

## Do You Want To Enter God's Kingdom Or Not?

By Roelf L. Ruffner

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he **cannot** see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except** a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he **cannot** enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:3-5 – emphasis mine RLR).

Yes, dear reader, this is an article about the necessity of water baptism for salvation. Why, you may ask? Water baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) has been a moot point among many in the religious world for a long time. They believe that baptism is an “ordinance” the Christian undergoes AFTER they are saved by “faith alone” and to become a member of a denomination. They spurn any attempt to teach otherwise as foolishness. But the kingdom of heaven is not a democracy run by majority vote but an absolute monarchy. The King of Kings has decreed that one CANNOT enter into heaven “except” by being “born again” (v.3). He then clearly explains what “born again” entails in Verse 5 – “born of water and of the Spirit.”

The “faith-only” false doctrine of salvation ASSUMES that the new birth is actually two births: physical birth, with the “water” (v.5) referring to the amniotic fluid of child birth, and the spiritual birth of the Spirit by faith only. In other words one must be “born” and then “born again.” In a sense they are confused as Nicodemus who saw salvation as strictly a physical birth – being born a Jew. But Jesus pointed out the new birth (singular) producing a “new creature in Christ” (2 Cor. 5:17) in verse 3 in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. He gives the details of that new birth in verse 5 involving obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Hearing, Faith, Repentance, Confession and Baptism). The “water” does not refer to physical birth but baptism for the remission of sins (Col.2:12; Titus 3:5). Faith-only false doctrine tries to negate loving obedience and replace it with a subjective religious experience. In a way it also negates faith because true faith in Christ involves loving obedience

(John 14:15). Neither faith alone nor baptism alone will save a soul. “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you’ (Rom. 6:17).

A case in point is the salvation of 3,000 religious Jews in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 30 as recorded in the Book of Acts, Chapter two. Fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ an audience of religious folk were confronted with their sins of denying the Christ and consenting to His murder. After witnessing the signs and wonders (wind, tongues as of fire and the preaching of the Gospel in many languages) they believed the message of the apostles that Jesus was the Son of God (Rom.10:17). With godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10) they responded to the Gospel invitation, “...Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

Peter did not answer their pleadings by saying, “Just repeat this sinner’s prayer after me” or “Now fall on your knees and ask God for forgiveness and you shall receive the Holy Ghost” or “You believe, so you are already saved. Our next baptismal Sunday, you will be christened.” Rather he answered their inquiry with immediacy. He commanded them to obey Christ at once (Mark 16:16). “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” (Acts 2:38). There was no waiting until “baptismal Sunday” or undergoing a time of prayer and fasting. He wanted them to fulfill the requirements for the new birth and receive the forgiveness of their sins at once by repenting and being baptized (immersed in water). Only then would their sin and guilt be removed or remitted by the blood of Christ (cf. Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3-7). They were now added to Christ’s kingdom, the church of Christ, by God Himself (Acts 2:47).

Dear reader, have you been “born of the water and the Spirit?” If not, you are not now in God’s kingdom but outside of it. “And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him

away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”(Mt. 22:11-13).