

## **Is Baptism Essential For Salvation? (No. 1)**

**By Casey Head**

As I begin this series of articles on the necessity of baptism, I want to address some of the common misconceptions that surround baptism. One such misconception is that baptism is a work of man and therefore cannot be essential for salvation because works deny grace.

First of all, let me point out that the Bible speaks of many different kinds of works. There are works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) which condemn us; works of the Law of Moses which do not justify us (Gal. 2:16); works of merit which stand opposed to the grace of God (Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 3:5), and then there are works of obedience which God has commanded (Rom. 6:17; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:22). So what do denominational people mean when they refer to baptism as a work of man? I believe they mean that it is a meritorious work that supposedly earns salvation...but where is the Bible evidence of this conclusion? In what way does baptism contradict the grace of God? How does it earn us salvation? Yes, it is an outward motion, but so also is confession, yet the same denominational people that reject baptism as essential will uphold confession per Rom. 10:9-10.

Salvation cannot be earned (Rom. 6:23), and if anyone believes that they can just work their way to heaven, they are gravely mistaken and will be sorely displeased when they face God in judgment. But there is a vast difference between works of merit and works of obedience.

If you had a malignant tumor and a doctor came to you and offered to perform a free operation and save your life, what would you do? You would accept his offer and place yourself on the operating table and have your tumor removed! In doing so, would you be earning the doctor's operation, or would you still be indebted to him? The answer is obvious, and so it is with baptism. Colossians 2:12 says, "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." When we are baptized, we are placing ourselves on God's operating table and He is cutting away our sin. Yes, we are physically being baptized, but who is doing the real work? God! And when we come up out of that water, we are cleansed and whole...because of God's willingness to operate on us.

In the coming weeks, I will address other common misconceptions surrounding baptism, and then I will begin to discuss the many verses and conversion accounts which teach the necessity of baptism. If you have any questions or would like to study this issue further, please call me, Casey Head, at 467-1463. I hope to hear from you soon. May God bless you!