

WHERE DOES GOD PLACE BAPTISM? (2)

By Keith Greer

Alien Sinners Must (1) Hear the Gospel. "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." {Romans 10:17} On Pentecost, when he preached the first gospel sermon, Peter voiced mankind's need to hear the truth. {Acts 2:22} (2) **Believe that Christ is God's Son.** "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." {John 8:24} Faith is an absolute, but at the point of faith, the sinner has not yet arrived at his spiritual destination. (3) **Repent.** "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent." {Acts 17:30} Repentance is a change of heart, resulting in a changed life. (4) **Confess His name.** "That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." {Romans 10:9,10} The sinner's confession affirms his commitment to submit his life to Christ's will. Why would one stop here? To do so is to reject the "counsel of God, being not baptized of Him." {Luke 7:30}

Blessings Obtained. The following are some very important blessings that sinners receive by submitting to baptism.

(1) **Salvation.** Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." {Mark 16:16} (2) **Remission of sins.** "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" {Acts 2:38} Peter told the first converts to the gospel of Christ that baptism was the means of having their sins remitted. Baptism is the connection to Christ's blood {Hebrews 9:22}. (3) **Sins Washed Away.** "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} Sinners are not cleansed by the water but by Christ's blood, which they encounter via the water. {Ephesians 1:7} (4) **Putting on Christ.** "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." {Galatians 3:27} One needs to put on Christ because all spiritual blessings are located in Him. {Ephesians 1:3}. (5) **A Place in His Church.** "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." {1 Corinthians 12:13} That one body is the church. {Ephesians 1:22,23} (6) **Baptized Into His Death.** "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" {Romans 6:3} We need to be baptized into His death because that is where His blood is located. To receive remission, we must contact His blood. (7) **A New Creation.** "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} When one contacts Christ's blood, his slate is wiped clean, and his life changes. It's a new beginning. (8) **Saved.** "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 3:21} Baptism saves us because it exhibits obedience to God's plan for our salvation. On the Day of Pentecost, 3,000 people gladly received that plan, obeyed by being baptized, and were added to Christ's church. {Acts 2:41,47}

Despite popular religious sentiment, BAPTISM is part of God's plan for saving sinners. The fact that one sees no rationalization for baptism's role in salvation is not a reason to reject it. Why not go all the way and do everything that God requires? ***