

THE SUBJECT OF BAPTISM

Last week we considered the question: "What is the mode of baptism?" Our conclusion from Scripture was that only immersion meets the requirements of the Biblical evidence. Thus, the sprinkling or pouring of water upon a person does not constitute Biblical Baptism. To be sprinkled with water is not baptism. Only immersion in water is Biblical baptism.

The next question we must ask, however, is: "Who may be baptized?" Are there any prerequisites for baptism? The question as you have probably already noticed is centered around whether or not the New Testament Church baptized infants. As we discussed a few weeks ago, we must not if we are to restore New Testament Christianity permitted anything into the faith and practice of the church which was not apart of the ^{Church of the} New Testament Church. In Colossians 3:17 Paul made this very point when he affirmed: "whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." We must not teach or practice anything which is not authorized by Jesus in the New Testament. The question, then, we must ask about infant baptism is: "Does the New Testament authorize the practice of infant baptism?" In other words, is there a direct command to baptize infants, or a ^{express} direct example of infants being baptized, or even a teaching of Scripture which necessarily implies infant baptism. If we can find no command, example or inference concerning infant baptixm in the New Testament, then no one has the right to baptize infants and those who were baptized as infants were not really and Biblically baptized at all.

Concerning this matter, Martin Luther, the founder of the modern Lutheran denomination made no claims for the Biblical authorization of infant baptism. Here is what he had to say: "It can not be proved by the sacred Scriptures that infant baptism was instituted by Christ or begun by the first Christians after the apostles." Thus, Luther as do most paedobaptists admits that there is no divine command or example in the New Testament which authorizes the baptizing of infants. In all the baptisms of the book of Acts, there is not one example of infants being baptized. In all the epistles of Paul, there is not one command to baptize infants though he often speaks of baptism. There is no authorization of infant baptism in all the New Testament. In fact, there are certain prerequisites to baptism which make it impossible that infants were ever baptized in the New Testament.

Take for instance, the baptism of John the Baptist in Matthew 3. According to Matthew, certain Pharisees and Sadducees came out to the Jordan river to be baptized by John. But before John would baptize them, he demand that they give some sign of their repentance. In Matthew 3:8 John says: "Therefore, bring forth fruit in keeping with your repentance." John the Baptist, therefore, demanded repentance before he baptized anyone. Thus, John calls his own baptism, a baptism "for repentance" (Matthew 3:11). Also John demanded confession of sins before he baptized anyone. According to Mark 1:5, people from all over Judea

came out to be baptized by John in the Jordan river. Mark records that they did this "confessing their sins." Therefore, Mark writes that John's baptism was a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." (Mark 1:4). Now since infants can neither repent of any sins nor confess any sins, it would have been impossible for John to have baptized any infants. If John's baptism which was preparatory of Christian baptism excluded infants from baptism, should we not expect also that Christian baptism would exclude infants as well? And this is exactly what we find in the New Testament record.

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus commands his disciples to for the first time to administer Christian baptism to all the nations. In verse 19 he says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Jesus wants the apostles to make disciples. A disciple is one who learns from and follows another person. Thus, the apostles are to teach all nations to learn from and follow Jesus. Now how is it that one becomes a disciple? Jesus said one is to make disciples by baptizing them. This necessarily excludes infants because they cannot be taught to follow Jesus in order to become disciples. Therefore, the Great Commission in Matthew 28 excludes infants from baptism.

Further, let us note the fulfillment of this command in the book of Acts. In Acts there are many examples of baptism, and by examining these perhaps we can notice a pattern. In the first place, Acts 2 records the baptism of 3,000 persons. But before they were baptized, these were required to repent of their sins according to Acts 2:38. The verse records

the answer Peter gave to the multitudes question concerning their salvation. Peter answered them in this way: "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins." Thus, those on the day of Pentecost were required to repent before they could be baptized just as in the baptism of John the Baptist. Verse 41 of the same chapter observes that only those who had "received his word" were baptized. Are infants able to repent? Are they able to "receive the word of God in their hearts?" If not, then they are not proper subjects for baptism.

In Acts 8 we have some more examples of baptism. Philip had gone down to the city of Samaria to preach the gospel, and the record in Acts 8:12 records that "when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike." When were they baptized? The Bible says they were baptized when they believed, not before they believed. Who was baptized? Luke says that "men and women" were baptized, he does not mention children, but only men and women. In Acts 18 we have a similar statement. Verse 8 records that many of the Corinthians when they heard, believed and were baptized. Thus, faith and baptism are once again connected. It was not until they believed the gospel that they were baptized just as they had not believed the gospel until they had heard it proclaimed.

Baptism, Peter affirms in I Peter 3:21, is an "appeal to God for a good conscience." A better translation reads that baptism is a "pledge of a good conscience toward God."

Baptism is not a mere ritual dipping of a person in water, but it has spiritual efficacy. It is the way in which a person commits himself to God, it is a "pledge of a good conscience toward God." But how can an infant commit himself in this way? He cannot, it is impossible for an infant to make a pledge or an appeal to God. Therefore, Peter's description concerning the nature of Baptism excludes infants.

But someone is sure to ask: If babies are not to be baptized, how are they to be saved from their sin? My answer is that infants are not sinners, they bear no sin. In Matthew 19:14 Jesus demanded that the children be permitted to come to him because "the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Children at birth already belong to the Kingdom, they do not need baptism to give them entrance into the Kingdom. But then it is objected that babies do have sin because they do physically die? However, Jesus died physicaly as well, does that mean he was a sinner? Of course not. Children until they come to an age of accountability are innocent and pure, members of the heavenly kingdom. Therefore, they have no need of baptism.

The New Testament, then, does not in any way sanction the practice of infant baptism. There is no command to baptize infants and there are no examples of it. In fact, Scripture suggests for us several prerequisites to baptism, particularly faith and repentance. If you were baptized without believing in God or without repenting of your sins, then according to the Bible, you were not baptized at all. The Bible only recognizes the immersion of penitent believers as Christian Baptism. Any other mode or subject is not Bible Baptism, and does no one any good of any kind.

THE DESIGN OF BAPTISM (I)

Bible Baptism is immersion in water of a penitent believer. Sprinkling or pouring do not meet the requirements of Baptism in the New Testament. Infant Baptism is not sanctioned in the Scripture. Only immersion is the correct mode of baptism; and only believers who have repented may be baptized. But we have yet to ask the question: Why should one be baptized? Of what value is baptism? What does it mean to the individual? What is the design or purpose of baptism? Over the next several weeks we will be answering these questions by the Bible.

If you have been listening to this broadcast on a regular basis, then you are aware that we discussed and answered the question "What must I do to be Saved" some weeks ago. In that broadcast we concluded on the basis of Scripture that in order for one to be saved from his sins he must first of all believe in Jesus. He must come to God in faith. Hebrews 11:6 makes this affirmation: "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of them who seek Him." Faith is a necessary condition of salvation, one cannot be forgiven of his sins except he believe. Thus, in answer to the Philippian Jailor's question, "What must I do to be saved", Paul said this in Acts 16:31: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household." Faith, then, is necessary for our salvation, but is faith alone able to save? James answers No. In James 2:14 asks these questions: "What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but has no works? Can that faith save him?" In the same passage

James answers his own question. In verse 24, he writes: "You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone." Therefore, faith alone cannot save a man. Rather, there is something else to be done in addition to faith.

When those on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 wanted to know what they had to do to be saved, Peter answered them in this way. He said: "Repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Thus, Peter required of the Jews repentance in addition to faith before they could receive the forgiveness of their sins. Jesus while he was on earth also required repentance. In Luke 13:3, he warns his enemies: "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." Further, in II Peter 3:9 Peter demands repentance by all men. He writes: "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." Repentance, therefore, is a necessary condition of salvation. One does not repent and turn away from his sins, he will never receive forgiveness from the Father.

But, as you probably noticed in Acts 2:38, Peter also required baptism of the Jews on the day of Pentecost before they could receive the remission of their sins. They were told to "Repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins." Further, in Acts 22:16, Paul recounts his conversion to the Jewish council. He relates how he was blinded for three days, but Ananias came to him to heal him and to give him forgiveness of his sins. Paul tells us what he

was told to do in Acts 22:16. Ananias said to him: "Now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." Paul as a believing penitent man was told to be baptized in order to wash away his sins. Thus, we must conclude that baptism also as well as faith and repentance is necessary for salvation. If one is to receive the forgiveness of his sins, he must not only believe in Jesus, and repent of his sins, he must also be immersed in water. By expressing his faith through baptism, God translated him from death to life, from the Kingdom of the devil to the Kingdom of his dear son.

But such a view of baptism is contrary to many of the creeds of the denominations. It is their contention that baptism is not necessary for salvation, it is an optional matter in their creed-books. Therefore, it is necessary for us to explicate and defend what we mean when we say that baptism is necessary for one's salvation. For this we must turn to the Bible.

In the first place it is important to note that all spiritual blessings are in Christ. In Ephesians 1:3, the apostle Paul writes: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." Where are all the spiritual blessings? They are according to Paul, in Christ. Now what do we mean by spiritual blessings? What does that include? Once again we must turn to the Bible.

First, redemption is in Christ. Ephesians 1:7 records that "in Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."

Thus, redemption or the forgiveness of sins is in Christ, and nowhere else. Second, salvation is in Christ. II Timothy 2:10 records: "For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory." Thus, salvation is in Christ. Third, only in Christ do we have an inheritance of eternal glory. Ephesians 1:11 record: "In whom also we have obtain an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Thus, only as we are in Christ do we have the inheritance of heaven. All these blessings and many more are in Christ, and those outside of Christ have no hope of salvation and no access to these blessings (Eph. 2:12).

The question, then, that we must ask is how does one enter into Christ? If one is outside of Christ, how does he get into Christ and become apart of his body? The Bible provides us with the answer? Listen to the reading of Romans 6:3,4 and see if the answer is found within these two verses. They read: "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." Did you catch the answer to our question? How does one get into Christ where all spiritual blessings abide? The apostle Paul affirms that we were "baptized into Christ." One enters Christ and his blessings by being baptized. Without baptism, then, one is outside of

Christ. Listen again to the apostle Paul in Galatians 3:27. There the apostle writes: "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." How does one enter into Christ? Paul affirms that one is baptized into Christ.

Now if all spiritual blessings are in Christ, and the way in which one enters Christ is through baptism, is baptism, then, necessary for our salvation? Yes, because it is necessary in order to enter into Christ. Since being in Christ is necessary for salvation, then so is baptism. We must all, then, be baptized, immersed in water for the remission of our sins.

Have you been immersed in water for the remission of your sins? You cannot be saved without exhibiting your faith through immersion, for by baptism you enter Christ. If we are going to follow the Bible alone, then we must become Christians in the Bible way. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? You do well, but faith is not enough. Faith in and of itself not as James said save. There is still something else that must be done. Have you repented of your sins? If you have, then you need to be immersed today for the forgiveness of your sins. You need to be baptized for your salvation (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16).

Christ has died for every man, and everyone has the opportunity to be saved. You can be rid of your sins today by believing in Jesus, repenting of your sins and being immersed in water for the remission of sins. Want you be saved today? If you need assistance, in your baptism call either your area Church of Christ now. You can be baptized today just

call your area Church of Christ now. Come to Jesus now, come on his terms and be saved by his blood. He is able to save you, but he can't unless you come to him in faith, repenting of your sins and being baptized in his name. Please do this today, ^{for} your soul's eternal security rests upon your response now.

THE DESIGN OF BAPTISM (II)

If you have been following our broadcasts, you know that we are presently discussing the importance of Baptism. The question is: Why should one be immersed in water? Particularly, we are considering whether or not the Bible teaches that baptism is necessary for salvation. Must we be immersed in water before we are able to receive the forgiveness of sins? To answer these questions we must, of course, turn to the Bible.

Last week we noticed from passages such Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27 that in baptism one enters Christ. He is according to the apostle, "baptized into Christ." Now in Christ is where all spiritual blessings abide (Ephesians 1:3). If then we want to partake of those blessings, we will need to be "in Christ." But how does one get into Christ. Pauth the apostle proclaimed that one is baptized into Christ. Surely, then, if one must be in Christ to be saved, and the way to enter Christ is by baptism, baptism must be necessary for one's salvation. But let us examine this question more fully than this.

First, in the New Testament the remission of sins follows baptism. Forgiveness of sins is not received till after baptism. Acts 2:38 is a case in point. On the day of Pentecost, those Jews assembled there were convinced of their sin, so they asked Peter and the apostles what could they do to rid themselves of this sin. Peter's answer is recording in Acts 2:38, he said: "Repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the

forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." If you notice, in Peter's answer, both repentance and baptism precede forgiveness. Both are necessary in order that one may be forgiven. The Jews there already believed on Jesus, but Peter requires them to repent and be baptized before they can receive the remission of their sins. Acts 22:16 is another case in point. Paul, as we know, had been blinded by a great light on his way to Damascus. He was now in Damascus for three days, praying and fasting. Notice that Paul was a believer in Jesus and a very penitent man, but he had not yet been saved. In Acts 22:16, Paul tells us what Ananias told him to do if he was to be saved. Ananias said: "And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." Paul was to be baptized so that his sins might be washed away. Baptism, here, precedes the forgiveness of sin. It was necessary for Paul to be baptized, so it is also necessary for us today to be baptized. Both Peter and Ananias had the answer to sin, and that answer includes submission to the Lord in baptism.

Second, baptism is necessary for salvation because in baptism we are baptized into the death of Christ. The question which all men must ask is: How do I obtain the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection for myself? How do I apply the blood of Jesus Christ to my sins? We must in some way contact the death of Christ and be quickened by his blood. Ephesians 2:5 in talking about those who were already Christians, affirms that "even when we were dead in our transgressions, he made us alive together with Christ." The question before us is: How does God make

us alive together with Christ? Paul answers our question in Romans 6:3-5. Listen for the answer in the reading of this Scripture. "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." How does one contact the death of Christ so as to apply its saving grace to himself? Paul says we are baptized into his death. Baptism is not a mere ritual, it is the glorious re-enactment of the death and resurrection of Christ. It was in Christ's death that he shed his blood, and we are baptized into Christ's death, therefore, it is in baptism where we contact the saving blood of Jesus Christ. When we enter the water, we are being buried as dead men just as Christ was buried dead, but when we come up out of the water, just as Christ was given life through the resurrection, so we are given life as we re-enact that resurrection. In this way, God has made us alive together with Christ. Therefore, if you as an individual want to be saved by the blood and death of Jesus, then you must re-enact his death and resurrection through the waters of baptism.

Third, Paul in Galatians 3:26,27 tells us how it is that we are the children of God. He writes: "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves

with Christ." Paul declares that we are children of God by faith, and how is it that faith makes us children of God. The very next verse tells us. Galatians 3:26 affirms that we are children of God by faith, and Galatians 3:27 tells us how. Paul is declaring that we are children of God by faith because we have been baptized into Christ. The reason our faith saves, Paul is saying, is because we have been baptized. It is not faith alone which saves, but faith expressed through some act of obedience. Listen carefully to the reading of Colossians 2:12. There Paul again writes: "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." Paul tells us that our baptism was only effective because of our faith in God's working. Our faith is expressed by baptism, our faith that God will cleanse us from all sin, when we submit to his commandment concerning baptism. Thus, faith and baptism are not at opposite poles from one another. To the contrary, faith finds its saving expressing through the act of baptism. It is in this way that faith in God saves, and until your faith expresses itself through immersion into water, then your faith cannot save you. As Paul said in Galatians 3:26,27: "for we are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus because all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

Finally, the apostle Peter in his first epistle affirms the saving efficacy of baptism. Let us read together I Peter 3:20,21: There were spirits in prison "who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which

few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Peter unequivocally affirms here that "Baptism saves."

Now either Baptism does or it does not save. Most denominations deny that Baptism saves. But Peter tells us that Baptism does save. Who are we to believe? The Bible, of course. Be careful, the Scripture does not say that Baptism alone saves. It is not Baptism in and of itself which saves, anymore that the ark itself in the time of Noah saved his household. Noah had enough faith to build the ark and get into it in order that he might be saved. So we must have enough faith to submit to baptism in order to be saved. Baptism and faith both save us. We are forgiven of our sins when we express our faith through the obedient act of baptism.

Baptism is no mere ritual that Christians submit to in order to be inducted into a denomination. No, it is the supreme expression of one's faith in God, it is an appeal Peter said to for a pure conscience. God's Spirit works through baptism as our faith is expressed in it to save us from our sins. Have you been immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins? If you were baptized as an infant, you were not really baptized, because you had no faith. If you were baptized because you were already a Christian, then you were baptized for the wrong reason. As sinners we must all submit to the ordinance of baptism in trusting faith. Only in this way will God forgive us and on the last day take us home with him. You can be baptized today, if you will only come. Come today, and be saved today.

COMMON OBJECTIONS TO BAPTISM

During the past four weeks we have been discussing the subject of baptism. First we asked the question: What is baptism? How should it be performed? We discovered that according to the Scripture, only immersion in water constitutes proper Bible Baptism. Sprinkling and pouring do not meet the Biblical requirements for Scriptural Baptism. Second, we asked the question: Who may be baptized? Who is the proper subject of baptism? We discovered that according to Scripture only one who believes in Jesus and repents of his sins may be baptized. Therefore, Bible Baptism does not include the baptism of infants, but excludes it. The only proper subject of baptism is the penitent believer. Third, we asked the question: Why be baptized? What is the design or purpose of baptism? We discovered that according to Scripture baptism is for the remission of sins. It places one in a saved condition. It is the means by which we contact the death of Christ, it is where we contact the saving blood of Jesus. Therefore, if one desires God to forgive him of his sins, he must necessarily submit to baptism in the name of Jesus before God will forgive him.

However, not everyone would agree with the answers to questions that we have given. This is particularly true of the last question. Therefore, this morning we will consider some of the objections which might be raised against the view that baptism is necessary for salvation. Although we will not be able to consider them all, I think we will be able to cover the major objections which might be raised. Yet, in all of this discussion we must be primarily and solely concerned

with what the Bible has to say. We must permit the Bible to speak about the subject of baptism.

The first objection which might be raised concerns the baptism of Jesus. It is argued that Jesus was baptized, but Jesus was not saved in his baptism. He was sinless and needed no forgiveness. Therefore, Baptism is not for the forgiveness of sins. In reply, we might point out that the baptism of John was a baptism for the remission of sins. Mark 1: 4 records that "John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." Thus, just because Jesus was baptized ^{for the Remission} does not imply that baptism is not for the remission of sins. ^{However,} Rather, Jesus himself states the purpose of his baptism in Matthew 3:15. When John objected that Jesus had no need to be baptized, Jesus replied to him in these words: "Permit it at this time, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Thus, Jesus submitted to baptism as an obedient son of God. What if Jesus had not been baptized? Then he would not have fulfilled all righteousness, which means that he would not have been perfect in his obedience. Therefore, if Jesus had not been baptized, he would have sinned. Thus, it was necessary for Jesus to be baptized ^{if} he was to be the perfect sacrifice on Calvary.

Also, Jesus did not depend of his sins...

Second, someone may object that the thief on the cross in Luke 23:39-43 was saved without being baptized. Therefore, it is not necessary that one be baptized. First of all, how do you know he was not baptized? No one knows whether or not he was, but he ~~had~~ evidently knew something about the preaching of Jesus because he knew about the "kingdom" of Jesus. But *these*

considerations are really irrelevant because the thief on the cross was not required to do everything we are required to do. In fact, the thief was not even required to believe the same things we believe. According to Romans 10:9,10 we today are required to believe that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day before we can receive the forgiveness of sins. But the thief was not required to believe that fact, but we are. We cannot today be saved by believing the same thing that the thief believed when he died. Therefore, the thief on the cross offers no objection. Further, Christian baptism was not instituted till after the resurrection of Jesus. The Baptism which now saves, Peter affirms in I Peter 3:21, saves because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The baptism to which we must submit today, was not even in effect during the time which the thief lived. Therefore, it was not necessary for the thief on the cross, but that does not mean it is not necessary for us today. because the thief was not even required to believe the same things as we are today.

Third, someone is surely to object that Baptism is a work, and we are not saved by works. Therefore, we could never be saved by baptism. In reply, it must be pointed out that one of the premises of this objection contradicts the apostle Peter in I Peter 3:21 where he argues that Baptism does now save us. Who are we to believe, the objector of Peter? Further, the Bible does not classify baptism as a work of human merit. Rather, it is a work of God by grace. Notice what Paul said in Titus 3:5. There the apostle writes: "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in

righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit." The washing of regeneration undoubtedly refers to baptism, but this washing is the means by which God saved us in opposition to any meritourous works which we might have done. Baptism is a work of grace, not a work of merit. We do not earn s alvation by being baptized, but God gives us his grace through the obedient act of baptism.

The objection ignores that there may be works of obedience as opposed to works of merit in which one may boast. For instance, even faith itself is a work, it is an obedient act in response to God. This is what Jesus affirmed in John 6:29 when he said: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." Thus, faith is in the strictest sense a work. It is not a work which earns merit, but it is a work of obdience. Baptism is the same way. Baptism is not a work of merit, but is an obedient act in response to God's grace.

Further, we studied a few weeks ago how that faith alone cannot save. Rather, only as faith is expressed through an obedient act, will faith save a person from his sins. This was James point in James 2:24. He writes: "You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone." Works of obdience perfect faith or make it complete. James 2:22 records: "You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected." In the Christian age, the act of baptism is the means by which we express our faith so that God saves us. Colossians 2:12 records: "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised

up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." It is by faith that we rise from the watery grave of baptism to walk a new life in righteousness. Further, Galatians 3:26,27 teach that we are saved by faith because we have been baptized into Christ. Thus, if your faith in Jesus is to save you, then you must submit to baptism in faith. There the blood of Christ will cleanse you from all sins.

But someone objects that they just cannot see the connection between baptism and the saving blood of Jesus. How can the water of baptism save someone, they ask. Well, Naaman of II Kings 5 could not see the connection between dipping himself seven times in the river Jordan and the cleansing of his leprosy, but that did not mean that it was ^{not} true. We must accept what God tells us in the Bible, just as Naaman had to accept what Elisha told him. In faith we must submit to the commandment of God so that we might be spiritually cleansed of sin just as Naaman was physically healed of leprosy.

The Bible tells us that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16). The Bible tells us that Baptism saves (I Peter 3:21). The Bible tells us that we are baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27). We must take God at his word, and obey his word in faith. Have you been immersed in water? If not, you need to obey God today? On the last day, Jesus' words will judge us, and if we have not obeyed those words, then we have no ^{will} hope of eternal glory. Baptism is necessary for your salvation, and if you have not been baptized, then please submit to God's will today because your soul's eternity rests upon your ^{faithful} obedience.

You have been listening to the "Let the Bible Speak" broadcast sponsored by the Northeast Philadelphia Church of Christ at 3200 Primrose Road. This congregation of the Lord's people extends this very special invitation to you to attend a series of gospel meetings which will be held at the Church of Christ in North Philadelphia. Beginning September 24 and going through September 29, Mr. Bob Walton of Lafayette, LA will be here in Philadelphia presenting the gospel. The services will begin each evening at 7:30 p.m. There will be singing and fellowship, but no collections will be gathered. It will be a time devoted only to the Lord. So, come and be with us ^{from Sept. 24-29.} At the Church of Christ on Primrose Road, and here brother Walton preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you desire more information, please write the Northeast Philadelphia Church of Christ at 3290 Primrose Road, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19114. And if you are interested in the learning more about the churches of Christ, write for some free Bible materials at this address: Northeast Philadelphia Church of Christ, 3200 Primrose Road, Philadelphia Pennsylvania 19114. Thank you for listening, and be sure to tune in next Sunday at 9:15 as we let the Bible Speak.