

# Back to Bible Basics

## Issue 19

### THINGS IMPOSSIBLE TO SEPARATE FROM BAPTISM

Ian McPherson

There are many things that are impossible to do. It is impossible, for example, to lift yourself up by your own shoe strings, or to fill a round hole with a square peg. No matter how hard we try these things, all attempts will fail. Unfortunately, there are many in the religious world who are striving to separate baptism from other essential aspects of salvation. This cannot be done, because all accountable people must be baptized. Let us examine some things that are necessary for salvation, but cannot be separated from baptism.

**FAITH:** *"For ye are all the children of God by **faith** in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been **baptized** into Christ have put on Christ."* (Galatians 3:26-27). We become a child of God by faith when we are baptized. Therefore, saving faith cannot be expressed without baptism.

**SALVATION:** *"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."* (1 Peter 3:21). Since baptism "saves us", it is logical to infer that we cannot be saved without being baptized.

**THE BLOOD OF CHRIST:** *"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, **for the remission of sins...**"* (Acts 2:38). Exactly the same wording is seen in Matthew 26:28 - *"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the **remission of sins.**"* Therefore, we

must conclude logically that our sins are remitted by the blood of Christ when we are baptized. Notice also Acts 22:16 - *"And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and **wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord."* The blood of Christ washes away our sins in the waters of baptism.

**THE CHURCH:** *"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."* (Acts 2:41). Unto what were these souls added when they were baptized? A look at verse 47 of the same chapter shows us clearly that they were added to the church: *"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."* (Acts 2:47) Therefore, the church, salvation and baptism cannot be separated from one another.

**PREACHING OF JESUS:** *"And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, **preached unto him Jesus.** And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him."* (Acts 8:35-38). When Jesus was preached, the eunuch wanted to be baptized. We cannot, therefore, preach Jesus without preaching baptism.

**GRACE:** *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; **That being justified by His grace**, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life"* (Titus 3:5-7). The "washing of regeneration" here is literally "the washing of new birth." This washing takes place at baptism (Acts 22:16). We learn from this that baptism is not a work of righteousness, but rather the time that one is justified by grace.

**THE GOSPEL:** *"Go ye into all the world, and **preach the gospel** to every creature. He that believeth and*

## Back to Bible Basics

is a publication of the  
Mersey Bluff church of Christ  
232 William Street  
Devonport, TAS 7310

Email:

Brett: merseybluffcoc@yahoo.com  
Ian: ianandmabel@iinet.net.au

[www.merseybluffcocfc.com.au](http://www.merseybluffcocfc.com.au)

*is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (Mark 16:15-16). Do not be deceived by eloquent religious leaders who teach that you can be saved by belief without baptism. Jesus said that **both** belief **and** baptism precede salvation.

---

## WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE "...THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH."

**Brett Rutherford**

In the introductory remarks to what is often called "The Sermon on the Mount," Jesus gives the keys to true happiness. The word that is often translated as "blessed" can more accurately be translated as "happy" according to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.<sup>1</sup> In the first twelve verses of chapter five Jesus gives us elements that we need to add to our character if we want to find true peace and contentment. Many of these characteristics that Jesus encourages us to adopt are the opposite of what the world would view as necessary ingredients to living a happy life. The problem with the world is that they are confusing the pursuit of happiness with the pursuit of pleasure. If you make it your life's goal to pursue pleasure then you will never find lasting happiness and contentment.

Unfortunately, the Christ's statement in verse five of Matthew chapter five has caused people a great deal of confusion. The source of this confusion is a misunderstanding of the way this phrase "the meek shall inherit the earth" is applied by Christ. Jesus' Hebrew audience would have no trouble understanding His meaning, but modern man is often dumbfounded by the use of this phrase. Why do we have difficulty understanding Jesus' meaning?

There have been many who have taken this phrase literally (as it is translated), and believe that God is going to create for us a "paradise earth" that the meek shall enjoy throughout eternity. This idea is clearly not the meaning of the phrase because the Bible elsewhere contradicts that view. Peter wrote concerning the second coming of Christ that the physical earth will "...pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with a fervent heat: both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (II Peter 3:10). However, God will create a "new heaven and a new earth" where the righteous shall dwell throughout eternity (II Peter

3:13). This "new heaven and new earth" is clearly a reference to the spiritual realm that Christ has prepared for all the righteous in heaven (John 14:1-4). John uses the phrase "a new heaven and a new earth" to refer to the eternal spiritual realm in Revelation 21:1.

If Jesus didn't mean that the meek and righteous will inherit a literal, physical earth then what did He mean? In order to answer that question we must understand the phrase as the Hebrews understood it. This phrase is used elsewhere in the Bible as a general description of God's blessings. It is found in Psalm 25:13: 37:9, 11, 22. In those passages the psalmist uses the Hebrew word "erets" which is translated as "earth" in many of our modern translations. Certainly, "erets" can be translated as "earth" in some contexts, but in this context it is not the best translation. The word "erets" can also be translated as "soil, land, country field or wilderness" according to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and Dictionary of the Bible.<sup>2</sup> For example, the word "erets" is translated as "land" when it is used to refer to the land of Canaan in Numbers 13:32; 14:3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 16, 23, 24 etc. The land of Canaan represented God's ultimate reward to the Jews. It was the culmination of all of God's blessings and rewards to the Jewish people. It is no wonder that the phrase "inherit the land" became a common phrase in Jewish literature to refer to the blessings and rewards of God. The Jews could think of no greater blessing that God had given them. Jesus used this phrase in this sense. He meant those who are meek shall inherit the blessings and rewards that God offers. The righteous shall inherit the spiritual land of Canaan (i.e. heaven).

It is my belief that the phrase "the meek shall inherit the earth" should be more properly translated as "the meek shall inherit the land." It should be understood that this is a symbolic reference to the blessings and the rewards that God offers the righteous. This is how the Jewish audience of Jesus' day would have understood it.

---

### References

<sup>1</sup> W.E. Vine, A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with Their Precise Meanings for English Readers (Macdonald Publishing Co., Mclean, VA, ND)

<sup>2</sup> James Strong, Strong's Concordance of the Bible (World Bible Publishers, Madison, NJ, 1986).