

DAILY READING

WEEK 2 THE SECURITY AND ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

WEEK 2 — DAY 5

Scripture Reading

Mark 16:16 He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned.

Acts 8:36 And as they were going along the road, they came upon some water, and the eunuch said, Look, water. What prevents me from being baptized?

Baptism

The Importance of Baptism

The first thing God did in the beginning of the New Testament dispensation was to send John the Baptist to preach the baptism of repentance (Acts 10:37; Luke 3:3)... This indicates the importance of baptism in God's New Testament plan and arrangement. We may say that baptism opens the New Testament dispensation. Just as the truth of baptism was God's initiation of the New Testament dispensation, so the practice of baptism marks the beginning of our enjoyment of the New Testament blessings.

In the New Testament, the verb form of the word baptism in Greek is baptizo, meaning to immerse or dip in water, to cover with water, or to put into water.

Many verses in the New Testament speak of the necessity and importance of baptism. In Mark 16:16 the Lord Jesus said to the disciples, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned." Here the verse does not say, "He who does not believe and is not baptized." This indicates that condemnation is related only to not believing; it is not related to not being baptized. Believing, by itself, is sufficient in order to receive salvation from condemnation; yet for the completion of one's inward salvation, believing needs baptism as an outward affirmation. To believe is to receive Christ not only for forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:42) but also for regeneration (1 Pet. 1:21, 23), so that those who believe may become the children of God (John 1:12-13) and the members of Christ (Eph. 5:30) in an organic union with the Triune God (Matt. 28:19). To be baptized is to affirm this by being buried to terminate the old creation through the death of Christ and by being raised to be the new creation of God through Christ's resurrection.

To believe and to be so baptized are two parts of one complete step for receiving the full salvation of God. To be baptized without believing is merely an empty ritual; to believe without being baptized is to be saved only inwardly without an outward affirmation of the inward salvation.

Baptism has two aspects: the visible aspect is the baptism in water; the invisible aspect, the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 10:47; 9:17-18; John 3:5). Water is the symbol of baptism, and the Holy Spirit is the reality of baptism. The visible aspect is the expression, the

testimony, of the invisible aspect, whereas the invisible aspect is the reality of the visible aspect. Without the invisible aspect by the Spirit, the visible aspect by the water is vain; and without the visible aspect by water, the invisible aspect by the Spirit is abstract and impractical, without an expression. Both are needed.

In the case of Philip preaching the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39) water baptism was particularly emphasized, but no mention was made of Spirit baptism. This should give us strong instruction that we must pay attention to water baptism, which signifies the believers' identification with Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12), as well as to Spirit baptism [1 Cor. 12:13]. Spirit baptism produces the reality of the believers' union with Christ in life essentially and in power economically, whereas water baptism is the believers' affirmation of the Spirit's reality....All believers in Christ should properly have both, just as the children of Israel were baptized in the cloud (signifying the Spirit) and in the sea (signifying water)—1 Cor. 10:2.

In the sight of God there is only one baptism with two aspects—the aspect of water and the aspect of Spirit.... Whenever we baptize others, we baptize them in water and in the Spirit at the same time.