

Twelve Baptist Objections Met & Answered



A series of radio addresses directed at answering twelve objections raised by a Baptist preacher to the Bible doctrine concerning baptism "for the remission of sins" as taught in Acts 2:38 and other New Testament texts. These sermons were delivered by Jeff Asher over **KGAS 1590AM** on the *Words of Life Broadcast* sponsored by the Northside Church of Christ which meets at 701 West Cottage Road in Carthage, Texas.

12 Reasons Why Baptism Is Not Essential For Salvation

By Dr. Robert Morey

The idea that baptism is essential for salvation is a pernicious doctrine taught by Roman Catholics, Mormons, Lutherans, United Pentecostals, and the Campbellites who have the gall to call themselves the "Church of Christ."

The Campbellites are referring only to those baptisms performed according to their doctrine of baptism. No one else's baptisms are viewed as valid, not even those done by other Campbellite cults! While the first reason applies only to the Campbellites, the other arguments can be used against anyone who claims that baptism is essential for salvation.

The Twelve Reasons

1. If the Campbellite doctrine of baptism is true then the very men who founded the "Restoration Movement" which later developed into the "Church of Christ" churches were never saved! All Thomas and Alexander Campbell had was the infant baptism they received from the Presbyterians and the adult baptism they received from the Baptists! They were never baptized a third time "in order to obtain remission of sins" according to the Campbellite doctrine of baptism. How can the Campbellite church, gospel and baptism be of God when the men who "restored" those very things were unsaved children of the devil according to their own teachings?
2. John the Baptist's baptism did not save anyone although it was done "for the remission of sins" (Mk. 1:4). John clearly stated that his baptism was only of water in contrast to Jesus' baptism which would be of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11). When this is added to the fact that people who had John's baptism were re-baptized with Christian baptism (Acts 19:1-5), it is clear that John's baptism did not save anyone. Since John's baptism did not save anyone, then such terminology as "for remission of sins" does not imply baptismal remission. This logically removes many of the arguments used by baptismal regenerationists.
3. Jesus never baptized anyone (John 4:2). If baptism is essential for salvation, why didn't Jesus baptize anyone? Since he did not baptize anyone, how did he save anyone?
4. Paul clearly states that baptism is not part of Gospel preaching. Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel (I Corinthians 1:14-17). Then in I Corinthians 15:1-4, when he summarized the Gospel, no mention of baptism was made, I make known to you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached to you...that Christ died for our sins...that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day. This is in agreement with Acts 20:21 where he summarized his preaching as, Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. How can baptism be essential to salvation when it is not part of the Gospel?
5. Paul argues in Romans 3:28-30 that since there is only one God there can be only one way of salvation. This means that whatever is essential to salvation today must be the same throughout all ages. While faith and repentance pass this test, baptism does not because it was not present in the Old Testament. How can baptism be essential to salvation when it was not present in the Old Testament?
6. Paul argues that justification has always been "by faith apart from the works of the law." Abraham: Before the law (Romans 4:1-5). David: After the law (Romans 4:6-8). No Campbellite, Catholic, Lutheran, Mormon, United Pentecostal, etc., has ever produced one verse where justification is by baptism.

7. Baptism is the N.T. parallel to circumcision just as the Lord's Supper is the parallel to the Passover (Colossians 2:11-12). Since circumcision "is nothing" (I Corinthians 7:19) and did not save anyone, then why should baptism?

8. Paul points out that Abraham was justified by faith before he obeyed God in circumcision (Romans 4:9-11, 16; 4:23-5:2). This clearly applies to us.

Abraham	You and Me
Justified by Faith	Justified by Faith
Before he was circumcised	Before we are baptized

The Campbellite doctrine destroys the parallel between circumcision and baptism.

9. Cornelius believed the Gospel, was saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues and then got baptized (Acts 10:44-48). Did not Cornelius' salvation take place before his baptism? The text clearly states that Cornelius and his family heard the word, believed it, were saved, filled with the spirit, spoke in tongues and then were baptized. None of this should have taken place if the Campbellite doctrine was true.

10. The thief on the cross went to heaven without baptism. Since Christ died before the thief died, the thief went to paradise through the shed blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:14-17). If baptism is essential to go to heaven, how did the thief get there without being baptized?

11. The Campbellite doctrine makes salvation dependent upon the availability of water and of a Campbellite. While someone who is alone can believe in Jesus in the desert or at the North Pole, will his salvation be denied because no water for a Campbellite baptism is present?

12. The Campbellite doctrine confuses the symbol with what it represents and is based on a superstitious and magical view of baptism. Since the Campbellites admit that the bread and the wine are only symbols of the body and blood of Jesus, then on what grounds do they deny that baptism is only a symbol of salvation?

Conclusion:

The Campbellites "twist the scriptures to their own destruction" (II Peter 3:16) when they try to mix works with grace (Romans 11:6). Salvation is by GRACE through faith in Christ apart from the works of the law such as baptism, church membership, etc. To make salvation dependent on the presence of water and the absence of a piano is ridiculous as well as unscriptural.

Twelve Baptist Objections Met & Answered

I have before me this morning an article written by Dr. Robert Morey, a Baptist preacher, entitled *Twelve Reasons Why Baptism Is Not Essential for Salvation*. I have never met Dr. Morey but am confident that he is a good man and that his article is well intentioned. I admire anyone who is willing, in a fair and evenhanded manner, to oppose what they perceive to be religious error. I even admire a vigorous attack of that error and a hearty defense of what is believed to be true. I do not get offended if someone thinks I am wrong and need to be corrected. Better that, than to be ignored and left to be destroyed by my mistakes. So, Dr. Morey is not an enemy and his words of rebuke and correction are not perceived as being mean spirited or hateful. By the same token, my objections to his words are not to be construed in any manner other than the response of one who believes he is right in his convictions, that the positions he holds are quite defensible from the Scriptures. Furthermore, my response to this article is intended to repay the courtesy I have been shown and respond in as kind and concerned a manner as I have been approached. And so, I enter into a "debate" of "my cause" with "my neighbor," as Solomon characterizes it in Proverbs chapter 25 and verse nine. I will not do so hastily, I intend to thoroughly examine these objections and complaints so that I might be a "wise reprover" and speak words that are like "apples of gold in networks of silver" (25:11).

Now, let's turn to the "twelve reasons."

Reason # 1: Because the Campbells Would Be Lost

Dr. Morey says, "If the Campbellite doctrine of baptism is true then the very men who founded the 'Restoration Movement' which later developed into the 'Church of Christ' churches were never saved! All Thomas and Alexander Campbell had was the infant baptism they received from the Presbyterians and the adult baptism they received from the Baptists! They were never baptized a third time 'in order to obtain remission of sins' according to the Campbellite doctrine of baptism."

Throughout his article Dr. Morey refers to Christians and the Church of Christ as "Campbellites" and the "Campbellite Church." The term Campbellite has been around for the better part of two centuries. Its origin is attributed to Robert Owen, the English infidel who came to America to establish a movement of "social reform" (A.B. Barret, *The Shattered Chain*, p. 32). Owen debated Alexander Campbell at Cincinnati, Ohio in 1829. Campbell was one of the few Americans at the time that was willing and able to take on Owen and expose his atheism and socialism for the sophistry and vitriol it was. Campbell was hailed at the time as a great defender of the Christian faith. Yet, those who have been prejudiced by the promoters of sectarianism and religious division have taken up the epithet coined by infidels and modernists.

Alexander Campbell labored the bulk of his adult life with a view to encouraging others to abandon sectarianism and be simply and only Christians. It is a tragedy that some would accuse him of being the head and founder of the "Campbellite" church. This pious man utterly repudiated the designation. For example, in 1826 he wrote:

"Some religious editors in Kentucky call those who are desirous of seeing the ancient order of things restored...the Campbellites...This may go well with some; but all who fear God and keep his commands will pity and deplore the weakness and folly of those who either think to convince or to persuade by such means" (The Christian Baptist, Vol. IV, pp. 88-89).

In 1828 Mr. Campbell responded to the question: "What is Campbellism?" in the following fashion:

"It is a nickname of reproach invented and adopted by those whose views, feelings and desires are all sectarian—who cannot conceive of Christianity in any other light than an ISM" (Christian Baptist, Vol. V, p. 270).

Once when Campbell was in New Orleans, a local newspaper characterized him as the “founder” of a denomination. Mr. Campbell was not pleased. He penned a letter to the editor in which said the following:

“You have done me, gentlemen, too much honor in saying I am the ‘founder’ of the denomination, quite numerous and respectable in many portions of the West, technically known as ‘Christians,’ but more commonly as ‘Campbellites.’

“I have always repudiated all human heads and human names for the people of the Lord, and shall feel very thankful if you will correct the erroneous impression which your article may have made in thus representing me as the founder of a religious denomination” (The Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, Vol. ii. p. 441).

Now, the truth is, Alexander Campbell denied that he was the head or founder of anything with respect to the Church of Christ. It is a gross misrepresentation of him and his work to call him such.

Furthermore, I neither endorse nor accept him as such. I was a Christian long before I ever heard of Alexander Campbell. He did not die for me neither was I baptized into his name. It is Christ that died and it is His name into which I was baptized (cf. I Corinthians 1:13). I recognize Jesus of Nazareth and Him only, as the builder, foundation and head of the Church of Christ. Calling me a “Campbellite” because I happen to agree with some things a man named Campbell taught would be like me calling the Baptists “Calvinists” because they agree with some of the things a man named Calvin taught. I am what I am religiously, and practice what I practice as a matter of faith in the word of God. I will give book, chapter and verse for everything I believe and practice as these studies progress.

Concerning Alexander Campbell’s baptism, his biographer, close friend and colleague, Dr. Robert Richardson, gives a detailed account of it in his *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* (pp. 396 ff). The testimony of the participants and witnesses to Campbell’s baptism establishes that what occurred in June of 1812 was not according to Baptist tradition. There was no Baptist congregation present, there was no “religious experience” given and there was no vote taken. The witnesses all bear record that Matthias Luce, the Baptist preacher that immersed Campbell, objected at first to doing so. However, after a presentation of the reasons for asking to be immersed contrary to Baptist practice, Luce consented and Campbell was baptized on a simple confession of faith in Christ. It is clear that Campbell and the others did not submit to what Dr. Morey and all other Baptists recognize as “Baptist baptism.” So, Morey is wrong when he says Campbell had “Baptist” baptism. The evidence is clear that Campbell was not seeking Baptist baptism, but the baptism taught in the New Testament.

For the sake of argument, let’s grant that Campbell was not immersed for the remission of sins and that the only baptism he had was that of the Presbyterians and Baptists. What has Dr. Morey proven? Well, in the first place, he has proven that I am not a Campbellite and has made one of himself since it is he, not I, who has Baptist baptism which, according to him, is the only baptism Campbell had. Furthermore, Dr. Morey proves himself and all Baptists to be lost because they have the same Baptist baptism which he says Alexander Campbell had which was not baptism for the remission of sins. Therefore, Dr. Morey has succeeded in demonstrating by this argument that he and all Baptists are in need of baptism for remission of sins which is the baptism I preach.

Alexander Campbell is not the point at issue in any discussion about water baptism. I am perfectly willing to let the lord judge Mr. Campbell. We will never settle the question of his immersion to the satisfaction of some. If Alexander Campbell was not baptized for the remission of sins that does not prove the New Testament does not teach it. As I said earlier, I am following Jesus Christ not Alexander Campbell.

Reason #2: Because John’s Baptism Did Not Save Anyone

Dr. Morey states, “John the Baptist’s baptism did not save anyone although it was done ‘for the remission of sins’ (Mark 1:4).” Dr. Morey gives three reasons for this conclusion: (1) John’s baptism was of water only and (2) Jesus’ baptism was of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11); (3) the people who had John’s baptism were re-baptized with Christian baptism (Acts 19:1-5).

The unreasonableness of the position that Morey holds is demonstrated by his continued denial that baptism saves while admitting that the New Testament clearly says that John's baptism was a "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." (Mark 1:4). The expression "for remission of sins" is used by Jesus to describe His own atoning death in Matthew chapter 26 and verse 28; it is exactly the same expression in both the Greek and English. Jesus said, "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." If Morey is right, the death of Jesus did not save anyone although it was done "for the remission of sins." Who can believe that? Jesus died in order that we might have the remission of sins (Colossians 1:14, 20; Ephesians 1:7). John baptized penitent Jews for the same reason and the Apostles commanded all believers to "repent and be baptized everyone in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). One must have help to misunderstand that, and sadly, Dr. Morey seems to be a willing volunteer.

John's baptism was certainly water baptism and Jesus' baptism, is also water baptism—not Holy Spirit baptism. In Acts chapter eight Philip went down into Samaria to preach the Gospel. Those who believed the preaching of Philip were baptized (8:12-13). Verse sixteen says that these saints had been baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus," but had not as yet received the Holy Spirit (cf. 8:15). Therefore, baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus is not Holy Spirit baptism and must be water baptism since no other baptism is known in the New Testament.

In addition, please note that this text upends Baptist doctrine on regeneration. Cobb's *Baptist Manual* states: "Since regeneration is the supreme qualification for church membership...It is further understood that sinners can perform the conditions [that is, *repentance and faith*] only by the grace of God. God enables man, by His grace to do those things necessary to regeneration...It is effected in a manner above man's comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth" (pp. 29-30, 91). I say this text upends Baptist doctrine on regeneration because according to the Baptists, as we just read, one must receive the Holy Spirit and be regenerated in order to repent and believe, after which one may then be baptized because he is saved; however, Acts eight says these folks heard the Gospel, believed and were baptized in water before they "received the Holy Spirit." Now, it is either the Holy Spirit populated the Church of Jesus Christ in Samaria with un-regenerated sinners, or the Baptist position on salvation is wrong. It is evident that it is the latter.

Jesus said in Mark chapter sixteen and verse sixteen, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." We saw that the Samaritans believed the preaching of Philip and were baptized; therefore, they were saved. Furthermore, Jesus went on to say in verse seventeen of Mark chapter sixteen, "These signs shall follow them that believe." He then enumerated the miracles that first century Christians would work as part of the process through which revelation was completed. It was at Samaria just as Mark said it would be, "They [the baptized believers] went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."

The Bible pattern is Gospel preaching, belief, baptism unto salvation followed by a miraculous reception of the Holy Spirit. This certainly does not fit the *Baptist Manual* pattern of a reception of the Holy Spirit in order to believe and repent at the preaching of the Gospel unto salvation followed by baptism because one is already saved.

Dr. Morey further contends that John's baptism, which was "for the remission of sins," did not save any one because certain ones in Acts chapter nineteen are mentioned as being re-immersed. While it is true that these men were re-immersed, Dr. Morey's conclusion does not follow. Just exactly how these men had received John's baptism is not specified. However, in Acts chapter 18 Apollos is mentioned as continuing to preach John's baptism after Christ had commanded Christian baptism in Mark chapter 16. Aquila and Priscilla are said to have taught him more perfectly, that is, they corrected his error. John's baptism was limited to Jews and was based upon repentance toward God and an acceptance of the Messiah who would come after John. It was intended only for the period of the "limited commission" and superseded by Christ's baptism at Pentecost as revealed in Acts chapter two and verse 38. Obviously, these twelve men had received this ordinance contrary to its original intent. Therefore, they had not

actually received John's baptism and were in need of being immersed into Christ for the remission of sins as had been taught at Pentecost.

Dr. Morey has certainly not helped his position on Acts 2:38 by this ridiculous interpretation. He contends that the expression "for the remission of sins" means "because of the remission of sins." Furthermore, he maintains that those who received John's baptism were already saved, saved first then baptized. Yet, he has these men who he says should have been saved being re-immersed; thus, they must have been baptized because they were unsaved, which is my position. It cannot be argued that John did not instruct men to believe on Jesus because Paul says that is just what he did (Acts 19:5). As a matter of fact, we have an example of John the Baptist taking two of his disciples and pointing out Jesus as the Messiah in John chapter one and verses 29 through 34. Furthermore, Apollos is an example of such an one that did believe that Jesus was Christ while in error on water baptism. John preached that Jesus was the Christ. Therefore, Dr. Morey has succeeded only in proving that the men of Acts chapter 19 were unsaved believers in need of water baptism.

Reason #3: Because Jesus Never Baptized Anyone in Water

Dr. Morey says that water baptism cannot be essential to salvation because "Jesus never baptized anyone (John 4:2). If baptism is essential for salvation, why didn't Jesus baptize anyone? Since he did not baptize anyone, how did he save anyone?"

As with other things, Dr. Morey is just mistaken when he says Jesus never baptized anyone. Let's read what John chapter four and verses one through three actually say:

"When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples). He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee."

Seems to me, that the text says Jesus did make and baptize disciples. As a matter of fact, He made and baptized more than John did. However, Jesus did not actually do the immersing—the Twelve did that.

What we learn from this verse is the principle of agency. An agent "is someone that acts as the representative of another" (*Houghton-Mifflin College Dictionary*). When the agent acts it is as if the one represented has actually done it. This is the principle which is at work in when one has been given "power of attorney." The principle of agency is found throughout scripture. While not specifically labeled, "Principle of Agency." It is necessarily implied and must be recognized or else difficulties arise in understanding the Scriptures.

An excellent example of what we are talking about is found in the parallel accounts of the healing of the Centurion's servant. The account in Matthew, beginning at chapter eight verse five, states the following about the centurion:

"And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."

If the only record of this event was that recorded by Matthew, we would come to the conclusion that the centurion came to Jesus personally and asked him to heal his servant of the palsy. However, Matthew's account is NOT the only record. We also have the word of Luke on the matter.

In chapter seven of Luke's account beginning at verse one, we have the following:

"Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, *he sent unto him the elders of the Jews*, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, that he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, *the centurion sent friends to him*, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.”

Luke’s account of the matter shows that the centurion certainly did not come personally to Jesus, but he did come through the agency of others. The words and actions are attributed to the Centurion by Matthew because they were done at his request and in his name. Thus, Matthew stated the truth about the matter when he said that the Centurion came beseeching Jesus to heal his servant. Likewise, John states the truth about the matter when he says Jesus baptized more disciples than John. These disciples were baptized according to the teaching and by the authority of Jesus Christ. He made them though He did not with his own hands immerse any of them. Now, Dr. Morey’s objections are dismissed by a proper handling of the text.

Reason #4: Baptism Is No Part of the Gospel

Dr. Morey continues with this fourth objection:

“Paul clearly states that baptism is not part of Gospel preaching, ‘Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel’ (I Corinthians 1:14-17). Then in I Corinthians 15:1-4, when he summarized the Gospel, no mention of baptism was made, ‘I make known to you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached to you...that Christ died for our sins...that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day.’ This is in agreement with Acts 20:21 where he summarized his preaching as, ‘Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.’ How can baptism be essential to salvation when it is not part of the Gospel?”

Before I deal with the Bible texts that Dr. Morey mentions, let’s notice the absurdity of what he says. This argument is a perfect example of *special pleading*. That means he has made an argument the consequences of which he is unwilling to apply to himself. When a man does that he either does not see the consequences of his argument, or he does not really believe the argument. I will leave to you to decide which the case is.

The Baptist Church is wholly dependent upon baptism for its existence. Without water baptism, the Baptist church does not have a name; it does not have an ordinance to administer; it does not have a membership. Now, if water baptism is no part of the Gospel and it is not necessary to salvation, then, the Baptist Church is not a *Gospel church* and it, the Baptist church, is not necessary to salvation. Therefore, when the Baptist Church preaches and practices water baptism, *it is not preaching and practicing the Gospel*. The Baptist church does not have a *Gospel name*; it does not practice a *Gospel ordinance*, and it does not have a *Gospel membership*. That pretty well takes care of the Baptist Church.

Now, let’s read I Corinthians chapter one verses 14 through 17.

“I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”

Paul does not say what Dr. Morey attributes to him. The apostle restates in personal terms the same “Great Commission” that Jesus had given to the Eleven on the Mount of Ascension in Mark 16:15-16, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Paul’s commission was the same as the other apostles; he was to preach the Gospel. Baptizing is no part of preaching, but Paul did not say baptism was no part of the Gospel. When men hear and believe the Gospel the baptizing takes care of itself. This is exemplified in the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch mentioned in Acts chapter eight. After Philip joined himself to the Eunuch the text says at verse 35, “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.” As they continued on their journey toward Gaza the Eunuch asked the question, it’s recorded in verse 36, “See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized.” Philip responded, “If thou believest thou mayest.” And, the Eunuch said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” The text the Eunuch had been reading from was Isaiah chapter 53. You can read the book of Isaiah from cover to cover and you will not find one reference to water baptism. How then did the Eunuch learn of it? It must have been Philip’s preaching, his preaching Jesus, his preaching

the Gospel. Baptism is very much a part of the Gospel, but it is not intended to supplant the Gospel message; it cannot be administered apart from a genuine faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

While we are here at Acts chapter eight, let's notice something else. The baptism which the Eunuch received was not "Baptist" baptism. There was no Baptist church present at the baptism of the Eunuch, he did not tell "an experience" to the members, since none were present, neither did any Baptist church render a judgment that the Eunuch "had passed from death unto life". There was no vote taken. All this humble man did was hear the Gospel, believe it, confess Christ and be immersed. What did that make him? It made him a Christian, and that's all it made him.

In this connection Dr. Morey also mentioned I Corinthians 15:1-4. However, in the quotation which I read from him, he did not include all of the verse. Therefore, let's read the whole text again.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received*, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

Again, Paul does not say what is attributed to him, that is, that baptism is no part of the Gospel or that the Gospel consists only of the facts of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul states that these things were what he delivered "first of all," that is, this is the beginning place of the Gospel message; the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus establishes His identity as the Son of God. In that these things were "first," the beginning, the preliminary and elementary things, necessitates the conclusion that other things followed which are parts of the Gospel. What Paul calls the "first" things in this text he calls the "first principles" in Hebrews chapter five and verse 12, hear it, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the *first principles of the oracles of God*; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." As with all things, so with the Gospel, there is a beginning place, a foundation that must be laid. This is certainly consistent with what has already been demonstrated as the Apostolic pattern of preaching the Gospel under the "Great Commission" of Mark 16:15-16.

Dr. Morey also quoted from Acts chapter 20 verse 21, "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." The implication was that since this text does not mention baptism, then baptism is no part of the Gospel. However, does the absence of any mention of baptism in this text prove that baptism is no part of the Gospel and not essential to salvation?

Acts 20:21 does not mention "love," are we to conclude that the love of God is not essential to our being saved? The Apostle Paul wrote in his first epistle to Corinth, chapter eight at verse 13, "But if any man love God, the same is known of him." Certainly a man must love God and Christ in order to be saved. Dr. Morey recognizes that, just as you do. Therefore, Acts chapter 20 verse 21 does not exclude love as an essential condition of salvation. What about confession, can a man not confess Christ and be saved? In John chapter 12, I recall that there were some who "believed on him," that is, they believed on Christ, but they "did not confess Him lest they be put out of the synagogue" (John 12:42). The Apostle Paul said in Romans chapter ten at verses nine and ten: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Again, Acts chapter 20 and verse 21 does not exclude confession because it only mentions repentance and faith. Now, why then should anyone conclude that baptism is excluded because this one text does not mention it? Other texts mention faith and repentance in connection with water baptism, just as other texts mention love and confession. Jesus said in Mark chapter 16 and verse 16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Peter, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said in Acts chapter two at verse 38, "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." No, baptism is not excluded any more than confession is excluded or love. They are all essential to receiving the forgiveness of sins.

Reason #5: There Has Always Been Only One Plan of Salvation

Dr. Morey says, "Paul argues in Romans chapter three verses 28 through 30 that since there is only one God there can be only one way of salvation. This means that whatever is essential to salvation today must be the same throughout all ages. While faith and repentance pass this test, baptism does not because it was not present in the Old Testament. How can baptism be essential to salvation when it was not present in the Old Testament?"

Frankly, this is a good question. It gets to the very heart of the issue. If I can get everyone to understand this, we are on our way to getting together and overcoming religious division.

While I might "tweak" Dr. Morey's explanation of Romans three, he has basically got the right idea. Justification of the sinner has always been on the grounds of faith and not on the basis of the works of the Law of Moses or any human standard of righteousness (Romans 1:16-17; 3:28; cf. Habakkuk 2:4; Genesis 15:6). That principle was true in the Garden Eden, the days of the Great Flood, at the crossing of the Jordan and during the building of the Temple. Hebrews chapter eleven affirms that from Adam to this present generation, all men that are saved are saved by faith.

However, the problem Dr. Morey has is that when he sees or reads justification by faith, his mind supplies the word "only." Dr. Morey, and every Baptist preacher I have ever discussed this question with, believes that salvation is *by faith before and without obedience*. We agree that salvation is by faith, but we disagree about the character of the faith that saves.

To illustrate how Dr. Morey misses the point let's consider one example, that of Noah. Our friend avers that baptism is not necessary because there was no baptism in the Old Testament. Yet will he be consistent? Was Noah saved by building the Ark or not? Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 7 states: "By faith Noah...prepared and Ark to the saving of his house by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." By faith Noah obeyed God and built an Ark. By building this colossal boat Noah saved his family from the destruction of the flood. However, the text also says that by the building of the Ark "he became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." The building of the Ark was a part of the process by which Noah was justified before God. Now, this command is a command which was unique to Noah. God commanded no one before or after Noah to build such a boat. Yet, that boat was essential to Noah's redemption, how do we explain that? Dr. Morey cannot, because he excludes the obedience of faith from the redemptive process. Yet, God includes it.

Dr. Morey tries to transform baptism into some thing that is parallel to works of the Law or external religious ritual when in reality it is perfectly parallel to Noah building the Ark. If you can understand that Noah was justified by faith when his faith was perfected in obedience, you can understand the place of water baptism in the redemptive process. This truth is stated and restated in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. Notice in that chapter that "by faith Abel offered...[and] by faith Enoch [walked with God] (Hebrews 11:4 and Genesis 5:24)...by faith Abraham...obeyed...sojourned...offered...by faith Moses was hid...by faith [he] refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter choosing rather to suffer affliction...by faith he forsook Egypt...[and] kept the Passover...by faith the walls of Jericho fell down AFTER they were compassed about seven days..." Where Dr. Morey or any one else ever got the idea that salvation by faith excludes obedience is beyond me.

God has always required that men exercise their faith by obedience. This obedience does not earn or merit one thing before God and it does not reflect anything other than complete trust in God to bestow the blessings of heaven in grace and mercy. To say otherwise is utter folly.

Dr. Morey is correct when he says that there is a consistent pattern of justification by faith throughout the entire Bible—it is the same in every dispensation—but the faith that saves is the faith that obeys. Just as Noah obeyed you and I must obey God, or else we do not have saving faith.

Reason #6: Justification Is by Faith Apart from the Works of the Law

Dr. Morey continues saying, "Paul argues that justification has always been 'by faith apart from the works of the law.' [It was true] of Abraham, before the law (Rom. 4:1-5), and David, after the law (Rom. 4:6-8). No Campbellite, Catholic, Lutheran, Mormon, United Pentecostal, etc., has ever produced one verse where justification is by baptism."

Before, I answer Dr. Morey's objection I want to point out something that he has done which is subtle and prejudicial. He has sought to prove that I am wrong by associating me with others whom he believes his audience will also recognize as wrong. It is what we commonly refer to as "guilt by association," or "tarring everyone with the same brush." Since, in his mind any way, the Catholics, Lutherans, Mormons and Pentecostals are wrong because they say baptism is necessary, I must also be wrong because I say baptism is necessary. However, he hasn't proven anything about baptism, and has only asserted not proven that I agree with any of these groups regarding what they say about baptism. The truth is, I do not baptize infants in order to be saved as do the Catholics and Lutherans. I do not believe babies are born lost; however, Dr. Morey does. Neither do I believe that baptism apart from faith in Jesus Christ will save anyone, as must be the case in the baptism of infants. I do not baptize "for the dead" as do the Mormons, again, indicating a belief that baptism without personal trust in Christ is efficacious to remission of sins. Neither do I believe water baptism must be administered with a certain formula of words such as, "in Jesus' name," in order to receive the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit manifested by speaking in tongues. It is unfair and seeks to arouse prejudice against what I teach. It is not necessary to do such when a forthright examination and rebuttal, if possible, will accomplish a proper refutation of all error. It is not necessary to misrepresent and characterize unfavorably what another teaches in order to answer it.

Now, while I will agree these groups are wrong in their conclusions respecting to whom baptism is necessary and how this baptism is administered, their error does not lead to the conclusion that baptism is not necessary for the remission of sins. Jesus still said, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." The first Gospel sermon still concluded with the words, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38).

Dr. Morey still does not understand the relationship between faith and obedience. I am glad that he recognizes Abraham as an example of justification by faith. If he will just stick with Abraham, walking in the steps of his faith as Paul said, there is hope for him. The good Dr.'s problem is that he thinks if a man does something, anything—especially baptism—in connection with salvation he is performing "deeds of Law" and is trying to earn his salvation. Yet, that is not what the Bible says, and in particular, that is not what it says about Abraham.

In Romans chapter four where Morey quotes, we read, "Now to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (4:5). This statement is said to describe Abraham who was justified by faith (4:9, 13). At one point Abraham was a sinner; he had nothing whereof he could boast before God (4:2; Ephesians 2:8-9). His works were unable to atone for his sins. This is the case because the only man who can be justified on the basis of works is the sinless man. He stands before God as just, not guilty and must be acquitted. It is as the Scripture says, "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" (4:4).

However, the guilty man can make no appeal to his works. His present compliance with the law does not atone for past transgression. This is easily illustrated. Suppose as I exit the highway I miss seeing the "reduced speed ahead" sign and continue at the accelerated rate. Also suppose that while traveling that elevated speed I pass a policeman with a radar gun. My dilemma is apparent. Now, let's continue the hypothetical. When the officer informs me of my infraction I suggest a remedy. I will return to the point on the road where the limit was reduced and traverse it again at the appropriate speed. The officer is not amused, why? Because he knows that future compliance does not atone for past transgressions. This is the nature of "law." It requires that it be done correctly every time and makes no provisions for the

removal of guilt. All that law can do is condemn the guilty and acquit the righteous. It cannot acquit the guilty.

However, the Gospel can acquit the guilty on the basis of faith in the sacrifice of Christ. The Father is satisfied or propitiated by the death of Jesus (Isaiah 53:11-12). The just requirement of God's law is fulfilled in Him (Romans 3:23-26); therefore, God is disposed to show mercy to those that will trust in His Son as their Saviour. This is what the Bible means by salvation by grace through faith. Our sins are remitted as a matter of favor to those that believe.

Yet, faith is not a passive commodity. Jesus, as the Hebrew writer says, is the author of eternal salvation to all that *obey* him (Hebrews 5:8-9). And, this obedient faith through which God's grace comes is exemplified in Abraham.

When Paul said in Romans chapter four that Abraham "worketh not" he was not excluding Abraham's obedience. As we have already shown, he clearly had in mind the fact that Abraham was "ungodly," that is, a sinner. Being such, he could never be acquitted on his own merits. He could never by keeping law atone for violated law. Abraham needed a Saviour. God revealed to him the promise of that Saviour and Abraham left Ur in Mesopotamia to inherit a blessing (Acts 7:1-4; Genesis 12:1-4; Acts 3:23-26). However, the Hebrew writer says that Abraham's departure was a matter of faith while at the same time included his obedience. When the Apostle James speaks of it, he asks "Was not Abraham our father justified by works?" (James 2:21). Now, James does not contradict Paul; rather, the two are in perfect harmony. Paul declares it is not by works of Abraham's own righteousness that he was saved; while James assures us that it is by the works or faith, or by the obedience of faith.

Abraham was not trusting in himself, or the merit of his actions. He was trusting in God, and this trust was perfected or brought to completion by acting in obedience. It was when Abraham obeyed that the Lord said, "Now I know that you fear God" (Genesis 22:12).

Now, the believer who is baptized is not trusting in himself or the merit of his actions. He is trusting in God and Jesus Christ. God has said that He will forgive the man who believes on Christ as the Saviour when he is baptized. Jesus said it in Mark chapter 16 and verse 16, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." Paul said it in Colossians chapter two and verse 12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." The believer is trusting in God and Christ to save him, not in any works which he has done.

Reason #7: Baptism Is Nothing Because Circumcision Is Nothing

Dr. Morey says: "Baptism is the N.T. parallel to circumcision just as the Lord's Supper is the parallel to the Passover (Colossians 2:11-12). Since circumcision 'is nothing' (I Corinthians 7:19) and did not save anyone, then why should baptism?" Therefore, Dr. Morey's conclusion that baptism is nothing is based on the *assumption* that Colossians chapter two verses 11 and 12 teach that water baptism is parallel to fleshly circumcision. Is this the case?

Let's read from Colossians chapter two:

"For in him [that is, Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

Paul affirms to us that the believer in Christ has all that God has to offer. In Christ we are complete or perfect. This is the theme of the entire epistle. Back in chapter one at verse 19 Paul had affirmed that "fulness" or sufficiency dwelt in Christ as a result of His atoning work at Calvary. Through Christ's death the believer is made holy, unblameable and unreprouvable in the sight of God.

Paul continues, and I hope you are looking at the text in chapter two, that when we enter Christ we are “circumcised with a circumcision made without hands.” This spiritual “circumcision” consists in the removing or cutting away of our sins. Paul says it is made “made without hands,” that is, it is a circumcision which God performs. This is not the circumcision of the Abrahamic covenant that was in the flesh and which Paul in I Corinthians chapter seven and verse 19 says is “nothing.” This “circumcision” is “of Christ;” it takes away sins and results in the forgiveness of all trespasses. How could anyone say that this circumcision is nothing!

Dr. Morey has jumped to a conclusion asserting that water baptism is parallel to Jewish circumcision when the text doesn’t even mention circumcision in the flesh. All I know to say about that is that he is wrong. You can see that can’t you?

In verse twelve, Paul tells us when this circumcision occurs. The body of the sins of the flesh is put off when we are buried and raised with Christ in water baptism. God takes away the sins of the believer who obeys Jesus’ command to be baptized. Jesus said, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16). The first Gospel sermon preached ended with this invitation, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Note that Paul does not say that this is symbolic ritual. Listen carefully and read his words with me, and I quote, “Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith in the operation of God.” We are BURIED with Christ and we are raised with Christ IN BAPTISM. Our burial and resurrection actually takes place in water baptism THROUGH FAITH in God’s working. No man who understands water baptism is trusting in himself, the water or anyone other than Jesus Christ the Son of God.

I would like to point something out to my friends in the Missionary Baptist Church. Every time one of your preachers makes an argument like this against water baptism he is destroying the Missionary Baptist Church. Without water baptism your preachers would not have a name, they would not have a mission and they would not have a church. Baptist Churches send Baptist preachers to baptize with Baptist baptism and make Baptists. If water baptism is “nothing”, then Baptist preachers preach “nothing” and practice “nothing” because they are “nothing.” If that is not the case why is it not? I still maintain that if what Dr. Morey and others say is true, the Baptist Church of necessity must be the most needless institution in the World. Furthermore, that institution cannot be the Church revealed in the New Testament because Jesus purchased that church with His own blood, it is the manifold wisdom of God, He is the Saviour of it and by it He and the Father in Heaven are glorified.

Reason #8: It Destroys the Parallel between Circumcision & Baptism

Dr. Morey continues his objections against water baptism for the remission of sins saying, “Paul points out that Abraham was justified by faith before he obeyed God in circumcision (Romans 4:9-11, 16, 23 through 5:2). This clearly applies to us...The Campbellite doctrine destroys the parallel between circumcision and baptism.” Dr. Morey constructs a parallel between Abraham and believers. His argument runs thus, since Abraham was saved before circumcision, and circumcision is parallel to water baptism, believers must be saved before water baptism.

However, as we have already noted, Dr. Morey’s parallel between water baptism and circumcision is the figment of his imagination. Colossians chapter two verses eleven and twelve do not teach it. That passage says that we are quickened or made alive with Christ in water baptism because in it God performs a circumcision that does take away sins. There is not one text in all the Book of God that says baptism and circumcision are parallel or for that matter that the Lord’s Supper and the Passover are parallel. Folks, Baptist preachers have just made that up. You can read the Bible and see that.

Now, let’s construct a real parallel between Abraham’s justification and our own.

In Romans chapter four, Abraham is held up as an example of justification by grace through faith. Paul’s question is does this blessing of justification belong only to the Jews or does it belong to Gentiles as well (that’s verse 9). Paul’s answer is that it belongs to both on the same grounds that it belonged to Abraham. It is both because he was justified in uncircumcision by faith and in circumcision through faith. Those

who are justified like Abraham was must, Paul says, “walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had being yet uncircumcised” (chapter 4:13).

Hebrews chapter eleven speaks to the character of Abraham’s faith. “By faith Abraham when he was called...obeyed...by faith he sojourned in the land of promise...by faith Abraham when he was tried offered up Isaac...” (11:8–19). If we are walking in the steps of the faith of Abraham we are obeying whatever commands God may give with complete confidence and trust in Him who has called us, even Jesus Christ. The faith of Abraham was an obedient faith, from the very first call which God issued to him in Mesopotamia until he was gathered unto his people when he fell on sleep in his tent in Beersheba where he dwelt as a stranger and a pilgrim in a foreign land. The life of Abraham was one of the obedience of faith.

When James wrote of the faith of Abraham in the second chapter He agreed with Paul’s statement in Romans chapter four and verse three, “The scripture was fulfilled which said, Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.” Yet, his agreement with Paul was based upon this truth, “You see then how a man is justified by works and not by faith only” (James 2:24). The faith that saves is the faith that obeys.

Now, the true parallel is this: Abraham was justified by faith after he obeyed God (James 2:21–24). You and I are justified by faith after we obey God (Hebrews 5:8–9). Now, let’s develop this even further. Abraham was said to have been justified before he was circumcised (Genesis 15:6 and Romans 4:10). However, Abraham had faith and was obedient to God before his circumcision, God having appeared to him in Mesopotamia before he lived in Haran (Acts 7:2–3; Genesis 12:1–2). His departure from Mesopotamia was the first act of the obedience of his faith (Hebrews 11:8). Remember what Paul said, “By faith Abraham when he was called obeyed.” Our baptism into Christ is parallel to Abraham leaving Mesopotamia not his circumcision. Just as Abraham is not said to have been justified until he departed from Mesopotamia, neither are we said to be justified until after we are baptized. God told Abraham to leave Ur, Jesus tells us to be baptized. If we are walking in the steps of Abraham’s faith we obey Christ.

Reason #9: The Conversion of Cornelius

Dr. Morey’s next objection is concerned with the Roman centurion Cornelius. Morey write: “Cornelius believed the Gospel, was saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues and then got baptized (Acts 10:44-48). Did not Cornelius’ salvation take place before his baptism? The text clearly states that Cornelius and his family heard the word, believed it, were saved, filled with the spirit, spoke in tongues and then were baptized. None of this should have taken place if the Campbellite doctrine was true.”

Dr. Morey has done what many do when advancing their own pet theory about things. He assumes his doctrine is true and asserts that a particular text teaches it. However, he gave absolutely no attention to what the text actually says. While I am always willing to believe a man will tell me the truth if he knows it, I am not willing to believe what he tells me is the truth if I don’t know it! So, if we accept what Dr. Morey says without investigating the references he cites then shame on us. We all have Bibles and we can read and study and draw conclusions from the Scriptures as well as he can. The burden of proof is on him. The burden of investigation is on each of us.

Let’s read these verses in Acts chapter ten.

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.”

Dr. Morey has cited only that part of the text that he thinks helps his position. The passages he cites do not say that Cornelius was saved at the point of faith before he was baptized in water. As a matter of fact,

Cornelius is nowhere called a believer before his baptism. He is leaving out some important facts that you must consider before you can make a decision about the case of Cornelius.

First, notice in Acts chapter ten and verse six. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Cornelius he commanded him to send to Joppa for Simon Peter who “shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.” When the Apostle Peter recounted this matter to the brethren in Jerusalem he said that the angel told Cornelius, “Call for Simon...who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved” (Acts 11:15). Therefore, it was necessary that Cornelius and those with him hear what Peter had to say in order to be saved. Furthermore, Cornelius and Peter both recognized that obedience to what Peter had to say was absolutely essential. When Peter arrived Cornelius said in Acts chapter ten and verse 33, “Thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” Peter responded to him with these words, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”

I also want to call your attention to Peter’s sermon. Beginning at verse 36 and continuing through verse 43 Peter speaks concerning the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. He also briefly speaks of his own association with Jesus and his place as a chosen witness of Christ who, along with the Eleven, had preached that Jesus was the Messiah of Old Testament promise and prophecy. Now, I call your attention to verse 37. Notice what Peter says of Cornelius’ relation to these facts about Jesus, “He is Lord of all—That word I say ye know.” Peter was preaching to a man that already knew and was convicted by the OT prophets and John that Jesus was the Messiah. This is significant; it indicates that up until verse 43 Peter had not said anything that Cornelius did not know or had not believed. Yet, we know that Peter came to tell Cornelius what he needed to do to be saved.

At this juncture, the gift of the Holy Spirit is poured out directly from heaven upon Cornelius and his house. The believing Jews are astonished by this event because these men were Gentiles (look at verse 45). Up until this moment the Gospel had been preached “to none but unto the Jews only” (Acts 11:26). Peter says later of this miracle that it was a divine witness from heaven that there was no difference between Jews and Gentiles respecting the plan of salvation (Acts 15:7–9). This is exactly where Peter had begun preaching, he had said in verse 34 of chapter ten, “I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.” The outpouring of the Spirit on the Gentiles served the purpose of confirming the rightness of the next action Peter would take.

Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Acts chapter eight and verse 16 establishes beyond doubt that baptism “in the name of the Lord” is water baptism. So that which had not been done before, preaching the Gospel to Gentiles and baptizing those that believed, is now commanded by an Apostle of Jesus Christ with the miraculous sanction of the Holy Spirit. This command to be baptized was the only thing which Cornelius had not heard or known concerning Jesus Christ. It was among those things which God had commanded Peter to speak, which was something that Cornelius ought to do and which would save him and his house. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was neither the means to, nor a sign of Cornelius’ salvation, but, rather, it was a sign to the believing Jews that Gentiles were amenable to the Gospel and subjects for salvation on the same terms as the Jews, by grace through faith which worketh by love (Galatians 5:6). It was in the presence of this miracle that Peter challenged the Jews to withhold water and after which he defended his own actions by saying, “What was I that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11:17).

Dr. Morey is just wrong about Cornelius. He does not say what he asserts and his doctrine based on this text is nothing more than wild assertion and wishful thinking. Cornelius was saved just like every man has ever been saved. He believed and was baptized.

Reason #10: The Thief on the Cross

Dr. Morey continues his artful assumptions and assertions in this next reason. He objects: “The thief on the cross went to heaven without baptism. Since Christ died before the thief died, the thief went to

paradise through the shed blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:14-17). If baptism is essential to go to heaven, how did the thief get there without being baptized?"

Dr. Morey wanders off into deep water here and quickly gets in over his head. He asserts that the thief who was crucified with Jesus died without water baptism (you can read about this in Luke chapter 23 beginning at verse 39). Well, since he said that, let him prove it. He evidently feels he must find someone who was saved without water baptism after Christ was crucified. He needs this one because we have already shown that Cornelius is not the exception to what Jesus, Peter, Paul and the other inspired prophets have said about the necessity of water baptism. He will never be able to prove conclusively that this was the case. This thief was a Jew; he was subject to the law and the prophets. Therefore, he was amenable to John's baptism. And, he may well have had it since all Jerusalem and Judea went out to be baptized of John (John 1:5).

Yet, I am inclined—for the sake of argument—to agree with Dr. Morey that he did not have John's baptism. However, does that prove that he is the exception to the Gospel plan of salvation revealed at Pentecost and expressed in Peter's words, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"? No, indeed not. In the first place, Jesus had the authority on earth to forgive sins (Matthew 9:6). This thief was a penitent, confessing believer; he had acknowledged his own guilt and confessed the innocence of the Son of God as well as recognized him as "the Lord." Jesus chose to pardon this man as a son of Abraham who found salvation in believing on the Messiah (Luke 19:9). He was the last of the lost sheep of the house of Israel that Christ the Good shepherd was able to gather back into the fold. In the second place, this man died before the covenant of Christ was ratified. Jesus did not establish His will until He sent the Apostles forth to preach the Gospel from Jerusalem (Luke 24:44-49). In order for a will to be of force there must be the death of the testator (Hebrews 9:16-17). The Will is not of any force while the will-maker is still alive, but once he is dead then it cannot be changed. Furthermore, in order for a will to be valid it must be read, declared and published. While the will is off force once men are dead, no man can be bound by its terms until they are revealed through the probate process. The thief could not possibly be bound by the terms of Christ's will when he died at Calvary because the command to be baptized for the remission of sins was not given until fifty days later at Pentecost. The thief was never subject to the Gospel plan of salvation.

In order for you to be justified as the thief on the cross, you would have to be the thief. How is his circumstance parallel to the man who has heard the truth on water baptism and refuses to do what Christ says? Does anyone doubt that this man would have obeyed Jesus to whatever extent demanded. He did not resist Christ all his life and wait to the last possible moment and expect Christ to save him contrary to what he already knew and had refused to obey. No there is nothing here in the case of this penitent man that will justify the disobedient.

Reason #11: It's Easier in Wet Weather

Dr. Morey's next objection is this: "The Campbellite doctrine makes salvation dependent upon the availability of water and of a Campbellite. While someone who is alone can believe in Jesus in the desert or at the North Pole, will his salvation be denied because no water for a Campbellite baptism is present?"

This objection is nonsensical and almost unworthy of a reply. However, for fear that some may think we cannot deal with all that Dr. Morey brings forth we will deal with it.

As we have noted before, every argument Dr. Morey makes against water baptism is an argument against the Missionary Baptist Church. Years ago, a Baptist preacher in debate said there were only three things born of water a mosquito, a tad pole and a Campbellite. The brother being quick in wit replied, "Well, a Baptist cannot be born without water and I know that a Baptist is not a Campbellite. So which are you, a mosquito or a tad pole?" As I have said before, if water baptism is no part of the Gospel then the Baptist church is no Gospel church and Baptist preachers are no Gospel preachers. Without water baptism the Baptist church is the most needless and useless institution in existence. As with the fig tree that the Husbandman would have cut down, "Why cumbereth it the earth?"

Just for the sake of it I did a search on the internet of Baptist churches. I found Baptist churches in Iceland and one in Fort Yukon, Alaska called "the Artic Circle Baptist Church." There was even one called "the North Pole Bible Baptist Church." There is a "Desert Gateway Baptist Church" in Gilbert, Arizona and a "Desert Valley Baptist Church" in Apache Junction. There are even Baptist churches in *Kuwait*. It seems to me that ice and sand are no impediment to baptizing folks since the Baptists manage to do it all over the globe. If Dr. Morey's argument proves anything it proves a man can be saved with out faith since we could surely find a hole deep and dark enough to put a man where he could not hear a preacher or read a Bible. This objection is just plain ridiculous.

Reason #12: Confuses Symbol with Reality

Dr. Morey concludes his objections by saying, "The Campbellite doctrine confuses the symbol with what it represents and is based on a superstitious and magical view of baptism. Since the Campbellites admit that the bread and the wine are only symbols of the body and blood of Jesus, then on what grounds do they deny that baptism is only a symbol of salvation?"

Before, I say anything about the objection I call your attention again to Dr. Morey's use of the pejorative term "Campbellite." I only do so in order to remind you that I in no way consider my self to be a "Campbellite," any more than Dr. Morey considers himself a "Smithite" or a "Calvinist". I call him a "Baptist" or "Missionary Baptist" because that is the name by which he desires to be called; he accepts it and is proud of it. I will point out that no one was ever called "a Baptist" in the Bible and that his wearing of the name is without any scriptural authority, but I will call him that because that is what he wants to be called. I would expect him to show me the same courtesy. I am a Christian; this is what the disciples of Christ were called by heaven itself (Acts 11:26). It was Christ that died for me and it was in Christ's name that I was baptized; therefore, as Paul instructs in I Corinthians chapter one and verse 13, it is Christ's name that I should wear. This is what I desire to be called, and good manners and common sense dictate that is what I should be called.

Now, why do I deny that baptism is a symbol of salvation when I admit that the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus? In the first place, when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper His body and blood had not actually been given for the remission of sins. Therefore, the elements to which He referred could not be his body and blood since He was actually standing there in His flesh. Furthermore, the context of the words of institution makes it clear that Jesus did not mean that the bread was His actual body or that the cup was his actual blood. Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me." The bread and the cup are intended to act a memorial of Christ's death. Finally, when Paul instructed the Corinthians concerning the Supper in the eleventh chapter of his first letter to that church, he said that by participating in the Supper we "show the Lord's death till He come." That is, we declare or preach the power and significance of His death at Calvary with a confident conviction that He was raised from the dead and will return again. The Lord's Supper is not a cannibalistic ritual; it is a faith practice that reminds and encourages Christians with respect to their salvation.

What Dr. Morey needs to find is a passage that says, "Be baptized to show the Lord's salvation." He needs a text that says water baptism is performed "in remembrance of remission of sins." He also needs to find passages that say, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, cannot be damned;" and "for this cause many are not weak and sickly among you and many are awake." You see, Dr. Morey's no obedience position denies the necessity of obeying this command to keep the Lord's Supper and the possibility of bringing condemnation upon oneself when he does so. He doesn't have an argument here.

The Bible says we ARE baptized into Christ, into the ONE BODY by the Holy Spirit of Christ (Romans 6:3 and 4; I Corinthians 12:13). It does not say it is done symbolically in baptism after it is accomplished actually at the point of faith.

The Last Word

Well, if you have read this far you are sincerely concerned about doing what pleases God. I am truly thankful for you and the fine heart you have displayed. I hope that you will continue to study and always do what God wants. If you think I have missed the point somewhere let me hear from you. If you think there are other objections that ought to be considered, send them my way, I will gladly study whatever others are willing to share. If you like so many others have come to see the empty character of the arguments against baptism for the remission of sins I urge you to arise and be baptized and wash away your sins calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16).

May God richly bless and keep you always in the doing of His will.