

Bedford Bulletin

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BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE
FAITH
1 Corinthians 3:9-11

Appointed for the Defense of the Gospel (Part 2)

Answering the Jehovah's Witnesses with Salvation and Baptism

It is safe to say that most all has had a Jehovah's Witness knock on our door. It's also safe to say that most don't want the meeting for fear of not having all the answers to all the issues. While there is certainly a plethora of differences with them on (i.e. the deity of Christ, the nature of the soul, the 144,000, the role of government, the eternal nature of hell, the future of this planet, the kingdom of God, blood transfusions, the return of Christ, the inspiration of The Watchtower, etc.), the one thing that will make or break the discussion is the issue of how we are saved. Fact is, if we can't agree on that one thing, there is not one reason to continue in study. Another reason to start here is because every child of God should know how to answer, "what must I do to be saved". Understand that every Jehovah's Witnesses, much like those bothersome telemarketers, has been pre-schooled with a string of arguments for your every objection. But, take them off their chosen path, off their pre-programmed arguments, and they are fish out of water, gasping for air, not knowing how to give answers from the word of God. A brief examination of their reasoning on baptism is certainly evidence of this.

If you ask a Jehovah's Witness what one must do to be saved, he will not answer because he cannot give you a direct answer. He simply does not know. So, begin to study such passages as Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, 22:16; Romans 6:3-7 or 1 Peter 3:21 with him, he will quickly agree with you that baptism is essential to salvation. Yet, in the very next breath, he will tell you God is more interested in the incentives of the heart than in the act itself. Use Acts 10:1-2; Rom. 10:1-3 to reply to this false reasoning. The truth is that their publications teach exactly what the Baptists teach on baptism. They do believe baptism is "essential" for salvation, but not for the remission of sins! They'll say it is the same as a faithful Christian attending church. A Christian must do these things because he is saved (and faithful), but the act itself has nothing to do with forgiveness and becoming a Christian. He only knows that he does believe baptism is "essential" to be saved—but how is it "essential"? That is the question!

Let us note a few statements from their own publications. In **"The Truth That leads to Eternal Life"**, they state: "When love for God moves you so that you want to do his will, then it is proper that you go to him in prayer...It is appropriate that you tell Jehovah that you want to belong to him and that you want to do his will...After you have made your dedication to Jehovah to do his will, he will expect you to keep it...What, then does Christian

baptism signify? It is not a washing away of one's sins, because cleansing from sin comes only through faith in Jesus

TODAY WE CHOOSE TO REJOICE

Acts 22:16

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Knowing & Doing God's Will

Proverbs 11:14

Christ (Eph. 1:7). Rather, it is a public demonstration, testifying that one has made a solemn dedication to Jehovah God and is presenting himself to do his will...If you have made up your mind to serve Jehovah and want to be baptized, then make this known to the overseer of the congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses with which you are associated. He will gladly assist you without any charge for the baptism" (pp. 182-194). Again, in **"New Creation"**, they state: "The views of the 'Disciples,' otherwise calling themselves 'Christians'...is that baptism (immersion water) is for the remission of sins. We cannot accept this to be a correct view of baptism; to us it is neither scriptural nor reasonable. We cannot believe that the word has made the eternal welfare of our race dependent upon their knowledge of, and obedience to, any such institution" (p. 428).

Certainly that ought to be adequate to clarify their position, but apparently they are still having problems explaining what they believe on it. In The Watchtower magazine (4-1-93), they carried an article entitled: "Baptize!" they ask: "Why did Jesus require that his disciples be baptized? Well, it was a fitting symbol of their whole-hearted dedication to God...Are you one who has been associated with Jehovah's Witnesses for some time? Perhaps you have already made the necessary changes in your life in accordance with Bible principles but have not taken the steps of dedication and baptism...There are many people who have taken in an accurate knowledge of the Bible but have not yet fully availed themselves of God's provision for salvation by being baptized.... A person who truly has such love and wants a special relationship with Jehovah God would not hold back from freely dedicating his life to him. Baptism is but an outward symbol of that dedication" (pp. 5-7).

Then, in an attempt to explain baptism away and get around the passages that teach it is essential, they state: "The Scriptures do not support the widely held view that baptism is a sacrament, that is, a religious ceremony imparting merit, grace, holiness, or spiritual benefit to the one baptized... Moreover, according to the Scriptures, remission of sins comes only through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ". This supposedly explains away such passages as Matthew 28:19. They then turn to Jesus and argue that baptism could have nothing to do with the remission of sins, because Jesus himself was baptized, yet he had no sin. Remind them of which side of the cross they're on. Acts 22:16 is explained away with the statement 'by calling upon his name' in faith - Hebrews 9:22, 1 John 1:7." I wonder what had moved Saul to such repentance prior to Ananias even coming to him? 1 Peter 3:21 is explained away by stating, Noah "showing full faith in God built the ark for the preservation of his family (Heb. 11:7). Similarly, by exercising faith in Jehovah God... people today can be saved from this present wicked world. They must also act on that faith. By repenting of sins, turning around from a wrong course, and making an unreserved dedication to Jehovah God in prayer, the request is made to God for a good conscience". Note how they completely skip over the mention of "water" and talk instead about the ark as the means God used "by faith" to save Noah and his family.

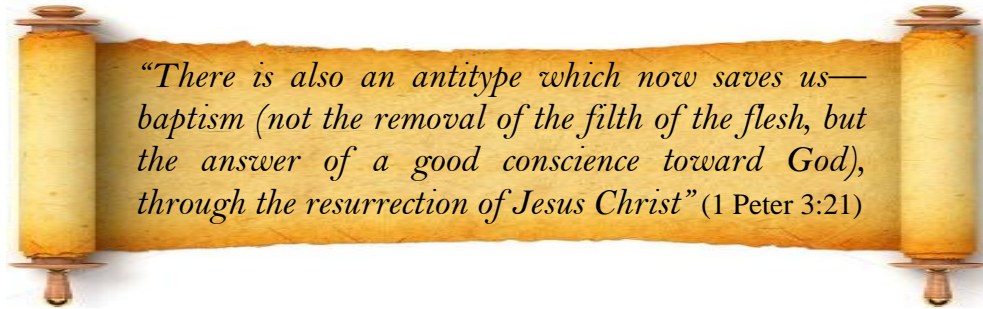
No, a Jehovah's Witness does not believe baptism has a thing to do with one being saved (i.e.: forgiven of his sins) it is only "essential" as an act of dedication, showing we are already saved and want to do God's will. But, a Jehovah's Witness will argue the point with you, and when finally forced to see their own statements in their own publications, will then turn around and argue one can be saved before and without baptism!

Again, if we cannot agree on the subject of salvation, what difference do all those other doctrines make? If one is going to be lost for not obeying God's will to get rid of his sins, the rest doesn't matter! And if baptism is essential, then The Watchtower and their publications have published falsehood, and if that is so, they are not inspired! This, in turn, makes all the rest of their teachings suspect as well.

Jehovah's Witnesses need to see these points, then be challenged whether they will continue to follow teachers who are not teaching the truth of God's word on so vital a subject. If they will teach error of one point, can they not also be in error in these others points as well? At least one point has been established though, The Watchtower can no longer be held up as the infallible interpreter of the word of God!

Remember the saying; You can't teach it wrong and get it right.

In Love
Dave Scarpino



Times of Our Services

Sunday Morning Bible Study	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship	9:50 AM
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:30 PM

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

Hear the gospel-----	John 6:45; Romans 10:17
Believe the gospel-----	John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6
Repent of sins-----	Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30
Confess Christ-----	Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10
Be baptized-----	Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38
Remain faithful unto and until death-----	Revelation 2:10; Matthew 10:22