

JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS VERSUS JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE

INTRODUCTION FOR LESSON TWO

We listed in the previous article 21 items the Bible says saves us! GOD saves us through His MERCY, GRACE, and LOVE. CHRIST saves us through His LIFE, DEATH, BLOOD, and RESURRECTION. The GOSPEL saves us through WORDS and PREACHING. We also saw that even though God wants all men to be saved, not all men are saved. Even though God has prepared everything needed for salvation, the final choice belongs to man (Acts 2:40). Salvation is not by men keeping law or doing works that earn their salvation, salvation comes from God. However, man responds to God's offer of salvation through HEARING and BELIEVING the GOSPEL. His FAITH leads him to CONFESS his belief and REPENT of his sins. The believer then CALLS upon God to save him when he OBEYS THE GOSPEL by being WASHED IN WATER by the act of BAPTISM.

In the last lesson, scripture was given for each capitalized word in the last paragraph. These scriptures showed that all 21 were for salvation, for justification, for forgiveness of sins. Please review that article if you are not sure of this truth.

It will be the purpose in the coming articles on baptism, to show the relationship of baptism to grace, faith, and works. We know that baptism is commanded (Acts 10:48), we know that baptism is "for the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 2:38), we know that Saul was told to "arise and be baptized to have his sins washed away" (Acts 22:16), we know that the Galatians were baptized into Christ, and we know that "baptism also saves us" (1 Peter 3:20-21). The Bible plainly states these things, yet we still get questions like, "Is baptism essential?" from interested students. Why is it that these same students don't ask, is "faith essential", "is repentance essential", "Is the gospel essential"? The Bible says we are justified and saved by FAITH, REPENTENCE, the GOSPEL, and saved by BAPTISM. Why do we only ask, is BAPTISM essential?

*I have discovered through the years that most problems with understanding the proper purpose of baptism comes not from the verses that actually mention baptism – they are plain about God's purpose for baptism. The objections usually come from people who think they see a contradiction between Bible teaching about the purpose of baptism and **other verses** that don't even mention baptism. They think that plain Bible statements about baptism contradict other subjects such as faith, grace, the blood of Christ, and works. It will be my purpose to first lay the ground work in these areas, and then show how baptism relates to all of these. Please study the following pages carefully, reading every verse and not skipping any point.*

JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE

Grace can best be understood in the context of legal terminology used in the book of Romans.

*We are **justified** freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
(Romans 3:24 NIV)*

Justification is a legal term. It refers to the verdict of acquittal handed down by a judge. The scriptures provide frequent illustrations of the "court" background of this language. For example,

the judges in Israel were charged to “justify the righteous and condemn the wicked” (Deuteronomy 25:1). However, some were corrupt and would “take away the righteousness of the righteous from him” (Isaiah 5:23). Even judges in America will sometimes say, “I think the defendant is guilty but due to the weakness of the evidence, I find him “not guilty”. Thus he “justifies” or “declares righteous” the defendant. Justification refers to a person’s position under the law.

At the “day of judgment” one will either be “justified” or “condemned” (Matt 12:36-37). Our justification or being declared “not guilty” will not be determined by what we think of ourselves, but by what God thinks of us. Listen to Paul.

I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. (1 Corinthians 4:3-4 NIV)

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. (Romans 8:33 NIV)

Therefore, when the Bible says we are “justified freely by his grace” (Rom 3:24); it means we are made not guilty by God’s grace. “Freely” means it is a gift and “grace” means it is God’s favor, good will, or loving kindness that makes the gift possible. Justification for men is not handed down by reason of what the defendant deserves, but as a gift due to the good will of the judge. In Romans, this **justification by God’s grace** is often contrasted to a justification not based on grace – **justification by law**.

JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS OF LAW

The principle of justification by law is stated in Romans 2:13:

*for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the **doers** of the Law will be justified. (Romans 2:13 NASB)*

For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. (Romans 10:5 NASB) (see Leviticus 18:5).

So the principle of justification by works goes like this: If a man does what the law says he is not guilty on the basis of his record as a law keeper. If he has not violated the law he is not guilty. That concept of justification has nothing to do with grace. This is why he puts **justification by works** in contrast to **justification by grace**.

Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. (Romans 4:4 NASB)

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

Only a sinless person can be justified by works! Justification by works is impossible for a sinner. So Paul says, “*and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;* (Romans 7:10 NASB). True, the law said, “*Do these things and you shall live*” (Lev 18:5). But Paul had violated the law. So instead of receiving the blessing of life from the law he had received its death penalty.

*For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT **ABIDE BY ALL THINGS** WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." (Galatians 3:10 NASB)*

If you run a traffic light and are arrested, you must pay the penalty. Never mind that you have stopped at 10,000 red lights – running one is all that is necessary to be condemned by law. In the first three chapters of Romans Paul cuts off all hope that anyone could ever be justified (judged righteous, be free from guilt) based on his record as a law keeper. The Gentiles were guilty (Romans 1:18-32) and the Jews were guilty (Romans 2). Paul concludes:

What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; (Romans 3:9-10 NASB)

*Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and **all the world may become guilty** before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:19-20 NKJV)*

The purpose of the law is to leave every man speechless! In court language, that means “without defense”. The demands of God’s law, brings the whole world under the judgment of God. The whole world is guilty. The Greek word translated “guilty” in Romans 3:19 is HUPODIKOS. It is a legal term referring to one who has lost his lawsuit. It describes someone who is subject to judgment and punishment.

Why is the whole world in such a guilty position? Because “*by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified (cleared of guilt) in His sight*” (Romans 3:19-20). The knowledge of the law brings guilt, not innocence. It is clear that **justification by works of law** requires **SINLESSNESS!** The law helps us to see our need for FORGIVENESS, not justice. It ought to be rather clear that anything that God says is “for the forgiveness of sins” is **not a part of justification based on law or works**. When Acts 2:38 says baptism is “for the forgiveness of sins”; it makes baptism a matter of grace – not a work of law. The whole assumption of baptism is that a person has sinned and recognizes their helplessness in respect to the law. They are asking when they are baptized to be **justified by God’s grace**. Modern theology has done its best to place baptism with law and works. However, in the Bible, baptism involves a sinner seeking grace and forgiveness.

JUSTIFICATION AS A GIFT

Now getting back to Romans, after Paul shows that the whole world is guilty, he proceeds to tell about the solution to man’s predicament that is provided by God and revealed in the gospel.

*But now **apart from the Law** the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present*

time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:21-26 NASB)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." (Romans 1:16-17 NASB)

Paul speaks of a righteousness that is possible for sinners – not, therefore, one founded on a person's record of law keeping. The righteousness revealed for sinners in the gospel is "apart from the law". But how can a sinner be innocent when he has broken the law? Sinners are made righteous by God through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul wanted to be

found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, (Philippians 3:9 NASB)

This way of being not guilty or righteous originated with God, not man. God gives it to man in consideration of his faith, not on the basis of his record as a law keeper. Paul refers to David in the Psalms, this way:

*David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness **apart from works**: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." (Romans 4:6-8 NIV)*

This person unto whom "God credits righteousness apart from works" is simply the person whose "sins are forgiven". God forgives the sinner and judges him to be righteous. This judgment is not based on a person's works; it is "apart from works". If it were by his works – he could not be judged righteous. By God's grace the sinner is pronounced not guilty. He is "*justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*" (Romans 3:24). Baptism was to be done "for the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 2:38). It is not done as a work of law or merit. To be saved by law keeping, one would have had to keep it perfectly (Galatians 3:10). Baptism is an act of faith by a sinner seeking God's grace. A person seeking baptism realizes the law holds him under a sentence of death.

THE MORAL POSSIBILITY OF JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE

How can God pass over the sins of a guilty person? How can a righteous judge declare a sinner to be not guilty? The answer is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The Greek for redemption conveys the idea of a deliverance, a liberation, a release that is affected by the payment of a ransom.

*just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a **ransom** for many." (Matthew 20:28 NIV)*

*you were **bought with a price**. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:20 NIV)*

*In him we have **redemption** through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace (Ephesians 1:7 NIV)*

*For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were **redeemed** from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. (1 Peter 1:18-19 NIV)*

God can declare sinners justified and not guilty because a price has been paid. God set forth Jesus as an atonement or propitiation.

whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:25-26 NASB)

To propitiate means to make favorable. Christ's sacrifice was the means by which God gave us a favorable standing before him. Because of the ransom Christ paid on the cross he can now treat us with favor instead of wrath. The propitiation or atonement is made effective by faith. The faith must be in the sacrificial death of Jesus. The propitiation "was in his blood".

'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.' (Leviticus 17:11 NASB)

There can be no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood. God shed the blood of Jesus "to show his righteousness because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed" (Romans 3:25). The sins previously passed over were the sins committed by Old Testament characters. Not all sins were passed over by God, but he did pass over the sins of men like David and Abraham who had faith (Romans 4:1-8). In consideration of their faith, he did not give the punishment they deserved – he forgave them. How could God be just and not punish a guilty sinner? The cross demonstrated God's justice or righteousness. The punishment the sinner deserved fell upon Jesus. God forgave their sins knowing what would happen at the cross.

For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, (Romans 8:3 NASB)

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21 NASB)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"-- (Galatians 3:13 NASB)

It finally became clear at the cross – that God had not been just winking at sin or looking the other way when he forgave men like Abraham and David. He forgave them because he knew about the adequate basis for forgiveness in the sacrifice of Jesus. The ultimate and final aim of the cross then was "that God might himself be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

A Jewish man once said, "Jews and Christians both believe in a MERCIFUL God who does not hold man's sins against him and gives man another chance." True, God is a merciful God who delights in forgiveness. But he is also a HOLY and JUST God. He cannot simply ignore sin. Sinners can be forgiven only as a result of God's justice seen in the death of Jesus. The cross of Jesus made the justification of sinners morally possible. The Jewish religion has no moral explanation for a holy God passing over the sins of the guilty.

The blood of Jesus was shed for the forgiveness of sins.

*This is **my blood** of the covenant, which is poured out for many **for the forgiveness of sins**.
(Matthew 26:28 NIV)*

*Peter replied, "**Repent** and be **baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins**. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38 NIV)*

Jesus shed his blood for the same reason a person is to be baptized; “for the forgiveness of sins”. The blood of Jesus and baptism are tied together in this way. Baptism answers this question: **WHEN** does the blood of Christ save a person with faith? Does this point explain why people were baptized immediately or on the same day they believed in the Bible?

HOW DOES BAPTISM FIT IN WITH GOD’S WAY OF JUSTIFYING OR FORGIVING SINNERS?

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

Grace and works are so incompatible they are mutually exclusive. If justification is by works or law it is not of grace. However, it is at this point of truth that a great departure is made by many people concerning baptism. The argument is made that if justification is by grace, or blood, or faith, it cannot be by baptism. Many want to take Romans 11:6 and make it say the following:

But if it is by grace, it is no more of BAPTISM, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

Now Paul said the following:

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9 NASB)

But some want it to say the following:

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of BAPTISM, that no one should boast.

Two contrasting systems of justification are put side by side in Romans. **One is by works or by keeping law.** Paul showed that justification by law was impossible for sinners. The law only condemned sinners. Paul showed however **a way for sinners to be justified.** It was through their forgiveness of sins based on their faith in the sacrifice of Christ. The whole purpose of my last lesson – listing at least 21 things the Bible says saves us – was to do the following. Things that are for salvation, for forgiveness of sins, cannot be under the system of justification by works or law. Baptism is for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). Where are you going to put it? Can we not see that those who want to substitute baptism for works in Romans 11:6 and Ephesians 2:8-9 are completely wrong. **Under which system of justification in Romans does baptism fit?**

Justification by works?

Justification by forgiveness?

We know that the death of Jesus saves us. We would place the death of Jesus under **justification by grace** and forgiveness. Does Paul connect baptism with the death of Jesus?

*Or do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?** Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have **become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection,** knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. (Romans 6:3-7 NASB)*

Paul said that baptism tied us to the death of Jesus. If we have been united with him in his death by being baptized, then certainly we will also be in the likeness of his resurrection. Did Paul consider baptism to be under justification by law or under justification by the death of Jesus Christ?

When sinners who had crucified Jesus Christ asked, “What shall we do?,” they were told by Peter:

*"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, **what shall we do?**" And Peter said to them, "**Repent,** and let each of you be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the **forgiveness of your sins**; and you shall receive the **gift of the Holy Spirit.** (Acts 2:36-38 NASB)*

Sinners were told to do two things (Repent and be baptized) in order to receive two blessings: 1) Forgiveness of sins and 2) the gift of the Holy Spirit. **Is repentance and baptism a part of justification by law or justification by grace and forgiveness?** Is the gift of the Holy Spirit promised to those who work or to those who believe, repent, and are baptized? Paul asked the Galatians this question:

This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? (Galatians 3:2 NASB)

Of course they received the Spirit by the hearing of faith! But people were told to be baptized in order to receive **forgiveness of sins** and **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** So is baptism classified under the “works of the law” or under the “hearing with faith”?

Notice how Paul tied faith and baptism together

*For you are all sons of God **through faith** in Christ Jesus. **For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:26-29 NASB)*

We become heirs of the promise, not by keeping the law, but by being Abraham’s offspring. We are Abraham’s offspring when we BELONG TO CHRIST. How do we clothe ourselves with Christ? Through faith we were baptized into Christ and clothed ourselves with Christ. **Is baptism**

a part of works and law keeping or part of being saved in Christ through the promise?

Justification by law and justification by grace are in opposition to one another, but baptism is not in opposition to grace. Baptism is for the forgiveness of sins and is designed by God to put us into Christ and into his death (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27).

Baptism: Man's Work or God's Work

*“ in Him you were also circumcised with a **circumcision made without hands**, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were **also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God**, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **He made you alive** together with Him, **having forgiven us all our transgressions**, (Colossians 2:11-13 NASB)*

There is work going on when one is baptized, but it is not man's work. Christ circumcises the body of the flesh **WHEN** we are buried with Him in baptism. The statement, “without hands” emphasizes it is not man's work. In baptism, we are raised up by faith in the WORKING of God. When we are baptized HE makes us alive together with Him as He FORGIVES OUR TRANSGRESSIONS. Baptism is not a part of justification by works, but is a part of justification by grace and faith. It is closely associated with God's forgiveness and allows no basis for man to boast.

In modern times, in most churches, there is a long waiting period between a person coming to faith and a person's baptism. Why is this the case when it was different in New Testament times? (See Acts 2:42; 8:12; Acts 8:36-39; 16:33-34; 22:16). I believe this separation of faith and baptism is significant. The separation of TIME between faith and baptism in today's churches is due to a separation of the two in modern DOCTRINE. Preachers see faith as one thing and baptism as something else altogether. They place faith with grace and baptism with works. Belief with forgiveness and baptism with law. They place faith as essential to salvation and baptism as irrelevant.

But in the New Testament, when people believed they were baptized (Acts 8:12)

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. (Mark 16:15-16 NASB)

The reason faith and baptism came together in TIME is that they were considered together in THOUGHT and DOCTRINE in the New Testament. The apostles did not see faith and baptism at odds with each other. Paul could say that we are justified by faith in Romans 5:1 and say in the next chapter we are freed from sin when we enter the death of Christ by being baptized (Romans 6:3-7). Faith and repentance in the heart led immediately to baptism as the outward expression and consummation of their faith.

OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL: JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS OR GRACE?

*But thanks be to God that though **1) you were slaves of sin**, you **2) became obedient from the heart** to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and **3) having been freed from sin**, you became slaves of righteousness. (Romans 6:17-18 NASB)*

Between being a slave of sin and being freed from sin, there is to be **an obedient heart to a form of teaching**. I have talked to many believers who think that **obedience** is a part of **justification by works**. However, in the verse above “obedience from the heart to a form of teaching” comes before “freedom from sin”.

The teaching is the good news about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

*Now, brothers, I want **to remind you of the gospel** I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. **By this gospel you are saved**, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of **first importance**: that **1) Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, that he was **2) buried**, that he was **3) raised on the third day** according to the Scriptures, (1 Corinthians 15:1-4 NIV)*

The Bible often talks about believing the gospel, so we must believe the facts about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. But the Bible also talks about **OBEYING** the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:8; 1 Peter 4:17). How do we obey facts? Romans 6:17-18 says we obey a form of the teaching. A FORM of the facts (the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus) is to be obeyed. How is that done?

*Or do you not know that all of us who have been BAPTIZED into Christ Jesus have been BAPTIZED into His **death**? Therefore we have been **buried** with Him through BAPTISM into death, in order that as Christ was **raised** from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:3-4 NASB)*

In Romans 6:1-7 Paul identifies the point where one is made free from sin and becomes a servant of righteousness with the burial that takes place at baptism. In Romans 6:17-18 the obedience from the heart to a form of teaching stands between being a slave of sin and having been freed from sin. Can there be any doubt that the burial in the first passage stands in the same place as obedience from the heart in the second passage. So we not only need to believe the gospel, but obey it (2 Thessalonians 2:8; 1 Peter 4:17). If the life of a Christian were put on a graph, the point where he became free from sin and became a servant of righteousness would be identified with baptism in Romans 6:3 and with obedience to a form of teaching in verses 17-18. When faith and repentance reach their fullness and consummation in complete surrender and submission to Jesus Christ, that is where one will find baptism in New Testament teaching. It is very apparent that this is not true in the doctrine of most modern churches.

All those who have been justified by faith (Romans 5:1) had gone through the experience of death to sin (6:2). Those who had died to sin had been buried and raised with Christ in baptism (Romans 6:3-4). The new life was to begin after they were raised with Christ in baptism. There were no un-

baptized Christians in the first century. To have not been baptized would have **doctrinally** put you

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Outside of Christ (Galatians 3:26-27)

Unclothed (Galatians 3:26-27).

Without a promise for forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38)

Without the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)

Not circumcised by Christ (Colossians 2:12)

Without a good conscience (1 Peter 3:21)

Without a relationship with Christ' death (Romans 6:3-4)

Without a good conscience (1 Peter 3:21)

Everyone realizes there is a **moment in time** of complete surrender for the sinner. Some say it is to occur during a prayer, signing a card at an assembly, raising ones hand, or coming forward at an evangelistic crusade. Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, teaches that at the moment a person surrenders his life to Jesus he seeks baptism. Peter said that when one is baptized he is calling upon God for a good conscience (1 Peter 3:21). He is calling upon God to have his sins washed away (Acts 22:16).

who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-- not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (1 Peter 3:20-21 NIV)

And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.' (Acts 22:16 NIV)

Someone might say that it is the BLOOD OF JESUS that saves, not water and think they can do away with the necessity of baptism. However, notice in the chart below the relationship between the blood of Christ and baptism.

THE WHAT AND THE WHEN

BLOOD OF CHRIST

BAPTISM

SAVES (ROMANS 5:9)

SAVES (MARK 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21)

REMISSION OF SINS
Matt 26:28

REMISSION OF SINS (Acts 2:38)

WASH AWAY SINS
Rev 1:5

WASH AWAY SINS (Acts 22:16)

GOOD CONSCIENCE
HEB 9:14

GOOD CONSCIENCE (1 Peter 3:21)

Can anyone be saved without the blood of Christ? Of course not! But the teaching of the New Testament plainly teaches a close tie between the death and blood of Jesus and baptism. The blood of Christ is **WHAT** saves, baptism answers the question **WHEN** the blood of Christ saves. Of course this is also based on the faith and surrender of the sinner.

IS THIS NEW TEACHING?

Is the teaching in this lesson strange to your ears. It is very possible you have never heard the connections between grace, faith, works, and baptism explained this way. Is this new teaching? It is as old as the apostles. Those who teach that baptism has no connection with salvation are teaching something new. I have plainly taught this from the Bible, now we will see that even men such as Martin Luther believed that baptism was essential to salvation. I don't quote Luther to prove the truth, the Bible taught the truth on baptism long before Luther was born. But there are many today who hold up Martin Luther (1530 A.D.) as the great protestant reformer. He helped millions in his own generation to see the importance of faith. Luther's teaching from the book of Romans has helped the generations that followed him to see exactly what we have shown in this lesson - we are justified by grace and faith, not by works of law keeping. But did Luther put baptism on the side of works or the side of faith? Judge for yourself in the following quotes from his writings.

MARTIN LUTHER TEACHING ON BAPTISM

In answer to the question, "What gifts or benefits does Baptism bestow?", Luther replied in his Small Catechism, *"It effects forgiveness of sins."*

He also wrote concerning the sinner: *"Through baptism he is bathed in the blood of Christ and is cleansed from sins."*

Again, he wrote: *"To put it most simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save."* (ibid., p. 32-34)

In answering the question, "How can water do such great things?" Luther said, *"Water doesn't make these things happen, of course. It is God's Word, which is with and in the water. Because, without God's Word, the water is plain water and not baptism. But with God's Word it is a Baptism, a grace-filled water of life, a bath of new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul said to Titus in the third chapter: "Through this bath of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit, which He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that we, justified by the same grace are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying."*

In his commentary on **Romans 6:3**, he wrote: *"Baptism has been instituted that it should lead us to the blessings (of this death) and through such death to eternal life. Therefore IT IS NECESSARY that we should be baptized into Jesus Christ and His death."* (Commentary On Romans, Kregel Publications, p. 101)

In his commentary on **Galatians 3:27**, he wrote: *"This is diligently to be noted, because of the fond and fantastical spirits, who go about to deface the majesty of baptism, and speak wickedly of it. Paul, contrariwise, commendeth it, and setteth it forth with honourable titles, calling it, 'the*

washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost'. And here also he saith, that 'all ye that are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.' Wherefore baptism is a thing of great force and efficacy." (Commentary On Galatians, Kregel Publications, p.222)

Let me again emphasize, I don't quote Luther to prove any point that I believe. There would be many things that Luther taught that I would not agree with. However, these quotes from him prove that many modern day Protestants have changed their former teaching on this subject.

In our next lesson we will closely examine the following verse and see where baptism fits in relation to grace, faith, and works. We will use examples of God's dealing with men in the Old Testament to illustrate this.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV)