BAPTISM IS NOT ABOUT EARNING SALVATION

Dylan Stewart

Jesus Christ is the reason salvation is possible (Acts 4:12), His blood is the price that purchased it (1st Peter 1:18-19), and grace is the reason God offers it (Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9). Believing that water baptism is necessary for salvation does not nullify salvation by grace, nor does it mean that we somehow "earn" our salvation. That argument confuses a condition for receiving a gift with the cause or price of the gift.

Salvation is by grace because God is the One who provided it. We are sinners who cannot save ourselves (Romans 3:23). God loved us and sent His Son to die for us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8). We are *"justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"* (Romans 3:24). Nothing we do could ever place God in our debt, make us deserving of the blood of Christ, or lead to us somehow earning salvation. But salvation being a gift of grace does not mean God does not establish conditions upon which that gift is received.

For example, faith in Christ is a condition of salvation: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved"* (Acts 16:31). Repentance is a condition of salvation: *"Unless you repent you will all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:3). Confession of faith is a condition of salvation: *"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"* (Romans 10:9-10). Having faith, repenting of sin, and verbally confessing my faith in Christ in no way earns me my salvation. Yet, God says I must do these things (among a host of other things) to be saved. The same is true of water baptism.

Jesus said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God"* (John 3:5). Jesus also said, *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved"* (Mark 16:16). Peter said, *"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"* (Acts 2:38). Ananias told Saul, *"Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord"* (Acts 22:16). Peter elsewhere said, *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism,"* while immediately explaining that the power of water baptism is not in physically washing the body but in its relationship to God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1st Peter 3:21; see also Romans 6:1-4). None of these verses imply that

– Continued on page 3 –

– Continued from page 1 –

Romans. So, in what way would the glory of the latter temple be greater than the former?

John may give us a clue. In the time of Christ the Jews asked, *"'What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up'"* (John 2:18-19). When Jesus made this statement, the Jews were clearly confused. They misunderstood what Jesus was referring to when He spoke of the temple just as we may also confuse Haggai's latter temple. The text continues, *"Then the Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body."*

When Jesus died, His temple being destroyed, there was a feeling of gloom among His disciples. Yet His body did not lie in ruins forever. Jesus rose from the dead a victor over the grave. God had glorified His Son by raising Him from the dead and exalted Him by placing Him on the throne. Through the sacrifice of Jesus, lost sinners could finally be at peace with God. His rebuilt temple is the basis of our hope. God's promise through Haggai was fulfilled. Because of the risen temple of His body, we can become the temple of God (1st Corinthians 3:16-17). This temple of God's people is not a temporary structure, subject to destruction. It is a people who are guaranteed by the very promise of the risen Savior Himself of future victory and everlasting glory in God's kingdom. For this reason, we celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus—the earnest of our inheritance in the glorious kingdom of heaven God has prepared for His children. How glorious!

– Continued from page 2 –

baptism is a meritorious cause of salvation, but they all consistently teach that water baptism is required if I want to be saved, just like faith in Jesus as the Son of God is required to be saved.

Baptism is not an attempt to purchase or earn salvation from God. It is a submissive act of faith by which a helpless sinner receives what he could never purchase in the first place. Colossians 2:12 describes baptism not as an act of human merit, but as an act of faith wherein we are *"buried with Him in baptism"* and raised *"through faith in the working of God."* Who is doing the saving work in baptism? God is. When I was buried in water for the forgiveness of my past sins, I was simply trusting God to do what He promised. That is not salvation apart from grace. That is salvation that trusts fully in God's grace.

"What Must I Do to Be Saved?"

Acts 16:30

Learn the Gospel
John 6:45; Romans 10:17

Believe in Christ
Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

Confess Christ
Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

Repent of Sin
Acts 3:19; 17:30

Be Baptized into Christ
Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

Remain Steadfast
1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"The Assembling of Ourselves Together"

Hebrews 10:24-25

Sunday
Worship @ 10:00 a.m.
Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

Wednesday
Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

Thursday
Ladies' Studies @ 6:20 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.

"If a Man is Overtaken in any Trespass... Restore Such a One"

Galatians 6:1

Confess Trespasses
James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

Repent of Sin
Acts 8:22

Pray for Forgiveness
Acts 8:22

Remain Steadfast
1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"A Word Fitly Spoken Is Like Apples of Gold in Settings of Silver"

Proverbs 25:11

"When a preacher is a motivational speaker, members become happy sinners."

"Whole Counsel"

Acts 20:27

Volume 4, Issue 45 November 8th, 2026

The Greater Glory of the Temple

Joshua Welch

In 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Solomon's temple. It was a moment of national sorrow and humiliation for the Jewish people. Yet, after seventy years of Babylonian captivity, King Cyrus of Persia allows the Jewish people to return to their homeland and rebuild their temple. Upon their return, God sends the prophet Haggai to motivate the procrastinating people of their task, saying, *"Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?"* (Haggai 1:4).

So, the people do rebuild. Yet, the rebuilt temple was not nearly as wonderful as Solomon's temple the older generation remembered. Haggai writes, *"Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?"* (Haggai 2:3). Even so, the Lord makes an interesting promise through Haggai. He says, *"'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says Jehovah of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace'"* (2:9).

Without Jesus, this statement just does not make much sense. After all, before Jesus, the temple would never match the epic beauty it reached in the days of Solomon. Furthermore, the people of God were never really at peace as they lived under the subjugation of foreign governments throughout the days of the Persians, Greeks, and

– Continued on page 3 –

Rio Grande Valley Church of Christ

505-864-0282 rgvcoc@gmail.com

Box 989, Belén, NM 87002 www.RGVChurchOfChrist.org

75 Sherrod Boulevard Facebook.com/RGVChurchOfChrist