

# GLAD TIDINGS

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

Vol. XI

August 11, 2002

No. 31

## TRUTH FITS

By: Jerry Fite

There is an important difference between merely giving an answer to religious questions and giving an answer that fits with all Scripture. The former may reflect merely human wisdom, while the latter will always manifest respect for the mind and wisdom of God. For example, some present Jesus as one who was tolerant of other's beliefs and practices. Yet, when we examine the Scriptures, we see that Jesus was not willing to accept any other belief that advocated a way other than Himself to the Father (John 14:6). He condemned idle words, hypocrisy, the breaking of the least of God's commandments, or all forms of sin (Matthew 12:36-37, 23:1-33, 5:19, John 8:11).

Some ask questions that seem to reflect a lack of understanding of how truth fits with Scripture. This lack of understanding is often seen in questions concerning the necessity of being baptized in order to be saved. Recently one argued that if baptism saves us, “Why did Jesus have to die?”. One might turn the question around and ask the inquirer, “If faith saves us, why

did Jesus have to die?”.

Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead so that we could be justified from our sins (Romans 4:25). Without Jesus' death and resurrection, we could not be saved (I Corinthians 15:17). While Jesus is the basis for our salvation, His death and resurrection does not rule out the necessity of a proper response on our part in order to be saved.

Peter, in his first gospel sermon, exhorted his hearers to “Save yourselves from this crooked generation” (Acts 2:40). He had just answered their question of “what shall we do”, by instructing them to “repent and be baptized” (Acts 2:38). Peter had preached the death and resurrection of Jesus. Was he now tearing these saving acts of Jesus down before believers by commanding repentance and baptism? Certainly not. Jesus is the basis for our salvation, but one must respond with faith, confession, repentance and baptism in order to have one's sins removed and be saved (Romans 10:9-10, Acts 3:19, Acts 22:16).

An assertion which reflects

the lack of understanding of how truth fits with Scripture is, “You believe in ‘water salvation’ if you believe that baptism is essential to our salvation.”. Again, we call upon the inspired apostle Peter to show how baptism in water fits with our salvation. Peter, connecting the likeness of the flood waters in Noah's day writes, “which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism...”. This saving response on our part is not based upon belief in some magical powers of water but “... through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 3:21).

Again, there is no contradiction between Jesus having to die and be raised from the dead, and the necessity for being baptized in order to be saved. The former is the necessary *basis* for our salvation, and the latter is the necessary *response* towards salvation. The above questions seem to manifest a lack of understanding of the relationship of these truths. Both, Jesus' death and being baptized for the remission of sins are necessary truths that fit with one another, and more importantly, fit with Scripture.