spiritual birth does not at all depend on us. This is something that

Saints [Mormons], etc.) who teach that baptism is a part of salvation, i.e. that repenting and believing on Christ is not enough to cause one to be born again and go to heaven! (sic)

FIRST, BAPTISM CAN NEVER WASH AWAY ANYONE'S SIN, INCLUDING A YOUNG CHILD'S!
cf. **Heb. 9:22; 10:11-14; etc.**

ANSWERS TO VERSES USED BY PROPONENTS OF BAPTISMAL REGENERATION
(i.e. **The idea that baptism is a part of salvation & necessary before one can become a child of God**)

Mark 16:15-16. "And He said to them, '*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.*'" **The important point to note is that salvation and condemnation is based on the believing, NOT the baptism!** Notice that baptism is not even mentioned in the second half of the contrast in verse 16. It's like saying, "*Whoever gets my key and gets into my vehicle, can drive away, but whoever doesn't get my key cannot drive away.*" The integral thing about driving my van away is not getting in it, but rather *getting the key*. If you don't have the key you can sit in it all day long and nothing will happen. The key is the KEY!

John 3:5 - "Jesus answered, '*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*'" Several denominations teach that Jesus was saying that a person had to be baptized and then receive the Holy Spirit, in order to go to heaven. **That is completely FALSE!** There are several possible interpretations to this passage (see below), **but that is the only one that is unquestionably wrong-the reason being that the Bible teaches from cover to cover that salvation is a free gift and cannot be obtained by any good works on our part. Baptism is a work that we perform. So clearly baptism is not in view here, since we cannot possibly work our way to heaven!** There are several other legitimate possible interpretations for what the term "water" refers to and represents in this verse. Those interpretations include the following:

- a. The water stands for **NATURAL PHYSICAL BIRTH**. In support of this view is the context, with Nicodemus thinking of physical birth & Jesus seemingly referring to that as well during their discussion (vv. 4, 6). If this interpretation is correct then Jesus was saying, "A person must be born physically *AND* spiritually in order to get to heaven." A saying that expresses this is: "*Born once-die twice, Born twice-die once!*"
- b. The water represents **THE ACT OF REPENTANCE** symbolized in **John the Baptist's baptism**. In support of this view, advocates point out that the only baptism the Jews at that time would have related to would have been John's baptism unto repentance (however see point "e" below). This view would thus have Jesus saying, "A person must repent and be born of the Holy Spirit to get to heaven."

happens to us and is given to us... We only will remain in our Baptism, in the place God has set us, if we grasp all that is given to us in subsequent faith." (Dietrich Waack, Lutheran Chaplain, Univ. of PNG. *The Biblical Doctrine of Baptism*. Unpublished Paper, c. 1988-1990, pp. 3&4); **b) Roman Catholic teaching on Baptism:** "Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin (sic) and turns a man back toward God... Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called. The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism. The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth... **[another blatantly false statement! -mwe]** *The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation* (sic). He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them. *Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament* (sic). *The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude*; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are 'reborn of water and the Spirit.' *God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism...* The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of justification: -enabling them to believe in God, to hope in him, and to love him through the theological virtues; -giving them the power to live and act under the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the gifts of the Holy Spirit; -allowing them to grow in goodness through the moral virtues. *Thus the whole organism of the Christian's supernatural life has its roots in Baptism.*" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Imprimi Potest, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger [with an official endorsement by Pope John Paul II. Liguori Publications: Liguori, MO, 1994, #'s 405, 1250, 1257 & 1266). **[Again, a more false & unbiblical statement could hardly be found-mwe]**

- c. The water symbolizes **THE WORD OF GOD**. In support of this view is that fact that sometimes in Scripture, water is a symbol for the Word of God & that cleansing comes through it (cf. Eph. 5:26; John 15:3).
- d. The water symbolically represents **THE HOLY SPIRIT**. In support of this view is the fact that the Holy Spirit & His work is sometimes represented under the figures of water & cleansing.
- 5. The water refers to an **O.T. PROPHECY REGARDING THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE HEARTS OF MEN WHEN MESSIAH WOULD COME**. "The people knew from Ezekiel that someday God was going to come and sprinkle their souls with water, cleanse them from their sin, and replace their hearts of stone with hearts of flesh (**Ezek. 36:25-26**). They knew the testimony of David, who cried out, 'How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!'...They knew of those truths, and they longed to experience the reality of them. Nicodemus was one such person."⁶ This prophecy is part of the "New Covenant" which will come to fulfillment at the return of Christ and the setting up of His millennial kingdom. At that time God will replace the Jewish people's hearts of stone (Mosaic Covenant) with hearts of flesh (New Covenant). (cf. Jeremiah 31 and Charles Feinberg, *Jeremiah*, in the *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, pp. 576-577)

1 Pet. 3:21 - "*And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you...*" Reading this brief excerpt from that verse seems to teach what baptismal regeneration folks promote. However a reading of the context actually *REFUTES* such advocates of baptismal regeneration:

An analogy is drawn between the waters of the flood of Noah's day and the waters of baptism (v. 20).

Obviously it was not the water in Noah's day that saved him! On the contrary, the water was the vehicle of divine judgment. **It was the ark that saved Noah through the water.** So too, water baptism doesn't save anyone, but the ark, the Lord Jesus, is a refuge from God's judgment.

Verse 21 clearly states that it is the inner change (regeneration) that cleanses one from sin, not outward baptism. The verse states that the concept that "*baptism now saves us,*" refers not to the physical act itself (the removal of dirt from flesh) but to the inner cleansing of the conscience from sin that occurs the moment a person trusts Christ as Saviour!

Acts 2:38 - An initial reading of this verse can be quite perplexing, since it appears to imply that a person's sins are forgiven when he is baptized. However, **one cardinal principle of Bible interpretation is that we should always interpret any verse according to "the harmony of Scripture" i.e. in harmony with the uniform teaching of Scripture.** The Bible does not contradict itself. Therefore, if the whole Bible teaches one thing (i.e. that a person is saved by faith alone), and we come across one verse that seems to teach the opposite (i.e. that a person is saved by works), ***we don't throw out all the clear verses because of one difficult one!*** Rather, we go back to that one difficult verse and study it further, realizing there must be something we are not seeing. This is just such a verse. The Bible teaches from one end to the other, that a person's forgiveness is not based on efforts, works, or deeds that he can perform (e.g. baptism, communion, church membership, keeping of the Law, good works, etc., etc.). Rather, it is based solely and completely by faith in Jesus Christ and his blood and righteousness alone. It also teaches that the saving righteousness of Christ is appropriated solely by grace through faith.⁷ That being so, there must be another explanation for this verse... *and there is!*

- a. The verse states "*Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ...*" The word "*in*" can also be translated "*upon*" i.e. *Repent and be baptised upon your confession of Christ as Lord and Saviour.*
- b. The word "*for*" (Gk:"*eis*") can be translated either "*for*" i.e. "*for the purpose of*", or

⁶ John MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 1-7*, Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 1985, pp. 200-201.

⁷ (e.g. Jn. 1:12; 3:16; 6:28-29; Acts 3:19; 4:12; 10:43; 16:31; Rom. 3:21-31 [esp. v.28]; 4:1-16[esp. vv.3-5 & 13-16]; 5:1-2,8-10,20-21; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 3:9; Titus 3:5; I Pet. 1:3,18-19; I Jn. 1:9; 2:23; 4:15; 5:1; Rev. 1:5; Gen. 15:6; etc).

"because of" i.e. "on the occasion of" or "on the basis of". **"because of"** makes more sense here since it fits with the whole uniform teaching of Scripture. The verse then reads: "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ **because of** the forgiveness of your sins..."

But is that a legitimate interpretation? **Absolutely!** A nearly identical grammatical construction is found in **Mt. 12:41** which reads "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: **for** they repented at the preaching of Jonas" ("for" [eis] i.e. because of the preaching of Jonas...) **The people of Nineveh didn't repent so they could get Jonah to come preach to them (!), but because of Jonah's preaching!** (cf. the synoptic account in Lk. 11:32).⁸

- c. **When we compare the above interpretation with Acts 10:44-48**, which was a very similar salvation message preached by the very same person (Peter) only a short time after this sermon was given by him, we see that our interpretation is indeed correct. In that passage it should be noted that those who heard his message believed and received the Holy Spirit **BEFORE** they were baptized! A person doesn't receive the Holy Spirit until they are saved, **so obviously those people were saved the moment they believed, even though they hadn't been baptized yet!**⁹
- d. It should be noted that **the question they asked Peter** in 2:37 was not "What must we do to be saved?" i.e. Believe (cf. Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9-10, 13; etc.); but "what shall we do?" i.e. what initial steps should we take to make amends for the terrible mistake we have committed in crucifying the King of Glory (cf. 2:22-24). To the question of "What must we do to be saved?" the answer is always simply, "**Believe on Christ.**" In answer to a more detailed question the apostle here gives more than just the initial path to salvation, going into further detail.¹⁰
- e. It should also be pointed out that **Paul was crystal clear in 1 Cor. 1:14-17 that baptism is NOT part of the gospel i.e. good news.** In fact he said he was glad that he had hardly baptized anyone! If baptism was part of salvation, he surely couldn't have, and wouldn't have said such a thing. But Paul understood that the gospel was one thing, and baptism was quite another.¹¹

⁸ "Roman Catholics teach that men are saved by baptism ('baptismal regeneration'): 'Baptism is the sacrament that gives our souls the new life of sanctifying grace by which we become children of God and heirs of heaven' (Baltimore Catechism, p. 254). The catechism then goes on to cite Acts 2:38 as scriptural proof (p. 256). But Acts 2:38 does not teach this. Peter commands, 'Repent' (2nd person plural)-that includes a change of heart and thinking, and presupposes true faith. Then let each one who has thus repented and believed 'be baptized' (3rd person singular). One who is a repentant believer should publicly confess Christ as Savior 'on the basis of the forgiveness of sins.' Because he has repented and has been forgiven, he should be baptized. This same Greek construction is found in Matt. 12:41; the men of Nineveh 'repented on the basis of the preaching of Jonah.' A.T. Robertson (perhaps America's greatest Greek scholar ever-*mwe*) declares, 'I understand Peter to be urging baptism on each of them who had already turned (repented) and for it to be done in the name of Jesus Christ on the basis of the forgiveness of sins which they had already received' (Word Pictures, III, pp. 34-36). Baptismal regeneration would also contradict the clear teaching of the apostle Paul on the contrast between the preaching of the gospel and baptism (I Cor. 1:13-17)." (Custer, Stewart; "*Witness to Christ: A Commentary on Acts*". BJU Press: Greenville, SC, 2000, p. 29).

⁹ "The story of the conversion of Cornelius and his friends very clearly shows the relationship of baptism to salvation. It was only after they were saved, as shown by their receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-46), that they were baptized (vv. 47-48). Indeed, it was because they had received the Spirit (and hence were saved) that Peter ordered them to be baptized (v.47). That passage clearly shows that baptism follows salvation; it does not cause it." (MacArthur, op cit).

¹⁰ "Repent means 'change the way you think, change the way you live, change your relationship to Jesus Christ.' It implies a genuine faith in Jesus Christ. If they had not believed Peter's message of salvation, they would not have come to ask how to obey. Be baptized means 'to express a public confession of Christ as Savior.' The ordinance of baptism is a significant way to do that. To the Jew, proselyte baptism meant a confession of sin and forsaking of pagan practices by the one who sought to join a synagogue. John the Baptist extended this to all Jews who would confess and forsake their sins and get right with God (Luke 3:2-9). Peter now makes a personal relationship with Jesus Christ central to this changed relationship toward God. If they will let Christ remove their sins, they too may have the gift of the Holy Spirit in their hearts."(Custer, op cit., p.29)

¹¹ "...in 1 Corinthians 1:14-16, Paul rejoiced that he had baptized none of the Corinthians except Crispus, Gaius, and the

- f. "Throughout the book of Acts, forgiveness is linked to **repentance**, not baptism (cf. **Acts 3:19; 5:31; 26:20**)... The order is clear. Repentance is for forgiveness. Baptism follows that forgiveness; it does not cause it (cf. 8:12, 34-39; 10:34-48; 16:31-33). It is the public sign or symbol of what has taken place on the inside. It is an important step of obedience for all believers, and should closely follow conversion. In fact, in the early church it was inseparable from salvation, so Paul referred to salvation as being related to 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism' (Eph. 4:5)." (MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Acts 1-12*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 1994, pp. 74-75)
- g. "...the Bible records that **some who were baptized were not saved** (Acts 8:13; 21-23), **while some were saved with no mention of their being baptized** (Luke 7:37-50; Matt. 9:2; Luke 18:13-14" (MacArthur, Ibid). Note too **the thief on the cross**. He was never baptized, yet was promised eternal life in heaven by Christ Himself! (Lk. 23:43 cf. II Cor. 12:4 & Rev. 2:7). In trying to explain away this passage, a Church of Christ missionary once told me that, "*God can make exceptions if He wants to.*" He was dead wrong. **God was not "making an exception to the rule" here. This IS the rule!** A normal interpretation of this passage leads one to conclude that clearly, baptism is NOT part of salvation, nor is it needed in order for one to get to heaven.
- h. "In **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**, the apostle Paul summarizes the gospel he preached and by which the Corinthians had been saved. **There is no mention of baptism.**" (MacArthur, Ibid)

Acts 22:16 - Here Paul is giving his testimony and reviewing his salvation experience before the multitude in the temple area. Paul says that after seeing and talking to Jesus on the road to Damascus, that Ananias told him, "*And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.*"

- a. First we can say that Scripture is crystal clear that salvation is not based on baptism, nor does baptism wash away sin. So whatever this verse may be saying, it is not endorsing baptismal regeneration. Ryrie states: "*Lit., 'Having arisen, be baptized; and wash away your sins, having called on the name of the Lord.'* Baptism does not wash away sins." (Charles C. Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL., 1978, p. 1688).
- b. Custer comments: "Paul had called upon the name of the Lord Jesus for salvation on the Damascus road. He was certain that he was saved (Rom. 10:13). Now he needed to publicly confess that surrender to Him by being baptized as His follower. **There is no comfort in this passage to those who would teach baptismal regeneration. Paul made very clear that he regarded baptism as merely a public ceremony, and sharply distinguished baptism from the powerful gospel that saves (1 Cor. 1:14-17).** A.T. Robertson notes that baptism here 'pictures the change that had already taken place when Paul surrendered to Jesus on the way' (*Word Pictures, III*, p. 392)." (Custer, op cit., p. 320).
- c. Perhaps the simplest explanation is one that was given years ago in a paper refuting the idea of baptismal regeneration written by a friend who was the leader of a Lutheran student group at the Univ. of Papua New Guinea. This group of solid Bible-believing Lutheran students was having major disagreements and debates with their chaplain who was trying to defend the faulty, standard Lutheran baptismal regeneration viewpoint. In explaining this passage he wrote: "**Note that it says; have your sins washed away BY PRAYING TO HIM. When a person calls upon the Lord's name in faith, he is**

household of Stephanas. That statement is inexplicable [i.e. totally unexplainable] if baptism is necessary for salvation. Paul would then in effect be saying he was thankful that only those few were saved under his ministry. The apostle clearly distinguishes baptism from the gospel in 1 Corinthians 1:17, where he says that '*Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel.*' How could Paul have made such a statement if baptism was necessary for salvation?" (MacArthur, op cit., p. 74).

cleansed by Jesus' blood and is saved. The following scriptures clearly show this: **Acts 4:12; 2:21; Romans 10:13 & 1 Corinthians 6:11**. Water baptism is nowhere mentioned here. Those who relate this scripture to water baptism do it erroneously. **In total harmony with other scriptures throughout the Bible, we are washed, sanctified, and justified, through the blood of Jesus by faith in His name.**" (*"A Critique on Water Baptism as taught by The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea"* Yumi Stretim Laip Ministry, Samky Ebo Ganora, compiler. Privately produced, c. 1992-93)

MISCELLANEOUS EVIDENCES & COMMENTS SHOWING THAT BAPTISM IS NOT A PART OF SALVATION AND THAT BAPTISMAL REGENERATION/INFANT BAPTISM IS FALSE:

1. **Apparently Christ did not baptize anyone!** If baptism was a part of salvation &/or how a person's sins were washed away, undoubtedly He would have been baptizing people. But the Bible says that He baptized NO ONE (**John 4:2**)!
2. "Passages like Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:4; 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5; and Heb. 10:22, are to be explained as particular instances 'of the general fact that, **in Scripture language, a single part of a complex action, and even that part of it which is most obvious to the senses, is often mentioned for the whole of it, and thus, in this case, the whole of the solemn transaction is designated by the external symbol.**' In other words, the entire change, internal and external, spiritual and ritual, is referred to in language belonging strictly only to the outward aspect of it. **So the other ordinance is referred to by simply naming the visible 'breaking of bread,'** and the whole transaction of the ordination of ministers is termed the 'imposition of hands' (cf. Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 4:14)." (A.H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, Fleming H. Revell Company: Old Tappan, NJ, 1907, p. 946).
3. **"Infant baptism is expressly contradicted: First: By the Scriptural prerequisites of faith and repentance, as signs of regeneration.** In the great commission, Matthew speaks of baptizing disciples, and Mark of baptizing believers; but infants are neither of these. **Secondly:** By the Scriptural symbolism of the ordinance. **As we should not bury a person before his death, so we should not symbolically bury a person by baptism until he has in spirit died to sin. **Thirdly:** By the Scriptural constitution of the church. The church is a company of persons whose union with one another presupposes and expresses a previous conscious and voluntary union of each with Jesus Christ. **But of this conscious and voluntary union with Christ infants are not capable.** **Fourthly:** By the Scriptural prerequisites for participation in the Lord's Supper. **Participation in the Lord's Supper is the right only of those who can discern the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11:29).** No reason can be assigned for restricting to intelligent communicants the ordinance of the Supper, which would not equally restrict to intelligent believers the ordinance of Baptism" (Strong, p. 952).**
4. "Dr. A.S. Crapsey, formerly an Episcopal (Anglican) rector in Rochester (NY), made the following statement in the introduction to a sermon *in defense of infant baptism*[!]: *'Now in support of this custom of the church, we can bring no express command of the word of God, no certain warrant of holy Scripture, nor can we be at all sure that this usage prevailed during the apostolic age. From a few obscure hints we may conjecture that it did, but it is only conjecture after all. It is true St. Paul baptized the household of Stephanas, of Lydia, and of the jailor at Philippi, and in these households there may have been little children; but we do not know that there were, and these inferences form but a poor foundation upon which to base any doctrine. Better say at once, and boldly, that infant baptism is not expressly taught in holy Scripture. Not only is the word of God silent on this subject, but those who have studied the subject tell us that Christian writers of the very first age say nothing about it. It is by no means sure that this custom obtained in the church earlier than in the middle of the second or the beginning of the third century... A review of the passages held by paedobaptists (i.e. those who baptize infants) to support their views leads us to the conclusion*

expressed in the North British Review, Aug. 1852:211, that infant baptism is utterly unknown to Scripture. Jacob, Eccl. Polity of N.T. 270-275-'Infant baptism is not mentioned in the N.T. No instance of it is recorded there; no allusion is made to its effects; no directions are given for its administration...It is not an apostolic ordinance'" (Strong, Ibid).

CONCLUSION

Baptism is one of the two ordinances instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is important. It is intended to be a public testimony and external picture of what has already taken place internally (i.e. regeneration) in the life of the individual who has put their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation and forgiveness of sin. **However it has no power to save or to wash away the sins of anyone, be they child or adult. Furthermore it is not the New Testament version of Old Testament circumcision.** It is something that every believer should do after having been born again by grace, through faith in the blood of Christ and His perfect, finished work on Calvary.