

## Salvation and Love of the Truth

Barry O'Dell

In his warning to the Thessalonians concerning the man of sin, the falling away, and what he told them while he was with them, Paul wrote, “*And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved*” (2 The. 2:10). He then wrote of those same individuals, “*That they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*” (v. 12). Notice that those who are damned neither “*received the love of the truth*” nor “*believed the truth.*”

In order to be saved from damnation, two of the prerequisites are that a person must love and believe the truth. There is not one thing alone that saves mankind from sin. However, not loving the truth is one thing that will cause people to be lost forever. Likewise, not believing the truth is one thing that leads to eternal condemnation. As did Pilate, we must ask, “*What is truth*” (Jn. 19:38)? Dictionary.com defines truth as, “*the true or actual state of a matter; conformity with fact or reality.*” Jesus has placed a premium on truth in connection with freedom (salvation) from sin. John records, “*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed in Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (Jn. 8:31-32). In connection with that, Jesus referred to Himself as “*the truth*” (Jn. 14:6). As He conversed with Pilate He said, “*Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice*” (Jn. 18:37). John also wrote of Jesus, “*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth*” (Jn. 1:14).

Notice what the above passages from John’s gospel teach us about Jesus and truth:

- Truth can be known (8:32).
- Knowing the truth will set you free (8:32).
- Jesus is the truth (14:6).
- Jesus bore witness (testified) of the truth (18:37).
- Jesus is full of truth (1:14).

Remember, truth is “*the actual state of a matter.*” However, there are those who will “*exchange the truth of God for a lie*” (Rom. 1:25). Some will “*not obey the truth*” (Gal. 3:1). Some will consider you an enemy if

you tell them the truth (Gal. 4:16). Others are “*destitute of the truth*” (1 Tim. 6:5). There are those who are “*never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (2 Tim. 3:7). Some resist the truth (2 Tim. 3:8). The point is clear - the Bible speaks to the fact that people deny truth/reality. For many in the world, truth is subjective and determined only by circumstances. Instead of using the word *truth*, use the word *reality*. Reality is not subjective nor is it dependent upon circumstances. Reality is! Truth is!

What does the New Testament say about truth?

- God’s judgment is according to truth (Rom. 2:2).
- Love rejoices in truth (1 Cor. 13:6).
- Truth must be spoken (Eph. 4:15).
- God desires that all men come to know the truth (1 Tim. 2:4).
- Truth must be handled properly (2 Tim. 2:15).
- Truth can be acknowledged (Titus 1:1).
- Man is born again by the word of truth (Jam. 1:18).
- Souls are purified by obeying the truth (1 Pet. 1:22).

- Truth can be known (1 Jn. 2:21).

- Truth must be manifested in behavior (1 Jn. 3:18).

Now, back to what Paul wrote in regard to loving and believing the truth (2 The. 2:10, 12). The subject matter was “*the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him*” (v. 1). There were clearly outside influences who were speaking and writing anti-truths about the return of Jesus (v. 2). Paul’s goal in writing was to reassure the believers that they had not missed His return and that several things would, in fact, occur in history before Jesus returned. Being deceived was a possibility (v. 3) and he wanted them to remember what he told them prior to this letter (v. 5). While you and I today do not have privilege to everything Paul told them while he was with the Thessalonians, we do know many truths in regard to the return of Christ. In other words, we can know the truth concerning the return of Jesus. There is a real, future event that will occur at a point when the Father deems it appropriate (Mk. 13:32-37). In connection with Paul’s discourse in 2 Thessalonians 2, we also learn that salvation itself is realized when one is sanctified by the Spirit and has come to a “*belief of the truth*” (v. 15). That belief of the truth is realized when one is called by and taught the gospel (v. 14-15).

**“...not loving the truth is one thing that will cause people to be lost forever.”**

In a variety of forms, the word *repent* can be found at least 111 times in the KJV. The Old Testament contains two Hebrew words that are translated as such. One of those words means, "to be sorry; to regret." For instance, Moses wrote, "And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth" (Gen. 6:6). Obviously, this verse does not say that God committed a sin from which He needed to repent. Because of the sinful practices that would soon lead to the flood, God had great sorrow or regret. The other Hebrew word translated as *repent* means, "to return; to change." By way of example, Ezekiel was instructed by God to tell Israel, "**Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations**" (Eze. 14:6). If Israel failed to repent she would, "bear the punishment of their iniquity" (14:10).

There are also two Greek words that are translated into our KJV as *repent*. Paul regretted the conditions in Corinth that necessitated the writing of what we call First Corinthians. He wrote, "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent" (2 Cor. 7:8). Just as with God in the account of Noah, Paul was not repenting of some wrong action. Rather, and most of our modern versions do a better job than the KJV, Paul was remorseful that the conditions in Corinth necessitated such a letter as his first to them. The other Greek word translated as *repent* means that a change of mind must take place. For example, the congregations in Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea were all commanded to *repent* - to change their mind. The preaching of John the Baptizer informs us that true repentance is visible when he said, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet (in harmony with) for **repentance**" (Matt. 3:8).

Repentance is connected with salvation from sin. Peter commanded the Jews on Pentecost to **repent** and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). As he was preaching in the temple in Jerusalem, Peter commanded those who heard him, "**Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out**" (Acts 3:19). After having been baptized, Simon sinned and was told, "**Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee**" (Acts 8:22). When

preaching to the idolaters in Athens Paul said, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to **repent**" (Acts 17:30).

What does repentance involve? As noticed in the definition of the term, repentance is simply **a change of mind**. A person must begin to think differently. A good illustration would be the Jews on Pentecost who were convicted by Peter of crucifying the "Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). They needed to change their mind about who Jesus was because their vicious actions were done out of ignorance (Acts 3:15-17). Perhaps this is why repentance has been referred to as the most difficult command - a man called to repent is required to think differently than he has before. Repentance also involves **godly sorrow**. Regarding Corinth's response to his first letter Paul wrote, "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to **repentance**: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh **repentance** not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:9-10). The NKJ is not as archaic in verse 10: "For godly sorrow produces **repentance** leading to

**"...a man called to repent is required to think differently than he has before."**

salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." Godly sorrow is a grief that is produced in one's heart through the presentation of God's truth. Godly sorrow will manifest itself. The change of mind (*repentance*) will be visible. God saw that the Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonah (Jon. 3:10; Matt. 12:41). When preaching to Agrippa Paul said, "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should **repent** and turn to God, and do works meet for **repentance**" (Acts 26:19-20).

True repentance has three elements: (1) a change of mind that is based on (2) godly sorrow that is then (3) manifested in action. There is an interesting thought found in Romans 2:4 - "the goodness of God leadeth thee to **repentance**." Think of what God has done for us through His Son, Jesus Christ! Think of the great privilege it is to be called children of God! Think of an eternity in heaven! Repent!

For whatever reason, the connection between baptism and salvation is an issue for many people. To some, baptism for the remission of sins is a “Church-a-Christ” doctrine. It usually is argued that way because most people cannot conceptualize the body of Christ apart from Protestant Denominationalism. The false assumption is that the Church of Christ was established by the Stone-Campbell movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Such a claim is based in ignorance of both history and Scripture. When the topic is discussed, there are others who make the uninformed claim that the necessity of baptism is a “works-based” salvation. This must be understood from the outset – there is no work that man can do in order to earn his salvation. There is nothing we can do that puts God in debt to us. As has been stated throughout this series of articles, salvation from sin is not by any one thing alone. It is not by grace alone. It is not by faith alone. It is not by baptism alone. Yet, man is saved by grace (Eph. 2:5), and by faith (Rom. 5:1-2), and by baptism (1 Pet. 3:21).

The question to ask is not, “What does your church teach?” Neither is it appropriate to ask, “What do you believe a person must do in order to be saved from sin?” No man or group of men has a right to establish a method by which they believe man is saved from sin. The question must always be, “What does the word of God reveal that one must do in order to be saved?” It is only when that specific question is asked and when the Scriptures are honestly searched that the proper response can be found.

First, what is meant by baptism? Without a clear understanding of terms, a logical discussion cannot be had. *Baptize*, and other forms of that word, are used as both a noun and a verb in the New Testament. When Peter wrote that baptism does save, he used the Greek noun – *baptisma*. When Peter commanded the Jews in Jerusalem to “repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ,” he used the Greek verb – *baptizo*. By definition, baptism is “to dip, to immerse, to submerge, to overwhelm.” There are at least two passages that incorporate the concept of a burial – Romans 6:3-4 and Colossians 2:12. Sprinkling water on someone is not baptism. Pouring water on someone is not baptism. Biblical baptism is a burial in water, period.

What is the Biblically stated purpose of baptism?

This is not difficult. This is not a deep theological discussion. One does not need to seek the counsel of some highly educated individual. Here is a list of passages which reveal the purpose(s) of baptism:

- One who submits to the commands of Jesus is baptized into a relationship with the Godhead (Matt. 28:19).
- Coupled with one’s belief in the preached gospel, baptism is what saves (Mk. 16:15-16).
- Coupled with repentance from sin, baptism is “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).
- Described as a burial, baptism then leads to a resurrection that involves a “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3-4).
- Baptism places one into the “body of Christ” (1 Cor. 12:13).
- Paul wrote that one who has been baptized into Christ has “put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27).
- In baptism, one is expressing his faith “in the operation of God” (Col. 2:12).
- Finally, Peter simply wrote, “Baptism does now save us” (1 Pet. 3:21). Coupled with verse 20 and the reference to the water that saved eight souls, the only thing to which verse 21 can refer is water baptism.

**“As has been stated throughout this series of articles, salvation from sin is not by any one thing alone.”**

The passages listed above make it crystal clear that baptism is inextricably connected with salvation. In other words, if one has not been baptized into Christ for the remission of sins, he has not been saved.

Another important study would be to consider all the records of baptism in the book of Acts. Luke wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit about the birth and growth of the church based on the Great Commission of Jesus (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16).

- The Jews on Pentecost (Acts 2:38).
- The Samaritans (Acts 8:12-13).
- The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:36-38).
- Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:18; 22:16).
- Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:47-48).
- Lydia and her household (Acts 16:13-15).
- The Philippian jailor (Acts 16:31-33).
- The Corinthians (Acts 18:8).
- The Ephesians (Acts 19:1-7).

As stated above, this is not difficult! When allowing the Bible to speak for itself, without some theological bias, the necessity of baptism for salvation is clear!

---

**November/December 2023 Contributors**

**Churches of Christ**

Pilot (Mammoth Spring, AR)	\$700.00
Mammoth Spring	\$600.00
Crossroads (Gepp, AR)	\$300.00
Bakersfield (Bakersfield, MO)	\$200.00
Bellefonte (Harrison, AR)	\$200.00
Camp (Camp, AR)	\$200.00
Moody (Moody, MO)	\$200.00
Poughkeepsie (Poughkeepsie, AR)	\$200.00
Troy, Rd. (Obion, TN)	\$200.00
Clarkridge (Clarkridge, AR)	\$150.00
Flippin (Flippin, AR)	\$150.00
Agnos (Agnos, AR)	\$100.00
Elizabeth (Elizabeth, AR)	\$100.00
Lowell (Springdale, AR)	\$100.00

**Individuals**

Anonymous	\$100.00
R.B. Watts (Gilmer, TX)	\$100.00
Gordon Barnett (Salem, AR)	\$90.00

**Contribution Total** **\$3,690.00**

Postage Cost	\$1,811.68
Printing Cost	\$1,354.13
Total	\$3,165.81.

**Difference** **\$524.19**

**The Churches of Christ**

- Bible only (2 Pet. 1:3)
- Name of Christ (Rom. 16:16)
- Began in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Acts 2:1-4)
- Established by Jesus (Matt. 16:18)
- Purchased with Jesus' blood (Acts 20:28)
- Married to Christ (Rom. 7:4)
- Established in the 1st century (Acts 2:47)
- Jesus the Head of the One Body (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23)
- Added to the church by God (Acts 2:41, 47)

**Salvation**

- Saved by grace, through faith (Eph. 2:8-9)
- Not by faith alone (Jas. 2:14-26)
- Not by grace alone (Matt. 7:21)
- Belief and baptism (Mk. 16:16)
- Repentance and baptism (Acts 2:37-38)
- Belief, confession, and baptism (Acts 8:37-38)
- Heard, believed, baptized (Acts 18:8)
- Faith and baptism (Gal. 3:26-27)
- Baptism does save us (1 Pet. 3:21)

Scan the QR code to  
get access to all of our  
online content!



---

**Fulton County Gospel News** (USPS Publication #211780) is a periodical publication issued bimonthly by the church of Christ at Third & Bethel (PO Box 251), Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0251. **POSTMASTER: Please mail all changes of address to the above address.** FCCGN is mailed free of charge to any who care to receive it. If you send in a name we must have a complete address, including number and street name, or RR, or HCR number, plus box number, or a PO Box number and the **NINE DIGIT ZIP CODE**. This paper is supported by voluntary contributions for which we are grateful. Financial information will be furnished upon request.

**Mail address corrections to: Fulton County Gospel News, PO Box 251, Mammoth Spring, AR 72554**

Editor - Barry O'Dell - Office Phone - (870) 625-3217