

BAPTISM: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE? (3)

By Keith Greer

By the act of baptism, we identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." (Romans 6:6) We have left one life for another just as Christ did when He died and then arose. One's baptism, is saying they put away their sinful way of life and are submitting to the authority of Christ and His will.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17) Now we belong to Christ. (Galatians 3:29) So without baptism, man cannot "put-away" the body of sin, and be put "into Christ." Baptism makes all that possible.

Do you remember Noah and the ark? "Who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" (1 Peter 3:20-21)

Would Noah and his family have been saved had they not obeyed God? Could they have been saved in the flood without the ark? The Hebrew writer tells us that "**BY FAITH NOAH, BEING WARNED OF GOD OF THINGS NOT SEEN AS YET, MOVED WITH FEAR, PREPARED AN ARK TO THE SAVING OF HIS HOUSE; BY WHICH HE CONDEMNED THE WORLD, AND BECAME HEIR OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS BY FAITH.**" (Hebrews 11:7)

Just as God told Noah what he needed to do in order to be saved, He has a plan for us today. If you can truthfully see that Noah had to obey God in order to be saved, then ask yourself, "Can I be saved today without being baptized into Christ?"

Could our religious friends be right that baptism is merely an "outward sign of an inward grace" or did Jesus Christ say that "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16)

What about those who contend that baptism is a "WORK?" True, baptism is a work but it is a WORK OF GOD! Doing God's work puts one into a proper relationship with God by being obedient to His will, John 14:15; 1 John 3:22-24; 5:3. Works of merit, works one may do to earn salvation are useless. Do they forget James 2? "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" {James 2:17-20}

One other point. God's book discusses FAITH, CONFESSION, REPENTANCE, and GRACE which they believe, teach and practice. In that same book also is the subject, command and example in every conversion of BAPTISM!

One's answer to this question, my friend, will determine where you will spend eternity. **"AND NOW WHY TARRIEST THOU? ARISE, AND BE BAPTIZED, AND WASH AWAY THY SINS, CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD."** (Acts 22:16) ***