

BY WHOSE AUTHORITY HAS THE DESIGN OF BAPTISM BEEN CHANGED?

Friends, I speak to you at this time on "The Design of Baptism!" By whose authority has it been changed from a condition of salvation, as named by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, to an initiation rite into the different religious organizations of today?

Every reader of the New Testament must know that Jesus, the Savior of men, made baptism a condition of salvation to the alien sinner--this is too plainly stated to be misunderstood; and he must likewise know that this design or purpose of baptism has been changed by practically the entire religious world. With perhaps one or two exceptions, they all say that one need not be baptized in order to be saved, but he must be baptized if he is to be recognized as a member of their respective church organization. Thus it is easier to go to heaven, than to become a member of most any denominational church. Most people think it strange indeed that the Lord would make baptism a condition of salvation, yet they have made it a condition of church membership. Those of us who teach that baptism is for the remission of sins are often-times charged with being narrow minded and of teaching a water salvation, but none of these things move me, so long as I have the inspired word of God to back me up.

The creeds of men may teach that one may obtain remission of sins and inherit that home eternal without being baptized, but the Bible, the inspired word of God does not so teach, therefore, I am not interested in what uninspired creeds say

but in "what saith the scripture" (Rom. 4:3).

Let us now turn to the New Testament Scriptures and examine its teachings on the design or purpose of baptism. I read first from Mark 16:15-16, which is as follows:

"And he (Jesus) said unto them, (the apostles) Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Now whom did Jesus say "shall be saved?" He that believeth and is baptized; "But" says one, "Did Jesus actually mean that one must be baptized before he is saved?" Well, let's read it again and let you be the judge. "And

"And he (Jesus) said unto them, (the apostles) Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

If the teaching of the donominational world be true, than this statement of our Lord would have to be changed to read as follows:

Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth shall be saved, and may afterwards be baptized when he decides which church he wants to join.

Then baptism will be to him a kind of an outward sign of an inward grace--and it will show to the world that he is saved, and is being baptized because he is saved. I will be glad to give a handsome reward to anyone producing a passage of scripture reading that way. If you know of one, please write me where to find it.

Yes I believe that Jesus said exactly what he had in mind to say, and that he has predicated our salvation upon

our believing the gospel and being baptized for the remission of sins: But to illustrate--suppose the congress of the United States of America should pass a law, and it should be signed by the President, to the effect, that whosoever should believe in the American form of government and be baptized would receive \$500.00. Now what think ye regarding a matter of that kind? Would there be--could there be any misunderstanding as to what one would be required by law to do in order to receive the \$500.00. Would anyone interpret that to mean "He that believeth shall receive \$500.00, and after he has received it and because he has received it, he should be baptized, and in so doing, he would show to the world that he had received from the government \$500.00.

Suppose that in a case of that kind, that some one would go to any denominational preacher, who teaches that baptism is not essential to salvation, and should ask him how he understood this law, and if he thought that a person would have to both believe and be baptized in order to get the \$500.00--what do you think his answer would be? Do you think for one moment that he would attempt to explain away baptism--that he would say "What Congress and the President had in mind was, that he that believeth would receive \$500.00 and then because he had received it, he should be baptized." No, no one thinks that any preacher would place an interpretation of that kind on such a proposition; and yet when someone goes to them with the

words of Jesus concerning the salvation of his soul, and asks if he thinks that Jesus really meant that he would have to be baptized before being pardoned of his sins, he says, "I would hate to be so narrow minded as to think that Jesus wouldn't save one who believes in him just because he isn't baptized. Why this difference? In one case \$500.00 is involved and in the other, the salvation of the soul is involved-- which is the most important?

But let's read again from the word of God--

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, What shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourself from this crooked generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:37-41).

Now may I point out to you, that Peter named two things for these believing Jews to do, and both were for, in order to obtain, the remission of their sins--they were told to repent and be baptized; now whatever repentance was for, that is what baptism was for. If they could be saved without repentance, then they could be saved without baptism; and if baptism was unnecessary, then repentance was unnecessary too,--they both stand or fall together. The inspired Peter said "they were for remission of sins." Un-inspired men of today say, "That repentance is necessary, but baptism isn't." They say what Peter ought to have

said is, "You believers in Christ, repent and you shall be saved, then if you want to you may be baptized, though it isn't necessary.

In Shepherd's Handbook on Baptism, in ^{the} chapter where "Baptism for remission of sins" is discusses, there are comments by fifty-eight distinguished Bible scholars, many of whom do not teach baptism for the remission of sins, yet when they come to give an honest interpretation of those scriptures wherein baptism is mentioned in connection with "salvation," or "the remission of sins," they are all agreed in saying that these scriptures ~~so~~ teach; and if these scriptures do so teach, who has the authority to say baptism is not essential to the remission of sins?

I maintain that no man nor set of men have any such authority, and to set aside the command "to be baptize for the remission of sins" is to reject the counsel of God against themselves, as did the Pharisees and lawyers, who refused to be baptized of John (Luke 7:29-30).

The next scripture to be examined in this study is Acts 22:16, where Ananias, a gospel preacher said to Saul Tarsus, the chief of sinners (I Timothy 1:15)

"And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

This gospel preacher (Ananias) evidently understood what the Lord meant when he said:

"Go, ye, into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

And this penitent believer (Saul of Tarsus) evidently thought it was necessary for him to be baptized for the remission

of sins, since he arose forwith and obeyed(Acts 9:18). For three days and nights, without food or drink, Saul had been praying, and if he had been forgiven as a result of his praying, he did not know it, neither did the preacher know it. When Ananias told Saul to "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins," Saul did not try to convince him that he was already forgiven, but immediately obeyed. Then and only then were his sins washed away.

Next I call your attention to I Peter 3:18-21 which is as follows:

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us(Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Baptism saves us from our sins in the same manner that water saved Noah and his family from the destruction of the sin-defiled world----that is, water is the medium through which we pass from a **state** of sin and condemnation into a state of acceptance and favor with God.

If this be so, we cannot reach that state of favor and salvation without baptism, any more than Noah and his family could reach the new world without passing to it by means of water. If it is an inference that no one of the antediluvians were saved without water, it is an inference that no one can be saved without baptism. If an inference at all, it is a necessary inference from so many and so

different standpoints that it has all the force and assurance of a clear and distinct declaration. It only means that God has seen fit to pardon man's sins on condition that he believe in Christ, our Savior, and so embodies that faith as to be buried out of self into Christ, the Redeemer. Baptism is the act in which we deny ourselves, are buried out of ourselves, and enter into Christ. This is God's order as plainly revealed as any truth of the Bible, and it is useless and sinful for man to try to set aside or avoid the plain commands of God."

There are four specific things that the Bible says baptism is for and they all equal the same thing---the remission of sins. Jesus says in Mark 16:16, that baptism saves. Peter says in Acts 2:38, that baptism is for the remission of sins. Ananias says in Acts 22:16, that it washes sins away, and Paul says in Romans 6:3 and in Galatians 3:27, that we are baptized into Christ.

Practically the whole denominational world denies every one of those statements. They say that we are saved without baptism; Sins are remitted without baptism; sins are washed away without baptism; and that we enter into Christ without baptism. Thus we have God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Apostles, and the Bible all united in saying baptism to a penitent believer is for remission of sins, on one side; and the denominational world saying it isn't so, on the other side, Whom will you believe?

Yes, the design/^{of baptism}has been changed, but by whose authority? Uninspired men, who have dared to lay unholy hands on the word of God and pervert its meaning to make, it agree with their theological dogmas.