Not*

Genesis 2:15-17 (15) And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.
(16) And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:
(17) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.
*"Thou shalt **not** eat of it," was a simple command, eat this, **not** that. However the forbidden fruit was determined by humans, to be good for food. But was it a healthy choice?? Let's consider;*
The "Not" in the Devil's Tale by Dave Miller, Ph.D.
Someone coined the title of this article many years ago. They were referring, of course, to the incident recorded in Genesis chapter three where Satan coaxed Eve into eating the forbidden fruit by assuring her that if she were to do so, she would become like God (3:5). Though God had previously informed her through her husband that "in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (2:17), Satan boldly disputed such a directive by inserting the word "not" in the very same statement: "You will **not** surely die" (3:4). He took precisely the same sentence that God Himself had uttered, and simply inserted the three-letter word "not."

Contemplate the gall of Satan. Ponder the absolute audacity of the devil in his willingness to pervert the Word of God by the simple insertion of such a small, seemingly insignificant word. Yet that simple three-letter insertion into the sentence articulated by God completely reversed the truth of the matter. It made it appear as if the truth was the exact opposite of what God had actually said. It countermanded God's Word on the matter and set in its place a falsehood that was in diametric opposition to God's will.

Besides the devil, who would dare to do such a dastardly

deed? Surely not those who claim to be Christians! Surely not preachers and teachers of the Bible! Surely, only those who deny the Bible, who reject it as uninspired and a mere concoction of humans, would so tamper with God's Word as to negate a positive, unambiguous declaration of Scripture. Yet God did warn that even from among Christians would arise those who would distort, deny, and push aside His instructions. Jesus Himself warned: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Peter agreed: "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies…" (2 Peter 2:1). John added his voice of caution: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). Paul claimed that even from among church officials, some would rise up and speak misleading things (Acts 20).

In view of these forthright words of warning and anticipation, one cannot help but be utterly amazed, even shocked, that so many who claim to be Christian have rejected the God-ordained role of water baptism in His redemptive scheme. The "faith only" perspective that was expounded during the Protestant Reformation, and has since permeated Christendom, displaced water baptism from its divinely assigned position. Rather than being the line of demarcation between the sinner and the saint, as the New Testament everywhere affirms, baptism has been relegated to an after-the-fact symbol—a post-conversion "outward expression" of the forgiveness previously achieved at the point of faith.

Though many New Testament verses expound the proper role of water immersion as intended by God, thereby weaving a consistent and harmonious picture throughout inspired Writ, but one is sufficient to demonstrate the absurd lengths to which so many theologians have gone to discount the biblical

treatment of baptism: 1 Peter 3:21. In this verse, Peter announced very simply: “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us” (KJV, emp. added). The ASV words it: “which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism.” The NKJV has it: “There is also now an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism.” The NASB words it: “And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you.”

What have the majority of commentators, theologians, and church authorities done with this verse? They have danced, twisted, and turned in every direction to evade the unambiguous import of the verse. Since they previously embraced a false theory of salvation—i.e., salvation by “faith alone” without any further acts of obedience on the part of the believer—they have had to engage in interpretive gymnastics and hocus-pocus to avoid the force of these verses that pinpoint the place of water baptism. In short, they have been pressured into doing precisely what Satan did in his discourse with Eve. They have had to take a very straightforward, unmistakable statement by the apostle Peter and insert the same three-letter word that Satan himself inserted: “not.” “Baptism doth also now not save us;” “There is also now an antitype which now does not save us, namely baptism;” “And corresponding to that, baptism now does not save you.” The gall and unmitigated audacity that accompanies such tampering with Scripture will surely be shown in eternity to be no different from the ploy of Satan himself. ***(Apologetics Press)***}

*“Not" is a small, unnoticeable word when coming from a deviating mouth. But it can cause ruinous damage. It would be acquainted with wearing a T shirt wrong-side out, but the wearer is emphatic it is right. Satan himself used this word in the beginning and even now his ministers continue to use "**not**" with a predetermined disastrous outcome. The false claims, The flood of Noah was "**not**" a world wide flood. The Bible does "**not**" condemn homosexuality. Jesus Christ was "**not**" a real person. Baptism is "**not**" necessary to be saved.* Be

sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (1Peter 5;8). *His tool of preference is the usage of "**NOT**" in opposition to God. **S**atan used 'not' inappropriately. Our Lord used 'not' appropriately, turn with me to;*

John 8:42-47 (42) Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.
(43) Why do ye **not** understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.
(44) Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode **not** in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.
(45) And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me **not**.
(46) Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye **not** believe me?
(47) He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them **not**, because ye are **not** of God.

*With this scriptural conditioning, let us prepare ourselves for the next onslaught of the devil's "**not**" of opposition. I want to direct you to a portion of an article attacking a vital position of Jesus Christ and his Church. Under attack is the ordinance of baptism established by Jesus Christ and we must respond by the word of God. Ones salvation could very well be in the balance.*

From an article titled; **Churches of Christ** by Tal Davis
{BAPTISM: Churches of Christ teach that baptism by immersion for believers is essential for the remission of sins and is necessary for salvation. They interpret passages such as Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 to substantiate this teaching. Baptism has a threefold purpose (1) it is necessary for salvation; (2) it places one in Christ; and (3) it places one in the church.
RESPONSE *(by Mr. Davis)***:** While baptism is important it is **not**

necessary for salvation. The biblical passages quoted by the Churches of Christ to argue for the necessity of water baptism do **not** prove their point.
Mark 16:16 "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." (NIV)
Contrary to the claims of the Churches of Christ this passage does **not** prove the necessity of water baptism. There are four possible relationships between belief and baptism. One could both believe and be baptized. We are told in the first part of verse 16 that this person will be saved. Second, one could believe and **not** be baptized. This possibility is **not** discussed in the passage so we cannot draw any conclusions about whether such an individual will be saved or lost. A third possibility is that one could **not** believe but be baptized. Fourth, one could both **not** believe and **not** be baptized. According to verse 16, one who does **not** believe is condemned whether he is baptized or **not**.**}**
*One **cannot** be baptized in the sense attached to it by the Spirit of God if he does **not** believe, and is therefore condemned already.*
John said; He that saith, I know him, and keepeth **not** his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is **not** in him (1John 2:4).
Who are satan's ministers but people whom he has corrupted?? This is he who has falsely accused the teaching of Christ and terrorized His Church falsely from its beginning. Responding to this false witness is an eternal decision that concerns you!
Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, (Hebrews 12:2). *There is a great cloud of witnesses, both righteous and false. The false put up a cloud of deceit, it may be no more than an "inserted not," in the devil's tale. There is an analogy "going to hell in a handbasket," is **not** this the destination for "he that rejoyeth*

in the devil's tale? The devil may convince some they are "enjoying the ride," but the end will be shocking. One should be like Moses, Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; (Heb 11:25). *To begin this quest of affliction, Mark 16:16 should be remembered as words spoken by Jesus Christ our saviour. He is the author and finisher of our faith,* ***not*** *the devil's tale. If one is to benefit from His authorship of faith, then one must be obedient to that faith. Christ did say,* "Keep my commandments." *Whether Christ is accepted as the finisher of your faith or* ***not****, is dependent on your keeping His commandments. Jesus gave Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven. But if unused, the door will* ***not*** *open, Turn to;*
Mark 16:14-16 (14) Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.
(15) And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.
(16) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.
Jesus used that powerful little word "not", but it was used to give warning of impending doom for the unbeliever. He wanted His audience to be aware that if one does not believe His salvation message, then one shall be damned. Mr. Davis added an additional alternative to the words of Jesus in Mark 16:16 that in fact made his point pointless. His counsel is reminiscent of Balaam's counsel that caused the Israelites to err. Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD (Numbers 31:16). *Could an unauthorized "not" be threatening? Yes it could;* Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar (Pro 30:6).
All liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with

fire and brimstone. The added alternative given by Mr. Davis needing rebuttal is, **{**one could believe and not be baptized, this possibilty is not discussed in the passage so we cannot draw any conclusions about whether such an individual will be saved or lost.**}** ***Yes we can!*** *To say we cannot draw any conclusions is false usage of language and misunderstanding of scripture. Now notice what Jesus actually said,* "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." *Proper usage of language disallows an alternative opinion because the conclusion of the matter has already been stated by Jesus. When Jesus gives a command, His command cannot be altered. Why? Because;* Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation (2Pe1:20). *So when Jesus says,* "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," *that prophecy of spiritual dwelling does* ***not*** *allow for any other alternative, Mr. Davis. And to whom would the altering affect? Both the perpetrator and the victim, going to hell in a handbasket.*

Tertullian [A.D. 145-220]: Is Baptism Necessary for Salvation?

But the heretics provoke further questions. They say, "Baptism is not necessary for those to whom faith is sufficient. After all, Abraham pleased God by a sacrament of faith, not water." But in all cases it is the *later* things that have conclusive force. The later [revelation of God] prevails over the earlier. Granted, in former days there was salvation by bare faith, before the suffering and resurrection of the Lord. But now faith has been enlarged, and has become a faith that believes in his birth, suffering, and resurrection. So the ordinance [of faith] has been amplified by the addition of the sealing act of baptism.

Tertullian (204 A.D.) wrote: "The church of Christ composed of baptized believers, does meet each Lord's day to partake of the Lord's Supper."

Is "baptism is not necessary" a doctrine of heretics? Yes it is. From the beginning, through the ages and continuing to our

present time God has used that little word "not" for our benefit, for our good, for our learning, so we can be pleasing to him. Turn to;
Genesis 2:16-17 (16) And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: (17) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt **not** eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.
*However not much time had elapsed until sorrow and tragedy struck Adam and Eve, their beloved son Abel was murdered by his brother Cain. One must wonder what was on the minds of Adam and Eve at this point of their lives. Were they thinking, if only I had **not** eaten of the forbidden fruit. If only I had obeyed God this would **not** have happened.*
*Eventually mankind became so wicked that it repented God that he had created man. Does it not seem strange that only eight righteous souls were found when Noah and his family were the sum total that were saved by water, (1Peter 3:20). Do you hear Noah crying out to the lost, A FLOOD IS COMING! Do you hear man's reply, it is NOT! Jesus is crying out, "*he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"! *I hear man's reply, "baptism doth **not** save"! God has stated "**not**" commands, it is our reasonable service to obey them. Turn your Bibles to Exodus chapter 20.*
Exodus 20:14 Thou shalt **not** commit adultery. *This certainly is a simple command and is logical and reasonable. But sometimes a man is not logical or reasonable. Still God required this "not" command because; "*He that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (1Cor 6:18).
Exodus 20:13 Thou shalt **not** kill. *This command is logical, reasonable and against carnal law for good reason. It's for the protection of every man's life, and; "*ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1John 3:15).
Exodus 20:15 Thou shalt **not** steal. *This "not" command is a logical, reasonable request for protection of life and goods.*

"Let him that stole steal no more"(Ephesians 4:28).
Exodus 20:16 Thou shalt **not** bear false witness against thy neighbour. *A false witness is a liar and,* "all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev 21:8).
Exodus 20:17 Thou shalt **not** covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt **not** covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. *To covet is to greedily want what belong to another.* But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; (Ephesians 5:3).
Now turn your Bibles to;
Romans 13:9 For this, Thou shalt **not** commit adultery, Thou shalt **not** kill, Thou shalt **not** steal, Thou shalt **not** bear false witness, Thou shalt **not** covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
We are God's creation and he places not's in our pathway as stepping stones for our journey. As long as we take advantage of our Father's pathway of not's we are stepping safely. Stepping off God's pathway of 'not's' is not an option. Visualize God's "not's" as rungs of a ladder. Grasp tightly, there is only one way and that is up. However be skeptical of satan's "not's", they are as broken rungs in the ladder, leaving nothing to grasp on too leaving only one way to go, and it burns, burns burns, the ring of fire. But if one believes in the words of the Saviour, he will pick up his cross and follow Jesus to His death. How is this accomplished? Turn with me to;
Romans 6:3-6 (3) Know ye **not**, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
(4) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

(5) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:
(6) Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.
Why would anyone insert the "not in the devils tale" and deny baptism? It simply does not make sense to talk oneself out of salvation in Christ Jesus as revealed in;
Galatians 3:26-29 (26) For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
(27) For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
(28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.
(29) And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
Did you notice, it is not by faith until baptized into Christ. Because of the peerless value of the death of the Lord, God is offering to all the blessings of salvation on a grace basis by faith in Christ. What is faith? Faith in Christ is the effect of belief, and baptism is the effect of that faith (Mark 16:16). Therefore, those who have believed the testimony of God, and by faith repent of their sins, and by faith confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and by faith are baptized into His death, have the full and explicit testimony of pardon. This is the gospel. There is an old song we love to sing, "O why not tonight." I ask "why not now." The invitation is open now, as is prayer for other reasons, in either case come while we persuade with song.

This message approved by
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a minister for Christ

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