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# Bible Talk

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This week the question is: ***Can a sinner be saved by prayer without baptism?***

This question is very appropriate, because many churches today teach their members that a sinner is saved by believing in Jesus and by praying for forgiveness. They teach that baptism plays no part in a man's salvation, and if a sinner prays, he is saved at that point whether he gets baptized, or not.

Is this truly what the Bible teaches? Or, does the Bible teach that a sinner is saved by a different process than by prayer? Let us search the Scriptures for a Bible answer.

## **The Great Commission**

First, let us look at the Great Commission which Jesus gave to His apostles:

### **Matthew 28:19-20**

<sup>19</sup> [Jesus said] Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

<sup>20</sup> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ...

Notice carefully that Jesus did not mention prayer in this Great Commission. He did not tell the apostles to "teach all nations" to pray for forgiveness of sins. Instead, He told the apostles to teach all nations to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Baptism in water is the final step of obedience which gives the sinner forgiveness of sins and makes him a disciple of Christ.

Again:

**Mark 16:15-16**

<sup>15</sup> And [Jesus] said unto [His disciples], Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

<sup>16</sup> He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Here the New Testament gives us more information about the Great Commission. Notice once again that prayer is absent. The apostles did not teach every creature to pray for forgiveness of sins. Rather, they taught every creature to be baptized for the remission of sins.

**The First Gospel Sermon**

The Book of Acts is a monumental testimony to the fact that sinners are not saved from their sins by prayer! In Acts chapter 2 the apostle Peter was preaching the first gospel sermon after Jesus had been crucified. As he preached the gospel it began to stir the audience. These Jews came to realize their great sin in crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ!

### **Acts 2:37-38**

<sup>37</sup> 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?

<sup>38</sup> Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Now, what did Peter tell these sinners to do??? He told them to repent and be baptized! He did not tell them to repent and pray for the remission of sins. He told them to repent and be baptized!!! Baptism is the step which a sinner must take in order to be saved from his sins.

## **Cornelius**

In Acts chapter 10 we are introduced to the first conversion of a Gentile. Cornelius was the Gentile who was given the first opportunity to enter into the Lord's church.

### **Acts 10:30-31**

<sup>30</sup> And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

<sup>31</sup> And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

Here the angel said that the prayers of Cornelius had been heard by God! Here was a sinner that was praying to God, but his prayers did not save him. The angel told him to find the apostle Peter and:

**Acts 11:14**

<sup>14</sup> [Peter] shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

The words of Peter would save Cornelius from his sins! His prayers did not save him!

Now, what words did Peter speak to Cornelius?

**Acts 10:48**

<sup>48</sup> And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. ...

Once again we see that baptism was the means designed by God to save sinners.

**Prayer – A Christian Privilege**

Prayer is not the means of forgiveness for sinners! Prayer is a privilege given to Christians.

**Proverbs 28:9**

<sup>9</sup> He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

**John 9:31**

<sup>31</sup> Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

**1 John 3:22**

<sup>22</sup> And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

Even when Jesus was teaching His disciples how to pray, He taught them:

**Luke 11:2**

<sup>2</sup> ... When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ...

A sinner cannot say, "Our Father," because a sinner is not a child of God. Only a Christian can ask for forgiveness in prayer. Only a Christian can truly pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."

## **Conclusion**

Since prayer is a privilege given to Christians, an alien sinner cannot pray for forgiveness. Instead, the sinner must be baptized for the remission of his sins. Jesus plainly told Nicodemus:

### **John 3:5**

<sup>5</sup> ... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Today, if you desire to become a disciple of Jesus Christ, if you desire to become a New Testament Christian, you must:

- Believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God
- Repent of all your sins
- Confess your faith in Christ
- Be baptized for the remission of your sins

## **Announcements**

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We invite you to call again every week as we consider different subjects on ***Bible Talk***.