




HAVE YOU BEEN
Zwinglianized?



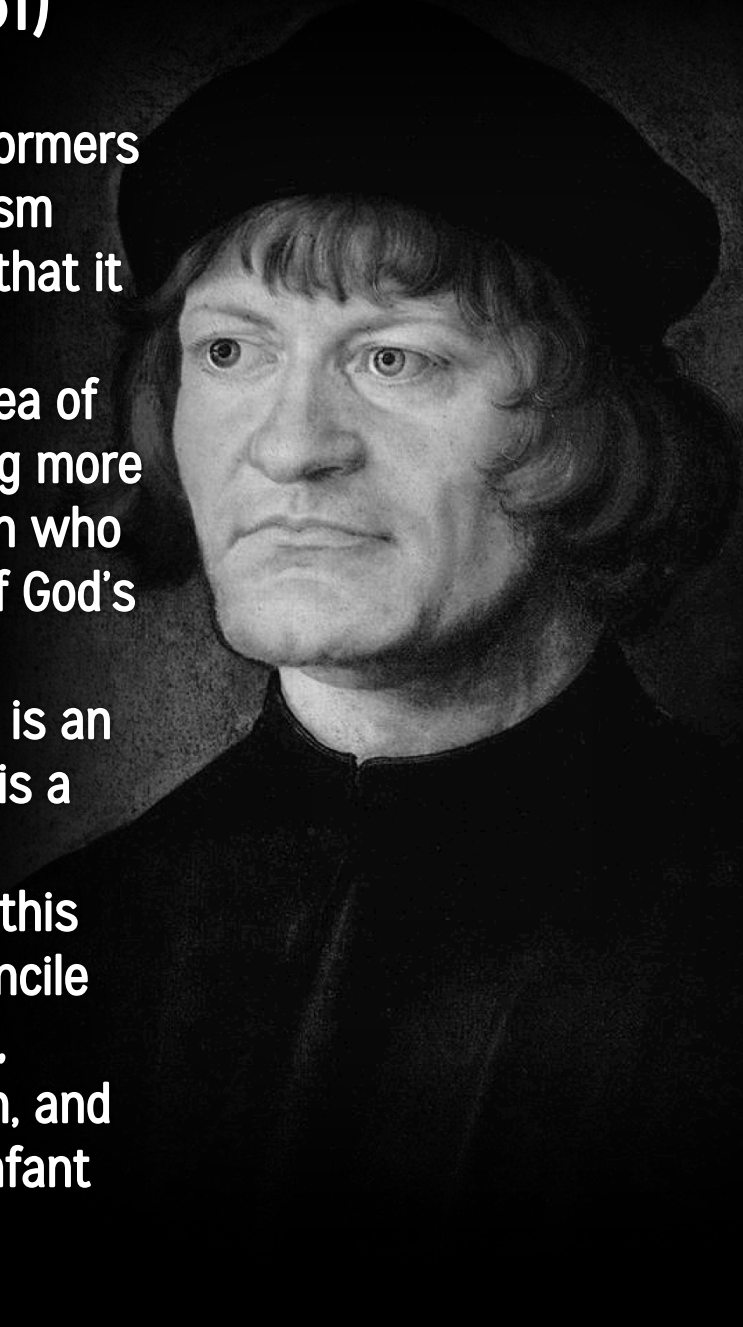
“We are saved by grace through faith,
not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Baptism is a work.

Therefore, baptism has no connection
to our salvation.”

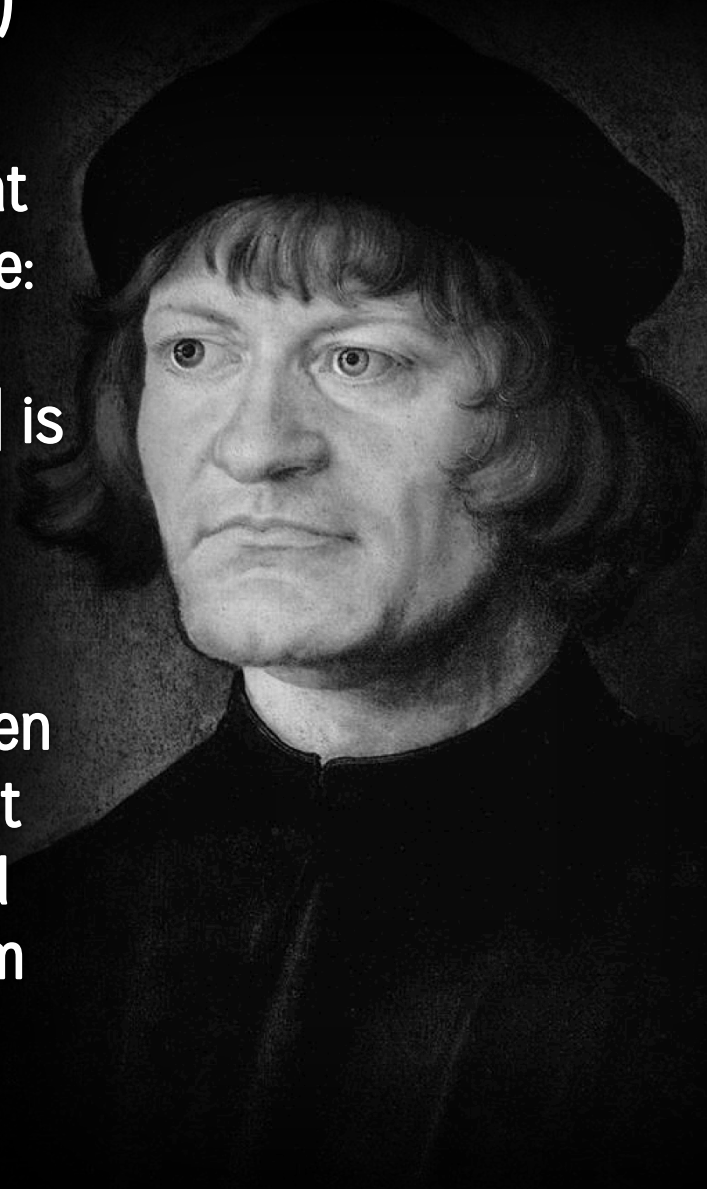
Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531)

- He was one of the most prominent reformers to attack contemporary views of baptism (that it is only for believing adults and that it has the power to wash away sins).
- In 1523-1525, he reworked the entire idea of baptism and argued that it was nothing more than a pledge or a promise for a person who had already been saved on the basis of God's grace.
- This led to his conclusion that baptism is an exact NT parallel to OT circumcision. It is a declaration of an already-existing membership in God's covenant nation (this proves to be a convenient way to reconcile the scriptural command to be baptized, Zwingli's convictions regarding election, and his insistence on the continuation of infant baptism).



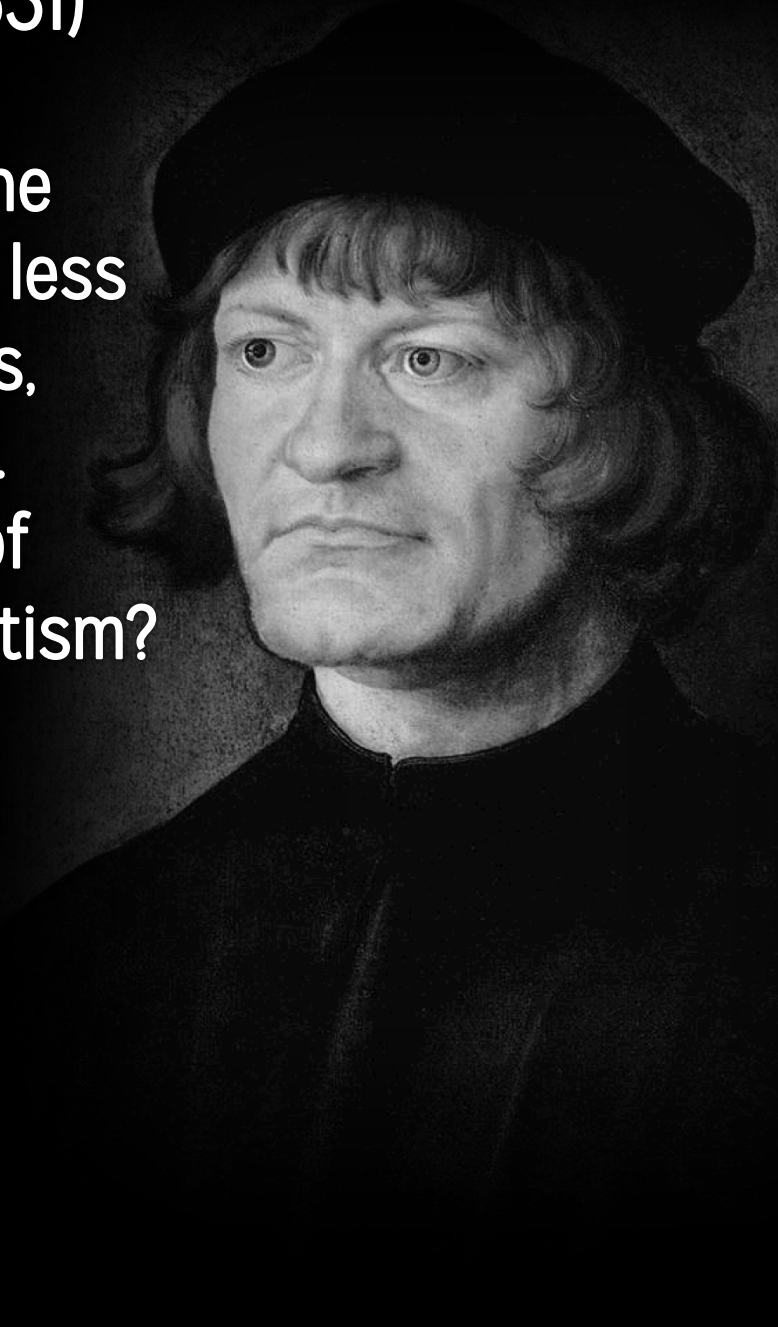
Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531)

Zwingli was clear in his writings that baptism did not forgive sin. He wrote: "Christ himself did not connect salvation with baptism: it [salvation] is always by faith alone." However, he also wrote that baptism was not connected to faith either. "Hence it follows that water-baptism was given even when there was no faith, and it was received even by those who did not believe." Thus, to Zwingli baptism was proper for infants.



Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531)

In *A Refutation*, he wrote, “The children of Christians are no less sons of God than the parents, just as in the Old Testament. Hence, since they are sons of God, who will forbid this baptism? Circumcision among the ancients ... was the same as baptism with us.”





Therefore, Zwingli's definition of baptism and "what it does" is different from ours. Today, many professed Christians are still falsely using his definition – they are **Zwinglianized.**

THE SECOND PREMISE


- Is baptism a work? Perhaps the real problem is that many do not realize there are different kinds of “works” described in the Bible, and Paul’s use of the term in Ephesians 2:9 cannot possibly be categorical.
- Jesus uses “works” language in John 6:26-29 to describe faith. Surely the works described here are not included in Paul’s statements in Ephesians or Romans 3:27-28, 4:4-5. Does my saving faith act alone, or are works a necessary, functional part of it? See James 2:17.

SOMETHING WE DO

- A “work” in the generic sense is just “something we do.” Faith, therefore, is a work. So is confession (Romans 10:9-10), without which we cannot be saved (Matt. 10:33). In fact, everything we do in response to the gospel is a work, since the gospel must be obeyed (Romans 10:16, 2 Thessalonians 1:8). So, unless Paul and Jesus (and Paul and James) are at direct odds with each other, Paul **MUST** mean something more specific by “works” in Ephesians 2:8-9.

WORKS OF LAW

- Paul frequently uses a more complete expression, “works of law” (Rom. 3:20, 28, Gal. 2:16, 3:2, etc.). When we examine his “works” language in context (including Eph. 2:8-9), he always means “works of law.”
- Anything that we do as an act of merit, whether under the Old or New Testament, is a work of law. My “good living”, my charity, my morality, cannot save me, otherwise salvation is not based on grace (2 Tim. 1:9, Rom. 4:2, 4).

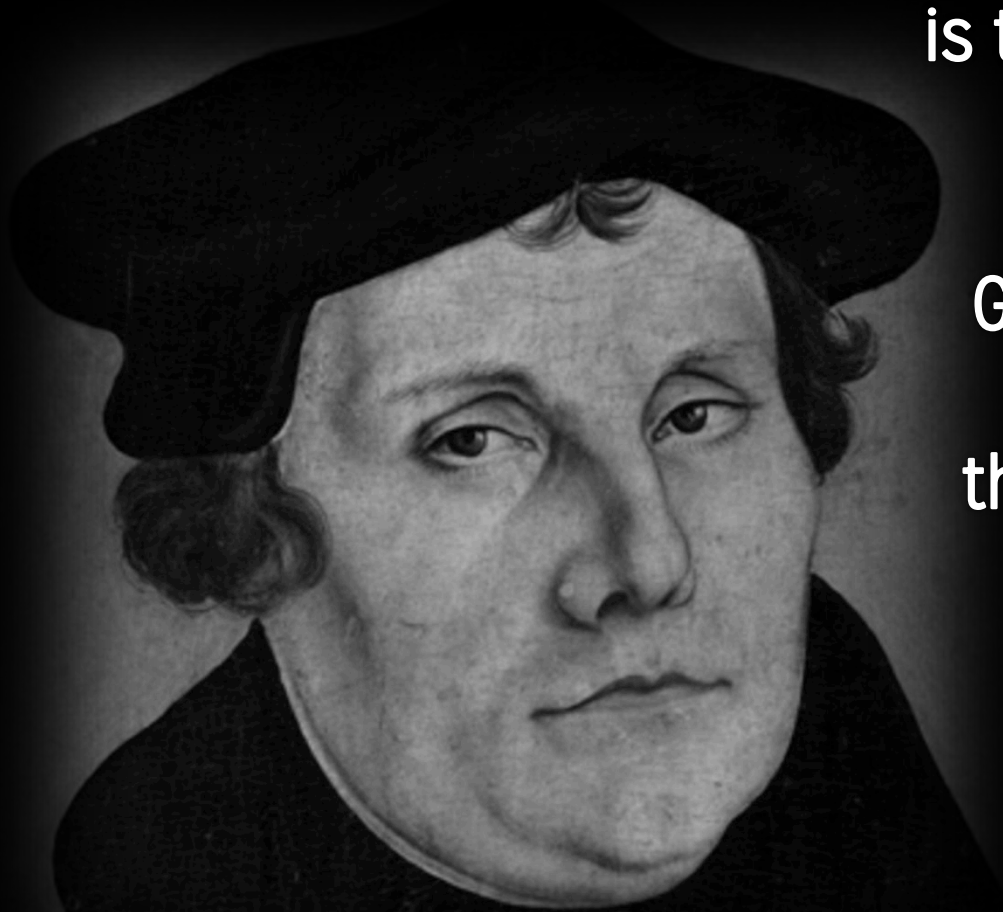


So, most professed Christians agree
that works of law cannot save, but
that still leaves us wondering about
baptism...

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

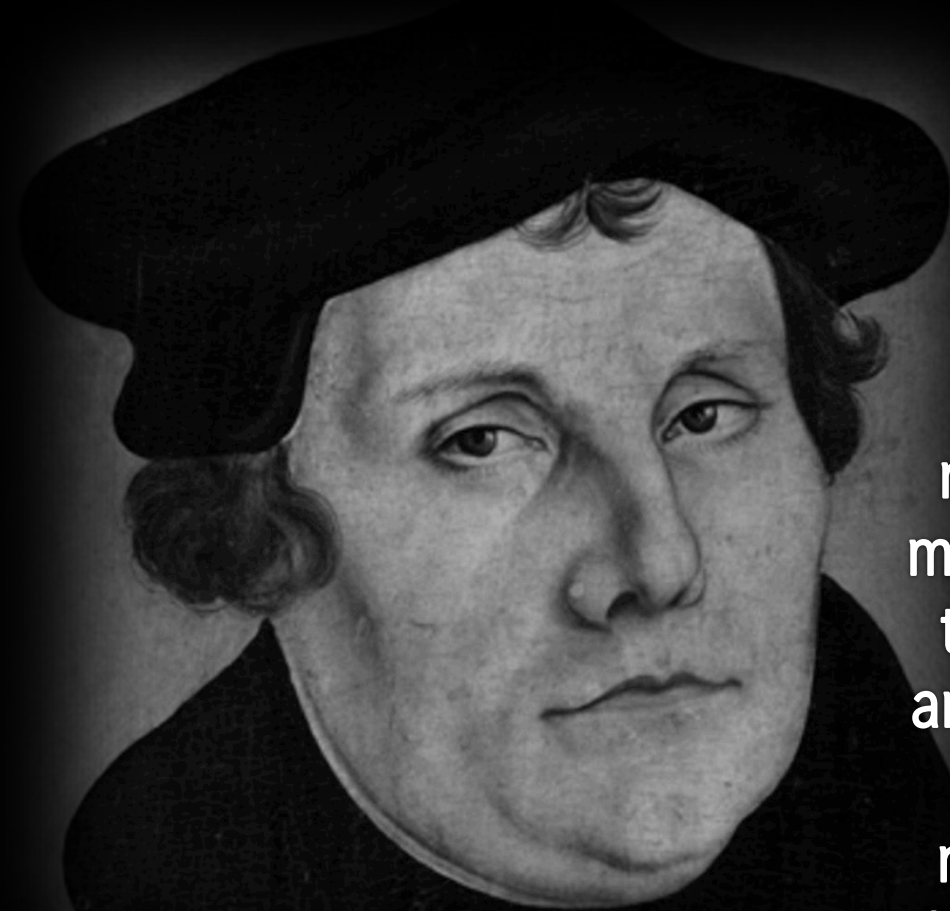
“To this you may answer: Yes, it is true that our works are of no use for salvation. Baptism, however is not our work but God’s God’s works are . . . necessary for salvation, and they do not exclude but rather demand faith.”


Large Catechism, IV.35



Martin Luther (1483-1546)

In his Three Treatises, he wrote:
“It is therefore indeed correct to say that baptism is a washing away of sins, but the expression is too mild and weak to bring out the full significance of baptism, which is rather a symbol of death and resurrection... The sinner does not so much need to be washed as he needs to die, in order to be wholly renewed and made another creature, and to be conformed to the death and resurrection of Christ, with whom he dies and rises again through baptism”





Baptism is not a **work of law** (meritorious) because I am not working in it. It is God's work! It is something I do, like faith and confession, but the actual washing is outside of my power. Scripture repeatedly affirms this (Titus 3:5-7, Acts 2:37-38, Ephesians 2:5-6, 10, Colossians 3:12ff).



The **irony** is that according to the Bible's definition of baptism, it is less of a "work" than faith!

BIG DIFFERENCES

ZWINGLI

- Zwingli's influence is felt among many Protestants, especially in the way they describe baptism:
- My pledge, my testimony, my response, my announcement, my confirmation, my ceremony.
- All things I do. It is no wonder they think baptism is a work!

THE BIBLE

- Baptism does everything we cannot do for ourselves:
- Forgiveness (Acts 2:38, 22:16)
- Death to sin (Rom. 6:4) and resurrection into the Christian life (Rom. 6:5-6)
- A conscience supernaturally cleansed (1 Pet. 3:21).
- Admission into the church (1 Cor. 12:13, Acts 2:41, 47).