

## Salvation

### What is Sin?

Anyone who seeks to do the will of God ought to know what sin is and that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). This death is spiritual separation from God, the source of life (Isa. 59:1,2). There are various words used in the Greek NT to describe sin. They are:

\*sin (αμαρτια): "a missing of the mark" Rom. 6:23; James 4:17; 1 John 3:4; 5:16.

\*sin (αμαρτημα): "an act of disobedience to Divine law" Mark 3:28,29; Rom. 3:25; 2 Pet. 1:9

\*error (πλανη): "a wandering, a forsaking of the right path" Jas. 5:20; 2 Pet. 3:17; 1 John 4:6; Rom. 1:27; 2 Pet. 2:18; Jude 11

\*iniquity (ανομια): "lawlessness or wickedness, crookedness" Matt. 7:23; 13:41; Tit. 2:14; 1 John 3:4; Rom. 4:7; Heb. 10:17

\*iniquity (παρανομια): "law-breaking" 2 Pet. 2:16

\*iniquity or unrighteousness (αδικια): "unrighteousness; a condition of not being right" Luke 16:8; 18:6; 2 Tim. 2:19; James 3:6

\*iniquity (αδικημα): "a wrong, an injury, misdeed" Acts 18:14; 24:20; Rev. 18:5

\*evil (πονηρεια): "bad, evil, worthless, wickedness" Matt. 22:18; Mk. 7:22; Lk 11:39; Rom. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:8; Eph. 6:12

\*trespass (παρπτωμα): "a false step, a blunder, a deviation from uprightness or the truth, to fall" Matt. 6:14,15; 18:35; Mark. 11:25,26; Gal. 6:1; James 5:16; Col. 2:13; Eph. 1:7; 2:1,5

\*transgression (παρβασις): "a going beyond the prescribed limits" Rom. 4:15; 5:13,14,20; 7:7,13; Gal. 3:19

The Scriptures teach us that sin is the breaking or transgression of the law (1 John 3:4); sin is lawlessness because the one who sins sets aside the law to do as he wishes. Sin is the breaking of God's law and is an offense against God Himself (Gen. 39:9; Psalms. 51:4). Sin is not only doing what God forbids; it is also the failure to do what God demands of us. "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins" (James 4:17). Many people will be lost at judgment for failure to obey the gospel (2

Thess. 1:7-9). All wrongdoing or unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17).

### Various Kinds of Sin:

John said that worldliness is characterized by three things: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). The very first sin of Adam and Eve, eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is an example of how temptation to sin may appeal to any or all of these categories (Gen. 3:1-19). Eve saw that the fruit was good for food (flesh), pleasing to the eye (eyes), and was able to make her wise (pride). Both Adam and Eve gave in to temptation. Their sin led to their spiritual death and to physical death coming upon all men (Rom. 5:12-17).

1. *Works of the Flesh*: "sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

2. *Wicked deeds*: sexual immorality, idolatry, adultery, male prostitution, homosexuality, theft, greed, drunkenness, slander, swindling. Those who commit such acts will not "inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

3. *Godlessness and wickedness*: failure to acknowledge or give thanks to God, idolatry, sexual impurity, homosexuality, shameful lusts, lesbianism, indecency, perversion, wickedness, evil, greed, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossip, slander, God-hating, insolence, arrogance, boasting, disobedience to parents, senselessness, faithlessness, heartlessness, ruthlessness, and the toleration and approval of others' wickedness (Rom. 1:18-32).

4. *Deeds of Darkness*: the hint of sexual immorality, impurity, greed, obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking (Eph. 5:1-12). Those who practice these things will not inherit the kingdom of God and have the wrath of God coming on the disobedient.

5. *Earthly Deeds*: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed (which is

idolatry). Also anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language, and lying. The Christian must rid himself of these things.

6. *Godlessness in the last days*: "For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these {men} also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected as regards the faith. . . . But evil men and impostors will proceed {from bad} to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:2-8,13).

### Sexual Sins

1. *Sexual Immorality*. This is a broad term referring to all kinds of sexual intercourse before or outside of marriage (1 Cor. 6:12-20). This includes intercourse before marriage, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, incest, multiple husbands or wives (Matt. 19:3-9). Those who practice sexual immorality will not enter the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 6:9,10; Gal. 5:19-21).

2. *Adultery*. Adultery is committed when a married person has sexual intercourse with someone other than the person to whom he is married. Those who commit adultery are guilty of breaking a covenant with their spouses. A single person commits adultery when he has sexual intercourse with a person who is married to someone else.

3. *Homosexuality*. Sexual intercourse between two persons of the same sex; those who practice it cannot enter heaven (Gen. 13:13; 18:20; 19:1-29; Rom. 1:24-32; 1 Cor. 6:9,10; 1 Tim. 1:10). Sodomites are called "dogs" in Deut. 23:17,18 and may be referred to in Rev. 22:15.

4. *Incest*. Illicit sexual intercourse performed between members of the same family (Lev. 18:6-18; 20:11-21; 1 Cor. 5:21; cf. Matt. 14:3,4).

5. *Bestiality*. Sexual intercourse with an animal (Ex. 22:19).

6. *Lust or Lasciviousness*. Jesus taught that the man who looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matt. 5:27-30). The Christian is to avoid lusting (Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:5). Coveting another man's wife is sin (Ex. 20:17), even though one may not touch her. The Christian must be careful to avoid activities that promote lasciviousness or lust. "Don't be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good morals'" (1 Cor. 15:33).

### Sins of the Heart

"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (Prov. 4:23).

"For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him" (Matt. 12:34,35).

"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander" (Matt. 15:19).

1. *Anger*. Jesus taught that anger with a brother is sinful (Matt. 5:21,22). Christians who have sinned against a brother are to reconcile quickly (Matt. 5:23-26). Christians who have been forgiven by God are expecting to be forgiving with others (Matt. 6:14,15; 18:21-35; Eph. 4:32). Jesus gives us instructions as to how to deal with a brother who has sinned against us (Matt. 18:15-17).

2. *Partiality*. Christians are to love and treat everyone with respect (James 2:1-10). God does not show favoritism (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:6,11).

3. *Envy or Jealousy*. Love is not jealous (1 Cor. 13:4). Envy is the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing the advantage or prosperity of others (Matt. 27:18; Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:21; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4; Tit. 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:1). Envy desires to deprive another of what he possesses; jealousy desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for itself (Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; James 3:14,16; Gal. 5:20; James 4:2).

4. *Prejudice*. Judging according to appearances is wrong; Christians are to judge righteously (John 7:24; cf. Luke 9:36-51). Since we do not know the motives of other people's hearts, we must be careful not to judge. The Lord warns us against judging others (Matt. 7:1-5). This, however, does not mean that we should not

take note of other people's actions and deal with them accordingly (cf. Matt. 7:6, 15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 1 Tim. 1:19,20; 3 John 9,10).

5. *Thanklessness*. An unthankful heart leads to many sins (Rom. 1:21-32). One who is not thankful to God for kindnesses may turn his life to cynicism, grumbling, complaining and bitterness (See 1 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:14; James 5:9; Jude 16).

6. *Pride or Arrogance*. Arrogance is the attitude of exalting oneself so that one is better than others. The "holier-than-you" attitude is greatly offensive to God (Isa. 65:5). God hates haughty eyes (Prov. 6:16,17) and expects us to despise it as evil (8:13). Pride leads to disgrace (11:2; 29:23), breeds quarrels (13:10), and goes before destruction (16:18). God will humble the proud (Luke 1:51; Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). The Pharisee was not justified, even though he compared himself with a sinner (Luke 18:9-14). The pride of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4) led to his downfall.

7. *Selfish Ambition*. A contentious struggle for personal profit or power, with no redeeming hint of service to others. Selfish ambition battles others for immediate gains and empty honors, which have no eternal value (Luke 12:13-21; Rom. 2:8; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:17; 2:3,4; James 3:14-16).

8. *Bitterness and Revenge*. Bitterness describes the twisted way individuals respond to the pain events of life. (Acts 8:23; Eph. 4:31,32; Heb. 12:15). Revenge is the paying back of evil for evil (Matt. 5:38-48). The Christian is to depend upon God to take vengeance on evildoers (Rom. 12:11-21; Heb. 10:30). The Christian is expected to forgive others (Matt. 6:14,15; 18:21-35). The Christian is instructed about what to do when a brother sins against him (Matt. 18:15-17).

9. *Greed or the Love of Money*. "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" (1 Tim. 6:10). One cannot serve God and money at the same time (Matt. 6:19-24). Greed or covetousness is idolatry (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5).

### Sins of the Tongue

1. *Lying*. The tongue can be used to hurt other people in a variety of ways: lying, bearing

false witness, false accusations, and flattery. (See Psa. 34:13; Lev. 19:16; Ex. 20

2. *Gossip, slander, blasphemy, and busybodies*. Rom. 1:28,29,30; 1 Cor. 12:20; 1 Tim. 5:13; 2 Tim. 3:1,2; James 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:16. It is slander to speak evil about anyone. Those who speak about others should ask themselves: Is it true? Is it needful? Is it kind? Is it helpful? Does it edify? (See Prov. 16:27; 18:8; 21:23; Psa. 15:1-3; 101:5; 2 Thess. 3:11; 1 Tim. 5:13,14; 1 Pet. 4:15.)

3. *Angry outbursts, unjust criticism, and ridicule*. See Prov. 14:17; 15:1; 29:22; The Christian is to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger (James 1:19,20), for a man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. When Jesus was reviled, he did not revile in return, leaving us an example to follow his steps (1 Pet. 2:21-25).

4. *Idle Talk*. (Matt. 12:36,37; James 3:10). Idle talk is unproductive; it does not bless or help anyone. It is negative and worthless. One who does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his heart, has a vain religion (James 1:26,27). The Christian is instructed to use his tongue to edify others (Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:5,6).

5. *Profanity*. "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord Thy God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain" (Ex. 20:7). To profane something is to treat what is holy and should be respected as if it were common. Profaning God's name is to use it in an unholy manner. To speak of God, Christ, heaven or hell in such a way as to make it common is sinful. To swear, using God's name, and not mean what you swear is taking the Lord's name in vain (Matt. 5:33-37; James 5:12).

Sexual things are often used in such a way as to be profanity. Marriage is holy, and the marriage bed is undefiled (Heb. 13:4). Dirty jokes, filthy language, and vulgar talk have no place in the conversation of Christians (Eph. 4:29; 5:3-5; Col. 3:4,5).

6. *Sowing discord*. God hates the spreading of strife among brothers (Prov. 6:16-19). The person who uses his tongue to incite anger and bitterness among brethren surely sins against God and against his brethren. Many will be hurt by his actions.

7. *Boasting*. Men should not boast of themselves, but rather boast that they know God

(Jer. 9:23,24; cf. Prov. 20:30,31). Let him who glories, glory in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:29-31; Gal. 6:14). Boasting is a cause of strife and jealousy (1 Cor. 4:6,7; 2 Cor. 10:12-18). See also Rom. 1:30; James 3:5; 4:16.

### Origin of Personal Sin

James 1:13-15 "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren."

Rom. 7:6-10 "And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died."

### Personal Accountability for Sin

1. Each responsible for his own sin (Ezekiel 18; Rom. 6:23)
2. All have sinned (Rom. 3:10; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8,10)

### Two Kinds of Sin

1. *Unintentional Sins Can Be Forgiven* (Lev. 4:2)
  - sins of ignorance
  - sins of weakness (Matt. 26:41; Heb. 4:15,16)
2. *Presumptuous Sins Cannot Be Forgiven* (Num. 15:29-31)
  - presumptuous (Ps. 19:13)
  - impenitence (Jer. 5:3; Luke 13:3; 2 Pet. 3:9)
  - blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (despising the Word, Num. 15:30,31; see Matt. 12)
  - Sins unto death (1 John 5:16; Jer. 7:16-20)
  - willful sins (Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31)

**What Sin Will Do.**  
**There are always consequences to sin.**

1. Sin will deceive (Heb. 3:12-14; Eph. 4:22)
2. Sin will enslave (John 8:34; Rom. 6:16-18; 2 Pet. 18-22)
3. Sin will corrupt and defile us spiritually and physically (Tit. 1:15,16; Gal. 6:7,8)
4. Sin will harden (Tit. 1:15; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Eph. 4:19; Heb. 3:12-14; 6:4-6)
5. Sin will bring spiritual death (Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1)
6. Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1,2) no relationship

### How God looks upon sin

1. Exodus 20:5 "jealous God, taking vengeance on them that hate me"
2. Sin is often called an abomination
3. Eph. 4:30 "grieve not the Holy Spirit"
4. Matt. 27:37-39 Jesus was broken hearted

### It Is the Tendency of Man To Downplay Sin

A. Men have always thought that sin should be softened

1. We call it mistake, difficulty, error in judgment, disappointment, an inappropriate action, problem, disease
2. We wish to blame society, parents, and circumstances and remove responsibility from the perpetrator
3. We offer so many excuses: (rationalizing away our sin)
  - "Just once won't hurt"
  - "Everyone's doing it"
  - "I can quit when I want to"
  - "Get with it, this is the 2000's! Things have changed!"
  - "We were all in on it"
  - "She did it first" (Adam)
  - "I had to do it, or I would have lost face" (Saul)
  - "I didn't use the proceeds anyway." (Judas)

### We often lie to ourselves about sin!

1. 1 Cor. 6:9-11 "Do not be deceived."
2. 1 Cor. 15:33 "Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals."
3. Gal. 6:7,8 "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked"
4. 1 John 1:8-10 "no sin? We are deceiving ourselves"
5. In our hearts we know that sin is wrong, but we often would rather believe a lie

### The Punishment of Sin

1. Earth cursed because of sin (Gen. 3:17,18)
2. Death entered the world through sin (Rom. 5:12)
3. The sting of death is sin (1 Cor. 15:56)
4. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 18:4)

5. Sin prevents people from entering heaven (Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 21:8,27)

6. The punishment for sin is eternal (Matt. 25:41-46; Rev. 20:10-15; 21:8)

J.W. McGarvey said, "I wonder if any of us has ever realized what it is to commit sin. I have prepared sermons designed to set forth the enormity of sin: but I have every time felt that I made a failure. The pleasures of sin have blinded our eyes to its enormity. The journey of human life is strewn with tears; the whole earth on which we live has become dotted over with graveyards. The Word of God tells us that all this woe, pain, sorrow and death result from sin."

### The Nature of Man

God made man with two natures: (1) an inward man, following the law of his mind (Rom. 7:23-24) which delights in the law of God and which of itself by nature can decide in moral matters what is right (Luke 12:57; Rom. 2:14; 1 Cor. 11:14); (2) an outward man of flesh (Rom. 7:25) which has no more religion than the beasts and knows nothing but to indulge itself. It is not subject to the law of God (Rom. 8:7) and cannot be, for flesh has no reason. It should not be expected that any moral goodness could dwell in the flesh (Rom. 7:8) or of badness either. Left to itself, by nature, the flesh will seek self-indulgence (Eph. 2:3). But the fleshly part of man is not sinful in itself. It is not immoral, but amoral: it does not know what morals are. Given the lead, its direction is immorality, but it was not made impregnated with sin. All that God made was very good.

Our parents bring us into a world of sin. (Psa. 51:5.) Our parents bring us into America, a land of the English language and of sin, but we have to learn both the language and sin. (Cf. Acts 2:8.) Psalm 51:5 is vivid poetical language, as is Psalm 58:3. Literally we do not speak as soon as we are born, nor that soon go astray, but the fact is that we are not born astray and as we learn right from wrong we go astray. Then our sins, not Adam's, separate between our God and us. (Isa. 59:1-2.) Our fathers' eating sour grapes will not set our teeth on edge. (Ezek. 18.) We receive the effects of many misdeeds of our fathers (Ex. 20:5), but

never the guilt (Deut. 24:16). We were whole and perfect when we were created till sin was found in us. (Ezek. 28:15.) The Lord forms the spirit in each of us, and he does not start us out as sinners. (Zech. 12:1.) He starts us in a way that Jesus thought fits us for heaven. (Matt. 19:14.) Romans 5:12 is not discussing those without the use of their minds, nor those who do not know their right hand from their left, but it is discussing those who have on their own sinned. (Rom. 3:9 f.)

#### Other passages for consideration:

Matt. 26:41 "Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Eccl. 7:29 "Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices."

Gen. 8:21 And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done."

Ezek. 28:15 "You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created, Until unrighteousness was found in you."

Rom. 7:8-11 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.

### What is Grace?

Someone has taken the word "G-R-A-C-E" and made the acrostic "God's Redemption At Christ's Expense." This is a fairly accurate description of grace. The word grace ( $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$ ) means "favor." One who has the love, blessing and favor of another may be said to be in the "good graces" of his benefactor. The distinguishing factors of God's grace are twofold: (1) that God's grace is given as a gift and is not earned; and (2) that God's grace is undeserved.

**God's grace is a gift and not earned**

Rom. 4:4 "Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness."

Eph. 2:1-10 "For it is by grace you saved through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast."

2 Tim. 1:9 "who saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace"

Tit. 3:3-7 "he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy."

Grace is not a wage for our labors, a prize for our winning a competition or an award for our meritorious efforts. It is a gift. When a man can earn no wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award, yet receives a wondrous gift, he has been given unmerited favor or undeserved kindness.

**God's grace is undeserved**

Rom. 5:6-8 "when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. . . God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

1 Tim. 1:12-16 "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life."

Grace is getting what we do not deserve.

Justice is getting what we do deserve.

Mercy is not getting what we do deserve.

**What Forgiveness Means:**

Psalm

32:1,2 "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!"

Forgiveness is not forgetting but "forgetting against." When God forgives us, He no longer counts our sins against us (2 Cor. 5:19) so that we

might be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 5:20). Men cannot undo the past, but God can forget our past sins against us so that we are no longer guilty. Psalm 85:2,3 says of God: "You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins. You set aside all your wrath and turned from your fierce anger."

**1. Forgiveness frees one from the bondage of sin.**

John 8:34 "everyone who sins is a slave to sin"

Rom. 6:16 "you are slaves of the one you obey, whether to sin. . ."

Rom. 7:14-20 "I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin"

Rom. 8:2 "through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death."

Rom. 6:3-7 in baptism "our old self was crucified with him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who died is freed from sin."

**2. Forgiveness releases one from the debt incurred by sin**

Matt. 18:23-35 forgiven debt is one that no longer must be paid

Rom. 6:23 "the wages of sin is death" cf. Ezek. 18:4

Sin releases one from guilt in spite of what one may deserve. Forgiveness should not be confused with injustice, as when a guilty person escapes punishment through lies or bribes. Forgiveness is a pardon; the sin was real but now no longer matters because the price was paid in the blood of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:5; Acts 20:28).

**3. Forgiveness creates the opportunity for a new beginning.**

2 Cor. 5:17 says "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" Forgiveness means that the old record is clear, and one is looked upon as if he had never sinned. His past no longer matters to God, for he has died to sin and has undergone a new birth (John 3:3-7; Rom. 6:3-7). With the past buried by the love of God, God and man can now start a new covenant relationship, brought about by the blood of Jesus Christ. This new birth allows a man to start over with God. In this new

relationship in Christ, he can think, act and speak like Christ.

#### **4. Forgiveness is the means by which God reconciles the world.**

2 Cor. 5:19 says "that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them." Reconciliation is the bringing back into friendship a world that was alienated by sin. Sin separates men from God (Isa. 59:2), so that God no longer hears man's prayers. Forgiveness restores the relationship by removing the cause of the separation, i.e., sin. The sin gone, man can once again approach God through Christ. Forgiveness is better than merely forgetting, for by forgiving us God demonstrates His love to us (Rom. 5:6-8) in that He sent Jesus to die for us. We at that time were powerless, ungodly, and sinful.

The cross of Jesus reaches out to us in love and "compels us" to want to love Him and serve Him. "And he died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor. 5:14,15).

#### **God's Grace is Greater than Our Sins**

- 1 Tim. 1:12-16 The grace of God and His unlimited patience was able to forgive the worst of sinners, Saul of Tarsus, the apostle Paul.
- 1 Cor. 6:9-11 Though men are caught up in the worst of sins, God's power is able to wash, sanctify and cleanse them.
- 1 John 3:18-20 Though our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts.
- 1 John 1:7-9 The blood of Christ can and does forgive all sin.

#### **Meeting God's Conditions Does Not Negate the Grace of God**

- Num. 21:6-9 looking upon the bronze serpent
- Joshua 6:2,16,20 God gave Jericho, but the people had to take it
- 2 Kings 5:1-14 Naaman dipping in the Jordan to be healed
- John 9:6,7, 10-12 The blind man who washed in the pool of Siloam
- John 3:3-7 except a man is born of water and the Spirit

- Titus 3:3-7 washing of regeneration is how the grace of God works
- Col. 3:12-13 God is active and we are passive in baptism

### **The Nature and Need for Repentance**

- Luke 13:3,5 "unless you repent, you too will perish"
- Acts 2:38 "repent, and be baptized every one of you,...so that your sins may be forgiven"
- Acts 3:19 "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out"
- Acts 11:18 "God has even granted the Gentiles repentance unto life"
- Acts 17:30,31 "now he (God) commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."
- 2 Pet. 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keep in his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

#### **What Repentance Is:**

Repentance is "a change of heart and mind that leads to a change in life and behavior." In Matt. 21:28-32, Jesus tells of a certain man who told his son to work in the vineyard. The son said, "I will not," but afterward he repented and went. He changed his mind about the matter and did as his father told him. Repentance is a change of heart and mind that leads to a change of life and behavior.

#### **What Repentance Is Not:**

*Repentance is not the same thing as regret.*

Judas regretted ( μεταμελεια: had remorse or emotional sorrow) that he had betrayed the Lord with a kiss and sold him for thirty pieces of silver, but he did not return to the Lord in obedience (Matt. 27:3-5). Judas went and hanged himself. Peter, on the other hand, wept bitterly but repented (μετανοια: changed his mind). Peter, after he was turned again (Luke 22:32), came back and served the Lord.

*Repentance is not merely being sorry for sin.* While godly sorrow produces repentance (2 Cor. 7:10), sorrow alone is not a change of heart and mind. There are fruits that show repentance (Matt. 3:8; Acts 26:20). Some think that because they have walked down an aisle confessing sin or have given their hand to a preacher in sorrow, they have repented. Repentance is more than merely being sorry.

*Repentance is more than stopping the wrongdoing.* While repentance demonstrates itself in the fact that a person ceases to do evil, it also means that one turns his heart to the Lord and embraces His will completely. There are those who sweep the house clean but do not fill their lives with the Lord (Matt. 12:43-45). One may cease to do evil, but real repentance means that one lovingly learns to observe everything Jesus commands.

*Repentance is not pretense.* One may pretend at righteousness, but the Lord knows every man's heart. One may attend the meetings of the church; but if he does not clean up his life, he has not repented. Pretending service to God is hypocrisy.

### **Repentance Begins by a Change of Heart toward Sin**

A penitent person is sorry for his sin against God. He is sorry that he hurt and grieved God by his transgression of God's law and realizes that Jesus suffered on the cross for his own sin (1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 2:24). It is this kind of godly sorrow that leads to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). God's kindness and grace leads us to repent (Rom. 2:4). Sin so grieves God that it breaks our relationship with Him (Isa. 59:1,2). The Ephesians made known their repentance by "bringing their books together and burning them in the sight of all" (Acts 19:19).

A penitent person is sorry for his sin against others. He realizes that not only has he sinned against God but that his sins have caused other people to suffer. God gave his laws for our good (Deut. 6:24; 10:13); they protect us from the evil of other people. We hurt others with our tongues, with our immoral acts, and with our example. Jesus said that one who sets a stumbling block before a little one sins grievously (Matt. 18:6-9).

A penitent person is sorry for his sin against himself. David said, "For I know my

transgressions, and my sin is ever before me" (Psalm 51:3). The consequent guilt that comes from sin can be a heavy burden (Psalm 32:1-5). Like the prodigal son, those who sin reap a sense of great unworthiness (Luke 15:11-24). Furthermore, those who sow to the flesh will from the flesh reap corruption (Gal. 6:7,8). He who sins against the wisdom of God injures himself (Prov. 8:36). Solomon said, "His own iniquities will capture the wicked, and he will be held with the cords of his sin" (Prov. 5:22).

A penitent person is sorry for the false teaching he taught or believed. False doctrine is like a gangrene that corrupts and destroys (2 Tim. 2:17). Those who support others who teach false doctrines participate in their evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

### **Repentance Continues in the Turning of the Heart toward the Right**

Repentance is not only a turning away from sin, it is also a turning toward God. A penitent person's heart is changed toward loving the things God loves and wanting to please Him in every respect. When the prodigal son "came to his senses," he left the far country and came home to the Father (Luke 15:11-24). The sinner cries out, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). There is a resolution to do right within the heart of a penitent man. The consequence to this is that not only does he become loyal to what is right, he also hates what is wrong (Rom. 12:9; 1 Thess. 5:21,22; Psalm 97:10). The penitent Thessalonians demonstrated their repentance by turning from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thess. 1:9).

The penitent believer is willing to take up daily the cross of Christ and follow the Lord (Luke 9:23). He is willing to lose his life for the sake of Christ that he may find it eternally. He is neither ashamed of neither Christ nor his teachings (Luke 9:26; Rom. 1:16). His heart has so changed that he is determined to do everything the Lord asks him to do.

One may cut down a tree, but chances are that it will sprout again. To be rid of it, one must dig out the roots. So it is with sin. It is not enough to quit committing a foul deed; the heart must be changed, for it is from the heart that foul deeds arise (Matt. 15:18).



Zacchaeus the tax collector set a wonderful example of repentance in Luke 19:1-10. Not only was his heart changed into gladness, but he vowed: "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount" (Luke 19:8). Zacchaeus was willing to restore fourfold whatever he had wrongfully taken. Those who turn to the Lord want to restore whatever loss they have caused others if and when they are able to do so.

### **Repentance Completes Itself in a Change of Life and Behavior.**

John the Baptist told the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to him for baptism that they should "produce fruit keeping with repentance" (Matt. 3:8). Jesus does not leave us where he finds us. He told the woman caught in the act of adultery to "go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:11). Jesus upbraided the Pharisees and leaders of his day because they did not repent at his preaching. He said, "The men of Nineveh will stand up at judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here" (Matt. 12:41). In Jonah's time Nineveh, from the king to the beasts, fasted, wore sackcloth and sat in ashes to show their penitence over their sin (Jonah 3:5-9). The penitent son of the vineyard owner changed his mind and went to work in the vineyard (Matt. 21:28-30). Christians do not merely talk the talk, they walk the walk. James urged the Christians, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (Jas. 1:22). No one is blessed who sees that he needs to change but fails to change (Jas. 1:23-25; 4:17).

### **Some People Harden Themselves and Refuse to Repent**

"See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (Heb. 3:12,13).

Jeremiah dealt with people in his time who had "made their faces harder than rocks; they have refused to repent" (Jer. 5:3). Sin deadens the conscience and calluses the soul (1 Tim. 4:2; Eph.

4:19). This is why the appeal to repent is an urgent one. God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30); He is not willing that any man should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). The person who goes on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth no longer has a sacrifice for sins in Christ Jesus, but may expect the judgment of flaming fire (Heb. 10:26-31).

God cannot force you to repent, but he can appeal to you. If there is no repentance, there can be no pardon. He promises forgiveness to the penitent but does not promise tomorrow to the procrastinator (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:7).

### **Repentance is perhaps the Hardest of God's Commands to Obey**

Men are quick to seek to justify themselves, but they are slow to recognize and to acknowledge that they are wrong. One basic difference between Saul and David was that Saul generally sought to justify himself, whereas David could be brought to repentance.

### **The Implications of Repentance**

1. That man is a free moral being, completely capable of obeying God's commands. Man is able to change; otherwise God is demanding that man do what he cannot do.
2. That the individual standing in need of repenting is personally responsible for his own sins and may not blame others for his own faults.
3. That repentance involves the whole heart: emotions, reasoning, and the will. Repentance is the deliberate choice of a persuaded individual, not the temporary response of an emotional experience.

## **Who Is a New Testament Christian?**

Only Jesus Christ has a right to determine who is and is not a Christian. I have no right to do that. What men think or believe is irrelevant. Our task is to ask if Jesus has spoken on such matters and to find out what He has said. Our focus in this lesson is not to determine WHO is right but to determine WHAT is right. Nor is our purpose to be sectarian. Our goal is to go to

heaven and to lead others there, based upon the only accurate guide we have--the Bible.

### **What Does Jesus Say about Who Will Enter the Kingdom of Heaven**

Jesus said in Matt. 7:21-23 that not everyone who thinks he is going to enter will be able--but he who does His will. Some sincere, busy people will be lost. They were lost because they were lawless; they did not do what God wills. Jesus said:

- John 8:24 unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins John 3:16
- Luke 13:3,5 unless you repent, you will perish
- Luke 14:27 "whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."
- Luke 14:33 "So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."

John 3:1-7 you must be born again to enter the kingdom. This birth is not optional. This birth is of the water and of the Spirit. This birth is a reference to baptism (3:22). In Mark 16:15,16 both faith and baptism are necessary to be saved. It is the one who both believes and is baptized who is saved.

### **How People Fulfilled These Requirements Of Jesus**

- Acts 2:14-41 Pentecost pricked by the preaching of Peter, they asked what must we do: repent, be baptized
- Acts 8:5-13 Samaritans heard the preaching of the kingdom and Jesus Christ, they believed and were baptized
- Acts 8:35-39 Ethiopian Eunuch Philip preached Jesus, and the Eunuch believed, confessed his faith, and was baptized
- Acts 9:3-6, 15-19; 22:12-16 Saul of Tarsus told by Ananias to "be baptized and wash away your sins"
- Acts 10:34-38 Cornelius' household was taught by Peter and commanded to be baptized

- Acts 16:13-15 Lydia's household Paul preached, she believed the preaching and was baptized
- Acts 16:25-34 Philippian jailer's household Paul spoke the word of the Lord, they were baptized that same hour of the night, having believed.

*Summary:* They heard the word, believed it, loved the lord, repented, confessed faith, and were baptized for the remission of sins.

### **What Is Baptism?**

Webster's Unabridged Dictionary: baptism: "a ceremony or sacrament of admitting a person into Christianity or a specific church by dipping him in water or sprinkling water on him, as a symbol of washing away sin."

Sprinkling for baptism was first mentioned in 251 A.D. when Cornelius opposed Novation who was sprinkled on what he thought was his death-bed. Cornelius opposed the practice. It was not until 1311, the Council of Ravenna, that men held sprinkling to be equivalent to baptism. This is 1300 years later than the New Testament.

### **What does the New Testament Teach in regard to baptism?**

"*Baptidzo*" means to dip, plunge, or immerse. There are other words in the New Testament which mean to sprinkle or pour (*rhantidzo* & *ekcheo*).

- Matt. 3:16 "went up out of the water"
- John 3:23 John baptized at Aenon, because there was much water there
- Acts 8:38,39 Eunuch went down into water, baptism, came up out of
- Rom. 6:4-7 "buried with him" "raised with him"
- Col. 2:12,13 "buried with him" "raised with him"

We have no authority to substitute one action for another in fulfilling God's commandments. Christian baptism is by immersion. Though one may think he has been "baptized" by sprinkling or pouring, one has not been scripturally baptized.

### **Are Infants To Be Baptized?**

We have no New Testament command or record of any infant being baptized. We have no right to make a law for God. The first infant

baptism we know of took place in the latter part of the second century A.D. Tertullian opposed it strenuously. It was not until the fourth century that this practice was accepted--four centuries too late. Acts 8:12 says that "men and women" were being baptized but not infants. Only people who could hear, believe and repent were candidates for baptism. Becoming a Christian requires personal decision (Luke 14:27). No one can believe or repent for another or be saved for another. Further, infants have no sins needing forgiveness (1 John 3:4)

### *Conclusion*

Jesus is the Savior; only He has a right to legislate. No one has a right to suggest new ways for people to become Christians--ways that depart from the teachings of Jesus. When people learn better, they should do better. Only those who have obeyed the gospel have the hope of entering the kingdom of heaven.

## Is Baptism Necessary to Salvation?

### **1. John 3:3-7**

"I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." "You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'" Cannot means that "it is impossible for him" to enter. "Must" means "it is morally necessary" for one to be born of water and the Spirit. Virtually all scholars of any merit are agreed that the birth of water and Spirit is a reference to baptism. Tit. 3:3-5 speaks of our salvation as a "washing of regeneration"

### **2. Acts 2:37-41**

Baptism's purpose is "for the forgiveness of your sins" (NASV), "so that your sins may be forgiven" (NIV), or "so that your sins will be forgiven" (New Evangelical Translation). All 3000 people who were baptized understood what they needed to do and gladly did it. The baptized were added at baptism (2:41), and the "saved" were added (2:47) to the church. Here the baptized and the saved are regarded as identical. The people were not told to pray at a mourner's

bench. They were not told to pray the sinners' prayer. They were baptized that very day.

### **3. Acts 9:1-9; 22:12-16**

Ananias came to Paul and told him the things that he must do. In spite of the fact Paul had spent three days fasting (9:9) and praying (9:11), Ananias commanded baptism. Paul was not yet saved, though he was penitent and praying. Ananias told him, "And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name." Ananias would not have commanded Paul to be baptized and wash away his sins if he were already saved. One does not take medicine because he is well but because he is ill.

### **4. Romans 6:3-7**

Baptism is the act of faith, which unites the penitent believer with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. One is baptized into Christ. He is baptized into his death and dies with Christ. His old man of sin is crucified with Him. He is also united with Him by baptism in His resurrection. Jesus did not have new life until he arose from the dead. In the same way, new life is not granted until one rises from the watery grave of baptism. The symbolism of baptism marks the time when one by the grace of God is united with Christ. Until one is baptized, he cannot claim to be united with Christ. It is in Christ's death that he shed his blood (John 19:34). To be baptized into his death is to come in contact with the blood, which cleanses from sin (Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5). The old self of sin was crucified with him "so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless" (inoperative, inactive). It is the person who had died (with Christ) who is freed from sin. Unbaptized people are still in their sins. See Col. 2:12,13

### **5. Titus 3:3-7**

"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit." God is the one who does the saving. He does it through (by means of) the washing of rebirth and renewal caused by the Holy Spirit. This washing of rebirth or regeneration is baptism (John 3:5).

### 6. 1 Pet. 3:21 (NASV)

"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." Baptism is the means by which God saves us and grants us a good conscience. Baptism is the means by which we appeal (ask) God for a good conscience and are cleansed. Baptism unites us with Christ in His resurrection (Rom. 6:4-5).

Baptism was a part of every example of conversion in the New Testament. The Eunuch did not rejoice until after his baptism; he was not content to wait and asked to be baptized. The jailer and his household considered baptism so important that they were baptized in the middle of the night. When the Samaritans believed the preaching of Philip about Jesus and His kingdom, they were baptized. The 3000 who obeyed at Pentecost were baptized that very day. If baptism were a non-essential, why is there a constant urgency in the New Testament to submit to it?

### 7. Acts 2:38

"Repent and be baptized everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Possessing the Spirit is essential to having Christ in our lives. Roman 8:9 "And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." The Holy Spirit is given to all who obey Him (Acts 5:32). We possess the Spirit, "who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who God's possession--to the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:13,14). The Spirit is given to us because we are sons (Gal. 4:6); we become sons of God by faith when we put on Christ in baptism (Gal. 3:26,27). Baptism is essential.

### 9. Rom. 6:3,4; Gal. 3:27

Baptism is "into" Christ and the act by which we put on Christ. Every promise, every spiritual blessing we have is "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:20). Since baptism puts us in Christ, we could not have been in Him before baptism or without baptism. Baptism is the difference between whether one is in Christ,

where all spiritual blessings are, or out of Christ, where there are no promises.

- Redemption Col. 1:13,14
- Salvation 2 Tim. 2:10
- New Creature 2 Cor. 5:17
- No Condemnation Romans 8:1

### 10. 1 Cor. 12:13

"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."

Baptism is the act by which one enters the body of Christ, the church (Eph. 1:22,23; 5:23). The church does not do the saving but is rather made up of those who are saved. Christ is the "Savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23). Christ purchased the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28). The act of baptism is when an individual is saved and added to the body of Christ. If one is not baptized, he has not been purchased by the blood of Christ nor saved.

### The Testimony of Church History

1. G.R. Beasley Murray, a noted Baptist scholar, quotes Adolf Schlatter as saying, "There is no gift or power which the Apostolic documents do not ascribe to baptism. He meant of course, that there is no gift or power available to man in consequence of the redemption of Christ that is not available to him in baptism. Though many will expostulate at the statement, there is little doubt that Schlatter is right."<sup>1</sup>

2. Everett Ferguson in *Early Christians Speak* list these church fathers who explicitly taught that baptism was for the remission of sins:<sup>2</sup>

- Barnabas, *Epistle of Barnabas* 11:1,8,11. (70-79 A.D.)
- b. *The Shepherd of Hermas*, Mandate IV. 3:1; *Similitudes* IX. 16:3-6. (not later than 155 A.D.)
- Justin Martyr, *Apology* I. 61. (175 A.D.)

<sup>1</sup> G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 263.

<sup>2</sup> Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak* (Austin, Tex.: Sweet Publishing Co., 1971), pp. 33-36.

- Theophilus, *To Autolycus* II. 16. (2nd Century A.D.)
- Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 3 (150 A.D.)
- Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor* I. 6:25:3-26:2; 30:2; 32:1. (2nd Century A.D.)
- Tertullian, *On Baptism* 12 (150 A.D.)

3. While the testimony of early church leaders does not prove that a belief is true--only the Bible is our authority--it does show how the early church understood the teaching of the New Testament. The idea that baptism is unnecessary is actually a very late development. Zwingli and Calvin in the 16<sup>th</sup> century believed baptism was a "work of merit" and was unnecessary to salvation, since one cannot earn salvation. It is clear however that the grace of God works through the washing of regeneration, which is baptism (Tit. 3:3-7).

<b>Acts 2:38</b>
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**Williams (Baptist)**

"You must repent--and as an expression of it, every one of you be baptized. . . that you may have your sins forgiven."

**J.B. Phillips Translation, 1958**

Peter told them, "You must repent and every one of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that you may have your sins forgiven and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**Today's English Version, 1966**

Peter said to them: "Turn away from your sins, each one of you, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit."

**Amplified New Testament, 1958**

And Peter answered them, Repent--change your views, and purpose to accept the will of God in your inner selves instead of rejecting it--and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of and release from your sins; and you shall received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Goodspeed**

"You must repent, and every one of you be baptized ...in order to have your sins forgiven."

**Short Baptist College, 1921**

"Repent and be baptized every one of you. . . for (in order that you may receive) the remission of your sins."

**New Evangelical Translation, 1990; God's Word to the Nations, 1995**

Peter answered them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ so that your sins will be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**Contemporary English Version, 1995**

Peter said, "Turn back to God! Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven. Then you will be given the Holy Spirit."

**Easy-To-Read Version, 1990**

Peter said to them, "Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Then God will forgive your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**McCord's New Testament Translation, 1989**

Peter said to them, "Change your hearts, and let each one of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins might be forgiven, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**New International Version (1st edition), 1974, 1978**

Peter replied: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (1984 edition: "for the forgiveness of your sins.")

**William Barclay's Daily Study Bible, 1976**

Peter said to them, Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**New Revised Standard Version, 1989**

Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**The Message, 1994**

Peter said, "Change your life. Turn to God and be baptized each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, so your sins are forgiven. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**Lexicons:**

Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1889: εις αφεσιν αμαρτιων, to obtain the forgiveness of sins, Acts ii.38."

Bauer's *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. and augmented by Gingrich and Danker,

1979: "to denote purpose in order to, to . . . εις αφεσιν αμαρτιων for forgiveness of sins, so that sins might be forgiven Matt. 26:28; cf. Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3; Ac 2:38."

The *Expositor's Greek Testament* (R. J. Knowling): εις, 'unto' R.V., signifying the aim (that is, the aim of the command is the forgiveness of sins, pds.) "It has been objected that St. Peter lays no stress upon the death of Christ in this connection, but rather upon His resurrection. But we cannot doubt that St. Peter who had emphasized the fact of the crucifixion would have remembered his Master's solemn declaration a few hours before His death, Matt. 26:28. Even if the words in this Gospel εις αφεσιν αμαρτιων are rejected, the fact remains that St. Peter would have connected the thought of the forgiveness of sins, a prerogative which, as every Jew was eager to maintain, belonged to God and to God alone, with the (new) covenant which Christ had ratified by His death. Harnack admits that however difficult it may be to explain precisely the words of Jesus to the disciples at the Last Supper yet one thing is certain, that He connected the forgiveness of sins with His death. . . . As each individual εκαστος was to be baptized, so each, if truly penitent, would receive the forgiveness of sins." (Vol. 2, p. 91.)

### Baptism among the Early Church Fathers

The first mention of sprinkling in extant literature is in the *Didache*, which is usually dated approximately 150 A.D. It was first known as "clinical baptism." Beginning with this early uninspired writing, there are occasional mentions of sprinkling in the general literature of church history on down through the centuries. It was not, however, until the Council of Ravenna, held in 1311, under the direction of Pope Clement V, that sprinkling was officially accepted by the Roman Catholic Church instead of immersion. In fact, some church buildings still standing show the evidence of the previous practice of immersion. Such is the case of the large baptistry building which stands near the leaning tower of Pisa in Italy. The building contains a large full-size baptistry in which possibly as many as 50 people

could be immersed at one time. Obviously, it was built before 1311 and the change in doctrine.

1. The Bible nowhere speaks of sprinkling as baptism. Rather the word baptizo is used which literally means "to dip, plunge, or immerse." The Catholic Encyclopedia says: "The most ancient form usually employed was unquestionably immersion. This is not only evident from the writings of the Fathers and the early rituals of both the Latin and Oriental churches, but it can also be gathered from the Epistles of St. Paul, who speaks of baptism as a bath (Eph. 5:26; Rom. 6:4; Titus 3:5). In the Latin Church, immersion seems to have prevailed until the 12th century. After that time it is found in some even as late as the 16th century. Infusion and aspersion, however, were growing common in the 13th century and gradually prevailed in the Western church. The Oriental churches have retained immersion, though not always in the sense of plunging the candidate's entire body below the water."<sup>3</sup>

2. Everett Ferguson: "A period of instruction, especially pertaining to the moral implications for the Christian life, preceded the baptism . . . Baptism was administered to those who believed Christian teaching and repented of their sins" (p. 37)<sup>4</sup>

"As the confession implies, faith was the necessary prerequisite to baptism. Baptism was administered to those who are persuaded and believe." *Didache* III.6 "Baptism was also viewed as an act of repentance" *Didache* III.3 (p. 37)

#### Substitutes for Baptism

"The precedent of Jewish washings, the secular usage of baptizein, circumstantial accounts of baptism in early Christian literature, and the symbolism of baptism as burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-11; Col. 2:12) indicate that the normal practice in early Christian baptism was a dipping or plunging."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. II: 261,62.

<sup>4</sup> Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak* (Austin, Tex.: Sweet Publishing Co., 1971).

<sup>5</sup> Everett Ferguson, "Baptism," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988), 131-134.

"The *Didache* is the only indication before the middle of the third century of the use of anything but immersion, even in the case of emergency."

"The clinical baptism of Novation (Cyprian IV.9, 10) provided an interesting case. We know the circumstance from his opponent, Cornelius, who was elected bishop of Rome in A.D. 251 . . . The opposition to the validity of Novation's ordination rested as much on the fact of his receiving sickbed baptism as on the way it was administered, but doubts about the latter were part of the misgivings about the former. There was a feeling that those who received baptism in these circumstances were not fully converted and submitted to baptism only as a safety protection in view of impending death." (pp. 51,52)

### Infant Baptism

"The early Christian feeling about the innocence of infants finds clear expression in second century authors and in the writer who makes the first explicit reference to infant baptism in Christian history, Tertullian (*On Baptism* 18:1-10,12). Innocence here meant "sinlessness, or at least guiltlessness." (58)

"This feeling plus the stress on baptism for the remission of sins explains why there is no early reference to infant baptism. It was actually the growth of the practice of infant baptism which led to a changed view of the spiritual condition of the infant." (p. 59)

"The earliest likely reference to infant baptism is to be found in Irenaeus" (*Against Heresies* II.xxii.4). (p. 59) "The first unambiguous reference is to be found in Tertullian (V. 12), and he was opposed to the practice . . . He seems to be stating, as elsewhere in his treatise *On Baptism*, the common position of the church." (p. 60)

"Origen affords evidence that the practice preceded the theological justification (*Homilies* on Luke V.14, 15). The sequence was infant baptisms then the doctrine of infant sinfulness, and not a doctrine of original sin leading to the practice of infant baptism. The reasons for baptizing a child were being discussed. The child did not have sins of his own. Origen's answer was that a stain attaches to birth. This is not yet a doctrine of original sin (that is, the inheritance of the guilt of Adam's transgression)." (Pp. 60,61)

"The first ecclesiastical command to baptize infants is contained in the fourth-century Apostolic Constitutions VI:15." (p. 64)

### Other quotations:

1. "It seems clear that up until about the end of the fifth century, adult believer's baptism was the normal practice of the church. This fact is demonstrated by the emphasis in the Early Fathers on careful preparation for baptism, and the necessity to live a sinless life after baptism."<sup>6</sup>

"The practice of infant baptism completes the early patristic developments. Infant baptism was practiced in the second century, but only with the aid of an adult sponsor. A full defense of this custom came to expression in the theology of Augustine in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Only in the fifth century did the Syrian Church make infant baptism obligatory; prior to this time it was the exception rather than the rule."<sup>7</sup>

2. William Barclay: "Commonly baptism was by total immersion and that practice lent itself to a symbolism to which sprinkling does not so readily lend itself. When a man descended into the water and the water closed over his head, it was like being buried. When he emerged from the water, it was like rising from the grave. Baptism was symbolically like dying and rising again. The man died to one kind of life and rose to another; he died to the old life of sin and rose to the new life of grace."<sup>8</sup>

### Does baptidzo really mean "to immerse"?

After an exhaustive survey of more than 200 examples in Greek literature and ancient translations, Thomas J. Conant concluded: "The word baptizein, during the whole existence of the Greek as a spoken language, had a perfectly defined and unvarying import. In its literal use it meant, as has been shown, to put entirely into or under a liquid, or other penetrable substance,

<sup>6</sup> Donald M. Lake, "Baptism," in *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. J.D. Douglas, revised (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1978), pp. 99-101.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, in the Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), p. 84.

generally water, so that the object was wholly covered by the inclosing element."<sup>9</sup>

G. R. Beasley-Murray in his treatise on baptism states: "Despite the frequent denials of exegetes, it is surely reasonable to believe that the reason for Paul's stating that the baptized is buried as dead, rather than he died (as in v. 6), is the nature of baptism as immersion. The symbolism of immersion representing burial is striking, and if baptism is at all to be compared with prophetic symbolism, the parallelism of act and event symbolized is not unimportant."<sup>10</sup>

Alexander Campbell said, "Greek lexicographers, with one consent, in their definitions, as well as Greek philosophers, historians, orators, and poets, in their use of this term baptizo, render it dip, plunge, immerse: never as indicating sprinkling, pouring, or scattering any thing."<sup>11</sup>

Gingrich & Danker's Revised Lexicon: "dip, immerse, mid. dip oneself, wash."<sup>12</sup> In New Testament times, the word was employed in describing the dipping of a garment in dye. "Sprinkling, as a form of baptism took the place of immersion after a few centuries in the early Church, not from any established rule, but by common consent, and it has since been very generally practiced in all but the Greek and Baptist churches, which insist upon immersion."<sup>13</sup> "In essence the action is an extremely simple one, though pregnant with meaning. It consists in a going in or under the baptismal water in the name of Christ (Acts 19:5) or more commonly the Trinity (Matt. 28:19). Immersion was fairly

certainly the original practice and continued in general use up to the Middle Ages."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas J. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1977), pp. 187, 188. Originally published by the American Bible Union, New York, 1864.

<sup>10</sup> G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 133.

<sup>11</sup> Alexander Campbell, *Christian Baptism* (Nashville, Tenn.: Gospel Advocate Co.: 1951), p. 90.

<sup>12</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed., revised and augmented by F.W. Gingrich and Frederick Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 131.

<sup>13</sup> J.L. Sooy, "Sprinkling," *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, ed. John McClintock & James Strong (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1895, reprinted 1968), IX: 968.

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<sup>14</sup> Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "Baptism," *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Everett F. Harrison (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1960), pp. 83-85.



**Timeline on the History of Baptism**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
150 A.D.	First mention of "sprinkling" or clinical baptism in Didache.
c. 182/188 A.D.	Irenaeus in "Against Heresies" may be the first to specifically mention infant baptism
c. 200 A.D.	Tertullian the first to specifically mention "infant baptism." He opposes it as a relatively new practice.
c. 215	Hippolytus in the "Apostolic Tradition" states "First Baptize the children"
c. 254-256	Cyprian of Carthage argues that baptisms given by schismatics are invalid; Bishop Stephen of Rome holds that the sacraments belong not to the minister but to Christ
303–306	Diocletian's persecution
311 & 315	First Majorinus, and then Donatus set up as rival bishops of Carthage, after a bishop is ordained by a possible apostate. "Donatists" believed a) only Donatist baptisms are valid and b) baptisms performed by the unworthy are invalid
c. 312	Conversion of Constantine to Christianity
337	Constantine is baptized shortly before his death
c. 380	British monk Pelagius is shocked by lax morals among Christians in Rome - He eventually rejects the doctrines of Grace and Original Sin, but still believes that infants should be baptized (John 3:5)
412 – 421	Augustine denounces the views of Pelagius – Augustine believes that we are all tainted by original sin; unbaptized children are condemned to "darkness"
418	Council of Carthage condemns "whoever says that newborn infants should not be baptized"
6 <sup>th</sup> Century	Justinian I made infant baptism compulsory.
1311	Council of Ravenna officially accepted sprinkling as a valid substitute for immersion
1412	Council of Florence states infants should receive baptism "as soon as is convenient"
January 21, 1525	Students of Ulrich Zwingli illegally rebaptize (immerse) themselves in Zurich, starting the Anabaptist movement
1536	John Calvin publishes "Christian Institutes," denying necessity of baptism
1528	Luther states in his Large Catechism "we must be baptized or we cannot be saved"
1609	Englishman John Smyth re-baptizes 40 followers in Amsterdam, starting the Baptist movement
1649	Westminster Confession affirms infant baptism, but views that baptism is not necessary for salvation
1812	Alexander Campbell is baptized by Baptist preacher Luce.
1823	Campbell realizes and teaches baptism is "for the remission of sins."
1837	Campbell's controversy in the Lunenburg letter over the pious unimmersed.
1899	Debate on the Validity of baptism as to its purpose
c. 1900	Birth of Pentecostalism, with emphasis on "baptism with the Holy Ghost and

	fire”
1915-1929	Controversy among Christian churches and Disciples over "open fellowship"
1980	Pope John Paul II reaffirms the necessity for infant baptism, in the “Instruction On Infant Baptism” by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

## What Happens at Baptism?

Before Baptism	Baptism: A Dividing Line	After Baptism
Guilt of Sins	Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46-49	Remission of Sins
The Unsaved	Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21	The Saved
Sins Not Washed Away	Acts 22:16	Sins Washed Away
No Gift of the Holy Spirit	John 14:17; Acts 2:38; 5:32; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13,14	Gift of the Holy Spirit A pledge of our inheritance
Children of the Devil	John 8:44; 2 Cor. 6:16	Children of God
Not in Christ	Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27	In Christ
Not in the Kingdom of God	John 3:5; Col. 1:13	In the Kingdom of God
Not in the “one body,” the church	1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22,23	In the “one body,” the church
Those who do not have all spiritual blessings	Eph. 1:3	Those who do have all spiritual blessings
Those who do not have the abundant life	John 10:10	Those who do have the abundant life
Those who do not have an inheritance reserved in heaven	1 Pet. 1:4; 3:21	Those who do have an inheritance reserved in heaven

### What Will Happen To Good But Unbaptized People?<sup>15</sup>

A person of unquestioned sincerity, convinced she should be baptized, hesitated because she knew of many fine people who were not baptized. “What will happen to good unbaptized people?” she asked. Certainly it is easy to understand her reasoning.

That there are excellent moral people, fair to all men, merciful to the unfortunate, who have not been baptized into the Lord is a well-known fact. But if a good man touches a highly charged electric wire, God’s law about electricity is not changed. That good people have not been

immersed does not change God’s law about immersion (Rom. 6:3,4; Col. 2:12). That many millions of people have been baptized (?) as infants does not change God’s law that baptism is for believers (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 8:36). That millions of people have been baptized into various sects and denominations does not change God’s law that baptism is into one body, one church (1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:18). That many sincere Jews and upright Mohammedans have not confessed Jesus does not change God’s law about the deity of His Son (John 3:18; Mark 16:6; Acts 4:12). That some are moral and yet deny the existence of God does not change God’s law about faith in him (Heb. 11:6).

But the laws of God also reveal that some people are better off in God’s sight unbaptized than some who have been immersed (2 Pet. 2:20-22). God’s laws also reveal that some

<sup>15</sup> Hugo McCord, “What Will Happen to Good Unbaptized People,” in Fifty Years of Lectures, Vol. 2, pp. 252,253.

heathen people, not being as stubborn as some who have heard the message of Jesus are going to have it easier in the day of judgment (Matt. 11:20-24). God's word also reveals that some without a Bible have lived better before God than some knowing the Bible (Rom. 2:14-24).

Certainly one should conclude that no matter what mercy some may have in the day of judgment, that mercy will not be extended to one who knows God's law on baptism and who refuses to obey (James 4:17; 1 John 2:4).

### **Are Infants to Be Baptized? What does the Bible say?**

1. There is not one single command or example of infant baptism in the New Testament.

2. Rom. 6:16-18 Infant baptism denies the person the opportunity to freely choose to follow Jesus Christ. Would we regard an adult baptized by force, independent of his will, as truly baptized?

3. Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16 fixes instruction and belief as prerequisites to baptism. (See also John 6:44,45) Infants cannot exercise faith in the gospel message.

4. Acts 2:41 the 3000 who were baptized gladly received the preaching of Peter and chose to "save" themselves (2:40). In addition to receiving the word, those who were baptized were commanded to repent (2:38). Infants are not capable of repenting. If baptism is for "the remission of sins," we must assume infants are lost in sin.

5. Acts 8:12 the Samaritans who believed Philip's preaching of the kingdom and Jesus Christ were baptized, both men and women (males and females of full age and stature). It is assumed that infants were baptized whenever "household" baptisms occurred. Why were infants not baptized in this instance, if indeed household baptisms included infants? Surely, some Samaritans had infants.

6. Acts 8:36,37 the Eunuch was permitted baptism after the confession of his faith. "If you believe with all your heart, you may."

7. Acts 10:44-48 Cornelius and his people heard the word before they were baptized

8. Acts 16:33,34 all the house of the Philippian jailer was baptized, having believed and rejoicing at their obedience.

9. Acts 16:14 Lydia was listening to Paul, and the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's preaching

10. Acts 18:8 Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

11. 1 Cor. 1:16 Stephanas' household was comprised of people old enough to have "devoted themselves for ministry to the saints" (16:15).

12. 1 Pet. 3:21 baptism is an inquiry for a good conscience. Do infants have defiled consciences?

13. Col. 3:5-11; Rom. 6:3-7 Baptism is the putting away of the old man of sin and taking on the new self freed from sin. What old man of sin does an infant have to put away?

### **Are Babies Born in Sin? Total Hereditary Depravity**

The doctrine of Total Hereditary Depravity says that every person from birth has a nature that is corrupt, perverse, and sinful throughout. As a result of this inborn corruption, the natural man is totally unable to do anything spiritually good. This spiritual inability means that the sinner is so spiritually bankrupt that he can do nothing pertaining to his salvation. The natural man is enslaved to sin; he is a child of Satan, rebellious toward God, blind to truth, corrupt, and unable to save himself or prepare himself for salvation.

It further says that man was not created this way, for God made Adam upright. When Adam chose evil in the garden, he thereby plunged himself and the entire race into spiritual ruin and lost for himself and his descendants the ability to make right choices in the spiritual realm. His descendants are still free to choose; but inasmuch as Adam's offspring are born with sinful natures, they do not have the ability to choose spiritual good over evil. Consequently, man's will is no longer free; instead, man's will, as the result of inherited depravity, is in bondage

to his sinful nature. As a result of Adam's sin, men are born in sin and by nature are spiritually dead. Therefore, if they are to become God's children and enter His kingdom, they must be born anew of the Spirit.

### **The Bible Says:**

#### *1. The spiritual condition of a person at birth:*

Rom. 7:7-12 "I was once alive apart from the Law"

Rom 9:10,11 "the children..., neither having done anything good or bad"

Ezek. 28:15 "You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you."

Acts 17:29 "being then the offspring of God"

Heb. 12:9 God is the "Father of our spirits"

Luke 18:15,16 "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." (How can this be if infants are born wholly corrupt and unable to do good?)

#### *2. How does a man alienate himself from God?*

Rom. 7:9,10 "when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died"

Cal. 1:21 "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior"

Psalms 58:3 "Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies." (They are not born astray; they go astray)

Isa. 59:1,2 "but your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."

1 John 3:4 "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness." (Sin is an act not an inheritable trait.)

Rom. 6:16 "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to some to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey--whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?" (One chooses slavery to sin; he is not born enslaved to sin.)

Ezek. 18:1-32 "The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son." Sin (as an act) and its effects may be learned, but sin and its guilt are not inherited.

#### *3. Man is not totally depraved; man is capable of good but is weak*

The idea of weakness to temptation and sin is not the same as total inability to do any good

Matt. 26:41 Jesus said "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body (flesh) is weak." (That man is willing means that man has some good within him.)

Gen. 2:17 Adam and Eve were not to eat fruit from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (This is not the tree of the knowledge of evil and evil. Adam and Eve received knowledge of good as well as evil. They were not totally corrupt in knowledge; even in sin they had knowledge of good.)

Gen. 8:21 "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood."

Luke 8:15 In the parable of the sower: "But the seed on the good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop."

Acts 10:2 Cornelius, though an unregenerate man was nevertheless "devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly."

Rom. 7:21-23 "When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members."

Rom. 2:14,15 Gentiles who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law (how can they if they are totally unable to any good?)

#### *4. That man is free to choose between good and evil, God and Satan.*

Rom. 6:16-18 "though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were committed. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness."

Acts 2:40 "Save yourselves from this perverse generation"

1 Pet. 1:22 "you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth"

John 3:16 "that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"

John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects (does not obey) the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”

Rev. 22:17 “whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life)”

Josh. 24:15 “choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve”

1 Kings 18:21 Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”

#### 5. *Some questions:*

- Luke 13:5, “unless you repent, you too will all perish.” Why would Jesus Christ condemn people for failure to repent when they are incapable of repentance or doing any good toward their salvation?
- Heb. 11:6 ‘without faith it is impossible to please God’ Why would God demand faith from all men, when He knows that men are incapable of believing?
- 2 Cor. 5:18-20 “Be reconciled to God.” Why would God ask men to be reconciled if they were not capable of doing anything by which they could be reconciled? (The word “reconcile” implies a separation and a reunion; it means “to bring back into harmony.” A reconciled husband and wife were once in harmony, separated, and later restored. If an infant is born in sin, he cannot be reconciled because he was never in harmony with the Lord. Infants are not born in sin but born pure; they separated from God when they sin and reconciled to God by obedience to the gospel.)

#### **An Objection:**

What about Psalm 51:5? “Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” Doesn’t this imply we are born in sin?

The NIV translates poorly here. Literally, David’s words would be translated: “Behold in iniquity I was born and in sin my mother conceived me.” The idea of this verse is that David was born in an evil and sinful world. Let’s remember that sin is an act, a transgression of God’s law. Sin is not inherited; it is learned.

One speaks a certain language because he was born in an environment that speaks that particular language. In Acts 2 the apostles spoke with the miraculous gift of tongues to people from many nations. When they heard the apostles, they marveled and said, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?” (Acts 2:7,8 NASB). One learns a language, and one learns sin by being born into a world that practices it.

To make this passage say that David was born depraved and sinful as a babe would make it contradict what David says in Psalm 22:9-10: “Yet you brought me out of the womb; you make me trust in you even at my mother’s breast. From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother’s womb you have been my God.” The fact that the world is a sinful place in which to be born does not mean that one is born sinful and guilty of sin.

### **God's Second Law of Pardon For the Christian**

When a person has been baptized for the remission of his sins, all his past sins are forgiven. This by itself, however, does not insure that the Christian will not sin after his baptism. What should the Christian do when he has sinned against God? How are the Christian’s sins forgiven? There are three things God expects of a Christian who has committed a sin: (1) confession of his sin, (2) repentance, (3) prayer for forgiveness.

#### **Confession of Sin**

James 5:16 “Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

1 John 1:8,9 “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

#### **Repentance**

Acts 8:18-24 “When Simon the Sorcerer saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money and

said, 'Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.'

Peter noted that Simon's money would perish with him and that his heart was not right before God. "Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin."

Col. 3:5-11 "put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature. . . rid yourselves of all such things. . . put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

Prayer

Acts 8:22 "Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord"

James 5:16 "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed"

1 John 5:16 "If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life."

### The Conditional Security of Believers

#### The False Doctrine of "Once Saved, Always Saved"

The doctrine of "once saved, always saved" suggests that the Christian, once truly saved, can never do anything to forfeit his salvation and be finally lost in hell. This belief means that Christians have an unconditional security in Christ. They suggest that any person who appears to be a Christian and falls away was never truly converted in the first place. They believe that Christians do sin; but when they sin, they are punished in this life and forfeit privileges in heaven but not entrance into heaven.

The Conditional Security of the Believer

The Scriptures teach that God's grace and favor continue to be abundantly given to the believer who continues to keep faith and to keep doing God's will from the heart. The issue is not, "can God save sinners?" He can and does! Nor is the issue, "What is the outcome of those who never believe?" They are condemned (John 3:18). The issue is "What will happen to the

born again Christian who willingly turns his back on God and forsakes Him by turning to a life of neglect and sin?" Unconditional security suggests that he is still saved; conditional security says that he is lost.

If conditional security is taught in the Scriptures, then one would expect conditional statements in the Scriptures regarding salvation. A conditional statement has a qualification to it. It may use the word "if" such as in John 8:31; or it may use a relative clause describing the kind of person who meets the qualification, i.e., "he that" as in Mark 16:16. The problem with the doctrine of unconditional security is that it ignores the conditional, qualifying statements in Scripture about whom the grace of God saves: Passages That Teach Conditional Security of Christians

- John 8:31,32 "if you abide (continue, remain) in my word"
- John 8:51 "if anyone keeps my word"
- John 15:2,6,10 "if anyone does not abide. . . if you keep my commandments"
- Rom. 8:12,13 "if living to the flesh, you must die"
- 1 Cor. 15:1,2 "if you hold fast the word"
- Gal. 5:1-4 "if you receive circumcision (go back to the Law)"
- Gal. 6:7-9 "if we do not grow weary"
- Col. 1:21-23 "if you continue"
- Heb. 3:12-14 "if we hold fast"
- Heb. 10:26-31 "if we go on sinning willfully, . . . no more sacrifice for sins"
- 10:29 "he who has trampled the Son of God, treated blood as unholy, insulted the Spirit"
- Heb. 10:35-39 "if he shrinks back"
- 2 Pet. 1:5-11 "if these qualities are yours, you will never stumble"
- 2 Pet. 2:20-22 "if he is entangled and overcome, then the last state is worse than the first" (these are Christians 2 Pet. 1:3,4)
- 1 John 1:6,7 "if we walk in the light"
- 1 John 1:9 "if we confess our sins"
- 1 John 2:24,25 "if (what you heard from the beginning) remains in you, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father."

*If there were only one Scriptural condition in this list, that would be enough to show that our salvation is conditional.*

**Some Warning and Exhortations:**

1 Cor. 9:24-27 "make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize"

1 Cor. 10:1-12 "if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!"

Gal. 5:19-21 Paul's warning to Christians about works of the flesh that might keep them from entering the kingdom of heaven.

Rev. 2:10 "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life"

**The Present Tense of Salvation**

John 5:24 "whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." This passage observes the basic truth that the believer has eternal life and does not consider the person who stops believing. Note John 8:51 "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he shall never see death." The whole truth blends both passages rather than ignoring either. John 3:36 says, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." One has eternal life as long as he believes and obeys.

**Can a person stop believing?**

Psa. 106:12 "they believed His words"

106:13 "they quickly forgot His works"

106:21 "they forgot God their Savior"

106:24 "they did not believe His word"

Luke 8:11-13 "they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away"

1 Tim. 1:19,20 "made shipwreck of the faith"

1 Tim. 4:1 "fall away from the faith"

1 Tim. 5:12 "cast off the faith"

2 Tim. 2:18 "upset (overthrow) the faith of some"

Heb. 3:12 "brethren, . . . in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from living God."

**Objections:**

*"No one can separate us from the hand or the love of God."*

Two precious promises are found in John 10:27-29 and Rom. 8:35-39, which state that

nothing is able to separate us from God. These verses, however, do not take into account that a person may decide to separate himself from God. Jude 21 advises us to "keep yourselves in the love of God"; and John 15:9,10 teaches that we must abide in his love. No one can separate us from God, but we are able to forsake Him. Christians can fall away!

*"If a Christian falls, they were never converted in the first place."*

But note Heb. 6:4-6. Those who fell away were at one time saved! They were "once enlightened" (cf. Heb. 10:32; Col. 1:13,14); "tasted the heavenly gift, partakers of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38,39); tasted the good word, and tasted the powers of the age to come." These people willfully fell away from God by rejecting Jesus Christ. It was impossible to renew them to repentance because they did not want to repent (Heb. 10:26-29). God is speaking of these "cases" and not all cases; some are brought to repentance (Acts 8:14-24). Notice also Gal. 5:1-4 speaks of those who fall from grace as having been "severed" from Christ. One cannot be cut off from that which one has never been united. In 2 Pet. 2:20-22, we have some who have escaped the defilement of the world returning to sin. One can only escape that defilement through the blood of Jesus. Speaking of a washed sow is meaningless unless they were washed clean from sin.

**Is Man Predestined?**

Calvinism teaches that God has unconditionally elected some to bring to a knowledge of himself, not on the basis of any merit shown by the object of his grace and not based upon his looking forward to discover who would "accept" the offer of the gospel. God, according to this doctrine, has elected upon the basis of His own will some for glory and some for damnation. He made this sovereign choice before the foundation of the world.

The Calvinist doctrines of unconditional election coupled with irresistible grace means that neither the elect nor the lost can resist God's will. Neither has freewill to choose to follow

God or not. Their fate is sealed from the beginning.

John Calvin said:

By Predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All men are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and accordingly, as each has been created for one or the other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.”<sup>16</sup>

### The Bible teaches:

1. *God desires the salvation of all people* (1 Tim. 2:3,4; 2 Pet. 3:9).
2. *Jesus tasted death for all people, not just the saved* (Rom. 5:6; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2; 1 Tim. 1:12-15).
3. *God loves all* (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8).
4. *Jesus commissioned the apostles to preach to the whole world* (Matt. 28:18; Mark 16:15).
5. *Jesus expects all men to believe and to repent* (Acts 17:30; Rom. 1:16). The Scriptures everywhere assume men are capable of repentance.
6. *Men have freewill to choose to believe or not to believe* (John 3:16; 3:36; 5:24; 8:24; Rom. 6:16-18; 11:22,23; Luke 9:23).
7. *Sinners are lost because they refuse to seek God and obey the gospel* (Acts 13:46; Matt. 23:37; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2:10-12).
8. *The righteous people are saved because they have met conditions for eternal life* (Matt. 19:17; John 5:40; Heb. 5:8,9; Acts 2:4; 1 Pet. 1:22,23; John 3:3-7; Matt. 7:21).
9. *There is hope for all men* (1 Tim. 1:12-15; Acts 2:38-41).
10. *God renders to each man according to his works* (Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10; Psalm 28:4; 2 Tim. 4:14; Rev. 20:11-15; 22:12).

### Some Things Are Predestined

“Predestinate” is used six times in four passages of the New Testament. Acts 4:28 says the death of Jesus was predestined by the Father. Rom. 8:28-30 says that God foreordained the

called (the church) to be conformed to the image of His Son and to be justified and glorified. In 1 Cor. 2:7, we find that by God’s wisdom the gospel was predestined to come out at the appointed time. In Eph. 1:3-14 Paul says that God chose “us” and foreordained (predetermined, predestined) us to sonship and blessing.

While the church is predestined for heaven and the lost are predestined for hell, each man decides for himself whether he will choose the destiny of the broad or the narrow way. While the roads invariably lead to their destinies, each one chooses the road he travels.

### How many baptisms do we have today?

In A.D. 64 Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:5, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” Before A.D. 64 there was more than one baptism, such as John’s baptism, Holy Spirit baptism, and the baptism into Christ for the forgiveness of sin. From the time of Paul’s letter, however, there is but one. If the Holy Spirit baptism is the one (as some denominations teach), then there is no remission of sins in a baptism today, for these churches teach that the baptism of the Holy Spirit does not remit sins. In contrast to that, however, the New Testament teaches that baptism in water does remit sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-7; 1 Pet. 3:21). Since the baptism of Acts 2:38 included the promise of forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and since that promise was universal in time and location, then we must conclude that the commanded baptism of Acts 2:38 is the one baptism of Eph. 4:5.

<sup>16</sup> Calvin’s *Institutes*, Book III, chap. 21, sect. 5.



## Do we fulfill the command of baptism in the Spirit or in Water?

Holy Spirit	Water
Spirit-element (Acts 1:5)	Water-element (Acts 8:38; 10:47)
Christ does the baptizing (John 1:33; Matt. 3:11)	Disciples do the baptizing (Matt. 28:19,20)
Limited Promise to the Apostles (Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4)	Universal Promise to all who are called (Acts 2:38-39)
A Promise received (Luke 24:48; Acts 2:1ff.)	A Command to be fulfilled (Acts 2:38; 10:48)
To reveal and confirm the faith (John 16:13; Heb.2:3,4)	For forgiveness and to wash away sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
In no name (Matt. 3:11)	In the name of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19; Acts 19:5)
Not raised in (Acts 2:1-4)	Buried and Raised in (Rom. 6:3,4)
Not into Christ (John 15:1-6; Acts 8:12-16)	Baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27)
Did not save (Acts 2:1-4)	For salvation (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21)
No longer needed (John 16:13; Heb. 2:3,4)	Needed so long as men need salvation (Mark 16:16; 2 Tim. 2:10)
Ceased by A.D. 64 (Eph. 4:5)	Unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:20)

### If We Had the Baptism of the Holy Spirit Today

If we had the baptism of the Holy Spirit today, we would expect to see the following things: additional inspired books added to the New Testament, living apostles, people raised from the dead, the maimed and all others healed, water turned to wine, people walking on water, tempests stilled, trees cursed, money found in a fish's mouth, thousands fed from a few loaves and fishes, words placed in prophets' mouths, languages miraculously spoken, and many other undeniable miracles. No one is performing these signs today.

## Baptism before Salvation: Wise or Foolish Matthew 7:24-27

Which is wise and which is foolish?

Man #1: Belief >>> Saved + Be Baptized to show past salvation.

Man #2: Be sprinkled >>> Saved + Believe and be confirmed

Mark 16:16 Believe + Be Baptized >>> Shall be saved

*The wise man:* "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock."

*The foolish man:* "And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand."

### Passages Which Show the Necessity of Obedience

Matt. 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven."

John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

John 8:31,32 "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

John 12:48 "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day."

Heb. 5:8,9 "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation."

### Examples of Conversion

Hearing the Gospel	Believing in Jesus Christ	Repenting of Sin	Confessing the name of Jesus	Being Baptized	Salvation, Forgiveness
Pentecost Acts 2:14-41		Repent 2:37-38		Baptized 2:38,41	Forgiveness 2:38,47
Samaria Acts 8:5-13	Believed 8:13			Baptized 8:12,13	
Eunuch Acts 8:35-39	Believed 8:36,37		Confessed 8:37	Baptized 8:38	Rejoiced 8:39
Saul (Paul) Acts 9 & 22		Prayed & Fasted 9:9,11		Baptized 9:18	Sins Washed Away at Baptism 22:16
Cornelius Acts 10:34-38 11:14	Believed 10:43			Baptized 10:47,48	
Jailer Acts 16:25-34	Believed 16:31			Baptized, having believed 16:33,34	
Corinthians Acts 18:8-11	Believed 18:8			Baptized 18:8	