

# THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE | SESSION 3

## SALVATION, BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER, CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

### SALVATION

- Salvation: General
  - The SBC position that salvation is “offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ” is patently Calvinist.
    - A non-Calvinist position: *Salvation is offered freely to all people.*
    - By adding “to all who accept” the statement the statement assumes a limited atonement .
    - By limiting the free offer of salvation to those who accept, the statement implies that only the elect *will* accept.
  - The statement requires acceptance of Jesus Christ “as Lord and Saviour,” yet gives no explanation of what this means. Therefore, Lordship salvation could easily be taught under this statement.
  - The statement is that Jesus “obtained redemption for the believer.”
    - Again, this is Calvinistic. It limits the power of the blood to the believer, thus is a limited atonement statement.
    - Note on Hebrews 9:12 – the words *for us* are inserted, and thus to limit the redemption “for the believer” is unnecessary.
    - In reality, by His blood He was the propitiation for the sins of *all the world* (1 Jn 2:2). In His completed work, He became Lord of the dead and the living (Rom. 14:9), and in His current position He offers the gift of reconciliation to all the world (2 Cor. 5:19-20).
  - The statement is poorly worded when it says, “There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.”
    - This says nothing about His completed work of death, burial, and resurrection.
    - Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and many others could sign such a statement.
  - General remarks:
    - The statement assumes the theological position that dissects salvation beyond anything presented in Scripture: regeneration, justification, sanctification, etc. This is the invention of theologians, not of Scripture.
    - The statement as a whole never mentions the role of the proclamation of the Gospel (which is possibly included elsewhere but is essential in a doctrine of salvation).
- Salvation: Regeneration
  - Does regeneration make one a “new creature” or give them a “change of heart”? This contradiction is too sloppy for a statement of faith.
  - Regeneration comes when the Holy Spirit gives a “conviction of sin” and the “sinner responds in repentance...and faith.” However, the Scripture tells us that not counting a persons trespasses against them (2 Cor. 5:19). Further, we are not told what this “conviction” looks like, feels like, or does in the sinner’s life.
  - It is problematic that the statement claims that “repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.”
    - The statement allows “grace” to be taken in a Calvinistic sense (i.e., “The Doctrines of Grace.”)
    - The statement can easily be taken to say, “When God places His grace on a person (in His own sovereign will), that person responds with the conjoined twin sisters called repentance and faith.”
  - What is repentance? “Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God.”
    - Does this mean that the new believer, having turned from sin, doesn’t sin?
    - If it doesn’t mean that he doesn’t sin, does it mean that he doesn’t like to sin?

- If it doesn't mean that he doesn't like to sin but does sin, does it mean he only sins a little bit?
    - If it doesn't mean he only sins a little bit, does it simply mean he sins a little bit less and feels a little bit worse when he does sin?
    - If that is what it means...is it "genuine?"
  - If faith is, "the commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour," then,
    - Is the word "commitment" the best word to describe something that is **not of works**?
    - Does the new believer's personality change, since it is entirely committed to Him?
    - What does it mean to commit your "entire personality?" (Ill-defined statements do not belong in a confession of faith).
- Salvation: Justification
  - All in all, this is a "feel good" statement with no real meaning.
- Salvation: Sanctification
  - Once again a statement that could not be used to determine whether one is teaching or advocating an unbiblical view of sanctification.
- Salvation: Glorification
  - Is a statement of glorification possible without some reference to the resurrection and the physical body?
  - Note: on the four portions of salvation, it would be difficult to make good statements, because the entire fourfold division is spurious.

## GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

- The first sentence clearly takes a Calvinist view, one that states, in effect, that if you are saved, it is because you are elect. There is no salvation outside of election.
- Election is both "consistent with the free agency of man" and "a display of God's sovereign goodness" and "unchangeable."
  - These mutually exclusive statements can be accepted together because it, "comprehends all the means in connection with the end."
  - This "comprehends" statement means that we can't understand it, but God does.
  - My position: the reason we can't understand election and free will is because theologians have created a problem which the Scripture does not create. The "doctrine of compatibility" is a fake doctrine created to fix a fake problem.
- The statement on "all true believers" is a classic Calvinist position on the "perseverance of the saints"

## BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

- Baptism:
  - Baptism is a *obedience* to a *symbolism*. Without the symbolism, the believer is disobedient.
  - The statement says that because it is a "church ordinance," "it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper."
    - Nothing is stated that explains what makes this an "ordinance" nor why this one is "prerequisite."
    - This likely comes from the "landmark" tendencies of old Baptist movements, but is ultimately a result of a failure to rightly divide, thus inserting baptism as a prerequisite for church membership and the Lord's supper.
- The Lord's Supper:
  - The Lord supper is also "a symbolic act of obedience," yet it is likely that few SBC Pastors have ever taught that you would be disobedient if you did not partake.
  - Nothing is stated about the frequency of the supper, nor manner of delivery.
  - It is stated that the Lord's Supper is for "members," though this is very rarely observed today.