

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”

APRIL 25, 2021

## Does God Really Mean That?

by Jim Stauffer

We live in a time in our nation when people expect to have things their own way. We tend to believe we should decide how things should be in our lives.

God expects His people to be a righteous lot. So much does He demand this, He sent His Son to die in order to provide forgiveness for the sins of man. Now does that sound to you like He is just O.K. with the worship and service man may choose to offer to Him.

*“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”*

**(Romans 15:4)** This refers to men of the Old Testament who were faithful in obedience to God and were pleasing because of that. Men such as Noah, Abraham and David among many others who were called upon by God to serve in very special and detailed ways. Scripture also warns us not to be disobedient as some were and were displeasing to God. *“Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”* **(1 Corinthians 10:11)** Men such as Nadab and Abihu, Uzzah along with the example of Israel left to wander in the wilderness. The clear example is when God speaks we must listen and obey exactly as He commands.

The gospel is a message of redemption. Redemption from the bondage of sin. That redemption involves the forgiveness of our sins and entrance into the kingdom of Christ **(Col. 1:13,14)**. Since all have sinned **(Rom. 3:23)**, this redemption is needed by each of us. The obedience that brings this redemption is being born again **(John 3:3-5)**, which makes us a new creature **(2 Cor. 5:17)**. That new creature then has the righteousness of God conferred on him. The soul of the man, desperate and

hopeless, has been reclaimed from the clutches of Satan.

Man is lost in his sin and therefore must submit to the One Who can solve his problem. Submission is therefore the key to obedience to God. He therefore demands man love Him and obey. Jesus summed up the relationship this way, *“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”* **(John 14:15)** Having established this point we are made to wonder why someone would reject the concept of baptism for the remission of sins and salvation. Passages that clearly set forth the principle of baptism washing away sins and leading to salvation are abundant. *“He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”* **(Mark 16:16)** *“Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized 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)** *“Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.”* **(Acts 22:16)** Yet many continue to teach and practice the concept that one is saved, forgiven of sins prior to baptism. Do you think God meant what He said in those verses? Did He mean what He said about the flood in Genesis? Did He mean what He said about Israel being punished for idolatry?

Why would mankind be so arrogant to challenge the word of God while claiming to believe in Him. Jesus came to earth in order to share in flesh and blood **(Heb. 2:14)**. He willingly gave up His place in heaven to sacrifice Himself for our sins **(Phil. 2:5-8)**. The last and only chance we had for redemption and we have the “unmitigated gall” to say, no, I would rather serve you my way. How arrogant are we folks?

*“Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who*

*abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.” (2 John 1:9)* Such arrogance will leave us without Christ. Instead of putting Him on in baptism as Paul tells the Galatians (3:27) we are not clothed in Him. This leaves us without the righteousness that comes to the one who becomes a new creature when he is born again as Jesus taught Nicodemus in **Johh 3:3-5**.

What do you think? Does God mean it?

## Does Jesus Discourage Followers?

There are a few Bible passages that seem to indicate Jesus discouraged people from following him. Note a couple examples:

**Luke 14:25-27:** *"Now a great multitude went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 'If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.'"*

**Matthew 8:19-20:** *"...a certain scribe came and said to him, 'Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.'*

Other such statements can be supplied. In these two scriptures we see a willingness in people to follow Jesus. Jesus, however, speaks to them hard sayings that could easily cause the person to change his mind. Why does Jesus do that?

To follow Jesus is to, at times, follow a difficult and lonely path. There will be temptations, challenges and choices that are difficult. People will not always react well to Jesus' disciples. Am I willing to suffer such things?

Jesus does not want us to be unprepared for these trials. Foreknowledge does not make the trial easier, but it allows us to strengthen and brace ourselves for the things we will face. We can weigh benefits and blessings against the cost and curses. With a clear mind we can determine to follow Him, regardless.

Jesus does not mean to discourage people from following him. He is calling people to be true and faithful followers. Do you want to be a real disciple?

**Don Bunting**

## Evolution demands blind faith.

Blind faith is believing in something without evidence.

Every person on the planet has faith, but having blind faith, by definition, is irrational: drawing conclusions without enough proof. The faith/trust I have in the laws of science is not blind; it is based on a mound of evidence that has been formed over many years by those laws never being wrong. Christianity is not built on blind faith, but on faith that has been proven by the Bible never being wrong in anything it says. God demands that Christian faith be the result of testing everything.

## (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

For one example, consider: if one is a naturalist, believing that there is no super-natural God, he must believe that at some point(s) in the past, life arose from non-living substances (that spontaneous generation of life occurred). Many scientific experiments have been conducted over the centuries testing the hypothesis that spontaneous generation could occur, and every one of them has resulted in the same conclusion: in nature, life only comes from pre-existing life. No matter what scientists have tried to do in a laboratory to make non-living material come to life, it still remains non-living. If one is rational and follows the evidence to its logical conclusion, the conclusion will be that in the Universe (in nature), life cannot come to exist from non-life. If, however, he cannot stomach the evidence, and chooses instead to irrationally believe that life can come from non-life in spite of the evidence, he is holding to a blind faith.

If life only comes from previously existing life in the Universe, then where did life originally come from? It must have originated from a supernatural spiritual Source—Someone outside of the Universe. Indeed, it is God who *"gives to all life, breath, and all things"* (**Acts 17:25**).

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Lionel Ruby (1960), *Logic: An Introduction* (Chicago, IL: J.B. Lippincott), pp. 130-131.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1; Acts 17:11; John 8:32; John 10:37; Dave Miller (2003), "Blind Faith," Apologetics Press, <http://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=11&article=444>.

<sup>3</sup> Jeff Miller (2012), "The Law of Biogenesis [Part 1]," *Reason & Revelation*, 32[1]:2-5,9-11.

<sup>4</sup> For more information, see Jeff Miller (2013), "Unlike Naturalists, You Creationists Have a Blind Faith," *Reason & Revelation*, 33[7]:76-83.

**Matt Hodge**

## Faith and Baptism

**David Posey**

When Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, many listened and believed. Convicted of their sins, they

asked a logical question: *“What shall we do to be saved?”* This question was an exercise of the faith they had after hearing the word preached (**Romans 10:17**). They believed and wanted to submit to whatever God commanded them to do. Peter told them to repent and be baptized for remission of sins. *“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them”* (see **Acts 2:37–41**). These people were saved by faith.

Some theologians argue with this analysis. Since they view baptism as a work of law they contend that teaching the necessity of baptism is something akin to teaching salvation by works of law. They see but two alternatives: one is either justified by perfect performance of law or one is saved without reference to anything he does. Since the first is ruled out by passages like **Galatians 2:16**, they declare the second the only possible alternative: salvation comes by grace through faith only. Though this assertion fails to address the fact that even basic faith is doing something ( Jesus calls it the *“work of God”* in **John 6:29**), they are resolute in their assertion of the dilemma and proceed to discard baptism as an unnecessary addition to God’s plan.

Is there such a dilemma? “Our problem is that Augustine, Luther and other Western theologians have convinced us that there’s an irreconcilable conflict between salvation based on grace and salvation conditioned on works or obedience. They have used a fallacious form of argumentation known as the ‘false dilemma’, by asserting that there are only two possibilities regarding salvation: it’s either (1) a gift from God or (2) it’s something we earn by works.” (David Bercot, *Will the Real Heretics Please Stand Up?* Scroll Publishing Co., Waco, Texas, p. 62).

Bercot’s right. The false dilemma has caused many to struggle with the place of baptism in a system of salvation that is clearly based on faith (**Romans 1:17; 3:21–26**). Yet there is no contradiction between justification by faith (trusting submission to the will of God) and the requirement to be baptized. Baptism is no more foreign to the concept of faith than Abel’s offering a sacrifice (**Hebrews 11:4**) or Noah’s building of the ark (**Hebrews 11:7**) or Abraham’s *“going out”* (**Hebrews 11:8**). Who would question the act if the texts said, *“by faith, Noah, being divinely warned, was baptized for remission of his sins”*? And no reasonable person would argue that Noah still exercised a saving faith if, being divinely warned, he refused to be baptized? Even if called *“faith,”* it would have been no more effective than the faith that devils practice (**James 2:19**).

Baptism is so clearly a part of the plan of God to save man that Peter says **“baptism now saves us”** (**1 Peter 3:21**), Paul ascribes the clothing of ourselves

with Christ to it (**Galatians 3:26–27**) and Paul makes our union with Christ dependent upon it (**Romans 6:1–7**).

How can anyone assert that it is not essential? Ironically, some opponents of the necessity of baptism have proved it’s significance by the form of arguments they lodge against it. For example, A. T. Robertson, in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, makes this comment on **Romans 6:3**: “The translation ‘into’ makes Paul say that the believers’ union with Christ was effected by baptism.” His bias doesn’t allow him to accept the translation, but the translators of nearly every version have chosen “into” to translate the Greek term. For another example, the Campus Crusade for Christ seeks to undermine the effect of **Acts 2:37–38** with these comments in a paper entitled “Bible Study on Water Baptism”: “It is true that Peter tells them to be baptized. However, his sermon in **Acts 2** is probably not a part of the original sermon.” In case that doesn’t work, they try this: “it seems possible that if the people hadn’t asked ‘what shall we do?’ (not ‘what must we do’ as in **Acts 16:30**) that Peter may never have mentioned baptism at all!” And that’s meant to convince college students! I hope they can see through that.

Clearly, baptism is an essential act of faith. Those who say otherwise have an agenda that is not from the Lord.

*~via South Bumby Church; Orlando, Florida.  
Taken from Market Street Messenger*

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We believe in worshiping and serving  
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**Psa. 1:1** *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

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## ***What Must I Do To Be Saved?***

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10