

# WHERE DOES GOD PLACE BAPTISM? (1)

By Keith Greer

Despite popular sentiments of many in the religious community, members of the Lord's church are not personally responsible for the place that baptism occupies in God's plan of salvation. We did not place it there; mankind's traditions did not place it there; we advocate and teach baptism because God Himself ordained it. It's useless wrangling to say that baptism is just a hobby of those in the Lord's church and that we promote water salvation. Such accusations are without merit and do nothing to answer the serious differences in what we believe and teach. I might even say that if I had a voice in deciding how mankind gains remission of sins, I possibly would not have included baptism in the plan. Since neither I nor any other person has a voice in the matter, we must humbly submit and base our conclusions on what Christ taught about baptism.

Baptism is a test of a person's faith, or lack of it. Our faith is in Christ, and His words on the subject are clear. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." {Mark 16:16} Baptism is a test of one's faith and whether or not he believes God's word. Baptism is the response of a believing heart. {Colossians 2:12} Human wisdom may not understand or appreciate the how and why of the process, but we must believe that God's ways are the right ways. Why are we convinced that the one who comes out of the watery grave of baptism has a new life. Because God said so. {Romans 6:4} Sadly, this truth causes many to stumble due to a lack of faith. How can a person claim to love God and at the same time reject following His instructions?

Since time began, people have had difficulty understanding God's ways. The majority of the known world, which had not previously seen rain, did not understand why Noah was building an ark. Yet, once the rains came, they did understand – but it was too late. Do modern doctors ask their patients who have snake bites to seek a remedy by looking at a bronze serpent on a pole? A Divine remedy saved the lives of those who had been bitten. {Numbers 21}. Modern doctors do not treat leprosy by having their patients dip seven times in a river. But it worked for Naaman, because the remedy was a Divine remedy. {2 Kings 5} Can a person's blindness be cured by applying spittle to his eyes and having him dip in the pool of Siloam? Yet, we know this worked for the blind man whom Jesus healed. {John 9} The fact that baptism does not equate to our preconceived notions regarding salvation is not a reason to reject God's Divine remedy. All of these remedies were effective because they were prescribed by the great physician. Let's examine HIS teaching on baptism.

**Before Baptism.** The alien sinner is:

(1) Condemned before God. "As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.'" {Romans 3:10,23}

(2) Dead in sin. "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins." {Ephesians 2:1}

(3) Without hope. How bad is it if a person has NO HOPE? Listen to the words Paul wrote to those in Ephesus who had been without hope before their obedience. "That at that time you were without

Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." {Ephesians 2:12} It is a dark picture that places sinful men in the dangerous position of living outside of Christ.

What possible advantage could there be to rejecting baptism if refusal leaves us with no hope for any type of solution for our sin problem? People can rail against God's plan as much as they want, but their solutions leave them without real hope. Only by turning to God's counsel can we find true remedies. Let us study further...\*\*\*