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C0532 – 8/24/2005 – The Terms of Salvation
Believe and be Baptized

Ok. let's review. First of all, can anyone tell me what repentance is? Can anyone give me a definition of repentance? Repentance is a change of mind that results in some change in the person. The change of mind precedes but necessarily results in some change afterwards. The real question is "repent about what"? The answer is it could be anything. It depends on the context. In the Bible there are three contexts in which repentance is used. Can anyone tell me what they are?

1. Non-Saving Repentance – a change of mind that does not result in salvation
2. Believer's Repentance – a change of mind that takes place in the Christian life
3. Saving Repentance – a change of mind regarding the person and work of Jesus

The only kind of repentance that saves is a change of mind about the person and work of Jesus Christ. For example, let's say Joe Blow has listened to the moorings of the secular media and read Time magazine and thinks that Jesus probably was a historical person, was a great moral teacher, and died a martyr's death. This person doesn't have any firsthand information about Jesus' existence, teachings or death but has received all his information from what others have said about Jesus. But then let's say Joe Blow is at work and gets into a conversation about Jesus with a Christian who has firsthand information from the Bible. Joe Blow puts forth his opinion that Jesus was just a great teacher who died a martyr's death and the majority of people think this so it must be true. The Christian asks if he's ever read Jesus' claims in the Bible? Have you read the firsthand information? Have you read the primary source material? No, but others have and they say Jesus was just a great moral teacher and a martyr, etc. Well, then the Christian demonstrates from the Bible that Jesus actually claimed to be God and that He died a substitutionary death, not just a martyr's death. He shows that the secular media has just made up these opinions; they certainly did not come from the Bible. Then he shows that if Jesus Himself claimed to be God and yet He was not then He was either a *liar* or a *lunatic* but that He certainly could not have been *God*. And if He was a *liar* or a

lunatic then it simply will not do to say Jesus was a great moral teacher. Now, Joe Blow has a logical dilemma on his hands. He may attack the Bible itself by using arguments he got, once again, from the uninformed secular media, in which case the Christian would show him that he must presuppose the Bible is true in order to deny its validity. But let's say he did not attack the Bible, and feeling the logical quagmire, he actually has a change of mind regarding Jesus Christ. Let's say that he was persuaded from the Bible that Jesus Christ was not just a great moral teacher who died a martyr's death but rather His Savior who died in his place. That would be an example of saving repentance; a faith that includes repentance.

I'm going to give you some requirements on the human side for salvation and I want you to say whether these are true or false statements.

a. example 1

you must have a repentant faith in order to be saved

b. example 2

1. you must repent from your past sins
2. you must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ

c. example 3

1. believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved

d. example 4

1. repent and your sins will be forgiven

e. example 5

1. feel sorrow for your sin
2. have faith in Jesus Christ¹

We must preach a message of repentance. Jesus commanded it (Luke 24:46-47), Peter preached it (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31), and so did Paul (Acts 17:30; 20:21). Why did they preach it? For two reasons: 1) because it was commanded by Christ and 2) because it is required for eternal life. However, Jesus, Peter, and Paul all understood repentance as included in faith and often used it as a synonym of faith (Acts 11:17, 18; Acts 17:30, 34). Thus, repentance is required for salvation but it is not to be understood as a second requirement. Saving repentance is a part of believing and could not be separated from it.

II. BELIEVE AND BE BAPTIZED

With all the confusion regarding baptism in our day we once again have to clear the air by giving a biblical definition and explaining it in the first century context. So, once again, we are not permitted to read 21st century ideas into 1st century concepts. For example, Cottrell writes,

God has promised to save us—to give us forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit—in Christian baptism.ⁱⁱ

Another writes,

If the Bible says that baptism saves us, why would anyone teach that it is not necessary for salvation?ⁱⁱⁱ

Many think that water baptism is essential to salvation. Some say the water itself is efficacious and others say it is not but that God imparts salvation while we are in the water.^{iv} There is clearly a lot of confusion over the whole issue. Many who profess Christ are not leaning their whole weight on Jesus Christ but on something they did, often, that something is water baptism. We have already seen in previous weeks that the only thing that is not contrary to grace is faith. In Romans 11:6 Paul says,

Romans 11:6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

thus, we came up with this formula

grace + human works = destruction of grace

Then we asked if there was any human condition not contrary to grace, that is, not a work, and we found one in this same epistle in Romans 4:1-6.

Romans 4:5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

And also,

Romans 4:16 For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace,

Thus, faith is not a work but is in accordance with grace. When repentance is used as a synonym for faith or as inseparable from faith then it is also in accordance with grace. We're holding that line as the *lowest common denominator* for salvation on the human side. We've got 150+ verses that condition salvation on faith alone. If faith is not the sole condition of salvation then these verses do not result in salvation as they claim, they are only partial gospels.

The main proponents of baptismal regeneration are those of the Church of Christ denomination. They are vehement about this doctrine and probably teach it every Sunday of the year. They actually have five or six requirements on the human side for salvation:

1. Hear the Gospel.
2. Believe.
3. Repent of past sins.
4. Confess Jesus as Lord.
5. Be baptized for the remission of sins.
6. Live a Christian life.”

The Church of Christ teaches that salvation is a process and not an instantaneous gift. They also teach that there is no salvation outside of the Church of Christ. That claim is always a red light signaling a cult. Tonight, it is time to deal with the question of water baptism. Must a person be water baptized in order to be saved?

First, the English word “baptize, baptizes, baptism, baptizing” are transliterations of the Greek words *bapto* and *baptizo*. The word means “to dip” or “to sink”. It was used of dyeing fabrics. When applied to a person “baptism” identifies one with some sect. Remember, there are actually eight baptisms mentioned in the NT. Five are “real” baptisms (done by God) and three are “ritual” baptisms (done by men).

8 Baptisms:

3 “Ritual”/“Wet” (done by men)

- 1) John's (Matt 3:1ff)
- 2) Christ's (Matt 3:13ff)
- 3) Believer's (Matt 28:19)

5 “Real”/“Dry” (done by God)

- 4) Fire (Luke 3:16)

- 5) Death (Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50)
- 6) Spirit Baptism (John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Rom 6:3-4; 1 Cor 12:13)
- 7) Moses (1 Cor 10:2)
- 8) Noah's (1 Pt 3:20-21)

Each time you find this word “baptism” you have to evaluate the context to see if it is a “real” or “ritual” baptism.

A. MARK 16:16

Mark 16:16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

First of all, this passage falls into a disputed portion of Scripture. There are actually four endings to the Gospel of Mark. There are two short endings and two longer endings. If either of the shorter endings are original then the problem vanishes. However, if either of the longer readings are maintained then what do we do of Jesus’ statement **He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved**? In my opinion, it really matters very little whether this is original or not. The longer readings do not alter any doctrine of Scripture and, once examined, does not add the extra condition of being water baptized. There are a several solutions to this difficulty.

1) Belief and Water Baptism Required for Salvation. Grammatically this could be true but the problem is that elsewhere in the NT salvation is conditioned on faith alone (150+ times). Also, the second half of this verse bases condemnation on disbelief alone and does not mention not being baptized. Thus, this solution fails.

2) Belief and Spirit Baptism Required for Salvation. This is a viable solution. It is certainly true that during the present dispensation of the Church anyone who believes is baptized by the Spirit. But the ministry of Spirit baptism is unique to the church age. People were saved without being Spirit baptized during the OT and will be saved during the Tribulation without being Spirit baptized. Spirit baptism puts a person in the body of Christ, the Church (1 Cor 12:13; Eph 1:22-23). The body of Christ began on the Day of Pentecost and will be completed at the pre-Trib Rapture. Therefore, Spirit baptism is not a condition on the human side for salvation. However, this solution could work grammatically for the present dispensation if seen as an effect. Grammatically, the first condition (**he who has believed**) is the *cause* and the second condition (**has been**

baptized) is an *effect* of having believed. This is a viable solution grammatically although not the best.

3) Belief Alone Required and Water Baptism is an Evidence. This is the best solution to the passage. Two conditional statements (as here) with a single article do not necessarily have to be taken in the same way. The first condition (**he who has believed**) is the *cause* and the second condition (**has been baptized**) is the *evidence* of having **believed**. The NT closely associated one believing with being baptized. Being water baptized was the logical thing for a new believer to do. The NT knows nothing of un-baptized believers. Further, the second half of this verse bases condemnation on disbelief alone and does not mention not being water baptized. Thus, this solution fits with the 150+ passages that condition salvation on faith alone. Thus, this verse teaches that believing is the *cause* and baptism is an *evidence* of having believed.

B. JOHN 3:5

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

First of all, everyone recognizes that this verse teaches two requirements for entrance into the **kingdom of God**.

1. born of water
2. born of the Spirit

Further, virtually everyone agrees that being **born of the Spirit** refers to "regeneration". However, many disagree as to what **born of water** refers to. There are several views.

- 1) Water Baptism and Spirit Baptism Required for Entrance into Kingdom of God. This view is contradicted by the fact that 150+ verses condition salvation on faith alone.
- 2) The Water is a Symbol of the Spirit. Those who believed would have the Spirit flowing as water from within them (John 7:37-39). Nevertheless, this is not the best solution in the context.
- 3) The Water Refers to the Word of God. Though the word of God is related to water in Eph 5:26 that idea is not present in this context.
- 4) The Water Refers to the Repentance Ministry of John the Baptist. This view has to read repentance into the text. Therefore, this solution will not work.

5) Physical and Spiritual Birth Required for Entrance into Kingdom of God. By way of context, as a strict Pharisee, Nicodemus believed that all Jews who were born into the world would enter the **kingdom of God**.^v This sets the stage for understanding Jesus' answer. Four reasons suggest that Jesus was saying that both physical birth and spiritual birth were necessary for entering the kingdom. *First*, Nicodemus clearly has in mind physical birth when he asks Jesus, "How can a man be born again when he is old?" *Second*, after Jesus mentioned being **born of water and of the Spirit**, He says in verse 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." So, Jesus clearly has in mind the physical birth and the spiritual birth. *Third*, in verse 12 Jesus says, "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" Once again, physical birth is an earthly thing and spiritual birth is a heavenly thing. Thus, two things are necessary to enter the **kingdom of God**. First, one must be physically born into the world. This is all Nicodemus thought was required. But he was mistaken. Therefore, Jesus adds a second requirement, one must be spiritually born. One who experiences both will enter the kingdom of God. *Fourth*, and lastly, in verse 15 Jesus says, "whoever believes will in Him have eternal life." Nothing is said of water baptism here being a condition for eternal life. Thus, the sole condition for a living person to be born of the Spirit is to believe in Jesus Christ. Water baptism is not set forth as a second requirement for salvation here in any sense.

C. ACTS 2:38

Acts 2:38 Peter to them, "You all repent and each one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit".

About this verse one Church of Christ spokesman says,

No one can read the Scripture with an open mind and reach any conclusion other than that baptism is by immersion for the remission of sins. Unfortunately, many then proceed as a radio preacher once did who declared after having read Acts 2:38: "If you just read that you would think that baptism is essential to the forgiveness of sins, but now let me tell you what it really means." Put another way, man needs some expert help to misunderstand the Scripture.^{vi}

Do you see how he's framed the issue for you? This is very deceptive and leads many people astray. One he's said that if you don't agree with his conclusion then you don't have an open mind. And we all want to have an open mind. Therefore, maybe we should

listen to some experts. Besides, the English text is not the final authority. The big difficulty here for most people is the command to **be baptized** as we read it in the English. This verse seems to be saying that water baptism is essential to forgiveness of sins. Doesn't the verse say **repent and be baptized for forgiveness?** Let's look at two views.

1) Water baptism and Repentance Required for Salvation. Grammatically, this is no problem. The problem is that elsewhere in Scripture forgiveness of sins is conditioned on faith alone (150+ times). That would mean 150+ verses are at best half gospels and would not result in forgiveness of sin. It would also mean God lied 150 times. Finally, in Peter's sermon in Acts 5:31 and 10:43 he does not mention baptism at all but only repentance or believing, which were, for Peter, synonyms (cf Acts 11:17, 18).

2) Water Baptism a Separate Act Following Saving Repentance. Some take the clause "**...and be baptized each of you in the name of Jesus Christ**" as parenthetical so that forgiveness of sins is not conditioned on being baptized but only on repentance. See "The Terms of Salvation" Lesson 5 *Believe and Repent – Part 2* for a grammatical defense of this view (<http://www.fgbible.org/>). We might simply ask, "If water baptism is required for forgiveness of sins then why didn't Peter mention it in Acts 5:31 or 10:43? Why didn't Paul mention it in Acts 17:30; 20:21 Why didn't Jesus mention it in Luke 24:46-47?" The obvious answer: because it's not required.

Ok, if it's not required then what is Peter's purpose in this context? Well, if you don't understand the flow of the Gospels then you're going to have a hard time with Acts. Let's re-trace the historical development here. First, Jesus came speaking openly and offering Himself to Israel as Her Messiah (Matt 3:1; 4:17). Second, the nation of Israel rejected Jesus as the Messiah in Matt 12. Third, Jesus pronounced judgment on that generation (Matt 12:41, 42, 45; 23:36-39) and began speaking in parables (Matt 13:1ff). Fourth, Jesus died on the cross. Fifth, Jesus was resurrected. Now, turn to Acts 1.

Acts 1:3-8 To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of* forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. ⁴ Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," *He said*, "you heard of from Me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶ So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; ⁸ but

you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

So, Jesus was speaking to them about the **kingdom of God** (v 3). Then **He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem** because the baptism **with the Holy Spirit** would happen **not many days from now**. Now, these good Jews who knew their OT knew that the indwelling Spirit was connected with the kingdom (cf Ezek. 11:19; 36:26, 27; Ezek. 37:14). Therefore, in verse 6 they ask "**Lord is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?**" Jesus answered, **It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...**" So, while the apostles connected the Spirit with the Kingdom Jesus separated the baptizing work of the Spirit from the Kingdom. This is highly significant for understanding Peter's sermons in Acts 2 and 3. In both sermons Peter uses a 2nd Person Plural Verb for "repent" (*metanoesate* – aorist active imperative). In other words, Peter is calling for national repentance! He is asking the whole nation to "repent". Why? So the "times of refreshing" will come (Acts 3:19-21). What are the **times of refreshing**? The kingdom! Peter does not know when the kingdom will be restored (Acts 1:7) but he does know that national repentance is required for it to come (Matt 3:1; 4:17; 23:39), therefore, he preaches a message of national repentance. After repentance, each one of them, as individuals should be baptized as a separate act to show that they have identified themselves with Jesus as Messiah and separated from Judaism. Baptism means "identification" and these Jews would need to be baptized in Jesus' name (Acts 2:38) to separate themselves from that generation. Peter even said, "Be saved from this perverse generation" (Acts 2:41)! Water baptism would separate them from that generation and identify them with a new sect. Water baptism would enable them to avoid the judgment of 70AD. Historically, those Jews who were water baptized left Jerusalem before the Romans destroyed it (cf Luke 21:20-22).

Thus, the solution to this problem is grammatical. Repent must be a synonym for believing (cf 10:43) or else this is only a half-gospel. The command to "be baptized" is a parenthetical remark in the singular. Therefore, water baptism is not required for forgiveness of sins^{vii} but it will identify a believer with Jesus as Messiah and separate him from that generation. Peter understood these things. Why don't we? Because we don't study the Bible. Instead, we listen to stupid arguments that get us all confused.

D. ACTS 22:16

This is a very difficult verse grammatically. The verse falls within Paul's testimony before Festus of what happened after the Damascus road experience in Acts 9. If you remember, Saul went to a man named Ananias (mentioned in verse 12). And as Paul recounts this story Ananias said to him in verse 16

Acts 22:16 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

Since Saul was a Jew, he knew what baptism meant. Therefore, Jews got baptized right *after* they believed. This would sever their connections with Judaism and identify them with Christianity. That is why Ananias said to Saul the Jew “**Now why do you delay?**” It was not common for a Jew who understood baptism to delay being baptized after he became a believer. That Saul was already a believer is clear because he surrendered to the Lord on the road to Damascus (v 10) and Ananias calls him “brother” in verse 13! But still we have to ask, “does being baptized wash away sins?” The grammar won't support that conclusion.

part 1 imperative 1 imperative 2 part 2
Acts 22:16 **anastas baptisai** kai **apolousai** tas amartias sou **epikalesamenos** to onoma autou.
Acts 22:16 **Having arisen**, **be baptized** and **wash away** your sins **having called** on His name

The first aorist participle **having arisen** goes with the first command **be baptized**. In other words, the arising precedes being baptized. Keeping the second part of the sentence distinct, the second command **wash away your sins** goes with the second participle **having called on His name**. Thus, the washing away of sins follows **having called on His name**. The command to be baptized does not go with the washing away of sins but with the arisen. Thus, it should be translated “**Having arisen, be baptized; wash away your sins, having called on His name**”. No one can baptize themselves and no one can wash away their own sins. Calvin says, “...we must hold this, first, that it is God alone who washeth us from our sins by the blood of his Son; and to the end this washing may be effectual in us, he worketh by the hidden power of his Spirit.”^{viii} “So what washed away Paul's sins was his calling upon the name of the Lord, and the baptism simply follows his arising to fulfill that commission.”^{ix} The logical order is calling→washed→arising→water baptism. Thus, water baptism for salvation is not in view. His sins had already been washed away. Water baptism was required for Jews to escape the judgment of that generation (cf Acts 2:38ff).^x

E. 1 PET 3:21

1 Peter 3:21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you-- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

One Church of Christ pastor says,

It is impossible to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ without teaching the absolute necessity of baptism for salvation. (Acts 8:35-36; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21).^{xi}

Let's read the previous context of 1 Peter 3 and see if Peter is teaching that

1 Peter 3:18-21 For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; ¹⁹ in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison, ²⁰ who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water. ²¹ Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you-- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

First of all, Noah and seven other persons were brought safely through the water, right? Did Noah and the others get wet? Is the baptism of Noah a ritual or real baptism? It was a "real" baptism, administered by God and no one got wet who was saved. Therefore, when we get to verse 21 and Peter says **corresponding to that, baptism now saves you**, what kind of baptism is Peter talking about? Is he talking about a real or a ritual baptism? He's talking about the same kind of baptism as Noah's baptism. He's talking about a real baptism, administered by God, a dry baptism. This verse explicitly goes on to say **not the removal of dirt from the flesh**. In other words, this is not water baptism at all. Therefore, this must be Spirit baptism. Peter is teaching that the ark was the OT type and baptism is the NT antitype. In the ark all eight souls were saved. In Spirit baptism all souls are now saved.^{xii}

F. ROM 6:1-4 (Spirit baptism)

G. GAL 3:27 (Spirit baptism)

H. EPH 4:5 (Spirit baptism). See “Ephesians” Lesson 33 *Exhortation to and Basis of Unity* Eph 4:1-6 (<http://www.fgbible.org/>).

I. 2 COR 1:12-17

1 Corinthians 1:12-17 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." ¹³ Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so that no one would say you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶ Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other. ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.

It is difficult to imagine that if water baptism is necessary to salvation Paul would not baptize. In these verses Paul explicitly denies that water baptism results in the remission of sins.

ⁱ Answers: 1. T; 2. F; 3. T; 4. T or F depending on what one is being called to “repent” about.; 5. F

ⁱⁱ Robert Lightner quoting Cottrell in *Sin, the Savior, and Salvation*, 166.

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.churchofchrist1.org/>

^{iv} Pristine Faith Restoration Society, <http://www.pfrs.org/baptism/index.html>. Even though this view says the water is not efficacious this does not remove the necessity of water baptism for this view. For if a person never is water baptized then they will not be in the water for God to save them.

^v There were six ways a Jew could be born again. Nicodemus had experienced four of these ways already. Two of these were inaccessible to him; one because he was not a Gentile converted to Judaism, and second, he was not of royal lineage and could not be king of Israel. Being a convert to Judaism and becoming king both constituted being born again. The other four had been experienced by Nicodemus. Jesus introduced a seventh way to be born again; being born of the Spirit (aka regeneration).

^{vi} <http://www.thywordistruth.com/questions/qa001.htm>

^{vii} Robertson says, "One will decide the use here according as he believes that baptism is essential to the remission of sins or not. My view is decidedly against the idea that Peter, Paul, or any one in the New Testament taught baptism as essential to the remission of sins or the means of securing such remission. So, I understand Peter to be urging baptism on each of them who had already turned (repented) and for it to be done in the name of Jesus Christ on the basis of the forgiveness of sins which they had already received."

^{viii} John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Vol XIX* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 302.

^{ix} Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Class Notes on the Book of Acts* (Tyndale Theological Seminary).

^x Robertson takes it a bit different. He says, "It is possible, as in 2:38, to take these words as teaching baptismal remission or salvation by means of baptism, but to do so is in my opinion a complete subversion of Paul's vivid and picturesque language. As in Ro 6:4-6 where baptism is the picture of death, burial and resurrection, so here baptism pictures the change that had already taken place when Paul surrendered to Jesus on the way (verse 10). Baptism here pictures the washing away of sins by the blood of Christ."

^{xi} <http://www.thywordistruth.com/plan.pdf>

^{xii} Fruchtenbaum takes this baptism as a water baptism for Jews that would save them from that generation which was under the divine judgment which took place in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. This is a plausible explanation that would fit well with Acts 2:38 and 22:16. Further, he argues persuasively that 1 and 2 Peter were written to Jewish Christians (cf *sojourners of the diaspora* in 1:1)

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