

Devotional Thoughts :: JUNE 28 - THOUGHTS BY WILLIAM MACDONALD

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“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mk. 16:16)

If this were the only verse in the Bible on the subject, we might justifiably conclude that salvation is by faith plus baptism. But when there are 150 verses in the New Testament that condition salvation on faith alone, we must conclude that those 150 verses cannot be contradicted by one or two like this one.

However, although baptism is not essential for salvation, it is essential for obedience. God’s will is that all who have trusted His Son as Lord and Savior should publicly identify themselves with Him in the waters of believer’s baptism.

The New Testament does not contemplate any such anomaly as an unbaptized believer. It assumes that when a person is saved, he will be baptized. In the book of Acts, the disciples practiced what we might call “instant baptism.” They didn’t wait for a formal service in a church setting, but baptized immediately on the basis of a person’s profession of faith.

The sequence of belief and baptism is so close that the Bible speaks of them in the same breath— “He that believeth and is baptized...”

In our desire to avoid the unscriptural teaching of baptismal regeneration, we often allow the pendulum to swing too far in the opposite direction. People are apt to go off with the false idea that it doesn’t really matter whether they are baptized. But it does matter.

We hear some saying glibly, “I can go to heaven without being baptized.” I always answer them, “Yes, that is true. You can go to heaven without being baptized, but if you do, you’ll be unbaptized for all eternity.” There will be no opportunity for baptism in heaven. It is one of those acts in which we can obey the Lord now or never.

All who have trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior should lose no time in being baptized. In this way they publicly identify themselves with Him in His death and resurrection and they publicly commit themselves to walk with Him in newness of life.