

Progress is being made in this debate. My opponent has conceded that all people for the first 4,000 years of human history until Mark 16:16 were saved by repentance and faith like the Bible teaches and Baptists believe. Now if we can get him to concede that they have been saved this same way from Mark 16:16 until now this discussion will terminate.

In answering my three questions he has also conceded that a man spiritually born again cannot be unborn - that he is born only once. This is surely a move in the direction of the security of the saints. However, he has introduced to us a rather grotesque creature. He has a man spiritually "born again" and still "a Christian" who is "separated from God" and "fallen from grace." It sounds like he has a person half saved and half lost - half a child of God and half a child of the Devil. I certainly want him to give me some more light on this person he has introduced to us.

It is good to note that he has also conceded that he has two ways of salvation in this age. The first time there is hearing, believing, repentance, confession, and being baptized in water. By admitting a man who has been saved can apostatize and yet be restored by repentance and faith he has come near our position. Pray for him. He may not be far from the kingdom. His gospel is that a man is saved by baptism and then when he becomes separated from God, he needs only to repent and believe. The first time you have to get wet, but after that a dry cleaning will do very well.

As often is the case with his people, he has tried to say that I believe that a man is not obligated to hear the gospel and repent. The reader knows that I do believe that a man must hear the gospel and repent. But a sinner is not saved at the point of the external hearing of the gospel or repenting. He is saved at the point of faith in Christ.

My seven arguments proved that Jesus Christ taught that a man was saved at the point of faith. But Mr. Donahue disputes this and says a person is not saved by faith unless his faith leads him on to baptism. It is sad to see a man who professes to be a follower of Christ and claims the true church of Christ is found among his people and no where else contradict the very words of Jesus Christ! Christ taught that salvation immediately follows faith (Luke 8:12), that faith saves (Luke 7:50), that the believer has eternal life (John 3:15), that the believer is not condemned (John 3:18), that faith prevents one from dying in his sins (John 8:24), that the believer has passed from death unto life (John 5:24), and that the believer shall never hunger (John 6:35).

Mr. Donahue does not believe any of these things which Christ taught. He believes that a penitent believer is a child of the Devil until the act of baptism is terminated. He has missed the point in the verses that I cited. The verses did not say that a man was on the way to being saved or at the half-way house of being saved. They said he was saved. Mr. Donahue does not believe that faith saves; he believes that baptism is man's savior.

He did not try to explain the plain verses which were the very words of Christ. He put them all in the hat and went off on a figure of speech, a synecdoche. He labored hard to make faith include baptism. But he did admit that he had a problem with Luke 7:48,50, and finally conceded this woman was saved by her faith in Christ as were all the Old Testament saints up until Mark 16:16. Very well put, Mr. Donahue. Since all the verses I cited from the words of Christ were spoken before Mark 16:16, then you admit that a person was saved during these days by repentance and faith - like the Bible teaches and Baptists believe. Faith in none of these verses implied baptism, and down the drain goes his argument about the synecdoche. Thank you, Mr. Donahue, for refuting your own argument.

Mr. Donahue wants me to give a verse that substantiates that baptism shows that one is already saved. I need only to cite I Peter 3:21: "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." Mr. Donahue, the waters of the flood did not save Noah and his family. Those in the waters of the flood died as ungodly sinners (2Pet.2:5). The ark was a type of Christ and the flood a type of baptism. Noah and his family of believers (Heb.

II: 7) entered the ark seven days before the flood came (Gen. 7:7,10), showing that a believer is safe in Christ prior to baptism. Only those in the ark were declared saved by the waters of the flood, disclosing how baptism declares a believer to be already saved by faith in Christ.

His passages about baptism (Mark 16:16; Jn. 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:11-13, and I Pet. 3:21) show how baptism symbolically saved. Baptism is a figure or likeness of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is by faith in the good news that men are saved. Mr. Donahue would make the symbol the savior. He would rob Christ of his saviorship and give it to the waters of baptism. Even Alexander Campbell wrote: "The water of baptism, then, formally washes away our sins. The blood of Christ really washes away our sins. Paul's sins were really pardoned when he believed" (Campbell-Maccalla Debate 135).

His comments upon I Corinthians 1: 12-13 do not imply baptismal regeneration as he alleges. He should stay out of I Corinthians as it shows that baptism and the gospel are not the same thing (I Cor. 1: 17). In I Corinthians 4:15 Paul declares he was the means of begetting the Corinthians, but in I Corinthians 1:14-17 he said he baptized but few of them. Hence, the new birth cannot be inseparably joined to baptism.

Argument Eight: Remission of sins comes at the point of faith: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10: 43). None of the prophets preached baptismal remission. They taught a man was saved by faith in Christ.

Argument Nine: Faith declares the sinner justified from all of his sins because Christ died for them: "And by him all that believe are justified from all things. . ." (Acts 13:39). It is not baptism which justifies here; it is faith in Christ.

Argument Ten: The heart is purified by faith in Christ: "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9). Faith contacts the blood of Christ which cleanses the heart from the filth of sin. Mr. Donahue believes that a believer has an impure heart until he is baptized. Where is it said that baptism purifies the heart?

Argument Eleven: Faith in Christ saves the soul: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). According to Paul, the person who believes in Christ is saved from all the miserable consequences of sin. Mr. Donahue would never answer the question in Acts 16:30 in the manner that Paul did here.

Argument Twelve: Faith sanctifies, or sets the person apart, as the holy property of God: ". . . them that are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18). A man is sanctified by faith, and faith comes before baptism. Hence, a person is sanctified by faith without water baptism.

Argument Thirteen: Faith in the gospel saves: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. . ." (Rom. 1: 16). Paul tells us what the gospel is in I Corinthians 15:1-4, but he does not mention baptism as a part of the gospel. In Romans 10:16 he asserts that belief in Christ is what constitutes obeying the gospel.

Argument Fourteen: The sinner contacts the cleansing blood of Christ at the point of faith: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3:25). One believes before he is baptized, hence he is cleansed by the blood of Christ before and without water baptism.

Mr. Donahue's Questions

1. The person who hears the gospel in the sense that he understands and believes it (John 5:24-25) is saved.

2. The sinner who calls upon the name of the Lord is saved because it is a call in faith: "How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed?" (Rom. 10:14) I am surprised at this question. I thought Mr. Donahue believed in salvation by baptism, but maybe he holds to "praying through."

3. Yes, the person who has become a Christian by believing in Christ with all his heart will confess Christ with the mouth (Rom. 10:9-10). Note the verse did not say confess by baptism, but with the mouth.

Questions for Mr. Donahue

1. Do you baptize a child of God or a child of the Devil?

2. Are all Christians not baptized in order to obtain the remission of sins going to Hell?

3. What about former "Church of Christ" members who have joined other churches?