

# GLAD TIDINGS

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

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## FAITH IN THE WORKING OF GOD

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Being saved from our sins involves more than a single element. If we say we are saved by “grace” only, we leave out the fact that we are saved by grace “through faith” (Ephesians 2:8). Likewise, if we say we are saved by “faith” only, we ignore the fact that “remission of sins” takes place after faith moves us to “repentance” and “baptism” (Acts 2:38). Faced with the truth of the Scripture, some will acquiesce and acknowledge the connection of grace, faith and repentance. But connecting baptism with these saving elements is still foreign to their thinking.

Paul connects saving faith with the act of being baptized into Christ: “In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead” (Colossians 2:11-12).

Paul reminds his readers that being baptized, we manifest

faith in the working of God, who raised Jesus from the dead. Being buried in water and raised up again, what meaning would we connect with this action if we did not believe Christ died for our sins and was raised by the power of God for our justification (Romans 4:25)? Saving faith finds expression in baptism, as we desire to be “buried with Christ” into the benefits of Christ’s blood and then “raised with Him” to enjoy blessings of a new life (cf. Romans 6:3-4, 17).

Some who believe that baptism into Christ is essential for salvation are putting a new twist upon Colossians 2:12, as to what we are to believe as we are being baptized. Bob Beard, in a recent issue of *Contending for the Faith*, writes, “When one is under the water of baptism for remission of his sins, he there receives an operation or working of God whereby he is ‘raised with’ Christ”.

This author assumes the working or operation of God as the work the Lord does by giving the baptized believer the indwelling of the Holy Spirit so he or she can be raised alive with Christ. This is what he means by “he there

receives an operation and working of God...” This is a fanciful assumption which ignores the context of Paul’s inspired writing. Paul clearly connects the working of God with raising Jesus from the dead, not operating on a person’s heart with a baptism of the Holy Spirit. God’s work in raising Jesus from the dead is what we believe through the gospel message, not what we receive while under the waters of baptism.

If the working of God in baptism is the giving of the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, does not Paul’s statement also demand that we believe in this work? Remember, In baptism we “are raised with him through faith in the working of God...” (Colossians 2:12). The logical consequence of Bob Beard’s position, is that all believers being baptized must believe that God is working on their hearts with the baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to be raised with Christ. Will all baptized believers who believed that the working of God was raising Jesus from the dead, need now to be re-baptized because of Beard’s new-found truth?