

-----Original Message-----

From: JIM DILLON [mailto:jimd407@worldnet.att.net]

Sent: Thursday, May 27, 1999 6:55 PM

To: Bill Blue

Subject: John 3:16

Could you possible give me the quotation for the above scripture.

Many Thanks.

Regards Jim

Reply to: Jim Dillon
From: Bill Blue
Date: **June 28, 1999**

Dear Jim,

Thank you for your email. If you have no objection, I would like to post your message and my reply on my web site.

You wrote:

Could you possible give me the quotation for the above scripture [John 3:16]?

Please correct me if I am wrong, but I assume from your question that you may question the necessity of baptism in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38, 22:16) and salvation (Mark 16:16, 1 Peter 3:21) because of John 3:16 which states:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

You have probably heard that faith, and faith alone, save us. Personally, I do not believe that this is true. The Bible says many things save you and I believe that they are all necessary. I do not believe I can simply choose the passage(s) or commandment(s) that I like, but must do all of the things commanded. In other words, I must COMPLETELY obey God in ALL things.

For example, obviously grace saves us (Ephesians 2:5), so does faith (John 3:16), and so does baptism (1 Peter 3:21). I believe that we cannot take advantage of God's grace unless we do all of the things God commands, to wit: hear (Rom. 10:14, 17), believe (Rom. 10:9-10, 13), confess (Rom. 10:9-10, 13), repent (Acts 2:38), be baptized (Mark 16:16) and continue to obey (Matt. 7:21; 1 Cor. 9:27, 10:12; Heb. 6:6; Acts 8:5-24). The Bible mentions many other things that also save us (*e.g.*, endurance Matt. 10:22, hope Rom. 8:24,

confession Rom. 10:9, etc.). The question becomes which passage(s) may we ignore or leave out (Rev. 22:18-19)? Personally, I know of none that we may ignore or leave out.

Is baptism necessary for salvation? I believe that the Bible says yes. Jesus said, **“He who believes and is baptized will be saved”** (Mark 16:16). Examine the context of John 3:16, within the same conversation that verse 16 is a part of, Jesus says, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3).”** How are we born again? Jesus, again, says **“Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5).”**

I have heard many arguments about how to interpret “water and the Spirit” and I am convinced that it is referring to voluntary submission to water baptism. This is how Peter says we receive the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and salvation (1 Peter 3:21, “an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism”).

I am reminded of the story of Naaman (2 Kings 5) who questioned the necessity of dipping seven times in the muddy Jordan River (v. 12). Logic and reason told Naaman that the rivers in Syria were much cleaner than the Jordan (v. 12). However, he wasn't cleansed of his leprosy until he dipped seven times in the Jordan as God commanded (v. 14). Similarly, you and I will not be cleansed of our sins until we obey God and are immersed for the remission of sins!

Baptism in water is important because without immersion into water, we do not come into contact with the blood of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4). Do you take the Lord's Supper? If so, why? Because it is commanded (1 Cor. 11:23-29; Acts 20:7; Matt. 26:26-29), and because it symbolizes the fact that Christ is our passover (1 Cor. 5:7), and like the passover lamb of the Old Testament, we are to “eat” or share in the body of the lamb that was slain for us (Matt. 26:26-29). Now obviously when we eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine, they are not the real body and blood of Christ; there is no Catholic transubstantiation. We do remember the memorial each week, however, because it is commanded, because it is a memorial, because of its symbolic significance, and because it is a public sign of faith. Similarly, baptism is commanded (Mark 16:16). Baptism symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-5). Baptism is a public act or work of faith that SAVES US (1 Peter 3:21). Baptism is how we “put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27), and how our sins are first forgiven (Acts 2:38; Cf. 1 Cor. 6:11) because it is how we come into contact, symbolically, with the blood of Christ by sharing in His death (Rom. 6:3-4; Cf. Rev. 1:5).

The importance of the blood of Christ to the scheme of redemption should not be overlooked. Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:2). The blood of Christ reconciles us (bring us back), both Jew and Gentile together, to God (Eph. 2:13-16). Sin makes us enemies of God (Rom. 5:10; James 4:4) and the blood of Christ reconciles us (Rom. 5:9), and brings peace between us and God (Col. 1:20). Sin enslaves us (Rom. 6:17) and the blood of Christ redeems us, or buys us back to God (1 Pet. 1:18-19). All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:10), but the blood of Christ cleanses us (Rev. 7:13-14). Whoever sins is guilty of violating God's laws (1 John 3:4), but the blood of Christ justifies (or acquits) us (Rom. 5:9; see also James 2:24). Sin brings eternal death (Rom. 6:23) and the blood of Christ provides us with a propitiation or covering (Rom. 3:25), He literally died

for us (Heb. 2:9; 1 John 4:10)! “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission” of sins (Heb. 9:22).

Today, we can only encounter the blood of Christ in the way He commanded—baptism (Mark 16:16). For only as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27). In baptism we share in the likeness of Christ’s crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-7; Gal. 2:20). In baptism we are freed (NKJV), acquitted (notes to the NASV), or justified (Darby) of our sins (Rom. 6:7) which are then “washed away” (Acts 22:16) since we have received the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

I have also attached to this message an exchange between Brian Harns and myself which I have responded to just today (I do not know who Mr. Harns is other than someone interested in discussing the necessity of baptism). In this exchange, Mr. Harns and I discuss the following topics:

- ◆ The necessity of water baptism
- ◆ The thief on the cross and the sick man
- ◆ The baptism of John the Baptist
- ◆ The necessity of being baptized for the right reasons
- ◆ The significance of water baptism
- ◆ The importance of blood in the plan of salvation
- ◆ Martin Luther
- ◆ Justification by faith apart from works, and
- ◆ The baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Thanks again for writing. I appreciate your willingness to study and discuss spiritual matters. I hope I have not offended you with any of my comments. I do hope that you will examine what I have said as well as the Scriptures I have cited. Again, focus your attention on the Scriptures themselves and not the hypothetical arguments and logical paradigms of self-important men. “Remember God has made foolish the wisdom of this world” (1 Cor. 1:20). Therefore, we can not rely on men and their wisdom, but must seek the truth in the Bible. Also, do not be like Naaman and judge what you read by what you already believe. Remember, “the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jer. 10:23).

Thanks again. I sincerely hope that a study of God’s word will convince you that baptism is necessary for the remission of sins and salvation.

Sincerely,

William W. Blue william_blue@hotmail.com
<http://www.bibleweb.com>