

Banner: THE SURE WORD

By Jonnie Hutchison

Down through the year's baptism has been a controversial subject. Many disagree as to the purpose of baptism and how it relates to salvation. However, the Bible clearly teaches both the purpose of baptism and its relationship to salvation. To see the purpose of baptism one only needs to read Acts 2:38, "And 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." What does this passage say baptism is for? The answer is "for the remission of sins." In addition, the Bible teaches that the purpose of baptism is to put one "into Christ" where salvation is located. 2 Timothy 2:10 speaks of "the salvation which is IN CHRIST JESUS with eternal glory." The question is how does one get into that spiritual location or relationship which is described as being "in Christ"? The Bible answers in Galatians 3:27, "For as many of you as have been BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST have put on Christ." The Bible also teaches that the purpose of baptism is to place one into the spiritual body of Christ which is His church (Ephesians 1:22-23). This is equivalent to being "in Christ." 1 Corinthians 12:13a reads, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Since the purpose of baptism is to provide the forgiveness of sins, to place one "into Christ" and thus into His church then where does that leave the person who has not been baptized? The obvious answer is without forgiveness, outside of Christ and outside of His church.

How baptism relates to salvation can be seen in the connection the Bible makes between baptism and the death of Jesus. The Bible teaches that Jesus shed His blood in His death on the cross (John 19:34). His blood was shed "for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28; Revelation 1:5) The Bible connects baptism with the death of Jesus, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). Since Jesus shed His blood in His death and baptism puts one in contact with His death it follows that it is in baptism that one reaches the blood of Jesus and one's sins are washed away. We invite your comments or questions. Email greenplain@greenplainchurchofchrist.org or call 492-8206. Write or visit us at 3980 Murray Paris RD Hazel, KY 42049.