

Is Baptism Essential For Salvation? (No. 10)

By Casey Head

Paul says in Colossians 2:11-12, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 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."

This passage plainly teaches that baptism is essential for salvation. It is at the point of baptism that the "body of the sins of the flesh" is removed. This is consistent with Romans 6:6 which says that the "body of sin" is "destroyed" when we are baptized into Jesus' death. Other passages such as Acts 2:38 teach that baptism is "for the remission of sins." Before baptism, we are covered in the filth of sin, unwashed by the blood of Christ, but when we are baptized into His death (Rom. 6:3), we contact His precious blood and our sins are washed away (Ac. 22:16).

We are also told in Colossians 2:12 that we are "buried with Him in baptism." Again I ask, do we bury people who are dead or alive? We bury people who are dead! Baptism is a burial, and therefore we infer that when a person is baptized they are spiritually dead. A sinner is made alive when he/she is raised from the watery grave of baptism to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4-5). Yet the denominational world says the exact opposite, that a person is "raised to walk in newness of life" at the point of faith and then baptized (buried) later as an "outward sign of an inward grace." In other words, the Baptist church and other denominations bury people who are alive! Compare Romans 6:3-7 and Colossians 2:11-12 and the conclusion will be clear and unmistakable- baptism is essential for salvation.

In Colossians 2, baptism is being compared to circumcision because both acts involve a surgical operation. The difference between the two is that circumcision involves a physical operation while baptism a spiritual operation. That is why Paul describes baptism as the "circumcision made without hands." It is at the point of baptism that we contact the "operation of God" where our sins are cut away. Is baptism a work of merit that earns salvation? Not at all! God is the one doing the real work. We are simply placing ourselves on God's operating table. He performs the spiritual surgery, cutting away the malignant tumor of sin. If you want God to operate on you, you must be baptized. It is that simple!

If you have any questions or disagreements about the content of this article, or if you would like to agree to a public debate, please contact me. I want to hear from you. My phone number is (828)467-1463. My mailing address is P.O. Box 401, Spruce Pine, North Carolina 28777 and my email address is NCBibleQuestions@yahoo.com. If you contact me, you can expect to be treated with kindness and respect. After all, this is not a personal dispute. It's not about who is right, it's about what is right.