

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About...

Answering Arguments Against Baptism - Part 2

This week's article is Lesson Five, and the final lesson, on the doctrine of water baptism. The four previous articles can be found on our website [www.sanjuanchurchofchrist.org] under "Archived Articles." The purpose of this article is to expose the most common arguments that false teachers use against the saving power of baptism.

The fourth most common argument is in Mark 16:16 when Jesus said "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. The false teacher says that if baptism saves, then Jesus would have said, "he who has disbelieved and is not baptized shall be condemned." Jesus is teaching that one is not a candidate for water baptism if they do not have belief. "For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (Rom. 10:10). Remember when Philip was teaching the eunuch and "preached Jesus to him" the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" Philip answered his question by saying, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And the eunuch said, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God" (Acts 8:35-37). Belief comes before baptism!

The fifth argument is that "The Bible says we are saved by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 9:13-14; 1 Peter 1:18-19) not by water." We are saved by the blood of Christ, but access to His blood is through obedience to the gospel (Acts 2:37-38; 2 Thess. 1:8; Heb. 5:9). False teaching called Calvinism claims that salvation is solely a work of God and that man has no part. The scripture says to be IN Him, [coming in contact with His saving blood] we are circumcised by Christ [spiritually speaking] when we have been buried "with Him in baptism [our obedience], in which you were also raised with Him through faith [our obedience] in the working of God, [because of our obedience] who raised Him from the dead" (Col. 2:11-12). Because of our faith and obedience these verses demonstrate that God does the work in saving us, because of our obedience in water baptism. In order to have access to the saving blood of Christ, we need to be buried with Him in baptism to come into contact with the blood (Rom. 6:3). Notice in this verse the phrase "baptized into Christ Jesus" is the only access to His saving blood.

A sixth and weak argument used by false teachers is using a verse out of context. Paul said, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1 Cor. 1:17). They claim that Paul is dispelling the importance of water baptism for salvation. If we look at the context of this chapter, Paul wanted all Christians to "agree and that there be no divisions among you." Paul did not want anyone he taught and baptized claiming that "I am of Paul...Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1:10-13). Paul is not minimizing baptism; rather, he is asserting that his God given task was to primarily preach. Peter did not baptize, but "ordered" Cornelius' household to be baptized (Acts 10:48). Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were (John 4:2). Paul simply did not want to make himself the center of attention because of division among believers. So when Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word (Acts 18:5) and had others baptize for him.

The seventh and last argument is that if baptism is for the "forgiveness of sins" that would mean every time we sinned we would have to return to the baptismal tank to be re-baptized. Those who have not been buried in the waters of baptism are "outside of Christ" and have no forgiveness of sins. Those who have been buried in the waters of baptism are "IN Christ" and have fellowship with God and God is light. If we go back into darkness we forfeit our fellowship with Him. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. Being IN Christ does not mean we will never sin, but it does mean that the fellowship with God is unbroken because the blood of Jesus keeps us cleansed from sin. (1 John 1:5-10) That is why there is "no condemnation for those who are IN Christ" (Romans 8:1)

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:

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