



"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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TRADITIONS OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

James W. Boyd (1930-2025)

Some today ridicule "rule keeping" because they consider obedience optional. Being obedient to the law of God is not Pharisaic — in a bad sense. It's simply obeying God from the heart.

We shall consider two Jewish parties of prominence in Palestine in the days of Jesus, some of their beliefs and practices, both good and bad. We will note the relationship between them and certain contrasts of them. We want to briefly consider the historical background of their origin and how they came to be as they were in the time of Christ. We want to note the relationship of these two parties to "the faith of Christ."

A tradition is something taught and handed down from one generation to the next. A tradition is neither good nor bad just because it is a tradition. Some have personal traditions such as having a cup of coffee the first thing each morning, winding their clocks each Saturday morning, family reunions on the Fourth of July. These are neither good nor bad in the sight of God and are of human origin and authority.

Some traditions are purely secular and national, such as the celebration of the Fourth of July, a day for voting, Valentine's Day or something of that nature.

Some traditions are of a religious nature such as observing the Lord's Supper every first day of the week, immersing in water for baptism. These exist by divine authority (Col. 3:17-18; 2 Thess. 3:6). Some have a tradition of meeting at ten o'clock on Sunday

morning and others possibly at nine. This is authorized but falls in the realm of a necessary decision of human judgment to meet a divinely authorized appointment. Some traditions are binding because God has bound them such as the Lord's Supper, baptism for the remission of sins, worship on the first day of the week at some optional hour.

We are warned against religious traditions by human authority (Col. 2:8; Matt. 15:9). Some traditions are contrary to the Word of God such as the rosary, the papacy, denominationalism, making laws that God never made and loosing laws He has made. Problems arise when the traditions of men or optional matters are bound or when those that are of divine authority are made optional or ignored. Elevating human traditions to the rank or level of a divine tradition creates strife. Forbidding all traditions is wrong because some are judgmental, but necessary. Reducing a divine tradition to the level of a human tradition is to reduce God's law to man's law.

This brings us to the traditions of the Pharisees and Sadducees; some of which were neither right nor wrong, but just Jewish. The Jews had racial and national traditions as do other people. Some were offensive and sinful before God. Some were contradictory to divine law and others were in harmony with it.

Today, some are quick to label

others as being "Pharisees" because they judge them to be like the Pharisees in action and attitude in Jesus' day.

We shall focus our attention on religious traditions of these groups, primarily on those revealed in the New Testament with mention of some of which we read from other sources like the Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, the Talmud, the books of the Maccabean period.

WHO WERE THE PHARISEES & SADDUCEES?

They were Jewish religious and political parties. Their origins go back many years before Christ when they were known by other names. They became significant during the days of the Maccabees fighting for Jewish independence.

The **Pharisees** were very patriotic, more orthodox, frugal and without luxury. They violently opposed Roman occupation of their land, wanted independence for the Jews, looked with contempt upon every nation except their own, aloof from the ways of the world and had hedged themselves apart from the heathen world and other Jews who did not agree with them.

One would become a Pharisees

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Traditions...



Editorial...

WATER BAPTISM AND CALVINISM

Garland M. Robinson

***Sinners save themselves by believing
and obeying what God has said and requires.
The Holy Spirit tells us what to DO to be saved in
the words of the New Testament.***

Calvinism holds that the “new birth” (which they call regeneration) is a sovereign act of the Holy Spirit that precedes and makes possible a sinner’s faith in Christ. They claim that since man is born spiritually dead, the Holy Spirit must change a man’s heart which enables him to believe. They say the work of the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with man’s decision to believe, but it is a supernatural act that transforms the sinner, enabling man to believe. The system of Calvinism teaches that all men are born spiritually dead, completely unable and unwilling to turn to God or believe in Christ on their own.

What does the Bible tell us about man being saved from his sins? For one, the Holy Spirit does not make man do anything. If so, why doesn’t He make everyone turn from their sins and believe? If He only makes some turn and believe, then God is a respecter of persons. However, Romans 2:11 & Colossians 3:25 tell us **“there is no respect of persons with God.”**

If a man can only be saved by the Holy Spirit acting on him, then it’s God’s fault if a man is not saved. The point is, **God has done his part** in making salvation possible to ALL men. Jesus said: “Come unto me, **ALL** ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). By God’s grace (favor, benefit), he provided the sacrifice of his only begotten Son on the cross that paid the price (satisfied God’s justice) for the forgiveness

of our sins. **NOW, it is man’s choice** whether or not to accept the Lord’s sacrifice and humbly obey God in order to receive the benefits of his grace. **Everyone**, not just an elect few, have the choice to **hear, learn, believe** and **obey** God’s commands. Those who do so will be saved and those who do not will continue to be lost because “...all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). The fact that man must choose to be saved is why Peter told those on the day of Pentecost, “*save yourselves*” (Acts 2:40). Sinners save themselves by believing and obeying what God has said and requires.

When man obeys God, he is not earning or deserving salvation, but God can’t save those who do not obey. Jesus said, “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that DOETH the will of my Father which is in heaven*” (Matt. 7:21). As a matter of fact, many **THINK** they are doing God’s will but are not doing God’s will. Notice verses 22 & 23 of this same text. “*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*”

We need the Holy Spirit to tell us **WHAT TO DO** so we can have forgiveness of our sins. As a matter of fact, the Holy Spirit has already told the entire world what to do. The words of the Holy Spirit are the words of the New Testament. He caused the New

Testament to be written. His Word is for the whole world. It’s every human’s responsibility to learn it and obey it. Jesus died for **ALL** men (Heb. 2:9), not just those who believe. Second Peter 3:9 tells us, “*The Lord is...not willing that any should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance.*”

Calvinism says: “*All believers have the Holy Spirit when they BELIEVE. Baptism is the fruit of that repentance. It is a public declaration of the new life you received BY the Holy Spirit.*”

Did you notice that no Scripture is given to prove this statement? None is given because none exists. It’s simply an effort to evade the Bible teaching on God’s plan of salvation. The Bible tells us the exact moment when one receives forgiveness of sins. That’s the moment one is forgiven of their sins and becomes a Christian.

Forgiveness of sins is not obtained at the moment one **BELIEVES**. Belief (faith) is a step “toward” forgiveness of sins. Mark 16:16 says “*He that believeth AND is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” In John 1:12 we are told that those who believe have the power, authority, privilege, “*...to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*” Those who believe and stop there are not yet sons of God!

Forgiveness of sins is not obtained at the moment one **REPENTS**. Repenting is a step “toward” forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). Repentance is a “change of mind.” One’s change of mind is no good unless it is completed in “action” — a change of conduct, life. “*Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. ... Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*” (James 1:17,24,26).

Forgiveness of sins is not extended at the moment one **CONFESSES** that Jesus is the Son of God. Confession is a step “toward” forgiveness of sins. Romans 10:9-10 says: “*...If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made UNTO salvation*” — not INTO salvation (Rom. 10:9-10). Jesus said, “*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do*

not the things which I say” (Luke 6:46)?

Forgiveness of sins is extended at the moment one is BAPTIZED (immersion). Baptism is the step that puts one INTO Christ. It puts one into contact with Christ’s blood that washes sins away (Rev. 1:5). That’s why Ananias told Saul: “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and **be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord**” (Acts 22:16). There is no Bible record of Saul eating, drinking or sleeping after being blinded on the road to Damascus. If he was saved on the road he did not know it. He was miserable for three days because he was still in his sins. Ananias told him what to do to have his sins washed away.

Romans 6:3-18 reveals that sinners are baptized INTO Christ. It is in

water baptism they contact Jesus’ blood. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptized INTO Jesus Christ were baptized INTO his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism INTO death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so WE ALSO SHOULD WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE.** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin**” (vs.3-6). A sinner goes down into the water; it is there forgiveness of sins takes place and a new man is raised up out of the water to live a Christian life. There is no new life without it!

Notice in this same context verses 16-18 (Rom. 6). “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But **God be thanked, that ye WERE the servants of sin, but ye have OBEYED from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being THEN MADE FREE FROM SIN, ye became the servants of righteousness.**” These brethren had OBEYED that FORM OF DOCTRINE they had received. What “form of doctrine” had been delivered to them? It was the teaching they had received and obeyed back in verses 3-6 — the act of being baptized. Before baptism they WERE the servants of sins, but NOW they are MADE FREE FROM SIN by being baptized.

WHICH COMES FIRST? SALVATION OR BAPTISM?

Jason Patrick Hilburn

Can alien sinners (those who have never been saved) be saved before water baptism — without water baptism?

Notice the Biblical order of salvation:

- Believeth...baptized...saved (Mark 16:16).
- Born of water and of the Spirit...enter the kingdom (John 3:5).
- Repent...be baptized...remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- Gladly received his word...baptized...added to the church (Acts 2:41,47).
- Be baptized...wash away thy sins (Acts 22:16).
- Baptized into Jesus Christ...raised to newness of life...made free from sin (Rom. 6:3-18).
- The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God...And such were some of you: but ye are washed... sanctified... justified in the name of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 6:9-11; John 3:5; Acts 22:16; Eph. 5:26; Heb. 10:22).

- Baptized into one body [of the saved] (1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:38-41,47; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23,26).
- Faith...baptized into Christ...put on Christ...heirs (Gal. 3:26-29).
- Washing of water...sanctified and cleansed (Eph. 5:26).
- Baptism...forgiven you all trespasses (Col. 2:11-13).
- Washing of regeneration...saved according to his mercy (Titus 3:5).
- Bodies washed with pure water...full assurance of faith (Heb. 10:22).
- Souls saved by water...baptism doth also now save us...good conscience (1 Peter 3:20-21).

When asking whether salvation or baptism comes first, the truth is that they both happen at the same time! How sad that most religious groups teach that people are saved before or without water baptism, when God has spoken so clearly!

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Traditions...

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upon an oath of fidelity, striving against Grecian influence of idolatry and immoral behavior. They were generally considered by the people as godly, saintly, the most righteous, respectable and responsible. However, this was not always the evaluation the Lord shared.

The name **Pharisee** means separation, Separatists, no mingling with others of foreign persuasions. There were two schools of thought among them: Hillel (a more liberal element) and Shammai (the stricter group). Gamaliel, the most prominent teacher among them at this time, was of the Hillel school. Both schools looked on Jesus with contempt. When asked concerning marriage, the teaching of Jesus was more akin to that of Shammai but He did not cite either school, or Moses, as the authority for marriage, but as God created it in Eden.

They were the more numerous party and looked for the physical restoration of Israel when the Messiah came. They were the ones with whom Paul had most of his conflicts over the Law of Moses being bound on Gentiles. They were the more religious of the two parties but gradually became more political. They had a strong, but not dominant, voice in the Sanhedrin.

The **Sadducees** were aristocratic, liberal, free-thinkers, wealthy, modernists and controlled the priesthood. They accepted only the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) while the Pharisees took the entire Old Testament plus their own traditions as authority. The Sadducees were more secular, worldly, concerned with material riches and political favor of Rome. They compromised Jewish ways with Grecian influence (called Hellenism) and Roman power.

Jesus warned His disciples of both (Pharisees & Sadducees, Matt. 16:6,11) and condemned their ways (Matt. 15:9; 23:1-39). His teaching was often antagonistic to both of them, but not always. There were commendable things said of them. This is often overlooked today when some hastily brand others as *Pharisees*. They use the term in a derogatory way. Both the Pharisees and Sadducees were very critical of Jesus and watched His every word and way in order to find fault. They

were viciously opposed to His claim to be the Son of God and smarted under His rebuke of their self-righteousness and hypocrisy. Not all of them were hostile toward Christ, such as Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus (John 19:38-39). Some followed Him, ate with Him and many of the priests were converted after Pentecost (Acts 6:7).

There was close affinity between the scribes and the Pharisees more than the scribes and Sadducees. Not all Pharisees were scribes but most scribes were Pharisees. This gave the Pharisees a big edge over the Sadducees in the knowledge of the law.

There were tensions, even wars, between the two parties that stemmed back into the Maccabean era. Conflict between Jesus and the Sadducees became more intense toward the later part of His ministry, especially when He cleansed the temple the second time, while the Pharisees were His opponents from the beginning. In Jesus, these two parties had a common foe. Both were aggressive against the apostles after Jesus ascended to heaven.

A MAJOR DIFFERENCE

The Pharisees contended for the written Law and an oral law. The written Law was considered a summary of principles. They contended that some oral law was given to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Pentateuch had 613 laws (248 commands and 365 prohibitions). The Pharisees justified more law than what was written.

The Law contained much about sacrifices, ceremonies, offerings and morals. They claimed some oral laws came through the prophets and were interpretations of the written law. They did not contend all of the traditions they advocated had come from Jehovah but they bound them and insisted they be obeyed anyway.

Allowance of unwritten oral law opened the floodgates of interpretations and opinions that went further and were more detailed than the written law. They were often subjective in nature. Once a decree was passed it became binding and irreversible. Oral law provided "refinements" of the written law. They allowed great latitude to meaning, creativity and flexibility. The first portion of the Talmud is oral law committed to writing. These laws

were often considered even more binding than divinely written law (Mark 7:1-13).

The Pharisaic slavishness to oral law made them bigots, formalists, human traditionalists in the worst sense (Matt. 23:4). The Sadducees denied oral law.

GOOD AND BAD

More often than not, the bad outweighed the good. In the New Testament the Pharisees are presented in a bad light, as they are today. In many ways they were as Christians are supposed to be, but in other ways they were very contrary to the will of Christ. They were given to external expression of religion to the neglect of the spirit. Christianity has external rituals and actions also, but not to the neglect of the heart of man. Consider the act of immersion. That is an outward act but the motive and understanding of the act is important. Outwardly, something may appear correct but inwardly not acceptable to God. The external was all that mattered to the Pharisees. They laid great emphasis on fasting and appearing to fast, public prayer, conspicuous garments, forms and rituals, ceremony. Many times they did what they did in good faith and sincerity but were ignorant of what they were doing.

The Pharisees believed that many things that happened were according to fate over which they had no control. They did not accept the idea that many things happened due to man's choice. The Sadducees believed everything that happened was due to man's choice. Fate was identified by the Pharisees as the work of God, not always understood, like the providence of God.

SOME COMMENDABLE BELIEFS

The Pharisees had respect for the aged. However, they did not always show it properly (Mark 7:9-13). They believed man had a soul and spirit. They believed there were angels, the resurrection from the dead, life after this one, the Judgment to come, reward and punishment. They were at great odds with the Sadducees over such matters who denied nearly all of these beliefs. Paul once used his belief in the resurrection to divide the Sanhedrin as they were debating what to do

about Paul (Acts 23:6).

Pharisees were eager to make proselytes and labored to propagate their faith. Their success was not beneficial (Matt. 23:15). They were mission minded as Christians should be. They wished to embrace all Jews through education to their ways. Christianity is also a taught religion that is spread through education. The Pharisees had great respect for learning and operated schools.

The Pharisees had great respect for the dead and keeping of the tombs (Matt. 23:29). They would build tombs for the prophets and garnished the sepulchers. But they did it for outward appearance.

They would pray at widows' houses for appearance sake. It was pretense (Matt. 23:14).

They were "rule keepers," keeping the Law. Many were upright, moral, given to holiness. Some today ridicule "rule keeping" because they consider obedience optional. Being obedient to the law of God is not Pharisaic in a bad sense. But the Pharisees considered their obedience as earning God's blessings. On this they vary widely from Christian obedience.

They were well organized. So is the church. They include men and women as does Christ (Gal. 3:28). Their religion included alms giving and they expected the Messiah. Christianity includes giving and benevolence.

THEIR MAJOR FAULT

It was not as much what they said as what they hypocritically did. They were not submissive to God but self-centered and self-righteous. As a class they were condemned although there were exceptions. Their showiness in religion was for the praises of men. They were guilty of straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel (Matt. 23:24). They made the word of God of none effect by their traditions (Matt. 15:3-6). They treated men like children with minute, precise ceremonies. For instance, they must repeat certain passages twice a day (Deut. 6:4-6). They had endless washings of cups, hands, clothes, vessels. They had laws what to eat, governing what they deemed clean and unclean more than the written law. Anything slaughtered by a heathen was unclean. There were precise regulations regarding tithing.

They tithed everything they grew, bought or sold. They paid their tithes only to priests that favored them. They even tithed mint, anise and cumin. They had laws on what kind of wick and oil could be used in their candles on the Sabbath. They could not eat fowl or an egg laid days around a festival. They could not pay a heathen their debt three days before a heathen feast. The Jewish midwife was prohibited from assisting a heathen woman giving birth. They were extreme on venerating the Sabbath day. They actually practiced what we call "situation ethics" about the Sabbath. While they could not work their animal, they could ride him. They could not carry a stick to urge a beast on the Sabbath. They even objected to healing on the Sabbath. They could give to a beggar if the beggar extended his hand but they could not extend their hand to him. You could exceed the Sabbath day's journey if you felt it necessary.

They believed plowing was wrong on the Sabbath; even dragging a chair if its legs left ruts in the dirt. They could walk on crutches or wooden legs, but not stilts. They could not wear false teeth or unnecessary garments. A tailor could not carry his needle on the Sabbath. They could not eat with a man, even another Jew, whose wife was a heathen. They practiced guilt by association to the extreme. They drew a sharp distinction between Jews and Samaritans. This explains much of the tension with Jesus since Jesus used Samaritans to illustrate His teaching in a favorable light. They were religiously elite and superior like some who think they are today and who like to brand others as Pharisees. While they attempted to tell others what they could and could not do, they did not follow their own guidelines. They blew horns to get attention when they prayed or gave alms. They wore titles and special garments to show their piety. Mark Twain described them as good men in the worst sense. Like liberals and legalists today, they assumed the right to bind whatever they wished.

WHAT IS NOT LIKE PHARISEES

It is not Pharisaic to oppose missionary societies, instrumental music, women preachers, choruses, quartet, clapping, etc. (Eph. 3:21; 5:19; 1 Tim. 3:11-15). Contending for law and obe-

dience is not being Pharisaic (James 1:10; Heb. 5:9). Proving all things, holding to what is good, forbidding what is not authorized, insisting that we build on the rock of truth, calling for morality and reverence, doing things Biblically taught is not Pharisaic. Nor is defending the Gospel (Phil. 1:17), marking those who teach false doctrines (Rom. 16:17), having "two songs and a prayer," being a Pharisee. Withdrawing fellowship from the disorderly, standing against the works of the flesh, is like Christ. Not many of the things liberals like to brand as Pharisaic fit the bill. Calling someone a Pharisee may reveal how the caller holds truth in contempt.

The Jewish sects have long ago been absorbed with the passing of time. Many of their attitudes and actions, good and bad, still exist. We should not imitate them in any respect because Christ is our authority and Captain.

BAPTISM IS AN IMMERSION

Jesus & His Apostles taught baptism is immersion. Many religious leaders of the past taught baptism is immersion. Why do many STILL persist in practicing that which is scripturally and historically proven to be false? It's because they don't love the Truth! — 2 Thess. 2:10-12

Notice what some of the past said:
JOHN CALVIN (Presbyterian): "The word baptize signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the primitive church."

MARTIN LUTHER (Lutheran): "Baptism is a Greek word and may be translated immerse. I would have those who are to be baptized to be altogether dipped."

JOHN WESLEY (Methodist): "Buried with him in baptism, alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion."

WALL (Episcopalian): "Immersion was in all probability the way in which our blessed Savior, and for certain the way by which the ancient Christians received their baptism."

BRENNER (Catholic): "For thirteen centuries baptism was an immersion of the person under water."

MACKNIGHT (Presbyterian): "In baptism the baptized person is buried. Christ submitted to be baptized, that is, to be buried under water."

SOME CRITICAL QUESTIONS IN ROMANS 6:1-4

Roger Campbell

Since the Lord shed His blood in His death (by which we are justified), and since one gets into Jesus' death by being baptized (Rom. 6:3), then it follows that baptism is a required part of the process by which one is justified in God's sight. Just as there could be no justification without the death of Jesus, so a sinner cannot be justified without water baptism.

As a background to Romans 6, consider some of the things we know about the people to whom the book of Romans was written. They are called “saints” (1:7). Their faith was “spoken of throughout the whole world” (1:8). They were “justified by faith” (5:1), having been “made free from sin” when they obeyed the Gospel in water baptism (6:17-18).

In the latter part of Romans chapter five, we read about a contrast between sin and righteousness. It is a contrast between the effects of the actions of Adam and Jesus. We further learn that sin is awful, but God's grace can overcome sin and its consequences. With this context in mind, here is the message of Romans 6:1-4: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

This text presents questions about: 1) what to say, 2) continuing in sin, and 3) knowledge of baptism. Let us examine these questions, recognizing they cause us to think. They challenge us and they can stir us to action.

Question 1: “What shall we say” (6:1)? Say about what? In the context, the points under consideration are sin, grace and proper living. What shall we say about such matters? The principle is, as in all spiritual matters, what should we say? The answer, of course, is that we should say what God says. The prophet Micaiah said it this way: “As the LORD liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak” (2 Chron. 18:13). What shall we say?

On any biblical subject, we should teach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), not “adding to” or “taking away” from what God says. We should be committed to speaking what people need to hear, not what they want to hear. The Lord certainly knew what He was doing when He gave the charge to preach the Gospel — speaking as the oracles of God (Mark 16:15; 1 Peter 4:11). Whatever Paul might write about sin, grace, and proper living, his instruction would come from God and nowhere else.

Question 2: “Shall we continue in sin” (6:1). The full question is, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” If someone understood that God's grace is demonstrated each time a child of God sins, but then repents and God accepts Him again, then perhaps he might think, “The more a person sins, the more God's grace is shown. Thus, it would not be a bad thing to keep on sinning.” What is God's answer to such an idea? “God forbid” (6:2, in other words, certainly not). Again, God says that we are dead to sin (Rom. 6:2,11), so sin is no longer to dominate our life.

When one becomes a child of God, he/she must get out of and stay out of the sinning business! We are not to be slaves of sin, but rather slaves of righteousness (6:12-16,22). In Romans 6:6 we read that, in baptism our body of sin is destroyed, “henceforth we should not serve sin.” We are a new creation in the Christ, so old things have passed away as we have put off the old man and his sinful ways (2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:5-9). We are instructed to abstain from the fleshly lusts which war against our soul (1 Peter 2:11).

But, what if a disciple of Jesus decides to just go ahead and continue in sin? In the first place, such a one is the slave of sin. “Know ye not, that to

whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness” (Rom. 6:16)? The same context shows that the one who continues in sin is dead spiritually — because the wages of sin is death (6:23). We learn elsewhere that the child of God who walks in darkness (remains in sin) forfeits his/her fellowship with God (1 John 1:6). Ultimately, the slave of sin (an unrighteous person) shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9). Because of the weakness of our flesh, we will commit sin. To deny this truth is to deceive ourselves and reject the Bible's plain teaching (1 John 1:8). However, we must not allow sin to rule in our lives, that is, we must not become sin's slave. Once again, shall we continue in sin? God forbid.

Question 3: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death” (6:3)? Remember, Romans 6 is a context that speaks about sin and the need to avoid staying in it. Do you know the truth about baptism? Do you accept that truth?

Here's truth about baptism: A person **gets into the Christ** by being baptized “into” Him (6:3). Galatians 3:27 states, “For as many of you as have been baptized **into Christ** have put on Christ.” Scripturally speaking, the only way to get into Christ, in Whom are all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3), including redemption (Rom. 3:24), is to be baptized “into” Him. Those that have not been baptized into Him are still lost in sin.

Here's the truth about baptism: A person **gets into the death of Christ** by being baptized into it (6:3). We are “justified by his blood” (Rom. 5:9) and reconciled to God “by the death of his Son” (5:10). Since the Lord shed His

blood in His death (by which we are justified), and since one gets into the death of Jesus' death by being baptized (6:3), then it follows that scriptural baptism is a required part of the process by which one is justified in God's sight. Just as there could be no justification without the death of Jesus, so a sinner cannot be justified without water baptism.

What's the truth about baptism: **We are buried with Jesus into death.** *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death" (6:4).* Just as Jesus died and was buried in a tomb, so a person that is dead in sin is *"buried with him in baptism" (Col. 2:12).*

What is the truth about baptism: **Following baptism, one is to walk in newness of life.** *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (6:4).* The fact that we should walk in newness of life is an-

other answer to the question, "Shall we continue in sin?" Of course we must not remain in sin because we are supposed to be a new person with a new outlook! That means that sin should be "out the door." Note also that a person has a new life, i.e., he/she is born again — that occurs only after baptism. That does not mean water can save a person, however it does indicate that baptism in water is a required act in order to be cleansed from sin.

Romans 6:1-4 is a clear, memorable, section of scripture. The three questions we have considered from this passage about what to say, continuing in sin, and knowledge of baptism, cause us to think seriously about what the Lord wants us to be.

Now that we have learned from this passage, what shall we do with this knowledge? Should we not apply it to our lives and strive to live as servants of righteousness? YES INDEED.

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BAPTISM: WHAT IS IT?

Baptism is one of those subjects in which there exists much confusion and contradictory teaching because men refuse to accept what Jesus says about it. The only way we will be able to know the truth on this matter is to accept what the Bible teaches. According to the Scripture, what is baptism?

A BURIAL — In the minds of some, baptism can be sprinkling, pouring or an immersion and still be acceptable with God. In Romans 6:4, Paul said, *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death..."* Paul also wrote in Colossians 2:12, *"Buried with him in baptism..."* According to the Scripture baptism is a burial.

A BEGINNING — *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4).* Only after baptism can one begin a new life. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2*

Cor. 5:17). If one is in Christ, he has become a new creature. How do we get into Christ? In Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:26-27 we learn that we get into Christ by being baptized into Him. Then and only then, according to the Scriptures, is the beginning of a new life.

A BLESSING — To be in Christ means we have all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). Only in Christ is there *reconciliation* to God (2 Cor. 5:19-20); *redemption* from our sins (Col. 1:13-14) and *remission* of our sins (Matt. 26:28). Since these blessings are found only in Christ, and the only way to get into Christ is by being baptized, surely, we can see that baptism is a blessing and essential to one being pleasing to God.

None of these things affirm that we are saved by baptism only. In fact, before one's baptism can be scriptural it must be preceded by *faith* (John 8:24), *repentance* (Luke 13:3), and *confession* of our faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32-33).

The Scriptures are very plain in teaching that baptism is a burial, it is the beginning of a new life as a new creature in Christ; and, it is a blessing.

WHY IS ONE BAPTIZED IN WATER?

Every time you read of baptism in the New Testament it was always an immersion in water in order to receive the remission of sins. Why is one baptized in water?

- To obey the Lord (Acts 10:48; Mark 16:16).
- To be united with the Lord (Rom. 6:3-6; Gal. 3:27).
- In order to become a child of God (John 3:3-7; Rom. 16:18).
- In order to become a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:3-4).
- In order to be saved/forgiven from sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
- In order to contact Jesus' blood (Rev. 1:5; Eph. 1:7; Rom. 6:3-6; Acts 22:16).
- In order to enter the kingdom / church (John 3:3-5; Acts 2:41,47; Eph. 5:23; 1 Cor. 12:13).
- In order to be put into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27).
- In order to bury the old man of sin (Rom. 6:6).
- In baptism God circumcises and takes away our sins (Col. 2:11-12).
- In baptism God performs an operation on a sinner to remove their sins (Col. 2:12).

What follows water baptism?

- We walk a new life (Rom. 6:4).
- We are a member of the one body, the church (John 3:3-5).
- We worship God faithfully (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)
- Satan will try to draw us away (1 Peter 5:8; Acts 5:3)
- We seek those things that are above (Col. 3:1-3; 2:12)

"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

HOW AND WHEN DOES ONE RECEIVE FORGIVENESS?

Garland M. Robinson

Notice the progression of HOW and WHEN one receives the forgiveness of their sins in order to become a child of God. Let the Bible speak for itself. It is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16). Remember, Cornelius had to hear WORDS in order to be saved (Acts 11:14)?

The following questions are extremely important:

1) **WHY is a person lost?** A person is lost because of their sin (Rom. 3:23,10). Sins separate us from God (Isa. 59:2). If we die separated from God we cannot go to heaven. That makes it essential that a sinner receive the forgiveness of sins.

2) **WHAT takes our sins away?** It is the BLOOD of Christ. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission (Heb. 9:22). *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"* (Eph. 1:7).

3) **HOW does the blood of Christ take away our sins?** It washes our sins away. Revelation 1:5, *"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."*

4) **WHEN does the blood of Christ wash away our sins?** It is WHEN a believing, repentant, sinner confesses faith in Christ and is immersed into water for the forgiveness of sins. In Acts 22:16 Saul was told, *"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."* That is exactly what the apostles told the multitude to do on the day the church began (Acts 2:38). From that day forward, until the end of time, how did (does) men and women become Christians and members of the blood bought body of Christ? Peter told the believing Jews that wanted forgiveness of their sins, *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."* (Acts 2:37-38).

Did Peter lie to the people that day? NO. He told them what to do to be forgiven of their sins, *"repent and be baptized."* Since that day and until the end of time, the Bible tells people the same words that Peter commanded.

Having your sins forgiven to become a child of God is not difficult. All one has to do is have faith, trust, confidence in the Lord as the Son of God AND OBEY what He said one must do in order to have forgiveness and become a child of God. The whole process is summed up by the Lord's own words in Mark 16:16, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."*

Water baptism is FOR the remission of sins. Water baptism is WHERE a sinner contacts the blood of Christ that washes sins away. The water itself does not wash sins away, the blood of Christ washes sins away. BUT, the question is WHEN does Jesus' blood wash sins away? It's WHEN a

person is immersed in water!

John baptized in water FOR (in order to receive) the remission of sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). Jesus baptized in water FOR the remission of sins (John 4:1-2; Mark 16:16). The apostles baptized in water FOR the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). The Lord's orders to those of the 1st century (and will continue until he comes again) is to teach and baptize believers FOR (in order to receive) the remission of sins. Jesus said, *"Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:15-16). How can one be saved without the forgiveness of sins? They can't!

First Peter 3:20-21 says: *"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."*

Why, oh why, do masses of people refuse to do what Jesus says to do in order to be saved?

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