

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Lucado's Views of the Place of Baptism in Salvation

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Max Lucado has become famous as a “Christian writer” among millions of readers. While working as a minister of the Oak Hills church of Christ in San Antonio, Texas, his books have hit the best sellers list consistently in recent years. He has been called to Washington for a healing prayer breakfast during the dark days of President Clinton’s personal sins. He was also called to the White House for emergency prayer sessions following the events of September 11 of last year. Crossing denominational lines in popularity has caused him to stand out among members of the church of Christ. He has been praised, and he has been criticized.

One area of controversy surrounding Max Lucado is his views of where baptism fits in God’s plan for our salvation. In a recent interview with The Christian Chronicle’s Scott Lamascus he conveyed his thoughts about baptism. When asked, “What do you teach and believe regarding central beliefs such as baptism”, he DID NOT respond by saying that baptism is essential to salvation (Mark 16:15-16, Acts 2:38, 22:16, I Peter 3:21, etc.). His first

response is, “I believe that baptism is essential for obedience.” He does not mind stressing, “there is no example of an unbaptized member of the New Testament church”; and “in baptism the believer is identified with the righteous life of Jesus—buried with him, risen with him.” He unashamedly testifies that “baptism is sacred” and “We’ve baptized over a hundred souls a year at Oak Hills for several years”.

You might walk away thinking that since obedience is necessary for salvation (Heb. 5:9), he believes that one must be baptized in order to be saved. But you will never hear those words coming from his mouth. Instead you hear, “With the exception of the thief on the cross, Scripture provides us no example of an unbaptized heaven-bound soul.” Appealing to the thief on the cross he sees his conversion “forcing us to trust the work of Christ, not the work of baptism.”

We do not hear a definitive answer such as I teach and believe what Jesus said, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...” (Mark 16:16), but we hear words that we have heard

over the years from denominational preachers who definitely believe and teach that baptism is NOT essential to salvation.

He does not upset those who teach “faith only” for salvation when he states, “baptism is the initial and immediate step of obedience and worship by one who has declared his /her faith to others”. For they see salvation beginning with their trust in Jesus as Saviour, and the first step of obedience as a saved person is baptism. Now you know what Max may mean by “obedience”. It is not obedience to baptism in order to be saved, but obedience of one who looks upon baptism as an act of worship.

Max Lucado strongly resists “any effort to trust the act of baptism to save”. Yet, Peter looks at baptism as saving us, not disconnected from Christ, but based upon His resurrection. (I Peter 3:21). What he hear from Max Lucado is every argument and concern that has been given by those who do not believe baptism is essential to salvation. He offers his views without appealing to any distinctive Scripture. Beware of such men!