

Donahue's First Negative

After defining his proposition, Mr. Cockrell begins his first affirmative article by asserting "that baptism is to declare that a believer in Jesus Christ has already experienced salvation." I've heard many Baptist preachers assert this same thing, but I haven't heard one (including now Mr. Cockrell) give a verse that substantiates the assertion. Mr. Cockrell, could you please give us a verse in your next speech that teaches that baptism only shows that one is saved? I am not asking for one that teaches that works demonstrate our faith (James 2:14-26), but for one that teaches that baptism demonstrates that we are already saved.

Mr. Cockrell's Prevailing Argument

Mr. Cockrell presents seven arguments to prove his proposition that salvation occurs at the point of faith before water baptism. Most of these arguments can be summed up by the argument that he makes in the fourth paragraph of his article. The argument is basically: 1) salvation is predicated upon faith; 2) faith precedes baptism; 3) therefore salvation precedes baptism. I will deal with this argument in two ways.

First I will show that if this argument were true, then by the same reasoning, salvation could be shown to precede faith, and even repentance, therefore ruling out these two conditions as being necessary to salvation. The reader should notice the following parallel argument: (1) salvation is predicated upon repentance (II Cor 7:10, Lk 13:3, Acts 2:38, 11:18, 17:30, II Pet 3:9, Lk 15:7); (2) "repentance always precedes faith" (according to Milburn Cockrell, paragraph #3); (3) therefore salvation precedes faith (and is therefore not at the point of faith). Similarly: (1) salvation is predicated upon hearing (Jn 5:25, Is 55:3); (2) hearing precedes faith and repentance (Rom 10:17); (3) therefore salvation precedes both faith and repentance, and occurs at the point of hearing the gospel!

Mr. Cockrell's application of this argument using Lk 8:12, Jn 3:15, 6:47, 3:18, 8:24, 5:24, and 6:35 contradicts the many plain passages teaching that baptism is necessary to salvation, for example, Mk 16:16, Jn 3:5, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, Gal 3:26-27, Col 2:11-13, and I Pet 3:21. After showing clearly that his argument cannot be true in the previous paragraph, now let me explain what Mr. Cockrell's verses are saying in a way that doesn't contradict the baptism passages. The Bible frequently uses a figure of speech called a "synecdoche." The Random House College Dictionary defines "synecdoche" as "a figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole or the whole for a part," An every day example of a synecdoche is if a farmer

were to say that he had "twenty 'head' of cattle," he would not mean that he just had the heads of the cows, but that he had twenty whole cows (the word "head" would be a part of the cow standing for the whole cow).

Biblical examples of synecdoches include Acts 2:42, where the phrase "breaking of bread" refers to the whole of the Lord's supper, both the eating of bread and the drinking of the fruit of the vine, and Gen 46:27, which uses the word "soul" ("all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten") to refer to the whole of the person: body, soul, and spirit. Some Biblical examples important to our discussion are Acts 11:18 and II Pet 3:9, which both use repentance as a synecdoche, for the whole of man's required response to the gospel (repentance is also used in the non-synecdoche sense in Acts 2:38 and 3:19), and Jn 5:25 which uses hearing as a synecdoche for the whole of man's required response to the gospel (or else all a person has to do to be saved is hear the gospel).

This figure of speech, synecdoche, is found in Mr. Cockrell's proof texts: Lk 8:12, Jn 3:15, 6:47, 3:18, 8:24, 5:24, and 6:35. The word "believeth" in these verses stands for more than just mental belief ("to think to be true; to be persuaded of; to credit, place confidence in" - Thayer), it also stands for the other things that "confidence in" would demand (like repentance and baptism). This is complete faith (James 2:22), or "saving faith." Complete faith includes everything that the Bible states as being necessary to being saved, or as one Baptist put it, "If Scripture speaks of something as necessary for eternal life, that 'something' must be part of true belief."

Luke 7:48, 50

This principle learned answers all of Mr. Cockrell's seven arguments, except argument #2. In argument #2, Mr. Cockrell claims that since the woman who washed Jesus' feet in Lk 7:36-50 was forgiven of her sins without baptism, the same will be done for us today. First of all, we don't know for sure that she hadn't been baptized by John the Baptist. But even if she hadn't been baptized (I assume she had not), that still wouldn't help Mr. Cockrell, because this lady lived under a different covenant than we do. Notice that this pardon occurred before the "great commission" of Mk 16:16 (requiring baptism) was even given. This lady didn't need to be baptized for basically the same reason that Moses and a host of other Old Testament children of God didn't need to be baptized; that is, the New Testament law had not come into effect yet. Heb 9:15-17 reads, "And for this cause he (Jesus) is the mediator of the

new testament ... For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator (Jesus). For a testament is of force after men (Jesus) are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator (Jesus) liveth."

I Peter 3:21

In connection with Lk 7:48, 50, Mr. Cockrell asks "if Mr. Donahue can cite a verse which says: 'Thy baptism hath saved thee: go in peace.'" How would I Pet 3:21 do, Mr. Cockrell? This verse reads, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." This verse shows that the physical salvation of eight souls by water prefigures our spiritual salvation by water baptism. This verse does not teach that baptism is the earning basis for our salvation (the death of Christ is the earning basis), but it does teach that our salvation is conditioned upon baptism. This verse says that "baptism doth also now save us." My opponent teaches that baptism does not save us. Who will the reader believe, the Bible or my opponent?

Baptism Of Erring Christian Not Required

Mr. Cockrell's last argument is that since the Bible teaches that once a person is born again, if he sins, he can be forgiven without being rebaptized, why can't he be forgiven without baptism the first time? I can answer that argument by simply asking Mr. Cockrell, "could God require different conditions for the alien sinner to be forgiven than the erring Christian, if he wanted to? Certainly he could, God can do anything he wants to, and that is exactly what he has done, require "water" baptism to obtain the forgiveness of sins in connection with being "born again" (Jn 3:3,5), but not require it on the part of the erring Christian desiring forgiveness (Acts 8:22, I Jn 1:9).

Does Salvation Come AT THE POINT of Faith?

After finishing up his seven arguments, Mr. Cockrell states that Christ "repeatedly declared that the believer in Him is saved at the point of faith." Mr. Cockrell, this is the crux of the proposition. Where does Jesus state that salvation is AT THE POINT OF FAITH? We agree that salvation is by faith. But saying that salvation is by faith, and saying that salvation is at the point of faith are two very different things. The proof is Heb 11:30: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." Did you notice that the walls fell down by faith, but they didn't fall down at the point of faith, they fell down only

after the Israelites met God's conditions by faith? Similarly, we are the children of God by faith after we meet God's condition of baptism (Gal 3:26-27). The question is not, "are we saved by faith?" The question is, "when are we saved by faith?"

After answering Mr. Cockrell's arguments in defense of his proposition, I will now present three arguments that prove conclusively that salvation does NOT come at the point of faith, but that instead, comes afterwards. These arguments deny any argument that says that passages like Jn 3:36 and Jn 6:47, for example, show that salvation occurs at the point of faith, thereby excluding baptism.

Rom 10:13 undeniably teaches that salvation is conditioned upon calling on the name of the Lord, which, according to v.14, clearly comes after the belief spoken of in the context. Since a person must "call on the name of the Lord" to be saved, and since calling on the name of the Lord comes after believing in Jesus, then salvation comes after a person believes in Jesus.

Rom 10:10 teaches that salvation is conditioned upon a "confession" with the "mouth" ("with the mouth confession is made unto salvation") which, of course, comes after the belief of the context. Again, salvation comes after belief.

Notice also that Acts 9:5-6 shows that Saul believed on the road to Damascus (something I don't think Mr. Cockrell will deny), but Acts 22:16 ("... and be baptized, and wash away thy sins ...") clearly shows that Saul was still in his sins at least three days later (Acts 9:9). This again shows that a person's sins are not washed away the moment he believes. In this case, the forgiveness of sins occurred at least three days after Saul believed in Jesus.

Besides teaching that the washing away of Saul's sins occurred after he believed, Acts 22:16 also teaches that the washing away of sins occurred when Saul was baptized, and not before. Indeed, this passage teaches that if any alien sinner wants his sins washed away, he must be baptized.

I Corinthians 1:12-13

Another passage that proves that baptism is necessary for salvation is I Cor 1:12-13. Paul teaches in vs.12-13 that for a person to be "of Paul," Paul would have had to have been crucified for him, and that person would have had to have been baptized in the name of Paul. This implies that for a person to be "of Christ" (that is, to be a Christian), Christ would have had to have been crucified for him, and that person would have had to have been baptized in

the name of Christ. There is no way around this. I Cor 1:12-13 proves that to be of Christ, to be saved, one would have had to have been baptized in the name of Christ.

Conclusion

The Bible clearly teaches that salvation does not come at the point of faith, but that instead, it comes when one is baptized. The question becomes, are we willing to accept the plain import of the Bible passages?

Answers to Mr. Cockrell's Questions

1. The Bible does not instruct us to rebaptize one who is in sin, but who is already born again; instead it instructs the erring Christian to repent and pray (Acts 8:22). We are only born again once, and "water" baptism is connected with that process (Jn 3:5).
2. You don't "unbaptize" a Christian when he sins, but his sin does cause him to be separated from God (Is 59:1-2, Rom 6:23), that is, to fall from grace (Gal 5:4).
3. A person who is already born again can be forgiven without baptism (Acts 8:22, I Jn 1:9), so the answer is "yes" to your question if you mean "a man" who has already been born again. But the answer to your question is "no," if you mean by "a man," one who has not already been born again.

Questions for Mr. Cockrell

1. Why does Jn 5:25 not prove that all an alien sinner must do in order to be saved is "hear" the gospel?
2. Do Acts 2:21 ("And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved") and Rom 10:13 teach that it is necessary for a sinner to "call upon the name of the Lord" to be saved, that is, to become a Christian? _ Yes _ No
3. Does Rom 10:9-10 teach that a sinner must "confess" Christ to be saved, that is, to become a Christian? _ Yes _ No