



A Friendly Challenge

Tim Canup

For several weeks now, we have thoroughly examined the controversial subject of baptism. Many in the religious world today deny that baptism is for the remission of sins; teaching that salvation comes at the point of faith in Jesus with no further acts of obedience. There are many who teach baptism is not necessary for salvation. However, just because a large number (or even the majority) teach a particular doctrine, does not mean it is true (read carefully Matthew 7:13-14). The Bible's teaching about baptism cannot be compromised in order to please any person. Some will be offended, but some were offended by Jesus Himself in His day (compare Matthew 11:6, 13:57, 15:12).

Let me kindly challenge anyone who may teach or hold that baptism is not necessary to salvation to defend this in a public debate. I am not suggesting a public argument, but rather, a friendly public discussion with gentlemanly courtesy. Some may suggest that the Bible forbids debating, after all, Paul condemned it in Romans 1:29. The word translated "debate" in this passage is the word for strife, that is, to be contentious; and such is wrong and condemned. However, to kindly discuss the differences we have in religion (or any other matter), publicly or privately is not wrong. In fact, Jesus constantly debated with the self-righteous, religious leaders of His day (compare John 8 and many other instances). Paul, in his defense of Christianity, frequently debated (Acts 9:22, 17:2, 17, 18:4, 18:19, 24:25; Philippians 1:17). Peter commanded for us to "*be* ready always to *give* an answer [a reasoned discourse-TAC] to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15). We expect and demand our political leaders to stand and debate the issues; to prove to us what they believe and why.

Is there anyone who is willing to stand with kindness and gentlemanly courtesy, and publicly defend in debate the following proposition?

“The Bible teaches that at the point of faith in Christ (that is, by faith alone), without any further acts of obedience, a non-Christian can obtain the salvation from any and all past sins, thus making him/her a Christian.”

With all respect, I deny the above proposition and will gladly sign and publicly (or privately) affirm the following:

“The Bible teaches that baptism in water by a penitent believer is for (in order to obtain) the remission (that is, forgiveness) from any and all past sins, thus making him/her a Christian.”

The opportunity is now given for anyone to publicly defend what they teach about what God requires for salvation. As I stated before, I am not interested in a public argument or an attack on anyone’s character; let us simply and kindly discuss our differences. Who will accept this challenge? If you are willing, please contact us at: Back To The Bible; 221 Barnett Street; West Jefferson, NC 28694 or call: (336) 846-5615. You may also visit us online at: www.wjchurchofchrist.org.

- ☐ Yes, I am willing to defend the above given proposition in a public debate
- ☐ Yes, I want to know more about what the Bible teaches to do to become a Christian
- ☐ Yes, I would like a free copy of the *Searching For Truth* DVD

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () - _____