

# IF ONLY...

By Frank Himmel

**If only my boss wouldn't be so rude and domineering, I would try harder and be more cooperative at work.** "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable." (1 Peter 2:18)

**If only my husband weren't so lazy and self-centered, and would treat me like I deserve, I would go back and live with him.** "... wives, be submissive to your husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior." (1 Peter 3:1-2)

**If only people would quit taking advantage of me, I would maintain a better disposition.** "To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead." (1 Peter 3:8-9)

**If only the brethren were friendlier and that preacher not so dry, I would go to church more often.** "... let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is

the habit of some, but encouraging one another ..." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

**If only I had more income and fewer bills, I would give a lot more.** "... in the churches of Macedonia ... in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality." (2 Corinthians 8:1-2)

**If only my family would be more supportive, I would become a Christian.** "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me ..." (Matthew 10:37)

Do you notice that what God expects of us, He expects regardless of our particular circumstances? Instead of excusing ourselves due to adverse conditions, let us commit ourselves to our Creator and Benefactor.

**If only we would be like Jesus, who said,** "... I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30). He not only said it, He lived it — even to the point of death.



### Classes This Week

<b>Sunday 5:15 PM</b> Kids' class 5:15 in auditorium	<b>Sunday 5:00 PM</b> Song Leading Class in College Classroom	<b>Tuesday 8:00 PM</b> Truth-seekers Campus Study in Room 2310 in Student Center	<b>Thursday 7:00 PM</b> Ladies' Class at Home of Haley Gay, Taylor Lawrence and Emily Leopard
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<b>Brad Marshall</b> (Allie Hosey's Cousin)	<b>Jesse Godwin</b> (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	<b>Frank Hand</b> (Laura Humphrey's dad)	<b>Louise Pack</b> (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
<b>Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson</b> (Toni Herd's Sisters)	<b>Don Lanier</b> (Father of Greg Lanier)	<b>David Hartsell</b> (Holly and Brad's Father)	<b>Terri Sams</b> (Erica's friend)
<b>Terri Moore</b> (Joey's aunt)	<b>Audrey Barnett</b> (Joanetta's sister-in-law)	<b>Betty Bradford</b>	<b>Hazel Gilliland</b> (Toni's relatives)
<b>Tom Davis</b> (Walker Davis' Uncle)	<b>Ermogene Laxson</b> (Sara Lail's grandmother)	<b>Danny Weldon</b> (Rusty Weldon's brother)	<b>William Smith</b> (Ken Sullivan's brother)
<b>Gerald White</b> (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	<b>Bernice Martin</b> (Will Harris' great-grandmother)	<b>Rebecca Davis</b> (Chuck Hahn's Niece)	<b>Eva Jean Cavender</b> (Matt's grandmother)
<b>John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley</b> (Toni Herd's family)	<b>Joe Perkins</b> (Scott Perkin's Dad)	<b>Aubrey Meeks</b> (Toni Herd's Nephew)	<b>Virginia Box</b> (Sarah Norman's grandmother)

### February Birthdays

- 2-Ken Sullivanne
- 2-Wesley Herd
- 3-Chris Long
- 4-Emma Hayes Bagents
- 5-Jude Hosey
- 5-Chase Counsell
- 5-Jimmy Owen
- 6-Jackson Fowler
- 8-Bruce Daniels
- 11-Blake Tolliver
- 13-Leslie Freeman
- 14-Leighton Daniels
- 14-Anna Jean Selsvik
- 15-Ella Miller
- 15-Dave Johnson
- 16-Seth Humphrey
- 17-Ivy Hall
- 18-Caralise Hunt
- 18-Wyatt Boyd
- 20-Andrew Tominack
- 22-Brock Hester
- 22-Alexander Calvert
- 23-Greg Lanier
- 23-Luke Carter
- 24-Jeff Jerkins
- 24-Thomas Peek
- 25-Valerie Liverett
- 27-Julie Johnson

### News and Notes

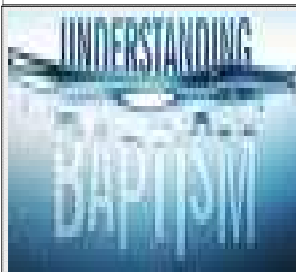
- Lisa Carter, Luke's mom, began her chemo treatments in Bham this week. please pray that these will be effective.
- There is a singing at the Northwood church in Tuscaloosa Fri, Feb 26 at 7:30
- Our monthly singing night is tonight
- Please continue to pray for Rebecca Davis, Chuck Hahn's niece, who is not doing well.
- Sarah Norman's grandmother, is receiving therapy in a rehab center.
- Ken Sullivanne's cardioversion was successful. He will remain in hospital a day or so.
- Please remember will Harris' great-grandmother, Bernice Martin, as she is gravely ill.
- We rejoice in the baptisms of Robert Ziama and Joel Tumwebaze!
- Pray for Dorothy Buck, Brittany Bagents' great-grandmother, who is gravely ill.
- Turner Stephens will have an outpatient procedure on Monday in Bham.
- Please pray for the Herds as they are traveling to CA this week to visit William's father.

# The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Volume 7, Issue 22 February 21, 2016



### Thoughts to Ponder

And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" ... (Acts 19:3)

### Is Knowing That Baptism is Essential to Salvation Essential to Salvation?

By Gary Eubanks

This question may seem a bit obscure and require a moment's reflection to digest, but it actually addresses a very common and familiar situation. Anyone who knows much about Evangelicalism knows that at its heart lies the concept of salvation by faith alone. For Evangelicals, salvation comes at the point of belief and before, and without, baptism. Yet, Evangelicals also seek, and encourage, baptism. Hence, the idea that people should be baptized but for some reason other than to be saved is by far the norm.

If anyone wants to be baptized at all, it is because the New Testament instructs people to be baptized. It is inconceivable that anyone could come away from a reasonably careful reading of the New Testament without getting that impression from it. This much is not even questioned, much less controversial. The result, then, is a situation in which baptism is held to be essential to obedience but not essential to salvation. In the abstract, the idea that something could be essential to obedience but not salvation is not at all strange, since almost all of a typical person's obedience to God's commands does follow salvation.

Yet, the fallacy of applying this thinking to the purpose of baptism begins to unravel simply by asking how anyone could manage to become convinced from reading the New Testament that he should be baptized without also

noticing in the same texts the very reasons why he should be baptized. Such a scenario is so improbable that the only reasonable conclusion one can draw is that such people have willfully chosen to ignore New Testament teaching about baptism. A brief survey of some of the more outstanding texts relating to baptism renders this conclusion self-evident:

(1) How does one learn from Jesus' commission to His apostles that he should be baptized without also learning that it is how he is made His disciple (Matt. 28:19)?

(2) How does one learn from Jesus' commission to His apostles that he should be baptized without also learning that, along with belief, it comes before salvation (Mk. 16:16)?

(3) How does one learn from Peter's response to the people on Pentecost that he should be baptized without also learning that it is "for the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 2:38)?

(4) How does one learn from the Ethiopian eunuch's recognition of his urgent need to be baptized that he should be baptized without also learning that it intervenes being taught Jesus and going on one's way rejoicing (Acts 8:35-39)?

(5) How does one learn from Paul's recounting of his baptism that he should

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Walker Davis  
(334) 703-0050  
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(334) 734-2133

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**  
**Sunday**  
Bible Class .....9:30 AM  
Worship .....10:20 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM  
**Wednesday**  
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM  
**E-Mail:**  
larryrouse@aubeacon.com  
**Larry Rouse**  
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be baptized without also learning that it is to wash away sins (**Acts 22:16**)?

(6) How does one learn from Paul's teaching about baptism that he should be baptized without also learning that it is "into Christ Jesus" and "into His death" and so that one "might walk in newness of life" (**Rom. 6:3, 4**)?

(7) How does one learn from Paul's teaching about baptism that he should be baptized without also learning that it is essential to his identity as being "of Christ" (**1 Cor. 1:12-15**)?

(8) How does one learn from Paul's teaching about baptism that he should be baptized without also learning that it is when he is "clothed with Christ" (**Gal. 3:27**)?

(9) How does one learn from Paul's teaching about baptism that he should be baptized without also learning that it is when he is buried and raised with Christ (**Col. 2:12**)?

(10) How does one learn from Peter's teaching about baptism that he should be baptized without also learning that it "saves" (**1 Pet. 3:21**)?

While not every text is so explicit in making this connection between baptism and salvation, yet, that connection is so clear and compelling that a good argument might be made for it from virtually any text referring to gospel baptism. Thus, it is so improbable as to be practically unimaginable that anyone desiring salvation could undertake a serious, careful, and conscientious study of the New Testament and conclude that he should be baptized without also concluding that the reason he should be baptized is because it is essential to his salvation. In short, the very texts which convince him he should be baptized are the very ones which should convince him that he should be baptized to be saved.

That being the case, the idea that a person, strictly from reading the New Testament, would want to be baptized to obey God but not to be saved simply lacks credibility and fails to conform to reality. To be charitable, it is conceivable that a person might come to believe in Christ from a brief and casual reading of some New Testament texts (e.g., Jn. 3:16) and conclude he is then saved without having been baptized.

The very contemplation of such a scenario requires the improbable conception of a person who has so little regard for his salvation and so little respect for

God's word that he is content to vouchsafe his soul to a process which cherry-picks isolated texts for the ease and comfort they provide and rejects the rest. That alone is sufficient to raise doubts about his salvation.

Rather, the kind of person this question contemplates and the kind experience offers is one who is serious enough about his faith to continue a more extensive study of the New Testament. In the course of such a study, he will shortly uncover numerous texts about baptism and its relation to salvation. This means that he cannot conclude from reading the New Testament that he should be baptized to obey God without having to confront what the New Testament says about its relation to salvation. Thus, at this point, he will have to make an informed decision about baptism. Whatever it is, it will also involve a very conscious conclusion about its purpose. He has long passed the stage of innocence by way of ignorance. If he decides to be baptized to obey God but not to be saved, his decision necessarily entails a very the conscious conclusion that baptism is not essential to salvation, and that in the face of all the New Testament says about baptism's relation to salvation. Thus, any decision to be baptized to be saved but not to be saved will involve a more-or-less elaborate attempt to reconcile the texts already considered with the notion that baptism is not for the purpose of salvation.

It is now time for great candor. This, then, is not a person who is baptized in obedience to God's command but rather in defiance of it and rebellion against it.

If anyone thinks this conclusion is unwarranted or exaggerated, he should consider that it enjoys the vast support of reality. Evangelicals by the hundreds of millions have not been baptized to obey God but not to be saved because they live in a doctrinal vacuum and have simply followed an impulse to be baptized from some vague sense of the need to obey God. No! They are baptized "to obey God" but not "to be saved" because they are desperately clinging to the cherished doctrine of salvation by faith alone with all the far-fetched, lame, ungainly, and incredible quibbles they can muster. Thus, the idea that one should be baptized but should not be baptized to be saved is not the result of slight inadvertence in one's Bible reading; rather, such a baptism is done in conscious response, and deliberate submission, to a rebellious, man-made creed. No other rational explanation is available nor one need to sought, except by those who, discontented with the narrow fellowship of God's people, wish to enlarge it by accommodating the disobedient.



## Baptism Isn't For!

By Lowell Blasingame

No religious topic generates more controversy than water baptism. The problem isn't that the Bible hasn't spoken clearly and plainly. The real cause for the difficulty is because so many have drawn conclusions from their own feelings and opinions without consulting the Bible to see what it says.

All religious people agree that baptism is a command but there are differences over who are subjects of the command and for what purpose it is to be obeyed. Maybe we can remove some of the difficulty if we approach the study of the topic from the negative standpoint and point out some of the things that baptism isn't for.

**1. Baptism isn't for the untaught.** Jesus told his disciples to go and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (**Matt. 28:19**). Teaching was to precede the baptizing and each case of conversion related in the book of Acts shows that persons were taught before they were baptized. Since baptism isn't for the untaught, it follows that babies and irresponsible persons are not subjects for baptism.

**2. Baptism isn't for unbelievers.** While Philip was teaching the eunuch, they came to a certain water and the eunuch asked what hindered him from being baptized. Philip's response was, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" (**Acts 8:35-37**). Jesus placed believing before baptism (**Mk. 16:16**). Since baptism isn't for unbelievers, it isn't for atheists or agnostics.

**3. Baptism isn't for the impenitent.** Sometimes I hear people say, "If I thought one had to be baptized to be saved, I'd force that person to be baptized." But, wait, friend, you've missed a point in Bible teaching. One must repent before he is baptized (**Acts 2:38**) and if you were to compel one to be baptized who has not repented, you would have forced him to submit to an act that isn't for him.

**4. Baptism isn't for saved people.** I know that many think that one is first saved, then baptized as a symbol or sign of his salvation but I want you to read carefully the following passages of scripture and take note of where baptism is placed in relationship to the blessing that is promised in each of them.

a. **Mk. 16:16 - Baptized—saved.**

b. **Acts 2:38 - Baptized—remission of sins.**

c. **Acts 22:16 - Baptized - washing away of sins.**

In fact, in every passage of Scripture in which baptism and a word corresponding to forgiveness appears, bap-

tism always comes before that word, never after it. There is but one conclusion that can possibly be drawn and that is baptism isn't for saved people.

**5. Baptism isn't for Christians.** Some talk about baptism being a "Christian rite" or the "Christian ordinance" of baptism. Baptism is a command so in this sense it is a rite or ordinance but it isn't one for a Christian to obey. Let me show you that this is so. One does not become a Christian before he enters Christ for it is in him that he becomes a new creature (**2 Cor. 5:17**). But he does not enter Christ until he is baptized into him (**Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27**). Therefore, it follows that one is not baptized as a Christian, one already in Christ, but in order to get into that One in whom he becomes a Christian.

**6. Baptism isn't for the sins of a child of God.** Often when I point out that baptism is for the remission of sins, I am asked, "Does this mean that a child of God must be baptized each time that he sins?" The answer is, "No, baptism isn't for the sins of the child of God."

Look at a Bible example that proves this. In Samaria, Simon heard Philip's preaching and was baptized (**Acts 8:13**). Later, Simon sinned in trying to buy the power to impart miraculous gifts of the Spirit but he wasn't told to be baptized again. He was told to repent and pray that the thought of his heart might be forgiven (**Acts 8:18-23**). Baptism isn't a command given to children of God for remission of their sins.

**7. Baptism wasn't for Old Testament Characters.** "If Abraham, David and Moses were saved without baptism, does not that prove that I can be saved without it?" is another question that I have had asked. Again, the answer is, "No, Christ gave the command to baptize just before he returned to heaven." Old Testament characters who had lived and died before it was given were not subject to obeying it. The same is true of the thief on the cross. He had been dead more than forty days when Christ gave this command (**Acts 1:1-3**).

Baptism is a command now for us and we must obey Christ if we are to be saved (**Heb. 5:9**). It is for those who gladly receive the word (**Acts 2:42**) and show such by believing in Christ (**Jn. 8:24**), repenting of their sins (**Lk. 13:3**) and confessing their faith in him as the Son of God (**Matt. 10:32-33**). If you are willing to do this, baptism is for you. If you aren't willing to do this, baptism isn't for you!

Guardian of Truth - October 7, 1993

