Baptism – Not An Absolute?

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INTRODUCTION

- We not only proclaim the truth, we are intent, and we encourage every person to practice the truth, because it is the truth that saves and sets free.
- This headline, as important as baptism is, it is not an absolute in pursuit of salvation.

1 Theology Talking, Not Scripture Talking

Mark 16:16; Acts 10:34–35; Acts 2:38–41

- Look, folks, that is theology talking, that is not scripture talking.
- If the oft-repeated phrase, the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, settles everything in religion, then why is it that not all men and women are automatically saved?
- In every one of those instances, the audience or the person was instructed to do something.
- Save yourselves from this perverse generation. That sort of sounds like something they've got to do in order to be saved.

2 The Thief on the Cross

- No one had been baptized in the name of Jesus when the thief on the cross was saved.
- Baptism in the name of Jesus is in likeness of Jesus' death and resurrection. And that hadn't happened yet.
- So the thief didn't need to be baptized. He lived under a different covenant.

3 Make Disciples, Baptizing Them: Grammar and Nature

Matthew 28:18–20

- Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- Notice that go and make disciples of all the nations does not conclude with a period. But there is a comma there.
- On the basis of all that God is, of all that God has said, and all that God has done, and all that God has promised, we by our baptisms are coming into a relationship with God.

4 Christ Did Not Send Me to Baptize

1 Corinthians 1:12–17; Acts 8:35–39

- Baptism is not something that I might want to add. The fact is, it is something that God commands and teaches in his word.
- The baptizing Paul was not sent to do was to create some kind of party that would follow Paul and say, I am of Paul.

- I did not come to baptize merely, but to preach the gospel.
- He says, Look, water. He doesn't say, look, the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

5 The Essential Role Baptism Plays: An Appeal

1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6; Colossians 2:12–13

- The role baptism plays is that of an appeal.
- An appeal to God for a clean conscience. That is, we come to God asking him to do what he's promised to do, and that's to cleanse us from our sins.
- It's not about the water per se and its cleanliness. It's what God does by our faith when we submit to his instruction.
- There can be no newness of life without baptism.
- Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were raised up with him through faith and the working of God who raised him from the dead.

6 Why Put It on the Periphery?

1 Peter 3:21; Hebrews 2:1–3; 2 Thessalonians 2:10–11

- It's their theology talking, not the scripture talking.
- The Bible can't be in conflict with itself because it comes from a God of truth. Everything has to harmonize.
- People believe baptism is not an absolute because they have not received the love of the truth so as to be saved.
- We have to work and strive in our understanding of Scripture so that we're not like that, because the devil wants to deceive us too.
- Far from meritorious, our baptism into Christ merely places us where we must be so we can cast ourselves ultimately on the mercy of God.

THE CHALLENGE

This is an urgent appeal. This is an essential appeal to remedy the condition of your soul if need be, if sin is on your account.

MY NOTES