

The compatibility of Grace and the necessity of baptism

Baptism is a valid part of the plan of salvation.

1st. Man can not save himself. There is nothing that a man can do to earn his salvation. He can not depend on himself and his efforts to earn his salvation. Man must depend on God's grace and mercy, brought into being by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross of Calvary for man's salvation.

2nd. Jesus had to die on the cross as the sacrifice of sins for all of those who believe in Him and who want to have their sin records cleansed completely and so perfectly restore their relationship with God. There is no other way by which man can be saved, and there is no other one through whom man can be saved, but Jesus.

3rd. What then is the role of baptism in the plan of salvation? Baptism is just as significant a necessary part of the plan of salvation as hearing is; as belief is, as repentance is, and as confession is. They are all part of a man's appeal to God to have the grace of Jesus blood applied to the needs of that person's soul.

4th. Baptism is not an effort to earn one's salvation. Baptism is an appeal to God for a cleaned conscience. God would not have had Peter tell the people in Acts 2:38 and in I Peter 3:21 about the necessity of baptism, if baptism did not have a realistic element of significance to perform in the plan of salvation.

5th. Baptism is not an "earning" of one's way back into a state of justification before God. Baptism is no less a request than the request that was placed before Naaman. God is looking to see if we are so filled with faith as to be willing to do what He has requested us to do. Baptism is then a major part of the first test of our acceptance of

God as the ultimate sovereign of our lives, but by being baptized one does not earn any 'merit points' towards their salvation.

6th. Salvation has always been a gift of God's grace and mercy. It is like a bank check that one is given as a gift at a person's birthday. If that check is not presented at the bank, after showing identification, a reviewing of the statement of the account and the confirmation of signatures, then the check remains a piece of paper and nothing more. It is valuable if the process and pattern of the sound words of the requested banking procedure is observed. The fact that the check is still a gift after going to the bank and going through their procedures is not challenged. It is still honored and accepted as a gift even though a procedure to cash the check must be undertaken, with all necessary steps fulfilled. Baptism is part of the procedure that we must follow to receive the gift of salvation that Jesus has placed in account for us. It is not an act of earning, but an act of appeal.

7th. There are two ways of looking at the idea of work. The first is seen in the thoughts of the commercial world, where actions are seen as tools by which one earns a monetary reward. That is the way that the majority of the world sees the concept of baptism. However, "work" can also be seen in the idea of physics, where "work" is simply the meeting of the procedural requirements needed to open a path by which one facilitates the accomplishment of a ultimate goal of receiving the gift placed in an individuals salvation account. It is thus not an earning process, but a simple procedural process done so that one may secure the salvation that has already been accomplished at the cross. It is a parallel to Naaman's Jordan River experience.