

Is Baptism Essential For Salvation? (No. 8)

By Casey Head

Romans 6:3-7 says, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."

When an honest person reads Romans 6, he cannot help but acknowledge the necessity of water baptism (for salvation). It is tied to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, to the destruction of the "body of sin," to deliverance from sin, to a new life of righteousness, and yes, even to the blood of Jesus Christ. Let's consider these points in greater detail.

First, Paul says that we are baptized into Jesus' death (v. 3), buried with Him in baptism (v. 4) and raised from the watery grave of baptism to walk in newness of life (v. 4-5). Keeping in mind that baptism is a "burial," consider the following question: do we bury people who are dead or alive? We bury dead people, right? Yet the denominational world says that people are saved and "made alive" before baptism. In other words, they baptize, or bury people who are alive! Notice also that Paul says we are "raised (from baptism)... to walk in newness of life." The "newness of life" comes after baptism, not before! The order here is very simple: dead, buried (baptized), resurrected, made alive! This irrefutably points to the necessity of baptism!

In verse five, Paul says that when we are baptized the "body of sin" is destroyed. Sin is what separates us from God (Is. 59:1-2), so if it is destroyed at the point of baptism, then is it not safe to conclude that baptism is essential for salvation? Acts 2:38 says that we are baptized "for the remission of sins," Acts 22:16 says that we are baptized to wash away our sins, and Colossians 2:11-12 says that the sins of the flesh are "put off" at the point of baptism. While the denominational world teaches that the "body of sin" is destroyed at the point of faith (before baptism), the Bible teaches that it is destroyed when one "believes and is baptized" (Mk. 16:16).

Paul says in Romans 6:17-18, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." This passage reaffirms what Paul said earlier. Before baptism, we are servants of sin, but after baptism we are "free from sin" and the "servants of righteousness." In other words, baptism (when coupled with faith and repentance) delivers us from sin to salvation.

Finally, notice the relationship between baptism and the blood of Christ. In Romans 5:9-10, Paul says, "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Just a few verses later, in chapter six, verse three, Paul says that we are "baptized into His death." Do you see the point? Jesus' blood was shed at His death, and we are reconciled to God by the death of Christ. How do we contact the blood of Christ? How do we reach His death? Baptism! We contact Jesus' precious blood when we are baptized into His death. If the blood of Christ is essential for salvation, then baptism is as well!

If you have any questions, or if you would like to meet for a private Bible study or public debate, please contact me. I want to hear from you. My phone number is (828)467-1463. My email address is NCBibleQuestions@yahoo.com, and my mailing address is P.O. Box 401, Spruce Pine, NC 28777.