

Upon The Rock
2411 E. Riggin Rd.
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UPON THE ROCK

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EDITORIAL

CHANGE OF EDITOR

As of this issue Mark Reynolds will be serving as the editor of *Upon-The Rock*. As our readers know, Paul Hoover is the founding editor of this publication, and has done an outstanding job in the format and editing of this paper. Paul has moved out to West Virginia, and has an increased amount of responsibility with the mission work in which he has engaged himself. Paul will continue to be a writer for *Upon The Rock*, and will help me as I strive to carry on the editing work of the paper. We appreciate the fine work that he has done to this point, and the work that he will continue to do in his capacity as a regular writer.

SAME GOAL

Upon The Rock was started for the purpose of setting forth sound biblical material concerning first-principles and evangelism. It has been our goal to print articles that are informative for both Christians and non-Christians. These goals will not change with the changing of the editor. Each writer that will write for *Upon The Rock* will be true to the Scriptures of God, and will write for the sole purpose of furthering the kingdom of Christ (Matthew 16:18).



ABOUT THE NEW EDITOR

I am married to the former Mindy Botkin, and together we have two children, Cassidy and Abby, and are expecting our third in May. I am a 1999 graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching. My first full-time work was with the Towne Acres Church of Christ, which I began in 1995. I then preached for the Independence Church of Christ in Independence, Mississippi while attending school, and then returned to Towne Acres upon graduation where I continue to work. It is a pleasure to take on the work of editing this great paper. I appreciate greatly the support that I have from Paul Hoover, and the help that he has already been to me. If there are any suggestions that you would like to make, please do not hesitate to contact me either by telephone, mail or email.

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deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:13). And, “Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation” (Matthew 26:41).

Third we should not ask for trouble. We should avoid the appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Sometimes the things we do, the places we go, and the people we are with put us in a position where we will be exposed to greater temptation. It is not possible to be around dirt without getting dirty. A young lady can wear a white dress into a coalmine, but she cannot wear one out.

Fourth we must know the Bible. The Psalmist said, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:11). Jesus responded to Satan with quotations from the sacred text. Three times He said. “It is written” (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). And each time the devil was defeated. We can use the Scriptures in the same effective way if we know them. Biblical illiteracy is a serious problem. Our lack of knowledge can have disastrous consequences (Hosea 4:1, 6; 8:12).

Fifth sometimes we just need to run in the opposite direction. Joseph, through no fault of his own, found himself in an awkward situation. His master’s wife made frequent unwanted advances which he repeatedly rejected. On one occasion he found himself alone in the house with her. She took hold of his cloak and demanded, “O come to bed with me” (Genesis 39:12). Joseph ran from her presence leaving his cloak behind. Sometimes that is the smartest thing to do. There are times in life when literally running from temptation is the best recourse.

Temptation is unavoidable, but we need not give in to it! With God’s help we can be victorious, but not without preparation and effort. The devil is a roaring lion on the prowl, but if we resist him he will flee (1 Peter 5:8, 9 James 4:7)

Deciding On Death

By Paul Hoover

The evil some people accept as good is abundant when that evil works to their perceived benefit. In Romans 1:18-32, the Apostle Paul describes this ungodly acceptance. This passage describes those who pervert or twist truth. It says, in part, that people, who exchange the truth of God for a lie, though they believe themselves to be wise, are in reality foolish.

When we examine the “death issues” in our society we see confusion and inconsistency. On one hand people are struggling with the issue of life-support. In hospitals across our nation people often have machines attached to them, which breathe for them. Without the machines these people, more often than not, would die. There are several questions directed at this practice. Is it ethical for people to be kept off life-support if their living will expresses that desire? Even living wills can be challenged in court. If they do not have a living will, should their family or physician make the decision to turn off the technology? The motivation behind these questions is the belief that people have a right to live.

At the same time, people are struggling with the issue of euthanasia. They argue that people have a right to end physical, and in some cases, psychological pain. They say that people should have the right to die with dignity. The motivation behind these arguments is the belief that people have a right to die.

Society is also struggling with the issue of abortion. It says that a woman has the right to choose. The choice is to allow the child of their conception to live, or to end the child’s life. The motivation behind these statements is the belief that people (women) have the right to choose life or death for another person.

Ungodliness is interwoven in some of these practices. We will attempt to look behind the facade and recognize these issues for what they truly are.

Deciding On Death By Abortion

Abortion was presented to the American psyche in much the same way the Greeks presented the Trojan Horse to Troy. Its terrible danger was well concealed.

In 1966, Mississippi legalized abortion in cases of rape. Due to natural compassion for women who became pregnant as a result of rape, this legislation seemed humane to many people. Yet, this seemingly humane legislation was the attractive package that contained the horror of legalized murder. Women who become pregnant as a result of rape deserve great compassion. The suffering they endure is both physical and psychological. The scars from that trauma run deep. But violence must not beget violence. The violence of abortion in these cases is not even directed at the guilty, but at an innocent life. The Lord said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" (Matthew 5:38). He went onto say, But I say to you..." Part of what He said is found in verse 44 "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." This attitude is to be displayed even to the guilty rapist. How then could we ever justify the murder of the innocent child? Will it be easy for a raped woman to love, bless and pray for her rapist? Absolutely not! Will it be easy for her to give birth to his child? Absolutely not! But the innocent child simply cannot be murdered for the crime of his father.

After the 1966 legislation in Mississippi was in effect, it was only four years before other states passed similar laws expanding them to include legalized abortion in the cases of: pregnancies which threaten a woman's health; any fetus which has serious abnormalities; or pregnancies which are a result of incest.

In 1973 the Supreme Court of the United States decided the case of Roe v. Wade. The result was legalized abortion for any reason before the 24th week of pregnancy. This decision legitimized the false view that human life does not exist in the womb until the 24th week. There is much medical evidence, which disproves this claim, but common sense does the job quite well.

oracle of God" (2 Samuel 16:23). When his counsel was rejected and that of Hushai was accepted, Ahithophel's pride was injured. Humiliated he took his own life (2 Samuel 17).

A comparison of the temptation of Adam and Eve in the garden (Genesis 3) with that of Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4), and the warning of John the apostle concerning the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17) provides additional insight. In each we see illustrated the desire to enjoy things, to have things, and to do things, to satisfy the lust of the flesh. Satan always makes them appear to be good and natural. Sin seldom shows its real face. It hides behind a mask of deceptive beauty and pleasure. The process from temptation to sin is a simple one first lust or uncontrolled desire develops in the heart (James 1:14). Blind to the truth, man's focus turns to the momentary pleasure sin offers while ignoring the harmful consequences. Seeing only the immediate rewards, and ignoring the eternal consequences, a course of action is followed that results in sin. Sin, unforgiven, leads to death (Romans 6:23).

The good news is that we can have victory over temptation. The devil is, by nature, a coward. He is powerless unless we surrender to him. The promise of God is that if we resist him he will flee from us (James 4:7). There are some precautions we can take to help us in our daily struggle to win out over temptation.

First we are not engaged in a losing battle. God will not allow us to be tempted in a manner beyond our ability to resist. This is one of the great affirmations of the Bible "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Defeat is not inevitable. There is strength in the knowledge that the devil is powerless over us if we resist him.

Second we must build a relationship with the Father so that we can always turn to Him in times of need. Prayer is a vital link between man and his Maker. We must keep the lines of communication open. Jesus taught His disciples to pray: "...lead us not into temptation, but

VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION

Roger A. Rush

A war is raging. It is a spiritual battle for the hearts of men. Christianity is a daily struggle. Every day Satan throws roadblocks in our way. Will we stumble and fall, or will we overcome? Some might argue that the situation is hopeless, but it's not. The promise of Scripture is clear, no temptation is too great to overcome (1 Corinthians 10:13). With every temptation God supplies a way of escape!

What is temptation? In the New Testament the word is *peirazo*, and it is used in two specific ways. First it means to test, try or prove for the purpose of finding one's genuineness. This is what was involved when God tempted Abraham telling him to offer Isaac upon the altar (Genesis 22:1; Hebrews 11:17). Second, it is an enticement to do wrong by promise of pleasure or gain. It is essentially an invitation to sin (Genesis 3:1-7, Matthew 4 :1-11).

In James 1:12-15 both concepts are illustrated. James wrote: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life (vs. 12). James clearly had in mind temptation as a test to prove one's loyalty or faithfulness. However, he went on to say: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (vs. 13-15). Now the word is used as it is most commonly understood as an enticement or invitation to sin. God is not subject to temptation, and He never encourages or invites others to sin. However, the devil is busily engaged in this business.

Temptation is not sin, but when we give in to temptation, sin is the outcome. In a sense, temptation is the result of Satan and man agreeing. It is said that men have three natural desires which are to enjoy things, to obtain things, and to do things (the urge to achieve). It is in these three areas that Satan strikes. They can easily be illustrated from Scripture. David's sin with Bathsheba came about as a result of the king's desire to enjoy the forbidden love of a woman (2 Samuel 11, 12). Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard and was willing to obtain it by any means (1 Kings 21). Ahithophel's counsel was as "an

No one argues the point that from conception that which is in the womb is alive. The argument made is that the life is not human life. But, if a human male and a human female come together in the act of sex, and life results from that union what kind of life can it be other than human life? Can two humans produce life that is something other than human? Of course not! From the moment of conception that which lives and grows within the womb is human.

The abortion avalanche began in 1966 with women who were victims of rape. It is now inclusive of partial-birth abortion and RU 486.

"RU-486 is a pill containing hormones that chemically induce abortions in women who are five to nine weeks pregnant. This is done in three different steps. In the first visit, the woman is given the pill. This prevents the development of the nutrient-rich lining of the uterus so the baby starves. In the second visit, 36-48 hours later the woman is given a dose of artificial prostaglandins which initiate uterine contractions and usually causes the baby to be expelled from the uterus. The baby may abort anywhere between several hours after taking the pill to 5 days later.

The third visit, about two weeks later, is to make sure the abortion has occurred or if a surgical abortion is necessary. Side effects from this include prolonged bleeding, nausea, vomiting and pain" (http://loki.stockton.edu/~stk_10029/abortions3.htm).

So now in the same way we relieve ourselves of a headache women can take life. All they have to do is pop a pill.

Now lets discuss the real issues behind the pro-choice movement Do you really think that which was done in darkness and viewed as unquestionably wrong prior to 1966 changed into that which was good and right in the minds of the American people by 1973? How could that which was known to be ungodly become acceptable in a seven-year period?

For the most part, the underlying reason for the pro-choice movement is lust. Many people lust for sexual gratification though they reject

marriage. They do not have proper respect for God's design or authority. God's intent from the beginning was for a man and woman to marry and become one (Genesis 2:24). God's Word teaches that sex is a privilege of marriage. "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). Outside of marriage, sex is a sin. "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18). They commit sin, and unwanted children are conceived. Other people though married lust after someone other than their mate. The lust that burns within them is stronger than their desire to be morally right and right with God. A married person who has sex with someone other than his or her spouse commits the sin of adultery (Mark 6:18). Through the commission of that sin unwanted children are conceived.

No matter how many excuses are made for the vile practice of abortion, the truth is both simple and obvious. Abortion is a convenience for those who do not control their lust. They do as they please and murder the consequence. They sacrifice their children on the altar of lust.

Deciding On Death By Euthanasia

The roots of euthanasia are deeply embedded in Darwin's evolutionary hypothesis. After all, if one is taught that he is an animal he has no responsibility to act any way other than animalistic. Humanism is another strong influence. Humanism denies the existence of God and teaches men to do whatever pleases them. These philosophies take away any real accountability and teach people that their own happiness and contentment is all that matters. If you are unhappy in a marriage they say "get out and do not worry about consequences." If you do not wish to be pregnant, they say "get out of it and do not worry about consequences." If you are tired of life, they say "get out and do not worry about consequences" But, there are unavoidable consequences to the actions we take.

Euthanasia is referred to as "mercy killing." While mercy is to be a characteristic of mankind, we cannot overstep our bounds God is the

many have been deluded by the notion that we can be immoral as a society, but still prosper financially. This type of reasoning always leads to ruin. We seem to live in a "no sin society." Nothing is really "wrong" anymore in the eyes of many. Immorality is paraded and flaunted under the guise of "freedom." In our society we wonder why there is so much immorality, crime, hatred; and inhumanity. We ask, "Why would teenagers want to murder their teachers and fellow students?" The answer is simple: we "**have forgotten**" God "**days without number**" and have "**trusted in falsehood!**" As a Nation, it is no longer "*In God We Trust,*" but to our own knowledge, technology, and abilities that we look for guidance and deliverance. We have made it a "crime" to teach about or pray to God in our schools. The godless theory of evolution and the religion of Humanism permeates our society from the White House down to our local levels of government and schools. Abortion, the murder of innocent babies, and "doctor-assisted suicide" exemplify a disregard for the value of human life. When we allow our children to be exposed to all the violence in movies and television and teach them they have evolved from animals, can we expect them to behave any better than an animal? God hath declared, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34), "The wicked shalt be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm 9:17).

The only possible solution to our nation's plight is to turn to God and His Divine Word for guidance. Our plea is that of Jeremiah 6:16, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Let's return to the old paths and walk therein! Hear God's Word, believe it, and obey it! (Cf. Romans 10:17; 1:16; Galatians 3:26-27). Set your priorities right in your life! Wayward child of God, repent, while you have time. Judah rejected God's plea to come back to Him. How will you respond?

"BLESSED IS THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD"
(Psalm 33:12)

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God's reaction to the unfaithfulness of His people: "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number" (Jeremiah 2:32). "Thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood" (Jeremiah 13:25). Judah had forsaken God (cf. Jeremiah 2:13) and corrupted His worship and teachings (cf. Jeremiah 5:30-31). Jeremiah adds these sad words, "My people love to have it so." The pattern of Judah's departure and rebellion is recorded in Jeremiah 6:10-17. Jeremiah described Judah's downfall in five steps.

1. THEY REFUSED TO LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD - "To whom shall I speak, and give warning. That they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: Behold, the word & the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it." (Jeremiah 6:10).
- 2 THEY WERE OBSESSED WITH MATERIAL THINGS - "From the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness." (Jeremiah 6:13).
3. THEY DELUDED THEMSELVES WITH FALSEHOODS— "They have healed also the hurt of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (Jeremiah 6:14).
4. THEY WERE NOT ASHAMED, NEITHER COULD THEY BLUSH - "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush" (Jeremiah 6:15).
- 5 THEY REJECTED THE ONLY POSSIBLE CURE - "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." (Jeremiah 6:16).

As a nation we appear to be on a downward spiral morally speaking. History does repeat itself. Just as the nation of Judah fell, so we, as a nation are following Judah's footsteps. Even though the Bible is on the best sellers list, it is probably least read. Many no longer look at the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Our nation is steeped in materialism. In many families, both parents work outside the home at the expense of allowing someone else to "raise" their children. We may have more "things," but the home is going down the drain. The popular cry in politics is for a leader with the right "economic plan" regardless of his or her views on morality and what is right. Thus,

giver of life, therefore humanity cannot define life or the acceptable quality of life.

Job was a man who suffered unimaginable loss. Job had some harsh things to say about quality of life. His great pain was reflected in Job 3:1-4, "After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day. And Job spake, and said, "Let the day perish wherein I was born; and the night in which it was said, There is a man-child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it." Job's pain was extreme, both physically and psychologically. Added to his burdens were the words of his wife. "Doth thou still retain thy integrity? Curse God, and die" (Job 2:9).

Even in the face of his suffering, with the negativity of his wife and entertaining thoughts of death, Job did not take his own life nor did he have someone assist him in doing so. For Job also said, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4).

We simply have no right to destroy that which was given by God. We have no right to assist anyone else in destroying that which God has given. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed for in the image of God made he man" (Genesis 9:6). We cannot murder a human being another, or ourselves, because humanity was created in the image of God.

Again, we see the same approach used to introduce this practice. It rides the coattails of compassion, but where will it stop. What if it evolves as quickly as the issue of abortion? Will it one day be seen as relief for an overburdened social security system? Or perhaps it will solve the unemployment problem. It could also eliminate a future overpopulation problem. Do you think it will never happen? Do you remember when we thought prayer would never be taken out of school? Do you remember a time when you never imagined abortion would be legal? Do you believe the same government, which passed laws to support these things, will not make full, horrible use of euthanasia? Its track record suggests that it will.

This brings us to a difficult question. Is the action of ending life the same as the refusal to prolong life?

Deciding On Death By Omission

The New Testament clearly teaches that some things are worth dying for. Peter made the statement that he was willing to go to prison with Jesus and to die with Him (Luke 22:33) Thomas called upon his fellow apostles to follow Jesus into what he considered certain death (John 11:16). Salvation is possible because Jesus laid down his life when he could have saved it. The Lord also said, concerning the defense of His life, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels" (Matthew 26:53). Yes, some things are worth dying for.

The Word of God teaches that life is sacred. It teaches that we are not to commit murder. It teaches that we are not to take our own lives. But, it does not teach us to cling to life at all cost. We are not to value life above our faith. This, however, does not deal directly with the area of our concern. Are we obligated to avail ourselves of technology in order to cling to life?

As a result of my studies I have concluded that, so far as I can determine, the Bible does not deal with this question, either directly or indirectly. I believe that this subject falls within the realm of opinion. That being the case, let's notice some thoughts concerning this subject.

A living will is an up front statement. A living will may limit the length of time that extreme measures may be used to preserve our lives. It may express our desire that extreme measures not be used at all. Is this wrong?

What if a person learns he has cancer? He may be told he has a year to live, however, with chemotherapy treatments he may live another six months but with no hope of a cure. But to gain the six months, he will lose any enjoyment of the initial year to the effects of the

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

1. HEAR — ROMANS 10:17, MATTHEW 7:24-27
2. BELIEVE—HEBREWS 11:6, MARK 16:15-16
3. REPENT—ACTS 2:38, 17:30, LUKE 13:3
4. CONFESS — MATTHEW 10:32,33, ACTS 8:36
5. BE BAPTIZED —ACTS 2:38, GALATIANS 3:27
6. LIVE FAITHFULLY UNTO DEATH — REVELATION 2:10

HAVE WE FORGOTTEN GOD?

By: Robert Vincent

It has now been over a year since the tragedy at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado occurred. A few months after the senseless shooting took place, I received an e-mail from a friend of an article that appeared in an area newspaper. It read as follows: *God, why didn't you save the children at Littleton School? Sincerely, Student. Dear Student, I am not allowed in schools Sincerely, God.*" I think the message speaks for its self.

Our Nation was founded by our forefathers upon a deep faith in God and a belief that the Bible is God's Inspired Word. In fact our 7th President, Andrew Jackson, said that the Bible is *"the book on which our Republic rests."* The beloved Abraham Lincoln called the Bible *"the best gift God has ever given to man. . . But for it we could not know right from wrong."* I have been told that 50 percent of the public buildings in our Nation's capital have the name of God inscribed on them. The President of the United States, upon assuming the role of leader of our country, takes his oath of office by raising his right hand, his left hand being placed upon a Bible, repeats his duties, which concludes with the words *"so help me God"* Even our currency and coinage bear the inscription *"in God We Trust."* But do we really trust in God?

How is it that a nation that was founded upon a deep faith in God and an abiding trust in His Word has departed so far from His holy teachings? From the nation of Judah we learn the tragedy of forgetting God and forsaking His law. The prophet Jeremiah wrote of

Ananias didn't "squeeze the water out" of God's plan. In fact, he told Paul, a penitent believer, to "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). At Pentecost Peter didn't "squeeze the water out" when he told his Jewish brethren to "Repent and ... be baptized... for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38). Years later, Peter reflected on the physical salvation that was made possible for Noah through water. He wrote, "...eight souls, were saved through water." There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection & Christ...) (1 Peter 3:20, 21).

When one squeezes the water out of the gospel, he squeezes out Christ, His death, burial and resurrection, as well as forgiveness of sins and salvation. Actually, he squeezes out faith. There is no biblical command or example that depicts baptism as a means to join a local church fellowship. Every New Testament passage that treats the subject shows that baptism is the means by which the penitent believer enters the body of Christ. Squeeze out the water and squeeze out membership in the body of Christ.

Conclusion

Men will go to great lengths to support their doctrines. This article shows that fact as well as the futility of such. It is much easier to just let God speak and prayerfully obey. When we come to the scriptures with no preconceived ideas of truth and no false system to support, we are freed from sin and the baggage that human doctrines impose. When God arranges matters, as He arranged water in baptism, I don't have to try to squeeze it out. I just need to reverently believe and obey. "Let God be true but every man a liar." (Romans 3:4)

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treatments. What if he decides to reject the treatment and to live out his remaining time? Would that decision be wrong?

This is the pivotal point. These questions do not deal with the saving of life, rather the prolonging of life by use of technology or medicine. If we are required to avail ourselves of this technology, we will face the same obligation with future technological advances. Were Cryogenics to become reasonably possible we would have to make use of it. I do not believe that the Bible places that type of obligation on us.

Conclusion

The Bible does not teach "life at all cost." Some things are worth dying for, such as our faith and the protection of our families. The Bible does not seem to obligate us to take extreme measures in preserving our physical existence. Yet, life is a precious gift from God. In every case, abortion is the ending of HUMAN life. We have no authority to murder unborn children for convenience, retaliation, or sorrow. And the "mercy" in "mercy killing" is not ours to extend. Not every heartache, inconvenience or pain can be solved by its instant removal. Some things must be endured, though they are difficult to bear.

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THE BEAUTY OF FORGIVENESS

H. Randall Baker

During World War II a bomber crew was sent on a mission to drop bombs over a target in Italy. They left their base in Ben-Ghazi in Northern Africa, and flew under the darkness of night. They were to maintain radio silence. From the time the plane took off there were problems. Radio silence had to be broken. The crew was instructed to drop their bombs over the Mediterranean Sea and return back to base. Somehow they over flew their base and landed five hundred miles out in the desert. All the crew survived, and the Captain kept a diary. The last entry read, "we are without hope." Eighteen years later when the crash site was discovered there was still food and water on

board the plane. The crew had not died because of a lack of these necessary items; they died because they lost hope.

Have you ever considered what it means to be lost in sin? The apostle described the gentiles before the coming of Christ as being **“without hope”** (Ephesians 2:12). To be lost is to be without hope. To be lost is to await **“the wrath which is to come”** (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

The angels announced at the birth of Christ that “unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Jesus Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). That angelic announcement was good news, and the good news of the gospel is that sinful man, on the merits of the blood of Jesus Christ can be saved from his sin. He can be forgiven (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Romans 3:23-26; Acts 4:12).

Jesus Christ went to the cross, took the sinners place and “bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (1 Peter 1:24). He was the perfect sin sacrifice (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Through his death all men have the potential to be saved (Romans 5:15-17). The burden of sin does not have to be shouldered by man (cf. Psalm 32:3, 4). Jesus Christ is our burden bearer. And we can confidently sing, “Burdens are lifted at Calvary”! However, man must respond in obedient faith to accept Christ’s atoning work at Calvary. It is then, and only then, that forgiveness is realized (Hebrews 5:8, 9).

On the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the apostle Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), set forth the plan of salvation. He indicated to his audience that they were responsible for putting Jesus to death (Acts 2:23, 36). Convicted of their sin (Acts 2:37), they responded with a simple but important question: “what shall we do?” (Acts 2:38). The inspired apostle declared, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins” (Acts 2:38). The Bible indicates that 3,000 were baptized that day and were added to the Lord’s church (Acts 2:41). Their past sins had been forgiven, they were now citizens of the kingdom (Colossians 1:13). Their obedience was a faith response to the commands set forth by Peter. That same kind of obedient faith is necessary today if we expect to receive what they received.

Notice how obvious this conclusion is from the immediate context of Romans 10:9 & 10. Romans 10:13 says, “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Salvation, according to this text occurs when one “calls on the name of the Lord.” Even stopping here, it is obvious that salvation involves “doing something.” It involves calling on the name of the Lord. Once again, the “faith only” doctrine is shown to be fallacious. And, a further review of the context makes this conclusion absolutely inescapable.

Romans 10:14 & 15a presents the progression of events that are necessary to salvation. Here is the entire text — “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?” Summarized, these steps are:

1) Send preacher, 2) Preach, 3) Hear, 4) Believe, and 5) Call on the Lord. These are Paul’s steps in the so-called “Roman Road.” There are five components involved. Salvation occurs at or after step 5, i.e. “calling on the Lord.” But belief (faith) is step four. Calling occurs after faith. Calling is an act in addition to faith. Therefore, the concept of “faith only” is not supported by Romans 10. In fact, it is shown to be a false doctrine.

God put water in Romans 6:3 & 4. Those who teach “faith only” doctrine want to squeeze the water out of Romans 6:3 & 4.

What else happens when you squeeze the water out of
Romans 6:3, 4?

The death of Christ is remembered in the baptism of the penitent believer. His burial is depicted at the point of immersion. His resurrection is reenacted as the new Christian is raised to walk in newness of life. His blood was shed in His death, and it is in the figure of baptism that we contact this blood. Squeeze out the water, and you squeeze out the heart of the gospel story.

of that act of love, that we contact His blood. Having benefited from that blood, we come forth a new creature to walk in newness of life. One needs help to misunderstand the clear import of this passage.

Why Would Anyone Want To Squeeze The Water Out Of Romans 6:3, 4?

The answer to this question is simple. Proponents of the “faith only” doctrine have adopted Romans 10:9 and 10 as their “favorite” passage. It is claimed that this passage supports the “faith only” doctrine. It is sometimes referred to as the Roman Road to salvation. However, as you will clearly see it not only does not support their doctrine, it destroys it. First, note the passage — “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:9, 10).

“Faith only” proponents reject baptism as part of God’s plan of salvation because it involves “doing something.” Of course, if “faith only” is a true doctrine, then “doing something” is excluded.

Since baptism is “doing something,” it follows that baptism is excluded from God’s plan of salvation. “Any act of man,” they say, “is work and cannot be of faith. Baptism is a work and therefore is not of faith.” This is the substance of the argument. However, what proves too much, proves too little!

If baptism is excluded, then all other acts of man are excluded. Their favorite passage actually mandates something other than faith. Belief (faith) and confession are equal prerequisites of salvation. This Romans passage requires that man confess Christ “with the mouth.” An oral confession is “doing something,” If this Romans text excludes baptism as a part of God’s plan, it also excludes confession. Since confession is, in fact, commanded by the passage, one MUST conclude that something is wrong. And, the thing that is wrong is the “faith only” doctrine.

Saul of Tarsus was a persecutor of the church (Act 9:1-2; 22:4-6; 26:9-11). However his life took a significant change in direction one day (Acts 9:1-18; 22:4-16; 26:9-19). On that day the Lord appeared to him and instructed him to go into Damascus and he would be told what he must do. Ananias came to Saul and said, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Saul arose and was baptized (Acts 9:18). Saul’s faith responded to the command to be baptized. It was then, and not until then, that he was forgiven of his past sins. Faith that does nothing, receives nothing (James 2:14). It is this kind of obedient faith that is necessary in our lives if we wish to receive the blessing of forgiveness.

As he returned from Jerusalem to Ethiopia the Eunuch was reading from a scroll of Isaiah. Philip joined him (Acts 8:26-30). Beginning at the same scripture Phillip preached Jesus to him. Preaching Jesus involved more than preaching the person, because we find the eunuch saying “Here is water what doth hinder me to be baptized” (Acts 8:36)? As the text continues both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him (Acts 8:38). Again, a man’s faith in Christ led him to obey the commands of Christ. In being baptized he didn’t earn or merit his salvation. His faith caused him to obey, and that is the only kind of faith that God will bless.

We confront various problems throughout life. However, our greatest problem is sin. Jesus Christ is the only answer (Acts 4:12). He makes available salvation to all men (John 3:16, Titus 2:11, 2 Peter 3:9). The vilest and wickedest can be saved if they come to Jesus with penitent, obedient hearts (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Man cannot be passive in salvation! He must be active! He must respond in obedient faith to the commands of Christ, and only then will he receive the blessing of forgiveness.

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Squeezing the Water Out of Romans 6:3 & 4

By: James E. Bullington

Recently I was listening to a radio preacher as he labored in an expository fashion with the first couple of verses of Romans 6. Before commenting on the next two verses, he made the following statement “The next two verses are admittedly controversial. However, I think, along with brother McGee, that the best way to deal with these verses is to squeeze all the water out of them.

The text says, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3, 4).

The preacher then proceeded to try to harmonize these two verses with his doctrine of salvation by “faith only.” His problem was evident. If baptism in Romans 6:3, 4 means immersion in water, it follows that baptism is essential to salvation. It would also follow that his doctrine of “faith only” is untrue. Therefore to preserve “faith only,” baptism must be made something other than immersion in water. And, that’s what he meant by squeezing all the water out of these verses.

Who put the water in Romans 6:3, 4?

Romans was written by the inspired apostle Paul. Whatever baptism means, it was authored ultimately by God and recorded by his inspired penman. But, what does baptism mean in the two verses under consideration? An elementary rule of interpretation is needed here. It would read something like this, – “The simplest and most natural interpretation of a passage must be the preferred one.”

This “rule,” or one very similar to it, is contained in virtually every book of biblical hermeneutics. The observation by the preacher that the passage is controversial actually tips his hand to the “simplest and most natural interpretation.” He felt obliged to prepare his

audience for his interpretation because it clearly is not the “simplest and most natural.”

Grant that baptism means immersion. Such can be proven, but that is outside the scope of this article. Baptism means immersion and it implies a medium in which immersion is to take place. A person could be immersed in water, red ink, milk, troubles, the Holy Spirit or any other suitable media. Since the medium is not specified in Romans 6:3 or 4, the “simplest and most natural” rule applies. How is the word ordinarily used by New Testament writers when baptism of a believer is contemplated and when the medium is not identified?

When John came baptizing, what medium was used? When the disciples of Jesus were baptized what medium was used? When Peter commanded penitent believers to be baptized in Acts 2:38, what medium was contemplated? When the Ethiopian treasurer commanded the chariot to stand still to accommodate his immersion what medium was used (Acts 8:38)? When the household of Cornelius came to faith what medium was used for their baptism (Acts 10:47)? When the Philippian jailer obeyed Christ in baptism, what medium was used (Acts 16:33)? When Ananias told the penitent Saul in Acts 22:16 to “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord,” what medium was used? To ask these questions is to answer them! It is clear that when the baptism of a penitent believer is contemplated, the medium is water.

So, who put the water in Romans 6, verses 3 and 4? The Holy Spirit did through the inspired pen of the apostle Paul.

Why Is Water In Romans 6:3, 4?

The very best way to answer this question is to let the text speak for itself. These verses contain other words that relate to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. The writer explains that penitent believers are baptized into His (Jesus’) death. In that act they are “buried with Him” into death. The believer is subsequently raised to “walk in newness of life.” Water is there because God put it there. In baptism the believer participates in the death and burial of Jesus. It was in His death that His blood was shed and it is in our reenactment