

Form of Doctrine

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth...” - - - Romans 10:9

Confess WHAT?

Context consists of:

- 1) WHO is speaking
- 2) TO WHOM is being spoke to
- 3) WHAT is being spoke about

The importance of understanding "TO WHOM" ~ #2 above, is seen from the Bible teaching on "CONFESSION", as this relates to "calling on the name of the Lord".

Most all preachers in denominationalism tells sinners to confess their SINS. A text often cited in support of confession of sins is Romans 10:10, 13 which says, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

The mistake made in using Romans 10, is a MIS-use of "TO WHOM" is being addressed in this context.

This epistle was written to Christians, not sinners (see Romans 1:7).

Also, the confession that is to be made is clear from the text, for in verse 9 we read, “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.”

Another text that is cited for support of confession of sins is 1 John 1:9 – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Please take note again, this passage is written to Christians; NOT sinners! (see 1 John 2:1, 18, 28; 3:1, 18; 4:1, 7, 13-21)

The New Testament epistles were written to those who already had “called upon the name of the Lord”. [These examples are recorded in the book of Acts].

We learn from the book of Acts what was CONFESSED by ALIEN SINNERS. It was NOT a confession of their sins, or anything about themselves.

Take, for example, the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26-40. His confession is clear. The eunuch (a sinner) wanted to be immersed in water; Phillip told him that something needed to be done BEFORE he could be immersed. He had to CONFESS something, but not about himself; he had to confess something about JESUS. What was it?

His confession about Jesus was what the apostle Peter told the Jews on the day of Pentecost; namely that God “hath made Him both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36 – “...therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”)

Accordingly, we find in Acts 8:37 this confession from the eunuch, “...I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

This confession that the eunuch needed to state about Jesus could NOT be confessed PRIOR to Jesus’ being raised from the dead, for He was neither “Lord” nor “Christ” prior to his resurrection.

This is why those examples of sinners being saved prior to Jesus’ resurrection are NOT applicable today. For example, Jesus spoke forgiveness to many while He was on earth: The crippled man – Luke 5:16-24 – “Man thy sins are forgiven thee” – v. 20
FORGIVENESS WAS MERELY SPOKEN

The sinner woman who anointed His feet – Luke 7:36-50 – “Thy sins are forgiven” v. 48
FORGIVENESS WAS MERELY SPOKEN

The thief on the cross – Luke 23:43 – “Today thou shalt be with me in paradise” Again,
FORGIVENESS WAS MERELY SPOKEN

All these people were sinners; they were physically healed of infirmities and they had their sins forgiven by being ‘spoken’ away.

But these instances were PRIOR to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus! What about NOW? Is this how people are saved TODAY?

Had God’s eternal purpose been accomplished BEFORE Jesus shed His blood?

None of these 3 could believe and confess what Paul stated in Romans 10:9-10, “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.”

WHY NOT???

Because Jesus had not even been put to death at this time, much less raised from the dead. We cannot look to any example PRIOR to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ for our example of how to be saved TODAY.

A sinner is not to confess in regard to himself that he is a sinner; rather, he is to acknowledge with his mouth, his conviction that God hath made Jesus both Lord and Christ.

He must acknowledge that, Jesus possesses ALL authority, (i.e. that He has the right to command us how to live our lives). As Jesus had taught, don't call Him 'Lord' and NOT do what He said (Luke 6:46).

If we love Him, “keep” (obey) His commands (John 14:15).

The commands that Jesus meant for those who desire His saving blood to be applied to their sins, are the same commands that He gave to the apostles shortly before His ascension. They are recorded in Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; and Luke 24:44-47.

It was these commands that the apostle was referring to when he mentioned a ‘form of doctrine’ that must be preached to AND be obeyed, by the sinner in order to reach Christ's blood, now that it has been shed.

Accordingly, we read: Romans 6:17-18 – “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

So we have the form of doctrine found in Matt. 28; Mark 16; and Luke 24

Peter's sermon in Acts 2 reflects what is to be believed, and confessed NOW.

Acts 2:32 – “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.”

Acts 2:36 – “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ.”

Neither of these things could be believed or confessed of Jesus by the sinner woman, the crippled man, nor the thief on the cross.

The book of Acts contains the ‘form of doctrine’ that preachers must preach today to sinners in regard to HOW they can be saved.

In each recorded case of conversion, following belief, repentance, and confession of their faith in Jesus, each sinner was commanded to be baptized in water FOR remission, NOT because they were already saved, as is erroneously preached today.

Acts 2:38 – repent & be baptized;

Acts 3:19 – repent & be converted; Mark 16:16 – believe & be baptized;

Acts 22:16 – arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord;

1 Peter 3:21 – the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...

All are consistent in showing that baptism in water is a part of this form of doctrine; and that baptism precedes forgiveness.