

Is Baptism Essential For Salvation? (No. 11)

By Casey Head

We are told in 1 Peter 3:20-21 that “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 baptism doth also now save us (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

While so many religious people say that “baptism does not save us,” Peter, an apostle of God says that it does! Why would Peter say “baptism doth also now save us” if in fact it has nothing to do with salvation? If we are saved by “faith only,” then why didn’t Peter say that here in this passage? Clearly, baptism, along with faith, repentance and confession, is a part of the conversion process.

Peter here connects water baptism to the flood of Noah’s day (vv. 20). Just as Noah and his family were “saved by water” (in the sense that the water lifted the ark) so also are we saved by baptism. Do not conclude, however, that the water itself possesses saving power, because it does not. Neither did the water of Noah’s day possess saving power. It is the act of obeying God’s command that saves us, and water is simply the medium that God has chosen. Because Noah obeyed God in building the ark, he was “saved by water.” Likewise, because we obey God’s command to be baptized for the remission of sins, we are similarly “saved by water.”

Water baptism is not intended to remove the filth of the flesh (vv. 21). In other words, it is not a bath. Rather, it is “the answer of a good conscience toward God.” It is an act of obedience rooted in the heart that removes, not the filth of the flesh, but the filth of the soul!

What is your conclusion? Will you, like so many others, ignore this passage? Or will you simply accept what it says, that “baptism doth also now save us.” Furthermore, will you submit to the law of Christ and be baptized for the remission of your sins (Ac. 2:38) unto salvation?

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. Also, you can find all of the previous articles in this series (as well as more information about baptism) at our website, www.LookingToJesus.com.