

**A CRITIQUE of Thomas D. Ross's "Heaven only for the Baptized?"  
By Bart Masiero, bondservant of the Lord Jesus Christ**

**Part I**

In the summer of 2007, after listening to the March 2005 debate between Thomas Ross and Brother Larry Hafley on the proposition, "The Scriptures teach that Salvation is by Grace through Faith alone, before and without water baptism" being affirmed by Mr. Ross, my Spirit was disturbed. I spent several months preparing material on the positions taught by Mr. Ross which are false, and presented this material to two men I respect highly as students of the Word (Mark Mayberry and Michael Wallace). I stated my desire to debate Mr. Ross and they suggested a written format. I sent a letter to Mr. Ross expressing this desire, and he wrote me back, offering the website where his soon to be published book can be found. He said I could critique his book and if he thought it worthy of attention, he would respond as he had time. (Hopefully it's worthy of his attention and hopefully he has time!) This may be as close as we get to a written debate, but the difference in format may be more "perceived" than of any real significance. (In plain terms -- "it may not make any difference!". But we'll see as we proceed along.) I will be copying in a list of Gospel Preachers and other faithful brethren as I send the critique over email to Mr. Ross. I am a member of the Adoue St. Church of Christ in Alvin Texas.

In reading the first part of Mr. Ross' book "Heaven only for the Baptized?", and consistent with his positions spelled out in the debate, he begins by addressing several areas of the Faith where he is in error - such as: baptism is not essential unto salvation (of course -- thus the proposition), that infants are born sinful, an incorrect interpretation of what it means to be "drawn by God", repentance and belief are two sides of the same coin - and this just from the first few pages. It is my intention to take each page and, if Biblical error is present, offer critique and expose the error in an effort to curtail the influence this book might have on the unsuspecting. I find it ironic that within the proposition itself (as well as the exact name of the file where this book is stored online) is the phrase: "Faith Alone Saves". Just as James 2.24 says *exactly the opposite* ("you see that a man is justified by works and NOT by faith alone"), so is Mr. Ross' doctrine concerning baptismal regeneration. Mr. Ross says "baptism does NOT save you", but the Word of God says "Baptism does NOW save you" in 1 Peter 3:21. As Larry Hafley so ably pointed out in the debate - the difference of just one letter ("NOT" vs. "NOW") could be the difference of life and death if the uninitiated are not re-directed from this man's error toward the Truth of the Gospel. Such is the purpose of this critique, and may the Lord Jesus Christ give direction and Divine Guidance throughout the process.

**CRITIQUE:**

On page 5 of this book, Mr. Ross says, with Romans 5:12-19 as reference: "when the father of humanity sinned, we all sinned" -- thereby teaching original sin. His full quote is:

"...for that all have sinned (Romans 5:12), so that by 'the offense of [Adam] many be dead,' and 'judgment was [upon all] by [Adam] to condemnation...by one man's offence death reigned by one...by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to

condemnation...by one man's disobedience many were made sinners (Romans 5:13-19).  
When the father of humanity sinned, we all sinned."

Answer: We should wonder, first of all, why doesn't Mr. Ross quote 5:12-19 *in its entirety*?!  
This sleight of hand can easily be seen by comparing what he has cited to the full context of what is happening in these verses. In 5:18:

Paragraph by Mr. Ross:

"by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation...by one man's disobedience many were made sinners (Romans 5:13-19)."

THE WORD OF GOD:

"By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Rom. 5:18, 19)

Now remember, he is trying to prove that "we all sinned" when Adam sinned, and to prove his thesis, he quoted *ellipses* ("...") after the first part of v. 18 - RATHER THAN THE REST OF THE VERSE! And it is no wonder because if one were to read the rest of v. 18 rather than the ellipses provided by Mr. Ross, his argument would be completely destroyed. Namely - if "all men" are condemned by Adam, as Ross would have us believe - *then why aren't "all men" made righteous by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the same manner?* If Rom. 5:18 proves universal inherited sin, it also proves universal salvation on the same basis.

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At the top of page 5, Ross says "Furthermore, we enter the world with a sinful nature" and quotes Psalm 51:5. To his credit, he quotes out of the KJV rather than the NIV, where the Calvinistic slant is unmistakable. Notice the difference:

KJV: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

NIV: "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."

Answer: Of course this speech is figurative, the same as seen a few verses later in 51:7: "wash me and I shall be whiter than snow", and 51:8 "let the bones which you have broken rejoice". Of course, both OT and NT have a good amount of figurative speech.

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