

What is the meaning and purpose of Baptism?



Death

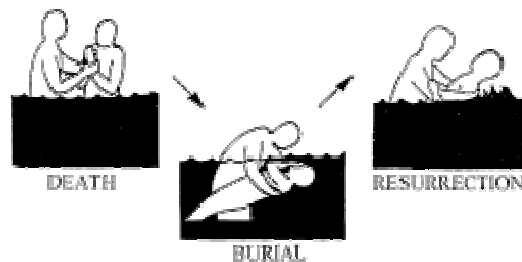


Burial



Resurrection

The work of the cross is *God's offer of life...*
Baptism is *our acceptance.*



By Jeff McFadden

There are many teachings and many traditions regarding the subject of baptism. This has long been one of the most controversial points of doctrine since the church began. The goal of this website is to explore strictly what is written on the topic in the New Testament scriptures themselves. We will look at [the scriptures](#) on baptism in question first and let [God's Word](#) speak for itself.

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flowers fall away: But the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached to you." – I Peter 1:24-25

...and pay close attention, for

He who rejects me, and doesn't accept my sayings, has one who judges him. The word that I spoke, the same will judge him in the last day.-John 12:48

So let us not allow the traditions of men to come before the Word of God as revealed in the scriptures. Christ spoke of this inclination of people...

"-making void the word of God by your tradition, which you have handed down. You do many things like this." –Mark 7:13

and He condemned it.

Let us remember instead that those who are blessed are those that obey and KEEP God's Word:

But he said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and keep it." –Luke 11:28

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free."

—John 8:31-32

For the purposes of the rest of the discussion it will be noted that the mode of baptism is used in the definition of full water immersion. The Greek for the word 'baptizo' means to immerse, plunge, dip, or bury in water. The very Greek word itself excludes it from meaning "sprinkling."

Let's begin by looking at each individual passage that relates to baptism and then at all of them together as a whole and let the Bible speak for itself:

Matthew 3:13-16

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." _

Ephesians 4:4-5

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Romans 6:3-5

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. _

I Peter 3:21

This is a symbol of baptism, which now saves you - not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, it saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:12

and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

John 3:1-5

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Acts 8:26-40

And the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, Get up, and go toward the south unto the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert. And he got up and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, Go near, and stay close to this chariot. And Philip ran up to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, Do you understand what you are reading? And he said, How can I, except someone should guide me? And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth." And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I ask you, of whom is the prophet speaking? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached to him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came to some water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what keeps me from being baptized? And Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, you may. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stop: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and Philip baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more: but he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

Galatians 3:26-27

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Mark 16:15-16

And he said unto them, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he that disbelieves shall be condemned.

Titus 3:5

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewal of the Holy Spirit

Matthew 28:19-20

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.

Acts 2:38-41

And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to

you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him." And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls

[Acts 22:16](#)

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

“What must I do to be saved?”

This is the single most important question anyone can ever ask. Our souls will exist for eternity but on the Day of Judgment when Jesus Christ judges all who have ever lived, He will divide the saved from the unsaved. The saved will go to eternal life while the unsaved will go to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46). This is why it is imperative we be on the right side of the dividing line before that day arrives.

The Bible teaches, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). So *everyone* is in need of salvation. Salvation comes through Jesus Christ. And “salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12).

To be saved we must:

- 1.) 1.) Hear the “good news” of Jesus Christ (Romans 10:14)
- 2.) 2.) Believe (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 8:37; Mark 16:16; John 8:24)
- 3.) 3.) Repent of our [sins](#) (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30; Mark 10:15)
- 4.) 4.) Confess faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 8:36-37; Romans 10:9)
- 5.) 5.) Be baptized (in water) for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:37-41; 1Peter 3:21; John 3:3-5; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-8; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:26-27; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:34-39; Ephesians 4:5)
- 6.) 6.) Remain faithful for the rest of our lives and carry our cross daily (Revelation 2:10; Matthew 24:13; Luke 9:23)

We become *saved* (conversion occurs) and we come into contact with the blood of Christ (or enter *into Christ*), at baptism, after steps 1-4 have been fulfilled.

Ephesians 1:11-14

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to [the plan of him\[*\]](#) who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you [heard\[1\]](#) the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having [believed, \[2,3\]](#) you were [marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, \[5\]](#) who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those
who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.

[*God's plan of salvation:](#)

1. [Hear](#)

2. [Believe](#)

3. [Repent](#)—[implied by “having believed”](#) (Mark 1:15; Matthew 21:32c)

4. [Confess](#)—implied, taken at moment of baptism

5. [Be baptized](#)—See [Acts 2:38; Gal 3:26-27,4:6-7](#) at baptism is when we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Sin

Sin is a very serious matter. Our sins are why Jesus had to die. Sin is what separates us from God:

Isaiah 59:1-2

Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Who is a sinner? Everyone is a sinner! That is why every single human being needs Christ.

Isaiah 64:5-6

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins.

Romans 3:10-12,23

As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

What is sin? Sin means to "miss the mark." It means to "fall short." Simply put, sin is wrong-doing. Here are some passages where the Bible defines sin:

Galatians 5:19-21

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: adultery, fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who live like this shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Colossians 3:5-10

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Romans 1:18-32 (NLT)

¹⁸But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who push the truth away from themselves. ¹⁹For the truth about God is known to them instinctively. God has put this knowledge in their hearts. ²⁰From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made. They can clearly see his invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God.

²¹Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. The result was that their minds became dark and confused. ²²Claiming to be wise, they became utter fools instead. ²³And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped

idols made to look like mere people, or birds and animals and snakes.

²⁴So God let them go ahead and do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. ²⁵Instead of believing what they knew was the truth about God, they deliberately chose to believe lies. So they worshiped the things God made but not the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever. Amen.

²⁶That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. ²⁷And the men, instead of having normal sexual relationships with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men and, as a result, suffered within themselves the penalty they so richly deserved.

²⁸When they refused to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their evil minds and let them do things that should never be done. ²⁹Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, fighting, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. ³⁰They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They are forever inventing new ways of sinning and are disobedient to their parents. ³¹They refuse to understand, break their promises, and are heartless and unforgiving. ³²They are fully aware of God's death penalty for those who do these things, yet they go right ahead and do them anyway. And, worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.

Mark 7:20-22

And he said, "What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness.

Revelation 21:7-8

He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death."

James 4:17

Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

What is the penalty for sin?

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It only took **one** sin for Adam and Eve to die spiritually. That is how serious and deadly sin is to us. **Once we have sinned, we die and become separated from God and are in need of the Redeemer and the forgiveness that comes through the work Jesus did on the cross.**

We have *all* sinned and stand guilty before God. We therefore need the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. But God does not owe us this. He does not owe us anything at all. Our deeds deserve death. The fact that He saves anyone at all is nothing but pure grace. Thank God that He provided a way out for us, when we were still powerless, through His Son who loved us, and gave up His life for us! Thank God He does not treat us as our deeds deserve!

What the Scriptures say about themselves (Traditions and teachings of men vs. the Word of God)

2Timothy 3:14-17

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Q: What makes us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus?

A: The Scriptures, the Bible, the Word of God.

Q: How much of Scripture is inspired from God?

A: All of it.

Q: What is the Bible useful for?

A: Teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness

Q: What purpose does the Bible's usefulness serve?

A: Its purpose is to **thoroughly** equip us for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12-13

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

2Peter 1:12-21

So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Scriptures have nothing to do with man. They have everything to do with God. The prophets did not speak on their own accord. As servants of the Most High, they just said what God wanted them to say. They were the mouthpieces and instruments God spoke through.

2Peter 3:13-17

But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard **so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men** and fall from your secure position.

Even while Peter was still alive he recognized Paul's writings as Scripture.

Jesus always had problems with people who replaced the teaching of Scripture with traditions that men had come up with:

Mark 7:6-13

He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

" 'These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

They worship me in vain;

their teachings are but rules taught by men. You have let go of the **commands of God** and are holding on to **the traditions of men.**"

And he said to them: "You have a fine way of **setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!** For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift devoted to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. **Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.**"

And here is the reason all of this is so important:

John 12:48

There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.

Ephesians 6:17

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Revelation 2:12,16

To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword...

Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Revelation 19:11-21

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the **Word of God**. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."

Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

The Bible is God's "instruction manual" for mankind. Whether we accept and follow the teachings of the Scriptures is what we will be judged on at Judgment Day. This is why it is imperative we know the Scriptures and what they teach so that we can obey and follow them.

**On Judgment Day,
Which will prevail?
The traditions and teachings of men,
or
the Word of God?**

Matthew 3:13-16

The baptism of Jesus

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have **prevented** him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; **it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness** Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."_

John the Baptist did not know Jesus was the Son of God until after he saw Christ come up out of the water and the Spirit descend on Him. John 1:29-34:

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World! This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' **I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel. Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."**

John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins so they knew each other a long time. But John did not know who the Messiah was until God revealed it to him. John tells us that he would not have known except that God told him, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' **John did not see this confirmation until after Jesus was baptized and He came up out of the water! It was Christ's baptism that revealed that Jesus belonged to God.**

So why John's reaction to Jesus when He came to be baptized? At the point Jesus came to him for baptism, John still did not know Jesus was the Christ. After all, this was John the Baptist who feared no man, who ate locusts and wild honey and defied a king. He wore camelhair clothes and a leather belt and lived in the wilderness. He called the Pharisees and Sadducees snakes and vipers to their faces. He loudly denounced king Herod as an adulterer. He was not one easily impressed.

And yet of Christ, he says that he was not fit to untie His shoes. And even before it was revealed to him John is so impressed by Jesus that he tries to tell Jesus that Jesus doesn't need to be baptized, but instead he needs to be baptized by Christ.

Jesus must have led an unbelievably righteous life even at that point to cause such a stirring reaction from John—a life that could only be led by the sinless Lamb of God:

"But John tried to deter Him, saying" I need to be baptized by *you*, and do you come to *me*?

But Jesus would not be deterred...

Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. –Matthew 3:14-15

Now if Christ-- who was without sin, *insisted* on being baptized, then we, who are His sinful followers-- **and are to follow His example**, need to be baptized as well. For anyone to teach that one does not need to be baptized in light of Christ's own baptism is missing the fact that following Jesus entails following Him in this action as well.

The reasons Jesus was baptized was:

- a.) to “fulfill all righteousness”
- b.) to set us an example that we should follow
- c.) to reveal Himself as to belonging to God and being the Christ

If there ever was anyone who should not have needed baptism, it was Jesus Christ. But Jesus himself submitted to baptism. **And so should we.**

Ephesians 4:4-5

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling;
One Lord, one faith, **one baptism**, One God and Father of all, who is above all,
and through all, and in you all.

According to this verse, there is only **ONE** baptism. This study will help determine just what that **ONE** baptism is....As this study continues, search the scriptures yourself and see if you can determine what that **ONE** baptism is....

Hint:

This **ONE** baptism is *into Christ for the forgiveness of sins after a person hears, believes and repents*. This one baptism is total immersion in water as the [account of the Ethiopian eunuch](#) undeniably illustrates.

It is very possible for people to go through a ritual that is called baptism without it being **the** baptism commanded by Jesus. "Baptism" that is not "for the forgiveness of sins" **is not this one baptism**.

Which baptism did you receive? Acts 19:3 BE HONEST (Your life depends on it)

	Scripture	The ONE baptism in the Bible	"Baptist" or "non-denominational" baptism
Full water immersion?	Acts 8:36-39 , Colossians 2:12	YES	YES
For the purpose of having your sins forgiven/washed away?	Acts 2:38 , Acts 22:16	YES	NO
To save you?	1Peter 3:21	YES	NO
To be reborn?	John 3:3-5	YES	NO
To have new life?	Romans 6:3-4	YES	NO
Required for salvation/criteria for judgment?	John 3:5 , Mark 16:15-16	YES	NO
United with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection THROUGH baptism?	Romans 6:3-6	YES	NO
Saved before baptism?	--	NO	YES
CONCLUSION:		Biblical baptism	Non-Biblical baptism--needs to be corrected

Some different "baptisms" that are taught today:

Which baptism is Biblical today?	Explanation	Reference
"Baptism of the Holy Spirit"	Happened <u>once</u> to the Jews in Acts 2 and <u>once</u> to the Gentiles in Acts 10. Has since passed away 2000 years ago.	Acts 2 , Acts 10 See here also
Infant baptism	Must believe, repent, and make conscious decision to follow Christ. Doctrine of "original sin" false.	Acts 16:30-33 --Faith must precede baptism Acts 8:36-39 --Faith must precede baptism Acts 2:38 --Repentance with baptism

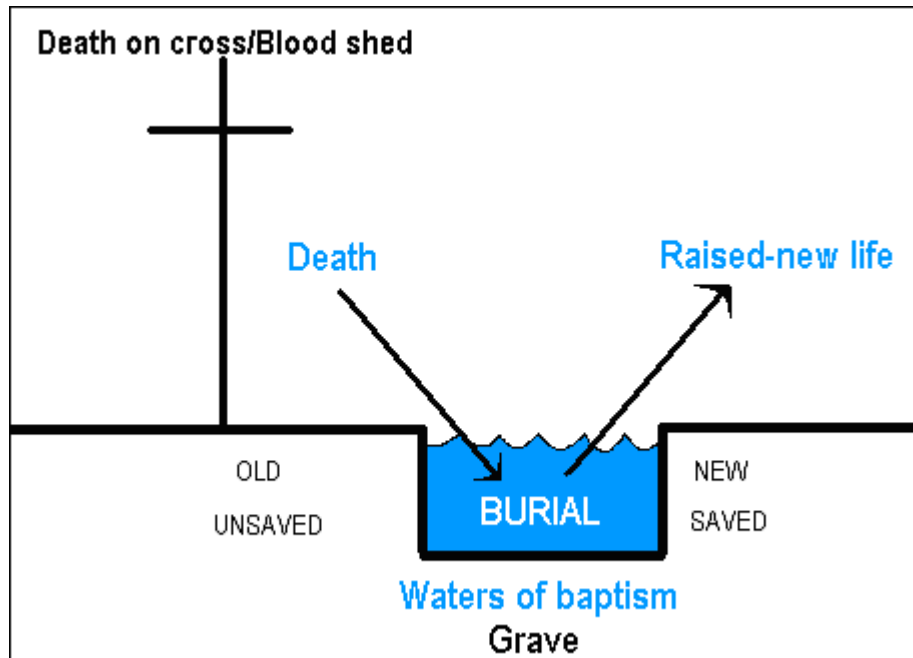
Baptism for the dead	Man faces judgment after death	Hebrews 9:27
Baptism as a “public confession of faith”	Not taught in bible	--
Baptism for the forgiveness of sins into Christ	The ONE baptism spoken of in Ephesians 4:4-5	Acts 2:38 , Acts 22:16 , 1Peter 3:20-21 , Colossians 2:12 , Galatians 3:26-27 , John 3:3-5 , Mark 16:15-16 , Titus 3:5 , Matthew 28:19-20 , Acts 8:26-40

Romans 6:3-5

Do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized** into Christ Jesus were **baptized into his death**? We were **buried** therefore with him **by baptism** into **death**, **so that** as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **we too** might walk in **newness of life**. For if we have been **united with him in a death like his**, we shall **certainly** be united with him in a **resurrection** like his.

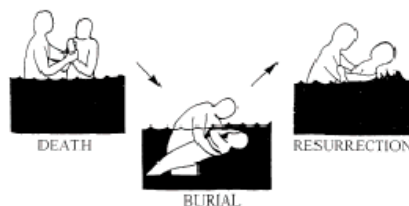
When we are baptized into Christ, we are baptized into His death, and therefore into His burial and resurrection as well. Through **baptism** we are **united** with Christ in His **death, burial and resurrection**; and being united with Him in this manner we rise to new life, leaving behind our old self and rising to a new. Baptism is when our old self dies and our new life begins. Baptism is when we stop living for ourselves and start living for Christ. **Through baptism** we die to ourselves and exchange our life for His. Baptism is also when we come into contact with the blood of Christ. **It is in baptism that we “die” with Christ...and so we therefore will live with Him as well.**

In other words, what happens in baptism is that God takes **Christ's** death, burial, and resurrection and transposes it onto **our** life. Our old, sinful self becomes **united** with Christ in His crucifixion and death **through baptism** and we rise from the water to **new life**. This is how we “obey the gospel” ([2 Thessalonians 1:8](#)) and how we “put on Christ” ([Galatians 3:26-27](#)).



“If we died with him, we will also live with him;” –2Timothy 2:11

Once you have crucified your old ways (sins) and you **repent**, the **dead** person must be **buried**. **Baptism**, a burial in water, **equates with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ**. This is the Biblical way to be born again to new life.



I Peter 3:21

...who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved **through water**, and this water is a symbol of **baptism, which now saves you** - not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, **it saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

Notice the phrases, "**baptism, which now saves you**", and "it ("it" refers to **baptism**) **saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**" First Peter tells us **baptism saves us**. Then he not only **restates** this, but also tells us **how and why** baptism saves us. **It saves us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.** This ties directly into [Romans 6:3-6](#)

Peter tells us that the story of Noah and the ark is an illustration of how **God saves through water**. In the days of Noah, God looked down on the earth and was grieved at all the evil he saw upon the world (Genesis 6). God used the waters of the flood to wipe out the old and bring about a new beginning. God "wiped the slate clean" and started all over again.

Many people become confused by this passage and the reference to Noah's flood correlating to baptism. The phrase, "**this water**" is a reference to the **water of Noah's flood**. **The water of Noah's flood is an illustration of baptism**. Before Noah's flood, the earth was filled with sin and corrupt. God "cleansed" the earth with water and though this water a new beginning came about.

Understand there is nothing "magical" in the actual water itself. But **when** we obey **God's command to be immersed in water in order to have our sins forgiven**, **God** is faithful and **God** cleanses our sins through the blood of Christ **at this point** of our obedience and faith.

Romans 15:4 teaches us...

"For as many things as have been written in the past have been written for our instruction, that through endurance and through encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope."

Here is another similar illustration, but this time it is Paul who speaks:

I Corinthians 10:1-4

And I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, And were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.

Paul says he does not want us to be ignorant that the Israelites were baptized into Moses. We know that Egypt is often referred to as the "land of slavery."

**God brought Israel:
out of Egypt (the land of slavery--i.e. sin)
through the sea (water -i.e. baptism)
and into the promised land (Israel--i.e. salvation, redemption)**

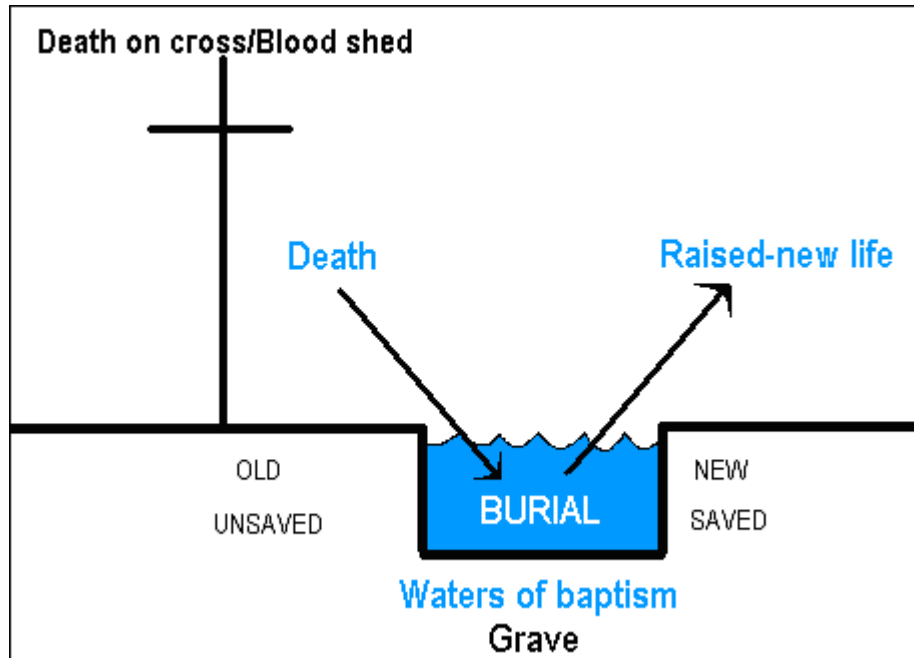
Baptism is nothing new in God's plan. It is something He has always used to illustrate the separating of sin from mankind. **God has always saved people through water**. It was foreshadowed long ago in the Old Testament scriptures.

Colossians 2:12

and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Baptism is an **act of faith**. It is through our **faith in *God working when*** we are baptized that we are saved. This is what distinguishes baptism from bathing. We have faith that **when** we are baptized, God unites us into Christ's own death, burial and resurrection. This passage teaches the same thing as [Romans 6:3-6](#)

Faith is the "active ingredient" at baptism, and without faith, baptism means nothing.



John 3:1-5

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

It is an historical fact that certain sects of the Jews practiced baptism for gentile converts to Judaism during the first century (as they still do to this very day). So Nicodemus, who was a devout religious teacher of the day, would have certainly been familiar with the concept. This high-ranking religious teacher comes to Jesus at night and tries to engage Him in a conversation. Jesus could have chosen any topic to talk about.

Jesus "took the bull by the horns" and chose the topic of [rebirth](#) (v .3) [through baptism](#) (v.5).

Notice Jesus says unless one is born again he **cannot** see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus asks Jesus **how** can someone be reborn **when they are old** (He understands Jesus is NOT speaking of natural childbirth). Jesus **describes** it and tells him very plainly **how—by being born “of water and the Spirit.” This is a perfect description of baptism! Jesus could not have given a more detailed and accurate explanation of baptism.** Some may wonder why the Lord did not simply say "baptism". But that would only be giving us the *term* and not the *definition*. Instead, Jesus wanted to be very specific, and in using the phrase "born of water and the Spirit" He gave us the very *definition* of baptism! Jesus tells Nicodemus one **cannot** enter the kingdom of heaven unless this happens. Look for the "water and the spirit" in [Acts 2:38-41](#). **According to Jesus Christ, who very clearly told Nicodemus the truth – unless a person is baptized, they cannot be saved.**

Some might be surprised to learn that Christian baptism actually has its roots in Judaism. During Jesus' time, as today, Gentiles who wish to convert to Judaism immerse themselves in a water bath called a *mikveh*.^{*} This procedure is called *tevillah*.

"The baptismal water (Mikveh) in rabbinic literature was referred to as the womb of the world, and as a convert came out of the water it was considered a new birth separating him from the pagan world. As the convert came out of these waters his status was changed and he was referred to as "a little child just born" or "a child of one day" (Yeb. 22a; 48b; 97b). We see the New Testament using similar Jewish terms as "born anew," "new creation," and "born from above."

Regarding the practice of baptizing proselytes, Lightfoot, in *Horae Hebraicae* explains:
"As soon as he grows whole of the wound of circumcision, they bring him to Baptism, and being placed in the water they again instruct him in some weightier and in some lighter commands of the Law. Which being heard, he plunges himself and comes up, and, behold, he is an Israelite in all things."

It would have been abundantly obvious to Nicodemus, a teacher of all Israel, that Jesus was plainly speaking of *tevillah*, or what Christians nowadays call [baptism](#).

There are some who teach being "born of water" means natural birth. But if that were the case, then the souls of babies that die in the womb or are miscarried or aborted (and never experience birth) would be excluded from the kingdom of heaven. From other places in Scripture, we know this simply not to be true because babies are innocent. If they die, they are saved and go to heaven.

Verse 6: Jesus is not talking about the rebirth of one's flesh but the rebirth of man's spirit—and the rebirth Jesus has in mind does not involve the flesh. It involves the Spirit. It wouldn't matter if we could enter a hundred times into the womb again, it would still not yield the required result because flesh gives birth to flesh, and a rebirth of a man's spirit is what is required.

***Glossary of Jewish terms**

"Mikvah" – (f., pl. "Mikvaot"); a ritual pool of water, used for the purpose of attaining ritual purity. **Immersion in a Mikvah is performed for the following main purposes:**

It is used in connection with Repentance, to remove the impurity of sin.

It is also used in connection with Conversion, because the convert has taken upon himself or herself to adopt the lifestyle of the Jew, that is based on the recognition of G-d as King of the Universe and on the obligation to perform the commandments of the Torah.

Acts 8:26-40

And the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, Get up, and go toward the south unto the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert. And he got up and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, Go near, and stay close to this chariot. And Philip ran up to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, **Do you understand what you are reading? And he said, How can I, except someone should guide me?** And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this,

“He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.”

And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I ask you, of whom is the prophet speaking? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and **preached to him Jesus**. And as they went on their way, they came to some **water**: and the eunuch said, **See, here is water; what keeps me from being baptized?** And Philip said, **If you believe with all your heart, you may**. And he answered and said, **I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God**. And he commanded the chariot to stop: and they both went **down into the water**, both Philip and the eunuch; and Philip **baptized** him. And when they **came up out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more: but he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

Notice that the Ethiopian Eunuch needed someone to explain to him the scriptures and give him instruction. The Bible simply says Philip “preached to him Jesus”. It does not record his actual words. But the eunuch *who understood nothing before Philip taught him, responded by asking to be baptized*. This directly implies Philip taught him about baptism and baptism was a part of Philip’s message in “preaching Jesus.” **Notice also that both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water. And they came up out of the water.** Philip did not “sprinkle” him. Philip fully immersed the eunuch in physical water. The word “water” is used four times! This was no “spiritual baptism.” **And according to [Ephesians 4:5](#) there is just ONE baptism. The baptism that was practiced on the eunuch and the baptism at Pentecost in [Acts 2:38](#) and [all throughout the book of Acts](#) is the same baptism that is in force and is commanded of by God today.**

Galatians 3:26-27

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

Faith in Christ is a prerequisite to baptism. Faith (along with repentance) is an essential ingredient in the conversion process. It must be understood that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he died for our sins and He was raised from the dead. In being baptized into Christ we “clothe” ourselves with Him or “put on Christ”. When God looks at us he does not see our sins, but Christ’s righteousness instead.

This is a very interesting verse to look at in light of Christ’s parable of the wedding banquet in [Matthew 22:1-14](#)

In Genesis 3:21 after Adam and Eve sinned (and they had died spiritually), God provided them with animal skins to clothe them and give them a covering. This required the shedding of the blood of animals. In the Old Testament a sacrifice for sin always required the shedding of blood. Under the New Covenant the shedding of blood was still required, but this time it was to be by the sinless Lamb of God that Jesus Himself shed on the cross. And just as God clothed Adam and Eve, so too, He now clothes us—but now it is with Christ Jesus.

Matthew 22:1-14

And Jesus answering spoke to them again in parables, saying, The kingdom of the heavens has become like a king who made a wedding feast for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast, but they would not come. Again he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "Behold, I have made ready my dinner. My oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the marriage feast!"' But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise; and the rest grabbed his servants, and treated them shamefully, and killed them. When the king heard that, he was angry, and he sent his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited weren't worthy. Go therefore to the intersections of the highways, and as many as you may find, invite to the marriage feast. And those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was filled with guests. **But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who didn't have on wedding clothing, and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here not wearing wedding clothing?' He was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few chosen.**

Mark 16:15-16

And he said unto them, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he that does not believe shall be condemned.

Like John 3:5, this verse seems pretty cut and dried, yet there are those who contend—

“Yes, but what about those that believe and are *not* baptized....It doesn't say *they* will be condemned...”

Oh yes it does! Baptism = faith. Those that do not believe will not be baptized.

Remember, even the demons believe Jesus is the Son of God--and shudder!

The Bible does not always spell out what we have to do to be lost. *Instead, it tells us what we have to do to be saved* and expects us to realize that, if we don't obey it, we will be lost.

Christ very clearly warns that baptism is such an important matter that it will be criteria for judgment.

Question:

According to Mark 16:16, who shall be saved?

Answer:

Those that believe and are baptized.

Question:

Who will be condemned?

Answer:

Those that do not believe.

Notice Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

Notice also what Jesus did NOT say. He did NOT say, “He that believeth and is saved shall be baptized.”


In great error, most denominations teach the latter. In other words, most denominations teach what Jesus did NOT say! This should send a chill up the spine of anyone who is truly seeking to follow the teachings of Christ.

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." —John 8:31-32

Notice: holding to Christ's teaching = being His disciple.

Therefore **NOT** holding to Christ's teaching = **NOT** being His disciple!

This is a very simple test God gave us to determine who is, and who is not a disciple of Christ.

Baptism is equated with *belief*. To reject baptism is equated with *disbelief*. If one believes the message, they will accept baptism. If they do not believe the message, they will reject baptism. The question must arise then, **What is the message?** Or, **What is the Gospel?** In verse 16 Jesus speaks of he who “believes.” **Believes what?** Believes in the tooth fairy? Believes in Zeus? Believes in Buddha? No! Verse 15 tells us Jesus is referring to believing the Gospel. 

In [Acts 8:26-40](#) Philip preached the message of Christ and the eunuch responded by wanting to be **baptized!**

For even another example of this scripture put into practice see [Acts 16:25-33](#).

The preaching of the [message of Christ](#) (or the “Gospel”—which means “Good News”) in the book of Acts always included **faith** and **repentance** as a prerequisite to **baptism**. **Baptism is inseparable from the Gospel:** It was a part of the message just as faith and repentance was. Baptism is a measure of obedience. Baptism is the greatest act of faith. Baptism is a measure of

whether someone accepts Christ's message or not. [Notice how people responded to the message of Christ in the book of Acts in the New Testament.](#)

If we have to be baptized to be saved, then he who believes this will be baptized. He who is not baptized, *does not believe* this. Therefore, he who does not believe will be condemned (since he won't be baptized). If someone even *teaches* baptism is not necessary, it is because they do not believe the message that baptism is a requirement for salvation. So even if someone is baptized correctly but then later is deceived by false doctrine and comes to believe and/or teaches that baptism is not necessary for salvation, they have turned from the gospel and fall into the category of *he who does not believe* (the gospel) and are in extreme danger of condemnation. Repentance is in order.

The point from this verse that is so often overlooked is that if [baptism is a part of the gospel](#) (and it is) then those who do not *believe the gospel*, the Lord says will be condemned. **Those who do not believe baptism is a requirement to be saved do not believe the gospel!**

Baptism represents death to oneself. Baptism represents taking on the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Baptism represents clothing yourself with Christ. Baptism represents a new birth. Baptism represents a pledge toward God. Baptism represents being buried and resurrected with Christ. [Baptism is when we come into contact with the blood of Christ.](#) Baptism represents your sins being washed away and forgiven. Baptism is when we turn to God and surrender our life. [Baptism has always been the correct biblical response to hearing the Gospel.](#)

Again, if someone is not baptized, it is because they do not believe these things. Yet these things are what the Word of God teaches about baptism. Baptism represents us accepting God's salvation plan [on His terms](#), not ours.

If someone does not believe the Gospel message, they will not be baptized. One cannot "believe" and *not* be baptized. Such would be a contradiction. If I am on the Titanic and am told, "Get in a lifeboat, the ship is sinking!" it would be said that if I do not get into a lifeboat I do not *believe* the ship is sinking (either that, or I am choosing to stay and die).

Let's look again at the structure of this verse in a way we can more easily relate to. The following illustration is viewed in light of the horrific September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center:

"He that **goes down the stairs and leaves the building** will be saved, but he that does **not go down the stairs** will be killed."

Relate this to:

"He that **believes and is baptized** shall be saved, and he that does **not believe** shall be condemned."

In each case, **there are two conditions that must be met in order to be saved:**

- 1.) Going down the stairs (believing).
- 2.) Leaving the building (being baptized).

The lack of fulfilling the second condition, **leaving the building (or being baptized) has the exact same effect as **not fulfilling the first condition, going down the stairs (or believing)**. That is why **not being baptized** is equated as **not believing**. Only fulfilling *part* of the equation is equated as fulfilling *none* of the equation. It is an all or nothing proposition.**

So the answer to the question, "What happens if I 'believe' and am not baptized?" is the same as what would happen if someone went down the stairs but still did not leave the building. Imagine saying, "He who goes down the stairs but *doesn't* leave the building *won't* be killed." **Very sadly, we know that to be a hopelessly false statement! The very act of staying in the building (not being baptized), even though you went down the stairs, still leaves you inside on the first floor and therefore *still in harms way!* To be saved, one must **complete** the escape process by leaving the building after going down the stairs.**

It would be self evident that in order to leave the building one must go down the stairs first. Going down the stairs gets you into a position to leave the building. And so it is with baptism. **Believing gets you into a position to have your sins forgiven in baptism.** One must believe first before they are baptized (otherwise, how would someone know getting immersed is when God will forgive their sins?). If one does not go down the stairs there is no need to say, *“He who does not go down the stairs and doesn’t leave the building will be killed.”* because the very act of *not* going down the stairs means one cannot be in a position to leave the building. And in the same way, there is no need for Jesus to redundantly say, “He that does *not* believe and is *not* baptized will be condemned.” All He has to say is, “He that does not believe will be condemned.” **It is just like saying, “He that does not go down the stairs will be killed.” Hence, “He that does not believe will be condemned.**

“He that goes down the stairs and leaves the building will be saved, but he that does not go down the stairs will be killed.” is the same sentence structure as “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he that does not believe shall be condemned.”

To those that may be upset and angry about this truth: why not instead rejoice that you now know the truth while it is still the day of salvation and there is still time to **do something about it?** In effect, by telling us to believe and be baptized, Christ is telling us to **go down the stairs and get out of the building!**

Titus 3:5

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to **his** mercy **he** saved us, **by the washing of regeneration, and renewal of the Holy Spirit**

It is not **us** at work in baptism. Man can claim no righteousness as his own. It is **God** who does the work **in** baptism. God saved us **by the washing of regeneration, and renewal of the Holy Spirit**. "The washing of regeneration, and renewal of the Holy Spirit" is a reference to baptism. This makes perfect harmony when viewed in light of other scriptures such as [John 3:3-5](#), [Acts 2:38](#), [Colossians 2:12](#), [1 Peter 3:21](#), and [Romans 6:3-6](#)

The word "washing" is from the Greek word *loutron*, which refers to (according to Thayer's Lexicon) the act of bathing and is used here in the New Testament and in other writings to refer to baptism. The word "regeneration" is from the Greek word *palingenesia*, which is taken from two root words "born" and "again."

Man can by no means consider baptism a "work of righteousness." (What is righteous about being immersed in water?) For here, at baptism, is when we "die" and are completely powerless and are at God's abundant mercy. This is when we completely surrender to God, so much so, that it is considered our own death in God's eyes. (This "death to oneself" by no means ends when we are baptized! [It continues on in daily living](#)).

Baptism is a manifestation of faith. **It is not Man who is at work in baptism; it is God.** Baptism is not a "work of righteousness." **On the contrary, if anything, it should be considered a work of UNrighteousness.** We are baptized because we are corrupt, unrighteous and spiritually **dead** in sin. This is why we are **buried** with HIM into DEATH as explained in [Romans 6](#). **It is the DEAD that are buried, not the living.**

As we have "died" and are therefore buried in baptism, God, according to His mercy, washes and renews our souls as we rise from the water.

Luke 9:23-25

And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever will lose his life for my sake, the same will save it. For what does a man profit if he shall gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

Defining "Baptismal Regeneration"

The term "baptismal regeneration" is thrown around a lot in discussions and debates about baptism. It is very important to **define the term first** before engaging in any debate on the topic because it is often misunderstood and therefore misapplied, or misrepresented.

It must be noted the ways "baptismal regeneration" is spoken about. To the critics of New Testament baptism, the term is used most of the time to misrepresent the position of the church of Christ. Hopefully this will help to set the record straight and clarify much misrepresentation. There are two ways "baptismal regeneration" is taught:

- 1.) There are some groups who teach "baptismal regeneration" in the sense that baptism has some wondrous power in the water itself. Subjects of this baptism are usually infants and these groups also teach the false doctrine of "original sin". Subjects of this baptism are usually void of the Scriptural pre-requisites of FAITH and REPENTANCE. These groups teach baptism alone, **excluding** the essential "elements" of faith and repentance as prerequisites, is valid for salvation. The Catholic Church is the most well known and recognized of all the groups who teach this view. But it should be obvious that unless the individual being "baptized" has any kind of understanding or awareness, that this kind of "baptism" can be nothing more than a man-made tradition. It is merely "getting wet."

- 2.) Then there is the New Testament teaching on baptism. The New Testament teaching on baptism requires the “elements” of FAITH and REPENTANCE to be present in the heart and mind of the candidate seeking baptism at time of immersion. It is **when faith** and **repentance** are **combined in baptism** that conversion occurs. It is not faith alone. It is not repentance alone. It is not baptism alone. Biblical conversion consists of **faith, repentance and baptism, together**. It could be said that **faith** and **repentance** are the “active ingredients” in baptism.

When considering all the [conversions in the book of Acts](#), it can be clearly demonstrated that all three of these elements are present (faith, repentance, and baptism). Through baptism **God** cleanses our sins in the blood of Christ at this point of our obedience and faith. So “regeneration” does indeed occur at baptism. It occurs as a result of man obeying God and claiming His promise to forgive our sins ([Acts 2:38-39](#)). But the “regeneration” is accomplished by **God’s** power, **not** by man’s.

Titus 3:5

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to [his](#) mercy [he](#) saved us, [by the washing of regeneration, and renewal of the Holy Spirit](#)

The word "washing" is from the Greek word *loutron*, which refers to (according to Thayer's Lexicon) the act of bathing and is used here in the New Testament and in other writings to refer to baptism. The word "regeneration" is from the Greek word *palingenesia*, which is taken from two root words "born" and "again."

The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines the word “regenerate” as to be *spiritually reborn or converted*. (See [John 3:3-5](#))

If Christ’s blood was shed for us nearly 2,000 years ago, and it is at the point of baptism we can come into contact with the blood of Jesus, it can truly be said we are saved through faith and grace.

Matthew 28:19-20

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.

The Lord Jesus *started* His public ministry by being **baptized** and He *ended* His public ministry by commanding His Apostles to **baptize** and teach disciples from all nations as they went into the world. These were Christ's final words on earth. They must not be overlooked.

Acts 2:38-41

And Peter said to them, "**Repent**, and be **baptized every one of you** in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness** of your sins; and **you shall receive** the gift of the **Holy Spirit**. **For the promise** is to **you** and **to your children** and **to all** that are far off, **every one** whom the Lord our God calls to him." And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying, **Save** yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were **baptized**, and there were **added** that day about three thousand **souls**.

The crowd is confronted with the fact that the very Messiah that they have long awaited has been rejected and murdered some 50 days beforehand. Perhaps there were some in this crowd that were even present during the day Christ was crucified. They are cut to the heart and in turmoil. They realized the terrible mistake they have made and are fearful of the precarious position in which they are now in. In verse 37, they asked, "What shall we do?" They had just heard Peter, in the language of Joel, speak of a possible salvation; and the question, "*What shall we do?*" indisputably means, *What shall we do to be saved?*

Peter tells them to **repent**, **each and every one of them**. He tells them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of sins**. Some translations actually render this --**so that your sins will be forgiven**. He tells them this is for **every one** of them. He tells them that if they do this they **will** receive the Holy Spirit. He tells them this is a **promise of God**. He tells them this promise of God is for **them**. He tells them this **promise of God** is for **their children as well**. Peter tells them very clearly and carefully this **promise** is **not just for them**, but for **all** that are far off. (This applies to **us** today. God's salvation plan has not changed) He tells them this promise of God is for **everyone** whom the Lord our God calls to Him. Peter continues with many other words and urges them to heed his words and to **save** themselves from this evil generation (This statement of Peter confirms undeniably that he was speaking to people who were **NOT saved**). And those that **accepted** his words were **baptized** and about 3,000 **souls** were **saved** that day. This is God's **salvation plan** in a nutshell. This is the new birth Jesus spoke of in [John 3:5](#)

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

...and those are the Words of Jesus Christ, the One we all must answer to

With **repentance** and **faith** (belief) in **Jesus the Son of God** who **died for our sins** and was **raised from the dead**, God **promises** to **forgive** our sins (each and every one of them, past, present, and future) and **give us** the **gift** of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit **when** we are **baptized** into His Son, **Jesus Christ**.

Notice verse 42 says the *believers* continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine. What is the Apostle's doctrine? Peter just told us in the previous verses.

Acts 22:16

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

This verse, like [Acts 2:38](#), again confirms that baptism is when our sins are washed away.

Baptism is how we “call on the name of the Lord.” That is why when people are baptized the person who baptizes them proclaims aloud they are being baptized “into Jesus Christ” or “into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” We see in [Acts 2:21,38](#) how closely the phrase “calling on the name of the Lord” is associated with baptism. This calling on the Lord (coupled with faith and repentance) is what distinguishes baptism from merely getting wet.

Ananias spoke these words to Paul three days after Jesus struck down Paul on the road to Damascus. Paul had believed and acknowledged Jesus as Lord for three days at this point in time. **If belief alone brought forgiveness, then his sins would have already been washed away.**

Let's take a closer look at this situation:

Here is Paul, who, after having persecuted the church of Christ, is confronted by none other than Jesus Christ Himself in his glorified state. Jesus tells Paul he will be told what he must do (Acts 22:11). Jesus did not tell him what it was he must do. No, Paul would be told by someone else what it is he must do. So while waiting for three days Paul:

- 1.) had **faith** and **believed** in Jesus as the Son of God
- 2.) fasted and **prayed** in **repentance** (Acts 9:9,11)
- 3.) **Yet his sins were still counted against him (Paul is told, “...wash your sins away”)**

So for three days Paul was repenting and prayed. Do you think that just maybe, possibly, any of his prayers were asking God to forgive him? But when Ananias comes to him, **Paul is told he still has sins that need to be washed away. This is indisputable Scriptural evidence that the “sinner’s prayer” is insufficient to save someone and we are NOT saved before baptism even if we have faith and repentance!**

Notice also, Paul is not told to “pray for Jesus to come into your life.” He is not led in a prayer requesting salvation. No, Paul is told to **“be baptized!”** **And the reason he was told to “be baptized” was that his sins were still counted against him--and it is in baptism that they are washed away.**

CONVERSION STORIES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

[Acts 2:38-41](#)..... the very first believers were Jews; the start of the church at Pentecost
[Acts 8:5-12](#).....Philip preaches in Samaria. People respond in faith by being baptized
[Acts 8:26-40](#).....Philip teaches the Ethiopian eunuch who responds by being baptized
[Acts 9:18](#).....the conversion of Saul to Paul
[Acts 10:47-48](#)....the “Gentile Pentecost”-God shows Peter the Gospel message is not for Jews alone
[Acts 16:15](#).....the conversion of Lydia and her household
[Acts 16:16-33](#)....Paul and Silas’ jailer (and his household) respond in faith and are immediately baptized
[Acts 18:8](#)Crispus, the synagogue ruler
[Acts 19:3-5](#).....those that had not heard yet of Jesus are baptized
[Acts 22:16](#).....Paul’s story revisited --his sins are washed away, calling on the name of the Lord in baptism

Baptism in the book of Acts and throughout the New Testament is always practiced by **adults** who have:

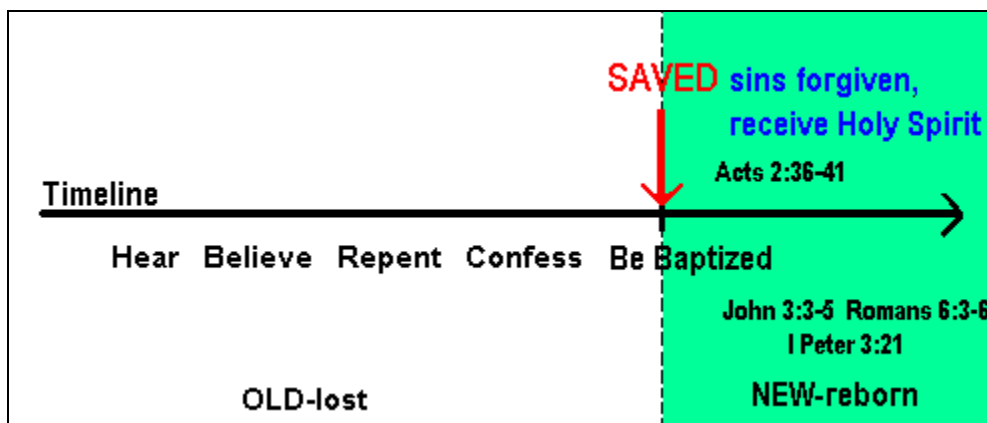
- a.) heard the message of the gospel (of the death, burial and *resurrection* of Jesus Christ),
- b.) believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and paid for their sins on the cross,
- c.) turned away from their [sins](#) (repented) and
- d.) turned to Christ in faith and then
- e.) were fully immersed in water into Christ and into new life.

There are these five basic events, *combined*, that mark conversions in the New Testament:

1. **Hear**
2. **Believe** (faith)
3. **Repent** of our [sins](#)
4. & 5. **Confess** verbally faith in Jesus and **be baptized** (fully immersed) in water for the forgiveness of our sins.
6. Remain faithful

It’s that simple.

In the Book of Acts, these five “ingredients” all take place in a very short time period, almost as a singular event.



Acts Chapter 2

Pentecost-the start of the church/the coming of the kingdom

- 26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.
- 1 When the day of Pentecost came, **they** were all together in one location.
- 2 All of a sudden a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.
- 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on **each of them**.
- 4 All of **them** were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them.
- 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from **every nation** under the sky.
- 6 **When they heard this sound, a crowd came together** in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.
- 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all **these men** who are speaking **Galileans**?"
- 8 Then how is it that each of us hears **them** in his own native language?
- 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,
- 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome
- 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own languages!"
- 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"
- 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "**They** have had too much wine. "
- 14 **Then Peter stood up with the Eleven**, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.
- 15 **These men** are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!
- 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:
- 17 "**In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people**. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.
- 18 Even on my servants, both men and women, **I will pour out my Spirit in those days**, and they will prophesy.

- 19 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.
- 20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.
- 21 **And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'**
- 22 "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.
- 23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.
- 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.
- 25 David said about him: "' I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.
- 26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope,
- 27 because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.
- 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'
- 29 "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried; his tomb is here to this day.
- 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.
- 31 Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.
- 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.
- 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.
- 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "' The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand
- 35 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."
- 36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."
- 37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

42 They devoted themselves to the **apostles' teaching** and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

44 All the believers were together and had everything in common.

45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

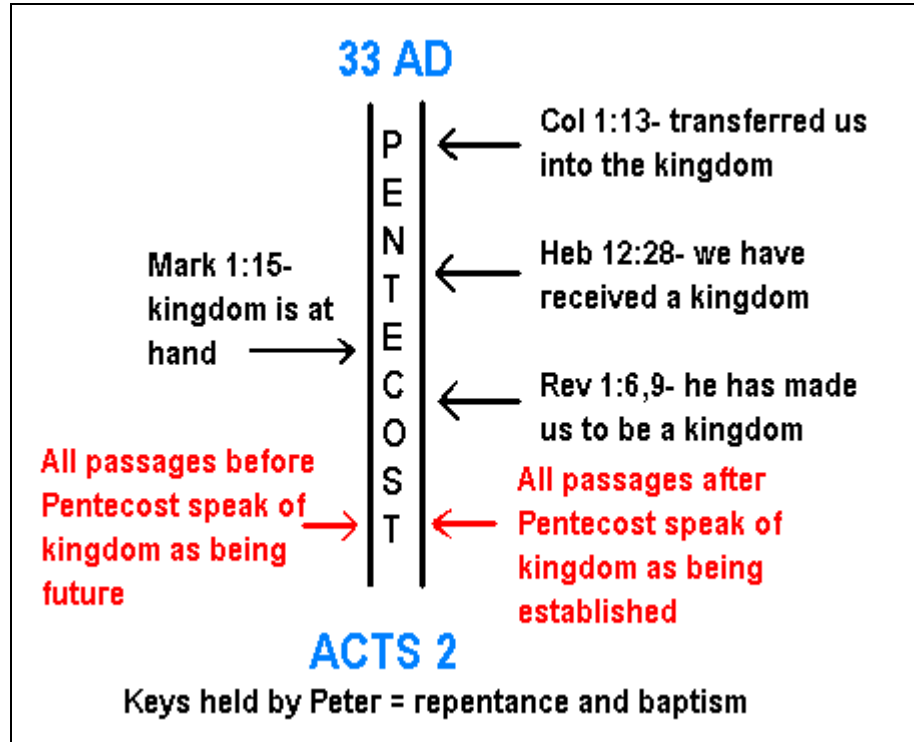
Here is where the New Testament church got started. The Twelve Apostles were gathered in one house and just as Christ had told them the baptism of the Holy Spirit came on the **TWELVE APOSTLES, *nobody else***. (At least not until the same thing happens later to the Gentiles in Acts 10) This was a miracle and the purpose for which was just the same as any other miracle ever done—to confirm that it was **God who was at work**. **This was a way to confirm that these Twelve had God's "seal of approval" as leaders of the new church and that it was Christ who was working through them**. As the scene was creating quite a stir, a huge crowd formed and was amazed that these Twelve men were speaking in languages that they had not studied. These other languages they had spoken were not some unintelligible "mumbo jumbo", but *actual languages* of nations that existed at the time (v.8). The "tongues of fire" came to rest on each of the Twelve Apostles but not on members of the crowd that had gathered. Some in the crowd thought the Apostles were drunk. But Peter explained otherwise. He explained that in the last days God would pour out his Spirit on all people, on all nations. Up until now the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was something God only gave to a select few—the prophets who lived under the Old Testament. But that was about to change.

Peter told the crowd how they had murdered their Messiah some 50 days earlier. The people were grief stricken. They asked, "What shall we do?" They had just heard Peter, in the language of Joel, speak of a possible salvation; and the question, "*What shall we do?*" indisputably means, What shall we do to be saved? And Peter told them, "**Repent**" (they weren't saved yet-- verse 40 confirms this fact) **and be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ **so that their sins would be forgiven** and they would receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit that he spoke of when he quoted the prophet Joel in verses 17-21**. This reference to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a reference to the gift of the Holy Spirit to be poured out on all men and received when we repent and are **baptized** into Christ for the remission of our sins (v.38)*. It was a reference to the gift that 3,000 people received that day when their sins were forgiven through repentance and baptism into Christ. The outward manifestation of the Spirit on the Apostles was a fulfillment of the prophecy of not only John the Baptist, but of Christ Himself. The gift of the Holy Spirit, which the 3,000 received

when they were baptized, was not accompanied by an outward sign (the ' tongues of fire') as it was with the Twelve. This outward sign on the Twelve served to fulfill prophesy and give authority to what Peter and the other Apostles taught.

Verse 42—they devoted themselves to the Apostles teaching. What was the Apostles' teaching? Whatever it was that the Apostle Peter taught in verse 38.

Both John the Baptist and Jesus spoke of "the baptism of the Holy Spirit." This was fulfilled at Pentecost 2,000 years ago. Its purpose was to mark the start of the New Testament church—the kingdom of God on earth.



* Even without the explanatory phrase-- *for the forgiveness of sins*, Peter's answer remains totally unchanged. The crowd asks (after hearing Peter speak of salvation, the Lord's name and, knowing their intense guilt of having killed Him), "What shall we do (to be saved)?" And Peter replies, "Repent and be baptized..."

Acts 8:5,12

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ to them....

But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Faith must always precede baptism. This is why the teaching of infant baptism is an error.

Because *baptism* is when our sins are forgiven and we become saved, baptism was always part of the message of the kingdom of God!

This section further reinforces Christ's declaration to Nicodemus that one cannot enter the kingdom of God unless one is "born of the water and the Spirit." ([John 3:5](#))

Acts 9:1-20
Saul's conversion

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he answered. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could not see anything. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called out to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord--Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. Promptly he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.

Acts 10-11:18
The "Gentile 'Pentecost'"

- 1 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment.
- 2 He and all his family **were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God frequently.**
- 3 One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him saying, "Cornelius!"
- 4 Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel replied, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God.
- 5 Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter.
- 6 He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."
- 7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devoted soldier who was one of his attendants.
- 8 He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.
- 9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray.
- 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.
- 11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners.
- 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as birds of the air and reptiles of the earth.
- 13 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."
- 14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."
- 15 **The voice spoke to him a second time- "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."**
- 16 This happened three times and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.
- 17 While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate.
- 18 They called out, asking if Simon, known as Peter was staying there.
- 19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you.

- 20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."
- 21 Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"
- 22 The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say."
- 23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along.
- 24 The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his close friends and relatives.
- 25 As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence.
- 26 But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."
- 27 Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people.
- 28 He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.
- 29 So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"
- 30 Cornelius answered: "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me
- 31 and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor.
- 32 Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.'
- 33 So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."
- 34 Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism
- 35 but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.
- 36 You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.
- 37 You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached--

- 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.
- 39 "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree,
- 40 but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen.
- 41 He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.
- 42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.
- 43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."
- 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.
- 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.
- 46 For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said,
- 47 "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."
- 48 So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Acts 11

- 1 The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.
- 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him
- 3 and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."
- 4 Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened:
- 5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was.
- 6 I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air.
- 7 Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'
- 8 "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'

- 9 "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, `Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'
- 10 This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.
- 11 "Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying.
- 12 The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house.
- 13 He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, `Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter.
- 14 He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.'
- 15 "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning.
- 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: `John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'
- 17 So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?"
- 18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."

This passage is often referred to as the "Gentile 'Pentecost'". As of this time the Gospel had been preached only to Jews. And from the vision God gave Peter, God was telling Peter the Gospel was for the whole world to hear, that is, for the Gentiles as well. **Notice the same thing happened to these Gentiles as happened to the Jews in [Acts 2](#)**. We see the exact same pattern, which was intended to fulfill [Christ's prophecy](#) and confirm that God was indeed the one at work and which He confirmed by this miracle

Cornelius is a very interesting character. Here is what the Bible tells us about him:

Cornelius was a Gentile.

Cornelius worshipped the Jewish God.

Cornelius was devout and God fearing.

Cornelius prayed regularly.

Cornelius gave to the poor and did good deeds.

God heard and answered Cornelius' prayers. *God even sent an angel to him.*

Although Cornelius had a very strong faith and it could be argued he had a "relationship" with God, he was still not yet saved. (Acts 11:14 confirms this)

Cornelius is like many people today.

Cornelius still needed further instruction. Notice Cornelius did not argue with Peter about the need to be baptized. Cornelius (and his household) **responded by being obedient and by being baptized.**

And in so doing, God blessed them and they became the first group of Gentiles to inherit eternal life.

Acts 16:12-15

The conversion of Lydia

From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to **respond** to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were **baptized**, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a **believer** in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Notice the Scripture says that Lydia **responded** to Paul's **message**. What must have been part of Paul's message? Well, she **responded** to his message by being **baptized**, so Paul's message **had** to include the topic of **baptism!** --And being **baptized** is equated with **belief**.

Notice also, that Lydia's response to the preaching of the kingdom of God was identical to the Ethiopian eunuch in [Acts 8:26-40](#) and the Samaritans in [Acts 8:5,12](#). They all *responded* by being *baptized*. **If baptism is when our sins are forgiven and we become saved, baptism absolutely has to be part of the message of the kingdom of God! And this is why baptism always has been part of the message of the good news!**

Acts 16:25-33

- 25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.
- 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.
- 27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.
- 28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"
- 29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.
- 30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
- 31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household."
- 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.
- 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.

Again, this passage reiterates that **faith** must **precede** baptism. It also demonstrates **repentance in the jailer's action of washing their wounds**. It is not faith alone that saves us. It is not merely the act of being immersed alone that saves us. It is when faith, repentance AND baptism are all combined together that conversion takes place. "Believing in the Lord Jesus" means being baptized. Belief is equated with baptism according to Christ's own words in [Mark 16:16](#). ***Believing the Gospel gets you into a position to have your sins forgiven in baptism.*** One must believe first before they are baptized (otherwise, how would someone know getting immersed is when God will forgive their sins?).

Just as Philip "preached Jesus" to the Ethiopian eunuch in [Acts 8](#), and the eunuch responded to this message by wanting to be baptized, so too, the jailer (and his household) had "the word of the Lord" spoken to them and, once again, their response was baptism. **There can be no doubt then, that "preaching the Gospel", "preaching Jesus", and "speaking the word of the Lord" includes proper instruction in the purpose of baptism.** This is a prime example of Mark 16:15-16 in action, where Jesus said,

"... Go into all the world, and preach the **gospel** to every creature.
He that believes **and** is **baptized** shall be **saved**, and he that does not believe shall be condemned."

The jailer asked what he must do to be saved. We know from Mark 16:15-16 that he who believes the gospel and is baptized will be saved. We find in this example of the jailer that this is *exactly* what happens! Notice that the scripture does not directly tell us the jailer believed. The Scripture only says the jailer was told he must believe. The scripture only tells us he was taught the message of Jesus and that he was baptized. The fact that the scripture *does* say he was **baptized** implies that he believed the message. The only way we have to confirm that the jailer believed was by his baptism. The jailer's faith is confirmed by his baptism just as it was confirmed that Christ belonged to God by His baptism. And so it is with us today.

It does no good to tell someone to get baptized unless they are first told the message of Jesus Christ. The first step is to believe, then baptism will be effectual. Faith in Christ is what gives baptism its significance. Obviously, it does no good to tell someone to get baptized unless they

have first heard the message of the cross and the story of Jesus. And this is the example we see with the jailer.

It was the middle of the night and the urgency for these people to be baptized after they came to faith in Jesus was so great that Paul did not wait until the next day to baptize them. They did not wait until the next church meeting. They did not wait until it was more convenient. It was done so **immediately**. Why this urgency? Because baptism is when a person's sins are forgiven and they become saved. When someone decides to be baptized to have their sins forgiven, their eternal destiny takes a 180-degree turn. From an eternal perspective, this is the most important event in a person's life!

Acts 18:5-8

When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

Again, baptism comes after hearing the message and coming to faith in Christ.

Believing and *baptism* are so closely associated together in the New Testament that the two happened almost as a singular event.

Those that have been "baptized" as infants should take note that baptism in the Holy Scriptures only occurs after faith in Christ, not the other way around.

Acts 19:1-5

Which baptism did you receive? – Acts 19:3

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They replied, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they answered. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. **He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.**" **On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.**

Faith in Jesus Christ is stressed yet again as a prerequisite to baptism. **It cannot be looked back on in retrospect (as is practiced with infant baptism)**. These disciples had been baptized, but they did not have faith in Jesus at the time of their immersion. **Therefore, they needed to be baptized correctly**. They lacked a complete teaching on baptism (one element was missing--faith in Jesus), so Paul deemed it insufficient, taught them what they lacked, and baptized them properly.

Paul taught only **ONE** baptism. ([Ephesians 4:4-5](#)) **This ONE baptism is *into Christ for the forgiveness of sins after a person hears, believes and repents***. John the Baptist's baptism was one of repentance (for the forgiveness of sins nonetheless) These disciples only knew John's baptism. They did not know yet the baptism of Jesus Christ that had replaced John's starting when the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost in [Acts 2](#). **Since there is only ONE baptism and the baptism of John's was no longer valid, Paul had them baptized right, with the ONE baptism.**

"Baptism" that is not "for the forgiveness of sins" is **not that one baptism** and should be looked on in the same manner as a "baptism" that occurs before a person has faith in Christ—it **needs to be done in the correct Biblical manner**. **If these disciples could not look back and apply their newfound faith in Christ retroactively to a different baptism (John's), how then, can we look back on a different baptism (one that is NOT for the forgiveness of sins) and apply our newfound faith to *it*?**

We know John the Baptist preached a baptism for the forgiveness of sins. ([Mark 1:4](#), [Luke 3:3](#))

We know Peter preached a baptism for the forgiveness of sins. ([Acts 2:38](#))

We know that Jewish baptism ([Tevillah](#)) was **for the forgiveness/removal of sins**. (See [John 3:3-5](#))

Before the protestant reformation movement, baptism was always **for the forgiveness of sins**.

Baptism that is not **for the forgiveness of sins** is a *different* baptism than the ONE baptism in Scripture. It is for a *different purpose*. It is NOT for the purpose that scriptural baptism is for—which is for the removal of our sins. And if it is NOT for that purpose, how then can our sins be forgiven? If we deny baptism is when our sins are forgiven and we pass from death to life, are we not denying the resurrection as well as the Word of God? And if we deny the resurrection, we deny Christ. So if a person did not understand baptism is when they become saved (i.e. their sins are forgiven) then they must have been receiving a different baptism. Anyone who has received the ONE baptism understands and believes this is when their sins are washed away. If we believe we receive forgiveness before baptism we have believed something contrary to the word of God. Furthermore, if we say we are saved prior to baptism we are not believing the Gospel message and are contradicting God. **We are not acknowledging our state of being lost, or, our sins. That's not a very good way to approach God if we are wanting Him to forgive our transgressions.**

The idea that baptism is not for the removal/forgiveness of sins is a modern day idea that is contrary to the Word of God, the practices of the first disciples, and the teaching of Jesus. Jesus taught one cannot be saved unless one is baptized (John 3:5 See also [Mark 16:15-16](#)) **If sin is what separates us from God, then our sins would have to be forgiven in order to be saved**. If sins are forgiven at baptism, this would account for His teaching that we must be baptized in order to enter the kingdom of God. If sins are *not* forgiven at baptism, then His teaching is inconsistent with the rest of Scripture.

Certainly if Jesus, who was sinless, was concerned with “fulfilling all righteousness” in [His baptism](#), we, as sinners, should be even *more* concerned about doing the same with ours.

Some (such as Baptists) may ask if what we believe about baptism at time of immersion matters. I.e., *Is it important for us to believe that God is forgiving our sins in baptism when we are baptized?* The answer is, **yes**, it is **vital** that we **believe** and understand what baptism is about, otherwise we are undergoing a different baptism, which is not the ONE baptism of [Ephesians 4:4-5](#). The Colossians believed that God was working to make them a new creation in baptism. Notice the phrase “through faith in the working of God”:

Colossians 2:12

and you were **buried** with him in **baptism**, in which you were **also raised** with him **through faith in the working of God**, who raised him from the dead.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God...

Which baptism did you receive? Acts 19:3 **BE HONEST (Your life depends on it)**

	Scripture	The ONE baptism in the Bible	“Baptist” or “non-denominational” baptism
Full water immersion?	Acts 8:36-39 , Colossians 2:12	YES	YES
For the purpose of having your sins forgiven/washed away?	Acts 2:38 , Acts 22:16	YES	NO
To save you?	1Peter 3:21	YES	NO
To be reborn?	John 3:3-5	YES	NO
To have new life?	Romans 6:3-4	YES	NO
Required for salvation/criteria for judgment?	John 3:5 , Mark 16:15-16	YES	NO
United with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection THROUGH baptism?	Romans 6:3-6	YES	NO
Saved before baptism?	--	NO	YES
CONCLUSION:		Biblical baptism	Non-Biblical baptism--needs to be corrected

Some different “baptisms” that are taught today:

Which baptism is Biblical today?	Explanation	Reference
“Baptism of the Holy Spirit”	Happened <u>once</u> to the Jews in Acts 2 and <u>once</u> to the Gentiles in Acts 10. Has since passed away 2000 years ago.	Acts 2 , Acts 10 See here also
Infant baptism	Must believe, repent, and make conscious decision to follow	Acts 16:30-33 --Faith must precede baptism

	Christ. Doctrine of "original sin" false.	Acts 8:36-39 --Faith must precede baptism Acts 2:38 --Repentance with baptism
Baptism for the dead	Man faces judgment after death	Hebrews 9:27
Baptism as a "public confession of faith"	Not taught in bible	--
Baptism for the forgiveness of sins into Christ	The ONE baptism spoken of in Ephesians 4:4-5	Acts 2:38 , Acts 22:16 , 1Peter 3:20-21 , Colossians 2:12 , Galatians 3:26-27 , John 3:3-5 , Mark 16:15-16 , Titus 3:5 , Matthew 28:19-20 , Acts 8:26-40

Baptism is...

Baptism is **how** we get into Christ.
Baptism is always accompanied by **faith and repentance**.
Baptism is God's terms of surrender.
Baptism is our signal to God we have accepted Christ's gospel.
Baptism is the external washing with water and the internal washing away of sin by God.
Baptism is "calling on the name of the Lord."
Baptism is being unified with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection.
Baptism is "clothing" ourselves with Christ.
Baptism is "accepting" Christ (on *His* terms, not ours)
Baptism is **when** our sins are forgiven.
Baptism is **when** we receive the Holy Spirit.
Baptism is **how** and when we come into contact with the blood of Christ.
Baptism is **when** we are reborn.
Baptism is an act of faith.
Baptism is **how** we enter the kingdom of God.
Baptism is when we are added to the body of Christ (the church).
Baptism is **when** we exchange our life for His.
Baptism is **when** we die to ourselves and come alive in Christ.
Baptism is the washing of regeneration, and renewal of the Holy Spirit.
Baptism is the starting gun of a race of a new life.
Baptism is proclaiming in Christ the resurrection of the dead.
Baptism is **when** the old dies and the new arises. In this manner we become saved.
Baptism is the point in time when we become saved.
Baptism is when we stop living for ourselves and start living for Jesus.
Baptism is **how** and when we scripturally make a conscious decision to dedicate our lives to Christ.
Baptism is **how** we scripturally enter into a relationship with Christ.
Baptism is the gavel striking the bench proclaiming forgiveness of sins, the end of the old and the birth of the new.

BAPTISM:

is done **FOR the forgiveness of sins** (Acts 2:38)
is done to **SAVE** us (1Peter 3:21, Acts 2:40, Mark 16:16)
Is done to **WASH AWAY OUR SINS** (Acts 22:16)
is done to be **REBORN to new life** (John 3:5, Romans 6:3-6)
is done to **CLOTHE** ourselves with Christ (Gal 3:26-27)
is done **so that GOD will RESURRECT us from death** (Colossians 2:12, Romans 6:3-6)
is done as a **REQUIRMENT** to enter heaven (John 3:5)
is done to put us **INTO CHRIST** (Romans 6:3-6, Galatians 3:26-27, 1Corinthians 12:13)

When accompanied by **faith and repentance**, baptism (immersion) is **how** and **when** our sins are washed away. If it is not done **for the purpose of** washing our sins away ([Acts 22:16](#)), it is not the ONE baptism of the New Testament ([Ephesians 4:4-5](#)) and therefore the "baptism" is invalid. It needs to be done in the correct, Scriptural manner.

When Jesus died on the cross, He, who had no sin, paid the death penalty for **our** sins. Through baptism we are united, or joined with Christ in paying the death penalty for sin. We are baptized into His death, into the death penalty for sin. We, who are unable to return from death because we have sin, are joined to Christ—and since Christ is sinless and was victorious over death, we, now being united with Him through baptism, are made victorious being united with Christ in His resurrection.

Now if God allows us to participate in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (an event which occurred 2000 years ago), **through baptism**, it can *truly* be said we are saved through faith and God's grace!

Baptism can be likened to the Israelites coming up out of the land of slavery, passing through the Red Sea and entering the Promised Land. Baptism can be likened to passing through the flood of Noah. Baptism is about leaving our old sinful, worldly ways behind and taking upon our shoulders the yoke of Christ. It is about lifestyle change and dying to ourselves and doing God's will instead of ours. Our reason and purpose for living changes after baptism. Afterward is a new way of life. Baptism is about heart, faith, total commitment, surrender, self-denial, death, resurrection, repentance, and seeking God's mercy through Jesus Christ and the work He did on that cross on that day of infamy 2000 years ago.

Some common arguments critics use in an attempt to nullify the need for baptism:

[Thief on the cross](#)

[Invite Jesus into your heart through prayer \(Rev 3:20\)](#)

[But baptism is a “work” and we are not saved by works...we are saved by faith alone.](#)

[But I was baptized as an infant...](#)

[Sure, baptism is commanded, but it's not essential...](#)

[We are not saved when we are baptized in water; we are saved when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit.](#)

[If baptism is so important, then why isn't baptism mentioned in every single passage about conversion?](#)

[We are not saved by baptism; we are saved by the blood of Christ...](#)

[We are not saved by baptism, we are saved by grace...](#)

[“What happens to a person if they die before they are baptized?”](#)

[“What about the Greek word “eis” in Acts 2:38?”](#)

[“But Paul said he was not sent to baptize...”](#)

[“But God has answered my prayers for a long time, so how could I not be saved?”](#)

[Baptism in the name of Jesus, or baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?](#)

The first thing Satan always attacks is the Word of God. It was the first thing he attacked in the Garden of Eden and the Word of God is still the first thing he attacks today. His tactics have not changed a bit. He keeps using the same old strategy over and over again on fresh batches of people. As generations come and as generations go, he repeatedly deceives the nations in the same way.

In the beginning, God told Eve, “**Do not eat of the fruit of the tree...**” and Satan came along and said, “Did God **really** say ‘Do not eat of the fruit of the tree?’” He managed to persuade Eve that's not really what God meant. Satan asks people the same question today, “Did God **really** say you need to be baptized to be saved?”

The answer is, “**Yes**, He did.”

Why are there so many that profess to believe in Jesus Christ but have such a hard time with what should be clearly apparent to them? There are many passages on baptism in the Scriptures. It seems so clear and obvious to some but more difficult for others. Why is this?

Perhaps the answer can be found in being tied to this verse and the message of the cross:

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into his death?** We were therefore buried with him **through baptism into death in order that** just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, **we too may live a new life.** If we have been **united with him in his death.** We will certainly be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that **our old self was crucified with him** so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, **that we should no longer be slaves to sin**—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if **we died with Christ,** we believe that we will also live with him. --Romans 6:3-8

Q: Where did Jesus die?

A: Christ died on a cross!

Baptism is when we become united with Christ and are crucified with Him. And those that resist the Scriptural teaching of baptism, resist the message of the cross:

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. –1Corinthians 1:18

And it is impossible to separate the message of the cross from the biblical teaching of baptism. The **two go hand in hand. The message of the cross is gut wrenching enough, let alone it now becoming when WE, ourselves must personally decide to be crucified with Christ and become unified with Him in His death—which was on the cross! Consider what Jesus went through on**

[the cross](#). And then consider that all we have to do to be saved is believe, repent of our sins and be immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins. This is *nothing* considering what He did for us that day on that cross two millenniums ago...

**The work of the cross is God's offer of life...
Baptism is our acceptance.**

It should be noted full well, that God is a God of order, light and truth, not one of confusion and darkness. By giving us the scriptures, God wants us to *understand* and *see*. His purpose is not to confuse. If we see everything that God is telling us about baptism and its essential need, we see the perfect *order* and *harmony* in these scriptures. If baptism *is* necessary then it is not hard to see the wonderful agreement, conformity, and synchronization of these scriptures. They all fit together perfectly, like pieces of a puzzle. If baptism is *not* necessary, and if we accept the critics "explanations", we see confusing meanings, contradictory commands, clashing explanations, and conflicting instructions, along with a schizophrenic God that can't make up his mind about anything He is trying to tell us. We end up understanding *less* than when we started! *But God is not a God of confusion but one of order.*

To those who may be more aware of the spiritual battle that rages around us...

If baptism *is* as important as we are making out, if it *is* when we become saved and God forgives our sins, then wouldn't you just expect the devil to set up every argument he could against the need and necessity of baptism? Would you not expect him to resist and attempt to persuade the world that one does not need to be baptized into Christ? He does not just roll over and die without a fight. And if we were to consider what arguments to use to deceive people what arguments would they be?

It is a grave mistake to remove the essential necessity of baptism from the gospel message! Jesus *started* His public ministry by being baptized Himself and He *ended* it by commanding the Apostles to baptize and teach disciples as they went into the entire world.

There are many people who have a deep and sincere faith in Christ. Yet, because the Word of God does not capitulate to *the teachings of men*, these people are being held at the "one yard line" by error (to use a phrase from the sport of American football). Though they sit on the doorstep to the kingdom of heaven, they have not yet entered in. If Jesus were on the earth today I believe Christ would say something like, **You are not far from the kingdom of heaven. You lack this one thing. Go and do this to fulfill all righteousness.** [Do not be like the foolish who, though they were at the very door, remained locked out.](#)

Christ died a [painful, excruciating, humiliating death](#) for us. Consider the [words of Isaiah](#) the prophet concerning the Christ. All Christ asks is we be baptized into His name to experience His resurrection and victory over death (and then follow Him for the rest of our life). He died alone on that cross and was separated from God for us. Being unified with Him in His death is the only way to be unified into His life. **Baptism is a simple and easy thing to do. It is time to put aside human teachings and traditions of men and follow the scriptures alone as our sole source of truth.**

For those people that have heard the Good News of Jesus Christ but have not yet been baptized, you are urged to do so immediately. Don't let the devil hold you at the one-yard line. You are so close. Get over that line. Being baptized is such a small thing. It takes a few moments. God has done so much for us and does not ask for much in return. Being baptized is a small thing to do in return. Christ set us an example Himself, and He commands it as well. It is the perfect measure of faith and action working together. --Faith that God will forgive your sins and add you to the kingdom of heaven and to His body and new life. This website has explained what baptism means and what is so significant about it. There is no need to delay any further.

Matthew 16:24-26

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will

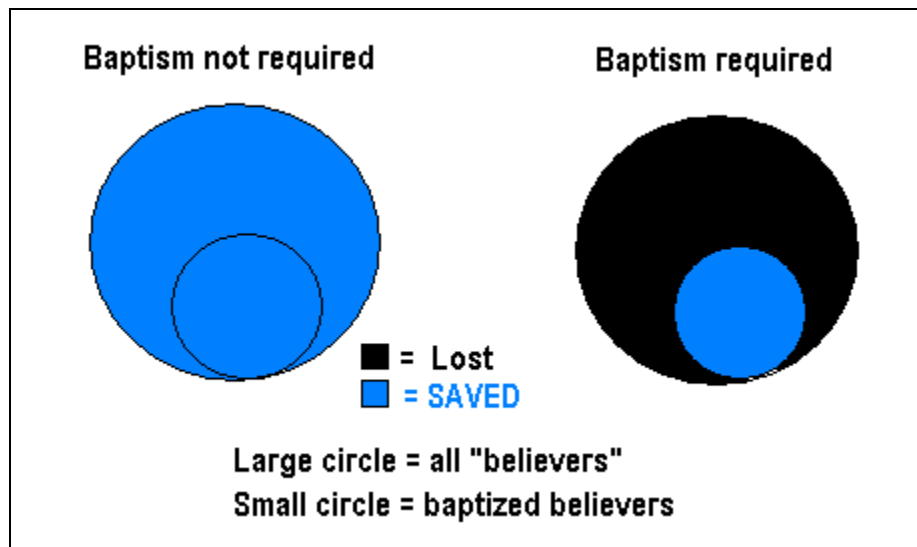
lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

"Enter in through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are they who enter in through it. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leads to life, and few are they that find it." --Matthew 7:13-14

Most assuredly I tell you, whoever will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child, he will in no way enter into it." --Mark 10:15

Here is some food for thought for those that wish to look at the issue using 100% logic:

If the critics were correct and baptism is NOT a requirement to be saved, and we ARE baptized, *we will still be saved*. But if, on the other hand, baptism IS required and we are NOT baptized, we will be lost.



"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."
—James 1:22

There are those who will try to use scripture to say that we don't need to be baptized to be saved. But the Scriptures make it very plain that baptism is a part of God's salvation plan for mankind. **The religious teachers of the day tried to use the scriptures against Jesus as well. But Jesus answered the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes—**

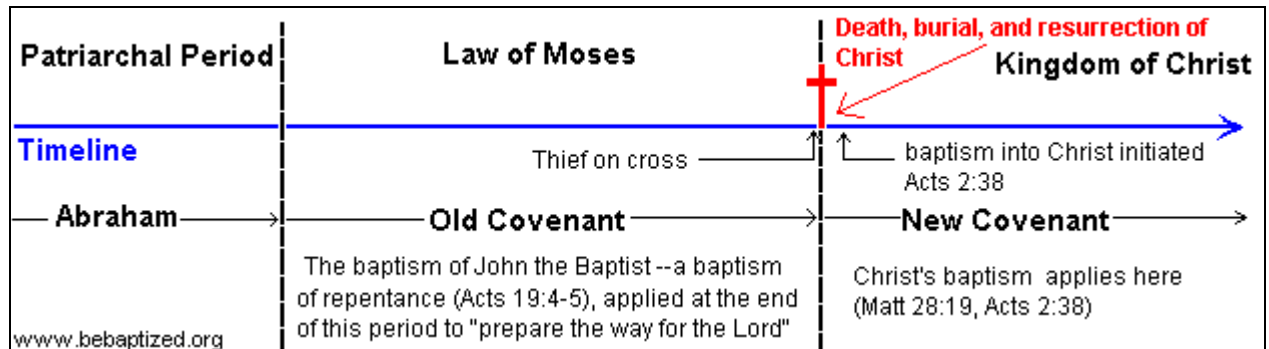
"Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? --Mark 12:24

The thief on the cross

Some will ask, "Well, what about the thief on the cross? He wasn't baptized and Jesus very clearly told him he would be in paradise. Doesn't that prove baptism is not essential for salvation?"

This is a perfectly valid question and makes sense at first glance. However, the problem arises from not having a clear understanding of what baptism represents and what the scriptures tell us about it. According to [Romans 6:3-6](#), **baptism represents being unified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection**. The problem with the thief on the cross when Jesus told him he would be with Him in paradise, is that **Jesus was still alive**. Christ had not yet **died** or been **buried**, so He had certainly **not risen** yet either. Baptism was not put into practice until Pentecost in [Acts chapter 2](#) **after** Christ had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven.

The thief on the cross was still under the Old Covenant and therefore **not** subject to this baptism. He was saved just like anyone else under the Old Covenant.



But besides that, when Christ was on this earth, He had the authority to forgive people of their sins. Look at [Mark 2:9-12](#):

Which is easier, to tell the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven;' or to say, 'Arise, and take up your bed, and walk?' **'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'** -- he said to the paralytic -- "I tell you, arise, take up your mat, and go to your house." He arose, and immediately took up the mat, and went out in front of them all; so that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

When Christ was on the cross, He was still on this earth. And He had the authority to forgive sins.

Invite Jesus into your heart through prayer

Revelation 3:20

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with me.”

This verse is taken out of context if it is applied to mean initial conversion. This is written in a letter to the church in Laodicea, i.e. to those that have *already* been baptized and have *already* been born again. *This is not a verse about conversion.* It was written to people who were *already* Christians (the church—see verse 14) and who were growing weak, in order to urge them back to a closer walk with God.

Many teach out of error that one only need say a prayer that goes something like this in order to be saved:

"Jesus, I know that I have sinned against you. I have sinned by my own choice. I take the responsibility for it. I know that I have earned punishment from You, and that the fair punishment would be death. Jesus, I believe that You died in my place. Forgive me for my sin. I cannot cover up or take my sin away, I am relying totally and completely on You. I am completely helpless. You are the only one who can save me. I reject my sin, I turn away from it, and I repent. Please come into my life, wash away my sin, and show me how to live my life in a way that is right and pleasing to You."

Nowhere in scripture do we see anyone “praying for salvation.” Although the thoughts and attitudes expressed in this prayer are exactly correct, *it needs to be followed up with baptism into Christ so that your sins will be forgiven.* Saying a prayer for salvation may sound reasonable from a human standpoint, *but it is totally unbiblical and foreign to the New Testament.*

Scripture	Prayer of “invitation to Jesus” taught?	Baptism taught?
Acts 2:38-41	NO!	YES!
Acts 8:5-12	NO!	YES!
Acts 8:26-40	NO!	YES!
Acts 9:18	NO!	YES!
Acts 10:47-48	NO!	YES!
Acts 16:15	NO!	YES!
Acts 16:16-33	NO!	YES!
Acts 18:8	NO!	YES!
Acts 19:3-5	NO!	YES!
Acts 22:16	NO!	YES!

If you have prayed a prayer like this, you have been stopped just short of the “one yard line” (to use a term from the sport of American football) You may have asked the Lord to show you what He wants you to do in your life. So keep going. Don’t stop now. *Go get baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.*

If you have prayed such a prayer asking God to save you, He is responding to your prayer right now by telling you what HIS salvation plan is and that you have not heard the full story! He has heard your plea and wants to save you. God wants you to know His salvation plan involves being baptized for the forgiveness of your sins.

**The work of the cross is God’s offer of life...
Baptism is our acceptance.**

“But baptism is a ‘work’ and we are not saved by works...we are saved by faith alone.”

First, we must consider what the definition of a “work” is that we are using. If one defines baptism a “work” then we must also label **believing** a “work”. We must also label **repenting** a “work”. **Believing** and **repenting** are both things we **must DO** as a prerequisite to salvation. They are both things that require human **action**. Baptism is merely the last part of that equation. James tells us he will show us his faith by what he **does**.

Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself. -James 2:17

It must be remembered that although baptism is something we must *do* (like believing and repenting), baptism is an **act of faith**, not a “work.” It must also be noted that the one at “work” when we are baptized is **God**, not us. See [Colossians 2:12](#). Just as we must report to the hospital before a surgeon can operate on us, so too, we must “report to God” in the waters of baptism, submitting to God and claiming His promise so that our sins will be forgiven. **Just as it is the surgeon who is the one who is at work when we are operated on, so too, it is God who is the one who is at work when we undergo baptism.**

Baptism is a once-in-a-lifetime event. It is our **birth** ([John 3:3-5](#)). Baptism is not an on going process such as feeding the poor, or clothing the homeless or offering sacrifices as they did under the Old Covenant. Doing good deeds cannot earn us eternal life.

Baptism is a manifestation of faith. It is **not Man who is at work in baptism; it is God**. Baptism is not a “work of righteousness.” **On the contrary, if anything, it should be considered a work of UNrighteousness.** We are baptized because we are corrupt, unrighteous and spiritually **dead** in sin. This is why we are **buried** with HIM into DEATH as explained in [Romans 6](#). **It is the DEAD that are buried, not the living.**

But God has always measured faith by our **actions**, as James 2:17-26 tells us:

Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself. But, someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith apart from works, and I by my works will show you my faith. You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe -- and shudder. But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith apart from works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Do you see how faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, and he was called Friend of God. You see, then, that out of works is man declared righteous, and not out of faith only; And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? For as the body without a spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Did you catch that? There are many who teach one is saved by “faith alone,” but there is only one place in the bible where the phrase “faith alone” is found—[James 2:24](#). And it states very plainly we are **NOT saved by faith alone!!!**

“You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.”

It is **faith** (or belief) that **causes** us to **respond** to God’s Word—the Gospel message. It is **faith** in God’s Word, that tells us Christ died in our place and rose again, that causes us to **believe**. It is our **belief** in God’s Word that **causes us to turn from our sins and repent**. It is our **belief** in God’s Word that **causes** us to go into the water in repentance for the purpose of having our sins forgiven and “washed away.” And it is in **this** manner that it can be said we are saved by faith. If we believe God’s Word about His salvation plan and respond accordingly, only then it can be said we are saved by our faith—because it is **faith** that acts as the **catalyst** to our **response**

(repentance and baptism). If we do not **believe**, then we will not repent, **nor** will we go down into the water **for the purpose** of having our sins forgiven.

Even Martin Luther, who coined the phrase "salvation by faith only", understood that salvation by grace through faith did not preclude the necessity of baptism:

In answer to the question, *What does Baptism give? What good is it?* Luther replied in his Small Catechism, "**It gives the forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the Devil, gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, just as God's words and promises declare.**"

It must always be emphasized that baptism is an act in which **God** works, not Man. This happens **through faith** in God's Word—His Son. In baptism we, the dead, are joined with Christ into His death. Then, being united with Him together in this death and burial, just as Christ arose from the dead, so too, **He** brings us up, still unified as one, with Him to resurrected life.

Those that have been misled into thinking baptism is a "work" and one only need say a prayer to be saved, must realize that baptism is no more a "work" than is saying the "sinner's prayer" or "praying Jesus into your heart."

Furthermore, it must be clarified what is meant by the term, "*work*". And we must define the phrase-- "*not saved by works*" if we are going to debate it. **Few would argue the work of the cross saves us**. However, no work of ourselves can save us. Only the work of God can do that. So in the argument -- "*we are not saved by works...*" it must be clarified that what is really meant is-- "*we are not saved by works of ourselves*". **But the Word of God does not ascribe baptism to that as being a work of man. The Scriptures credit baptism to that as being the work of God. Accordingly, we ARE saved by works—it's just that the "work" isn't *ours*; It's the work of God!**

Colossians 2:12

and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Martin Luther himself was often misunderstood and misrepresented by critics of baptism who oppose the very Word of God they claim to uphold. Yet he clarified [in his writings](#) exactly what he taught:

"For to be baptized in the name of God is to be baptized not by men, but by God Himself. Therefore although it is performed by human hands, **it is nevertheless truly God's own work...**"

"...But as our would-be wise, new spirits assert that faith alone saves, and that works and external things avail nothing, **we answer:** It is true, indeed, that nothing in us is of any avail but faith, as we shall hear still further. **But these blind guides are unwilling to see this, namely, that faith must have something which it believes, that is, of which it takes hold, and upon which it stands and rests.** Thus faith clings to the water, and believes that it is **Baptism, in which there is pure salvation and life; not through the water (as we have sufficiently stated), but through the fact that it is embodied in the Word and institution of God, and the name of God inheres in it.** Now, if I believe this, what else is it than believing in God as in Him who has given and planted His Word into this ordinance, and proposes to us this external thing wherein we may apprehend such a treasure?"

Now, they are so mad as to separate faith and that to which faith clings and is bound though it be something external. Yea, it shall and must be something external, that it may be apprehended by the senses, and understood and thereby be brought into the heart, as indeed the entire Gospel is an external, verbal preaching. In short, what God does and

works in us He proposes to work through such external ordinances. Wherever, therefore, He speaks, yea, in whichever direction or by whatever means He speaks, thither faith must look, and to that it must hold. Now here we have the words: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. To what else do they refer than to Baptism, that is, to the water comprehended in God's ordinance? **Hence it follows that whoever rejects Baptism rejects the Word of God, faith, and Christ, who directs us thither and binds us to Baptism.**

In the third place since we have learned the great benefit and power of Baptism, let us see further who is the person that receives what Baptism gives and profits. This is again most beautifully and clearly expressed in the words: **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. That is, faith alone makes the person worthy to receive profitably the saving, divine water.** For, since these blessings are here presented and promised **in the words in and with the water, they cannot be received in any other way** than by believing them with the heart. Without faith it profits nothing, notwithstanding it is in itself a divine superabundant treasure. Therefore this single word (He that believeth) effects this much that it excludes and repels all works which we can do, in the opinion that we obtain and merit salvation by them. For it is determined that whatever is not faith avails nothing nor receives anything.

But if they say, as they are accustomed: Still Baptism is itself a work, **and you say works are of no avail for salvation; what then, becomes of faith? Answer: Yes, our works, indeed, avail nothing for salvation; Baptism, however, is not our work, but God's** (for, as was stated, you must put Christ-baptism far away from a bath-keeper's baptism). God's works, however, are saving and **necessary** for salvation, and do not exclude, but demand, faith; for without faith they could not be apprehended..."

"...**Thus you see plainly that there is here no work done by us**, but a treasure which **He** gives us, and which faith apprehends; just as the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross is not a work, but a treasure comprehended in the Word, and offered to us and received by faith. **Therefore they do us violence by exclaiming against us as though we preach against faith; while we alone insist upon it as being of such necessity that without it nothing can be received nor enjoyed.**"

Submerging beneath the surface of water and getting wet is not a "work". The "work" that is done in baptism is done by God, not by man. The "work" that is done in baptism is the removal of the stain of sin from a person's soul for all eternity. The "work" that is done in baptism is the transference of a sinner from the kingdom of *darkness* to the kingdom of *light*. The "work" that is done in baptism is God taking a *dead* man and making him *alive*! The "work" that is done in baptism is God taking the *unrighteous* and declaring them *righteous*. The "work" that is done in baptism is God clothing the sinner with the righteousness of Jesus. The "work" that is done in baptism is God uniting together man's spirit with Christ's. **And this could NEVER, EVER be accomplished by man! The miracle that happens in baptism is not anything man does. It is something God Himself does through His Son, Jesus Christ.**

Again, baptism is not our work, it is His!

In speaking about marriage, Jesus said,

"So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." –Matthew 19:6

The participants of the wedding ceremony are no more credited with joining the man and the woman together than are participants of baptism. God does not give such credit to mere servants for this union, but reserves that honor for Himself-- and rightly so. Jesus sees marriage as something **God** does, not man. And so it is with baptism.

Just as the Lord tells us it is **God Himself** who is the one who does the joining in marriage, **so too**, baptism is viewed in the **same way**. It is God who joins us with Christ in baptism. This is a divine miracle and something infinitely beyond human capability. In a similar sense, as a man and a woman becoming united, we become united with Christ in the waters of baptism. **And in all of this, it is God who does the joining.** It is God who makes the two become one. **That is how it is not only in marriage, but in baptism as well.** Just as marriage is a spiritual union between a man and a woman that God gets the credit for, so too, baptism is a spiritual union (between Christ and man) that God gets the credit for because it is God who does the joining.

Ephesians 5:30-32

for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church.

And Christ frequently portrayed Himself as the Bridegroom. In the book of Revelation, the church is portrayed as the bride. This indeed, is profound.

The following e-mail was contributed by Jef Lee:

I have found out baptism is NOT a work - by any definition.

Believing is!

John 6:28,29 KJV Then said they unto him, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said unto them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

When one lists the step one must take to follow the example of those in Acts, we see:

- * Someone else must preach the Gospel in my presence - Romans 10:14,15
- * I must hear the Gospel that is preached - same verses
- * I must believe the Gospel - Romans 10:16,17; Hebrews 11:6
- * I must repent -Acts 17:30; Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3,5
- * I must confess Jesus of Nazareth, born of Mary to be the Son of God, the Messiah - Romans 10:9
- * Someone must baptize me - Acts 2:38; etc.

Note that the first and last "steps" require someone else "doing" something to me. I do not baptize myself. In fact, other than submitting to the act, I do nothing. Absolutely nothing.

This is not semantic trickery. It is basic English 101 (or Greek if you can read it). We all read the sentence from the blackboard, "The cat sat on the mat." Even a six year old child who was asked, "What did the mat do?", would answer, "Nothing!" If we change the sentence from "active voice" to "passive voice", we get, "The mat was sat upon by the cat." Again, "What did the mat do?" Again, "Nothing!"

The work is done by the baptizer not the baptizee. And to say that we are NOT saved by the works others do, would be to deny the work Our Lord did on

the cross.

Our submission to being baptized is a realization of the faith we have in God - James 2:22. No one would deny that Abraham had great faith in God, but until he went by faith into the wilderness and by faith proceeded to offer up Isaac, his faith had not been realized - seen to be real!

Why won't they see what God wants?

How do we become a part of His body (which is the church)?

Through baptism:

1Corinthians 12:13

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Romans 6:3

Galatians 3:27

BAPTIZED>>>>INTO CHRIST

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. – Ephesians 1:7-8

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus – Romans 8:1

But I was baptized as an infant...

The concept of infant “baptism” is totally foreign to the Holy Scriptures. This practice stems from the erroneous teaching of “original sin.” **The Bible does not give one single example or command of any baby being baptized anywhere.** The Bible does not teach babies are born separated from God. On the contrary, Jesus taught that the kingdom of heaven belongs to little children...

But Jesus said, "Allow the little children, and don't forbid them to come to me; for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven."- Matthew 19:14

To explore the topic of infant baptism we must also look into the erroneous teaching of “original sin.” The idea behind baptizing a baby is to remove “original sin”, i.e., the sin of Adam and Eve.

But *if* humans are “born in sin” and separated from God, then Jesus would not have been sinless. Jesus was not 50% God and 50% man. He was 100% God and 100% man. **And “He committed no sin...” (1Peter 2:22; See also Hebrews 4:15) Sin is something we commit. Sin is not something we are born with or “in”.**

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law:
for sin is the transgression of the law. - 1John 3:4

The process of falling is a step-by-step process in which we turn away from God and commit acts contrary to His will:

but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. – James 1:14-15

Notice in the above verses nowhere does it even imply we are *born in sin*.

Paul taught that we fall short because *we sinned-*

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”-Romans 3:23

The word “sinned” is an active verb. It means we did something. We sinned. Although we have a *disposition* to sin, we are not born lost and separated from God. How can babies who can't even yet speak, sin?

Paul reiterates this idea again:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—Romans 5:12

Notice this does not say men were born into sin. It says death comes because we all sin. The word “sinned” is an active verb. This means we have an active hand in our own demise. It is something we do to ourselves. Sin is an act. We commit sin; We are not born condemned. The act of Adam gave men the choice to sin because sin was now present. In Eden, Adam's eyes were opened and he realized he had a choice in whether to obey God or not. He saw the two paths set before him: obedience or disobedience. God gives us free will. The Bible says we all have chosen the wrong path at some point.

Adam's act brings death. In **choosing** to follow Adam's path we die.

Jesus Christ's act brings life. In **choosing** to follow Jesus' path we live.

But whether in Adam or in Christ (the Second Adam), we make a choice. And the end *result* is a result of that choice.

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of **one shall many be made righteous.-- Romans 5:19**

Or in other words:

In Adam, we do not **die** until we choose to **disobey**.

In Christ we do not **live** until we choose to **obey**.

But the end result of either is from the choice we make to obey or disobey. Both choices we have exist in the world as a result brought about by the actions of these “Adams”.

Adam’s disobedience doesn’t make *every* baby born *lost* anymore than Christ’s death automatically makes *every* human being *found*. Through Adam, *sin* has been set before us. Through Christ, *righteousness* has been set before us. If every human was born separated from God because Adam sinned and died, then every human being would be spiritually alive (saved) because Jesus obeyed and lives. But we can’t be saved *unless* we make a decision and choose to follow Christ. Likewise, we don’t die spiritually until we choose to disobey God—and sin. When Adam’s “eyes were opened” he realized he had a choice—and **we know what choice he made. Ultimately, whether we live or die, comes about by a choice we make.**

Another problem with the doctrine of “original sin” is that it teaches people they don’t have to take responsibility for their own sins.

Paul explains that there was a time when he was **alive** once (probably meaning as a child), but when God’s Law came (and he broke it), he **died**—just as Adam and Eve died when *they* sinned.

“For I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin came to life, and I died.” –Romans 7:9

Even in the Old Testament there is evidence to reason that babies are not born lost and separated from God:

"Why didn't I die from the womb? Why didn't I give up the spirit when my mother bore me? Why did the knees receive me? Or why the breast, that I should suck? For now should I have lain down and been quiet. I should have **slept, then I would have been at rest –Job 3:11-13**

The Bible often uses the term “sleep” and “rest” to describe a person who has died and gone to heaven.

The reasoning behind the error of baptizing babies and infants is to remove “original sin” so that if they die they will go to heaven. But the Bible teaches each man is accountable to God for his own sins, not the sins of others. Ask your Jewish friends. The concept of “original sin” is foreign to Judaism.

Yet say you, Why does not the son bear the iniquity of the father? when the son has done that which is lawful and right, and has kept all my statutes, and has done them, he shall surely live. **The soul who sins, he shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be on him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be on him. – Ezekiel 18:19-20**

and

"Fathers shall not be put to death for their sons, nor shall sons be put to death for their fathers; everyone shall be put to death **for his own sin," --Deuteronomy 24:16**

We are not held responsible to God for Adam’s sin. Babies are not born separated from God. Therefore there is no need to remove “original sin.” Baptizing an infant is an attempt to remove sin that is not there. Sin is disobeying God’s commands. Sin is falling short of His laws. What command has a baby disobeyed? Babies are not lost.

This is why we only find [believing, repentant adults](#), who have made *conscious decisions to follow Christ*, being baptized in the scriptures!

#1.) an infant does not hear or understand the Gospel of Christ

#2.) an infant cannot therefore believe in Jesus

#3.) More importantly, an infant has no sin and therefore has nothing to repent of, and needs no forgiveness.

Faith must always precede baptism.

Once a child grows and matures and becomes disobedient (and therefore sins) baptism can then enter the equation along with faith and repentance. No one knows what this "age of accountability" is, however; Each person is different.

But someone will say...

"Ok, although I was baptized as a baby and I don't even remember it, my parents told me it happened and then I went through "confirmation" when I was 13...."

What is one "confirming"? Is one confirming **belief (faith)** in Jesus Christ as the Son of God when baptized as an infant? Is one "confirming" **repentance** of sins not yet committed as an infant? Is one "confirming" making a **decision** to follow Christ when one was an infant? Baptism in the Holy Scriptures **only** occurs **after** faith in Christ, **not the other way around.**

You see, infant baptism is a complete and total error. The concept of "original sin" is a false teaching that prevents people from being baptized correctly. If one is baptized as an infant; if one went through "confirmation" **they were not baptized correctly.** It needs to be done correctly, according to the scriptures to be saved. Please do not delay.

But what about Psalm 58:3?

Psalm 58:3

Even from birth the wicked go astray;
from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.

Although this verse is usually cited in support of saying we are born lost, upon closer examination, this verse actually adds to the argument **against** all being born in a 'lost state.' If one is going to insist upon a *literal* interpretation of this verse, then let's look at it literally. The verse says "**the wicked go astray**" from birth. This implies two classes of individuals:

- 1.) the **wicked** and 2.) the **righteous**

If it is the **wicked** who go astray, then the righteous do **not** go astray. Therefore, not **all** are born lost. If **all** are born lost then they cannot **go astray**. They are **already** astray! I cannot go **outside** of a house unless I am **first inside** it. I cannot leave a place unless I am first there. This verse cannot be used to support that **all** people are born in a lost state because it teaches the exact opposite. Who goes astray? The wicked. Who then does not go astray? The righteous. The false doctrine of 'original sin' teaches **one** class at birth, not two.

We must always be careful when attempting to build entire doctrines around the often poetic verses of the Psalms, especially when our conclusions may run contrary to the vast weight of other Scriptures. Often times the language is symbolic, or employs literary techniques such as hyperbole (exaggeration) to make a point. It can be seen that this verse is symbolic because babies do not come out of the womb able to talk. It is the state of our heart that causes us to walk away from God. But God creates us all with a "clean slate." That is why Jesus said it was necessary to be "born again" (John 3:3). If we are born lost, what would be the point of being born again? What good would it do?

Questions for those that still want to say babies are “born in sin” or actually commit sin....

If babies sin.....

- 1.) Can you name one sin that babies commit?
- 2.) Why did Jesus say the kingdom of heaven belongs to little children? ([Matt 19:14](#))
- 3.) Where in the bible does it show a baby committing sin?

If babies are “born in sin”

- 1.) Why did Ezekiel say each man is responsible for his own sin (actions), not those of his father --and vice versa? ([Ezekiel 18:19-20](#))
- 2.) Why did Moses say basically the same thing as Ezekiel? ([Deuteronomy 24:16](#))
- 3.) Why, if babies are born in sin, did Job say, if he had died at birth, he would have been “at rest”? ([Job 3:11-13](#))
- 4.) If humans are born in sin (and Jesus was 100% human), how then was Christ **sinless**?
- 5.) If babies are “born in sin” how was Paul ever **ALIVE** “apart from the Law” at one time? ([Romans 7:9](#))
- 6.) Why did Jesus say the kingdom of heaven belongs to little children? ([Matt 19:14](#))
- 7.) If the concept of “original sin” is valid, then why wasn’t it taught in Judaism before Christ? Why isn’t it taught today? Why wasn’t it taught before the Catholic Church?
- 8.) If babies are born separated from God, and “in sin” then why does [Isaiah 59:1-2](#) teach that it is “**your iniquities**” and “**your sins**” that separates one from God? Why doesn’t it teach *Adams’ sin*, or something resembling “*original sin*” separates one from God?
- 9.) If babies are born in a “lost” state, what would be the point of Jesus telling us we must be born again? ([John 3:3](#)) **What good would it do?**

If babies are to be “baptized”...

- 1.) **Where** in the Bible does it **specifically** show or teach BABIES are to be baptized?
- 2.) How are babies saved without **faith in Christ**? ([John 8:24](#))
- 3.) How are babies saved without **repenting**? ([Luke 13:3,5](#))
- 4.) Without faith and **repentance** (which a baby does not need to do because he has not yet sinned) how is “baptism” any different than bathing?
- 5.) If babies can be saved **without faith** and **without repentance** (**and have sin**), *why are adults required to have faith and repentance?*

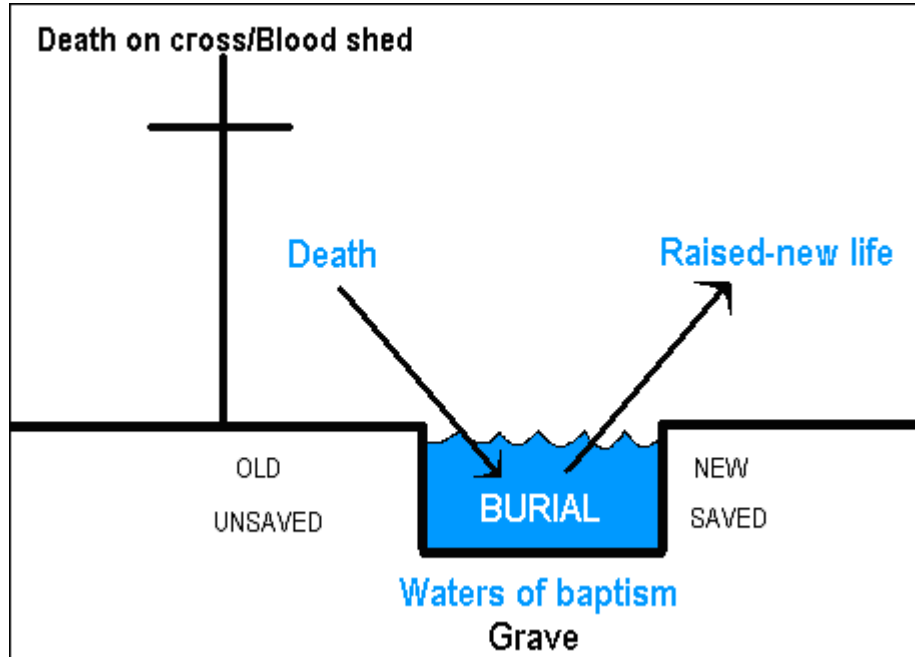
And finally...

Is there more than one way to be saved?

Some protest the need for baptism saying...

'I believe baptism is commanded by God but not essential for salvation. It is merely an "outward sign of a work that has already taken place within."

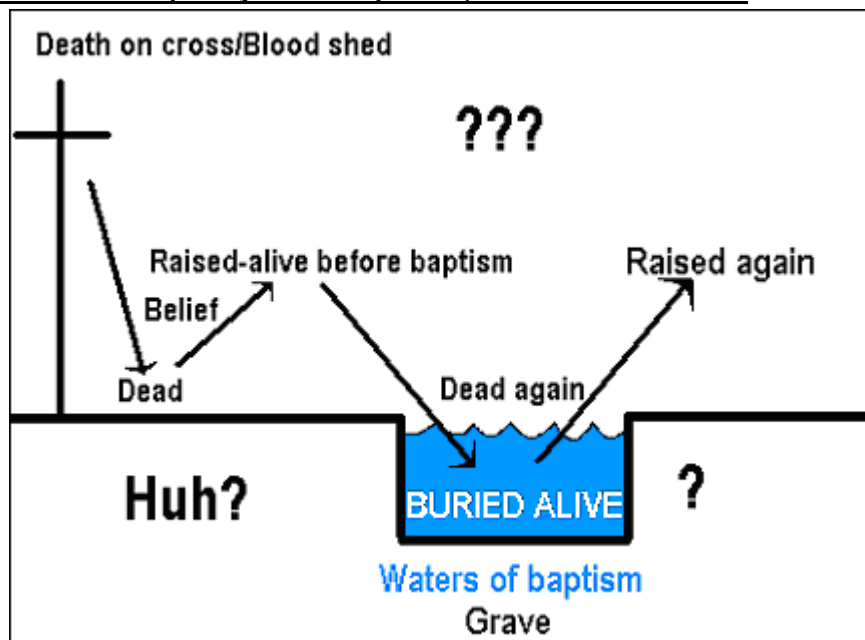
According to [Romans 6:3-10](#) and [Colossians 2:12](#) we are dead and unified with Jesus *through baptism* into His death, His burial and His resurrection:



Biblical baptism

"He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." –Mark 16:16

According to this erroneous teaching, which states: *We are saved when we believe and are resurrected at that point and are then baptized as a sign of "what has already taken place,"* we get another and completely different picture, which looks like this:



Denominational baptism

"He who believes and is saved shall be baptized." – Denominational tradition

We don't bury *live* people. On the contrary; *We bury dead ones!* This teaching, when looked at closely, is NOT what the Word of God teaches about baptism in [Romans 6](#) and [Colossians 2:12](#). This is not a Biblical baptism. Romans 6:9-10 states Christ died ONCE and cannot die again! We are unified with Him in death, buried with Him and also raised with Him *through baptism*. How does all this take place? By faith.

If we are "saved" before we are baptized, then baptism has no meaning and is contradictory to itself.

Furthermore, [Ephesians 4:4-5](#) states that there is only ONE baptism, not two! A person must choose which baptism is the one that is taught in scripture. And there is only ONE Gospel.

If we deny *baptism* is *when* we are *reborn*, we are denying not only our own [resurrection \(and rebirth\)](#) but also [Christ's resurrection](#).

To further clarify and reinforce this point see [1Corinthians 10:1-4](#), and remember the following illustration from the Old Testament as an illustration for us today:

God brought Israel:

1. out of Egypt (the land of slavery--i.e. sin)
2. through the sea (water -i.e. baptism)
3. and into the promised land (Israel—i.e. salvation, redemption)

God did NOT bring Israel:

1. out of Egypt (the land of slavery--i.e. sin)
3. into the promised land (Israel--i.e. salvation, redemption)
2. then through the sea (water -i.e. baptism)

Baptism is nothing new in God's salvation plan. It is something He has always used to illustrate the separating of sin from mankind. God has always saved people *through water*. It was foreshadowed long ago in the Old Testament scriptures.

Consider Nadab and Abihu and their strange fire in [Leviticus 10:1-3](#) and King Saul and his own way of doing things in [1 Samuel 13 & 15](#).

1 Corinthians 10:6,11

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did...

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.

Romans 10:2-3

For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

Romans 15:4

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Consider also this passage:

Mark 16:15-16

And he said unto them, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he that does not believe shall be condemned.

Notice Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Notice also what Jesus did NOT say. He did NOT say, "He that believeth and is saved shall be baptized."

In great error, most denominations teach the latter. In other words, most denominations teach what Jesus did NOT say! This should send a chill up the spine of anyone who is truly seeking to follow the teachings of Christ.

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free."—John 8:31-32

Notice: holding to Christ's teaching = being His disciple.

Therefore NOT holding to Christ's teaching = NOT being His disciple!

This is a very simple test God gave us to determine who is and who is not a disciple of Christ.

Some (such as Baptists) may ask if what we believe about baptism at time of immersion matters. I.e., *Is it important for us to believe that God is forgiving our sins in baptism when we are baptized?* The answer is, **yes**, it is **vital** that we **believe** and understand what baptism is about, otherwise we are undergoing a different baptism, which is not the ONE baptism of [Ephesians 4:4-5](#). The Colossians believed that God was working to make them a new creation in baptism. Notice the phrase "through faith in the working of God":

Colossians 2:12

and you were **buried** with him in **baptism**, in which you were **also raised** with him **through faith in the working of God**, who raised him from the dead.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is **impossible** to please God...

Which baptism did you receive? Acts 19:3 BE HONEST (Your life depends on it)

	Scripture	The ONE baptism in the Bible	"Baptist" or "non-denominational" baptism
Full water immersion?	Acts 8:36-39 , Colossians 2:12	YES	YES
For the purpose of having your sins forgiven/washed away?	Acts 2:38 , Acts 22:16	YES	NO
To save you?	1Peter 3:21	YES	NO
To be reborn?	John 3:3-5	YES	NO
To have new life?	Romans 6:3-4	YES	NO
Required for salvation/criteria for judgment?	John 3:5 , Mark 16:15-16	YES	NO
United with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection THROUGH baptism?	Romans 6:3-6	YES	NO
Saved before baptism?	--	NO	YES
CONCLUSION:		Biblical baptism	Non-Biblical baptism--needs to be corrected

Some different "baptisms" that are taught today:

Which baptism is Biblical today?	Explanation	Reference
"Baptism of the Holy Spirit"	Happened <u>once</u> to the Jews in Acts 2 and <u>once</u> to the Gentiles in Acts 10. Has since passed away 2000 years ago.	Acts 2 , Acts 10 See here also
Infant baptism	Must believe, repent, and make conscious decision to follow Christ. Doctrine of "original sin" false.	Acts 16:30-33 --Faith must precede baptism Acts 8:36-39 --Faith must precede baptism Acts 2:38 --Repentance with baptism
Baptism for the dead	Man faces judgment after death	Hebrews 9:27
Baptism as a "public confession of faith"	Not taught in bible	--
Baptism for the forgiveness of sins into Christ	The ONE baptism spoken of in Ephesians 4:4-5	Acts 2:38 , Acts 22:16 , 1Peter 3:20-21 , Colossians 2:12 , Galatians 3:26-27 , John 3:3-5 , Mark 16:15-16 , Titus 3:5 , Matthew 28:19-20 , Acts 8:36-39

Some say...

“We are not saved when we are baptized in water; we are saved when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit.”

First of all, the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” was never *commanded*; It was promised ---and could not be administered by men, *only by Jesus*. The baptism of the Great Commission was in water. The phenomenon of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” occurred twice in Scripture (Acts 2 and Acts 10). It never happened again in this outward, visible manner (which is what the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” was). This miraculous, outward sign was to verify and confirm the predicted coming of the Holy Spirit—which meant God’s eternal kingdom had now begun to establish itself on earth.

The “baptism of the Holy Spirit” as referred to by John the Baptist in Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16 is a separate and different occurrence than water baptism. It was an outward sign to confirm God’s Word and Christ’s prophecy of the coming of the kingdom—the start of Christ’s church, which happened at Pentecost over 2000 years ago.

But Ephesians 4:4-5 teaches there is only ONE baptism.

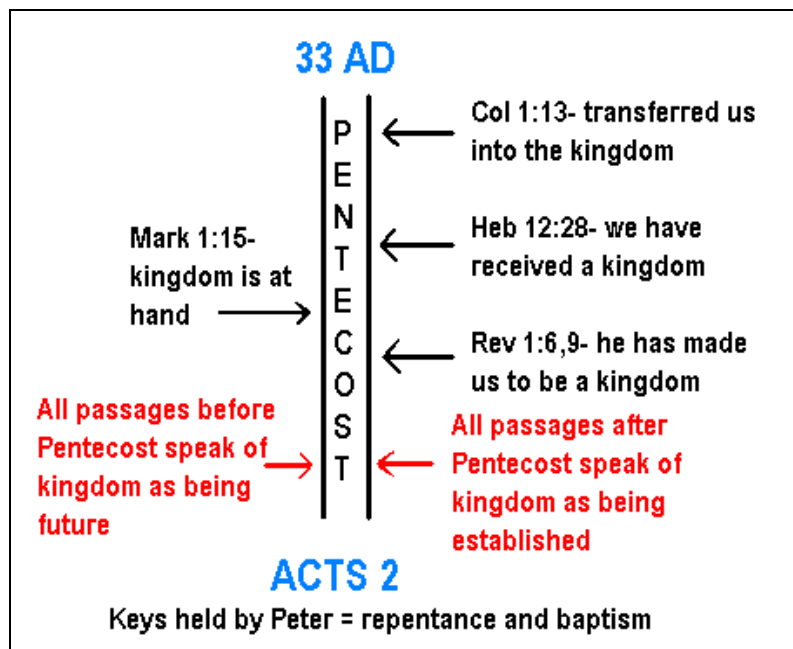


Which baptism can this be then? What is this ONE baptism?

It is the baptism of Christ spoken of by Peter starting on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:38 and continuing throughout the rest of the New Testament. It is the baptism that the Ethiopian eunuch underwent. It is the baptism that Paul underwent to have his sins washed away. New Testament baptism consists of two parts: water and Spirit, as the Lord spoke of to Nicodemus in John 3:3-5. Jesus said that the truth is that we must be born of the water and the Spirit in order to enter the Kingdom of God. In other words, we must be baptized to be saved. That is what the Lord Himself said.

“What was John talking about then when he talked about Christ, who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire? Doesn’t this happen today at conversion? Isn’t that what he meant?”

What John the Baptist was referring to was the coming of the kingdom of heaven—the start of the New Testament church. **From what John said, we know it was Christ who was at work on that day 2000 years ago at Pentecost.** Christ spoke of this and it was fulfilled at Pentecost in Acts Chapter 2.



The “gift of the Holy Spirit” that Peter spoke of in Acts 2:38 did not have an outward appearance as did the “tongues of fire” that had just come to rest on each of the Apostles shortly beforehand. The “tongues of fire” that came on the Apostles was the “baptism of the Holy Spirit”. The “gift of the Holy Spirit” promised to those that repent and are baptized was never an outward, visible phenomenon. The “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” is *invisible* to the human eye. The “*baptism of the Holy Spirit*” was *visible*. It does not occur today. The invisible “gift of the Holy Spirit” is received when we are baptized.

Those that teach that the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” happens today, teach a different “baptism of the Holy Spirit” than the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” recorded in Scripture. Those that teach today a “baptism of the Holy Spirit” teach an invisible one, but the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” in Scripture was VISIBLE!

Those that teach that people are “baptized in the Holy Spirit” today must be asked a question: “How do you know? Did you see it?” And if one cannot see it, *it is not “baptism of the Holy Spirit.”*

In **both** instances of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” ([Acts 2](#) {the Jews} and [Acts 10-11:18](#) {the Gentiles}) **baptism in WATER was practiced**. This is **undeniable**. In both cases, it was Peter who preached. And if the Apostle Peter taught, and even **commanded**, with the presence of the **VISIBLE** Holy Spirit, that baptism in **water** was **required**, then why on earth are there people today who teach baptism in water is *not* required?!

What we receive today is the *invisible* gift of the Holy Spirit (by faith)—which occurs at baptism in water. If we have believed in Jesus and repented, **we can confirm, or verify God’s promise of His Spirit** (and the forgiveness of our sins) by the water in which we are baptized. We cannot *see* someone receive the Spirit when they are baptized. This is *invisible* to humans. But God tells us in His Word what goes on in the heavenly realms and in the mind of God when someone is baptized—we receive the forgiveness of our sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. These are things we, being human, cannot see. The only thing we can see is the person going down under the water and rising back up again. **Baptism, forgiveness of sins and the receipt of the Holy Spirit are simultaneous events.** And the Scripture says **it is *impossible* for God to lie--**

And the Word of God tells us: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, **everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” So those who received his word were **baptized**, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.**

[Questions about 1Corinthians 12:13?](#)

1Corinthians 12:13

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

There are those of the Pentecostal/Charismatic denomination who incorrectly teach that this verse is speaking of baptism in the absence of water (which is a Scriptural impossibility). They come to this conclusion because of the phrase “by one Spirit”, yet this verse in no way, shape, or form, is speaking of baptism without water. There is nothing there to even suggest that. **Baptism in water does not negate that it is the work of the Spirit that is active in baptism** (in water). **Just as in [Colossians 2:12](#)** where it is the **power of God** at work, so too, it is here. **It is God** who raises us. **It is God** who washes our sins away; **It is God** who clothes us with Christ ([Galatians 3:26-27](#)); **It is God** who adds us to the body of Christ—the church. When we are baptized into Christ in water, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit as well as the forgiveness of our sins. **And these are simultaneous events.** To teach this verse is excluding WATER is to forget Paul’s words just two chapters earlier of the very same letter:

1Corinthians 10:1-2,6,11

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea...

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did...

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.

What is the **CLOUD** made of? What is the **SEA** made of? **WATER!!!** God is telling us that the illustration of the Israelites coming out of the Land of Slavery (Egypt), passing through **WATER**, and entering into the Promised Land (redemption) is an illustration for us today!

Back then (Old Testament):

- 1.) Left Egypt—the land of Slavery
- 2.) Passed through water—baptized into Moses
- 3.) Entered promised land

Today (New Testament):

- 1.) Leave “land of slavery”—sin. See ([John 8:33-34](#))
- 2.) Pass through water—baptized into **CHRIST**
- 3.) Enter into “promised land”—redemption/kingdom of heaven

To teach baptism to the exclusion of water is to contradict Jesus Christ’s very own words: “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of WATER and the Spirit.” —John 3:5

“Speaking in tongues” and “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” --A closer examination

This lesson is not meant to be an exhaustive study of the topic, but is only meant to touch on the main points of this sometimes detailed issue.

A.)

There are two main points about this concern:

- 1.) What was “speaking in tongues” **in the Bible**, and
- 2.) What is “speaking in tongues” **today**?

B.)

In the same way, there are two main points about the issue of “baptism of the Holy Spirit”:

- 1.) What was the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” **in the Scriptures**, and
- 2.) What is it **today**?

With both “speaking in tongues” and “baptism of the Holy Spirit” it is clear when looked at closely in the Word of God, that what happen **then**, is now what is happening **now**.

A.) “Speaking in tongues”:

Today, in Pentecostal churches around the world, the phenomenon of “speaking in tongues” is an utterance of unintelligible syllables that resembles nothing of the phenomenon of the “speaking in tongues” in the New Testament. In the New Testament, “speaking in tongues” simply meant speaking in other languages. These other languages were known, actual languages, not “mumbo-jumbo”:

Acts 2:6-11

When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own languages!"

Take special notice of the phrase, "IN OUR OWN LANGUAGES" (or "in OUR OWN TONGUES"). The speech of the Apostles was not incomprehensible syllables! It was in **actual, spoken languages** of the world. Although the Apostles had neither studied nor taken any foreign language courses, they incredibly were given the power of "miraculous, instantaneous translation." Any missionary knows that the biggest obstacle to taking the gospel to foreign nations is always the language barrier. Perhaps this is what Jesus was referring to when he told the apostles, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even **greater things than these**, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12) Not even Christ spoke the way in which God now gave ability to the Twelve. The people who heard the Apostles "speaking in tongues" understood them-- unlike when people "speak in tongues" today.

B.) "Baptism of the Holy Spirit":

The "baptism of the Holy Spirit" was a fulfillment of prophecy made as proof that the Apostles were God's chosen instruments-- just as God did miracles in the past (such as with Moses and Pharaoh), to demonstrate that certain people were the bearers of His message and commands. [John the Baptist spoke of this](#) and then [Christ followed it up in more detail](#). At Pentecost in Acts Chapter 2 we read about the Holy Spirit coming on the Apostles. Even [unbelievers](#) witnessed this phenomenon. Later, in Acts 10 when Peter was having difficulty understanding that the Gospel message was for the Gentiles also, God demonstrated to him that the Gospel message was indeed for all nations and God proved to Peter, by sending the Spirit on the Gentiles, that Peter needed to understand this fact.

Key points:

In the New Testament, "speaking in tongues" simply meant speaking in **other actual languages** ←

In the New Testament, "baptism of the Holy Spirit" was outwardly **VISIBLE** and **AUDIBLE** ←

In the New Testament, "baptism of the Holy Spirit" happened only **twice—ONCE** to the **JEWS** (Acts 2) and **ONCE** to the **GENTILES** (Acts 10) ←

In the New Testament, "baptism of the Holy Spirit" was never commanded upon anyone, **only water baptism was** ←

The "baptism of the Holy Spirit" (visible tongues of fire) is not to be confused with the invisible "**gift** of the Holy Spirit" which is internal and which is received through water baptism ([Acts 2:38, Galatians 3:26-27, 4:6-7](#)) ← See also [here](#)

"Speaking in tongues"	THEN	NOW
Actual spoken languages? Acts 2:6-11	YES	NO
Incomprehensible syllables?	NO	YES
Understood by listeners?	YES	NO
"Baptism of the Holy Spirit"		
Visible?	YES	NO
Audible?	YES	NO
Outward?	YES	NO
Inward?	NO	YES
Invisible?	NO	YES
Conclusion:	Real thing	Counterfeit

The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines the word "counterfeit" as: *to copy or imitate in order to deceive, sham, spurious, forged, pretend, fake, imposture, fraud, deceit, deception*

So in conclusion, when we compare both "*speaking in tongues*" and the "*baptism of the Holy Spirit*" with the practices of today against the examples in the Word of God---we see two different things!

The Bible speaks of **counterfeits**, and **deceit**-- and not in a good light!

2 Thessalonians 2:9

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

“If baptism is so important, then why isn’t baptism mentioned in every single passage about conversion?”

1.)

There is a simple principle of language that many of us constantly use, but overlook in scripture. It is called synecdoche. It means: the part represents the whole. We use synecdoche all the time in English. The following are examples:

- 1.) "Bless your heart" = We don't mean bless the organ that pumps your blood. We mean "Bless all of you." The part represents the whole. The heart represents the whole person.
- 2.) "It's good to see your face" = "It's good to see YOU, all of you"
- 3.) "Bless the hands that prepared this food" = "Bless ALL of you"
- 4.) "I like your wheels" = "I like your whole car"
- 5.) "Let's do a head count" = "Let's count all the people" to include their bodies
- 6.) "I have 100 head of cattle" = "I have 100 whole cows"

We use synecdoche all the time. It's like second nature.

It is also used in the Bible like this. When the New Testament writers speak of being saved by believing, they are using "believe" synecdochally. The term "believe" represents the whole response to the gospel. The emphasis he is trying to make in the context decides which term he uses. Sometimes he speaks of being saved by repentance (2 Pet. 3:9) but repentance is representative of the WHOLE response to the gospel to include faith, baptism, and being faithful. Baptism is used synecdochally in 1 Pet. 3:21 and "believe" in places like Acts 16:31. But it is apparent that "believe" is used in a representative way in this verse because the jailer was baptized the same hour of the night. Confessing is used in Romans 10:9-10 along with belief.

It is utterly absurd to expect the New Testament writers to write down every single faith-response to the gospel every time they talk about it. But WHATEVER they wrote, whether believe, repent, baptism, works, confess - - ALL were representative of the WHOLE response to the gospel. The hearers understood this.

The above section was contributed by the [Linary Church of Christ](#)

2.)

Baptism is, in fact, mentioned in every single *detailed* conversion story in the book of Acts.

It must be remembered that *faith, repentance and baptism, all combined*, are what make up the three facets of conversion. Some passages of scripture emphasize baptism. Other passages emphasize belief, and still others emphasize repentance. Some emphasize two out of the three. And yet in still others, all three facets can be seen.

In the book of Acts, when the question was asked, "What must I do to be saved?" some were told they needed to believe because they had not yet done so. Others were told to repent because they had not yet done that. And still others were told to be baptized because that still needed to be done. If the New Testament and its teachings are taken as a whole, then it is certainly reasonable to conclude that **God requires faith, repentance, and baptism for a person to be saved.**

For example, just because one particular passage does not emphasize repentance, it does not mean we do not need to repent. Jesus very clearly stated in Luke 13:3 that unless we repent, we too, will all perish. Does that mean then that the passages that emphasize *faith*, that *repentance* is not required? Of course not! What about passages that don't mention *faith, repentance or*

baptism? Take a look at Acts 14. Here, large numbers of people were being converted, yet nothing is mentioned *specifically* as to how people responded, not even faith! The fact that they believed must be *inferred*.

Acts 14:21

They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch

Next, we find where people were converted, but it only mentions *repentance*, nothing of faith:

Acts 26 :20

First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.

So we see that some passages speak of *repentance*. Does that mean they didn't *believe*? Of course not. Other passages speak of *faith* or *belief*. Does that mean they did not *repent*? No. But we know for conversion to occur, even opponents of baptism will grant *at least* faith and repentance is required. This tells us we cannot isolate one single passage from the rest of the other scriptures in trying to derive its meaning. We must look at what the Bible says in all places regarding a particular subject and combine all these passages to see them together as a whole.

Someone will point out that the fact they *repented* implies they also *believed*. This is true. And by the same token, passages that speak only about *faith* imply, likewise, that they not only *repented*, but that they were *baptized* as well.

Again, every detailed conversion story in the book of Acts mentions baptism and that it is for the purpose of washing away sin. The vague, passing references to conversion mention only belief specifically, but when the scriptures become more specific and detailed, baptism is always there. Furthermore, "to believe" implies believing the *gospel message*, and the *gospel message* includes not only faith, but repentance and baptism as well. It's a funny thing, but sometimes non-Christians understand baptism better than those who profess faith in Christ. Ask a Hindu what baptism means and they will tell you it is something one does when they want to become a Christian.

Jesus said to Peter in Matthew 16:19, "I give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven..." Jesus mentioned *keys* in the plural, not *one* key. So this means there is more than just one single "key." Take the example of a bank vault that has two or more locks on it. One key is given to one officer of the bank, and a second officer holds a second, *different* key. It takes *both* keys to open the vault. Either one by itself will not accomplish the task. It is the *combination* of *both* keys being used *simultaneously* that will successfully open the vault. And so it is with conversion and the keys to the kingdom of heaven. These keys are: *faith, repentance, baptism*. It is when *baptism* is **combined** with *faith* and *repentance*, simultaneously that conversion occurs.

Let's look at some specific passages and objections that often arise.

Acts 3:19-20

Repent, then, **and turn to God**, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. (NIV)

Curiously, the phrase, "**and turn to God**" in several versions (KJV, NKJV, Darby's, KJ21, Webster's, etc) render this as, "**be converted**". If one wishes to stick with the NIV, then look at **Acts 15:3:**

The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had **been converted**. This news made all the brothers very glad. (NIV)

The Greek text that the NIV is taken from uses the same root word in both of these passages, only the tense is different (epistrepho/epistrophe).

So now the question must be asked, what did Peter mean by saying, “Be converted?” He told them to “repent and be converted”. So it is highly unlikely “be converted” means just to repent. Otherwise, Peter would then be saying, “*Repent and repent.*” No, he must have been saying to repent and *something else* in addition to repentance. To a Jew in the first century, to “convert” meant something they all understood. A Jew was *born* into their religion so there was no need to *convert*. Conversion was for those outside of Israel, that is, the Gentiles. And for Gentiles to convert to being a Jew they had to **adopt the Jewish set of beliefs (i.e. repent)** and then, to complete this conversion and have their status changed, they were to undergo **tevillah**, which is where they immerse themselves in a water bath called a **mikveh**.

“Mikveh” or “mikvah” is defined as follows:

“Mikvah” - (f., pl. "Mikvaot"); a ritual pool of water, used for the purpose of attaining ritual purity. Immersion in a Mikvah is performed for the following main purposes:

It is used in connection with Repentance, to remove the impurity of sin.

It is also used in connection with Conversion, because the convert has taken upon himself or herself to adopt the lifestyle of the Jew, that is based on the recognition of G-d as King of the Universe and on the obligation to perform the commandments of the Torah.

Regarding the practice of baptizing proselytes, Lightfoot, in *Horae Hebraicae* explains: "As soon as he grows whole of the wound of circumcision, they bring him to Baptism, and being placed in the water they again instruct him in some weightier and in some lighter commands of the Law. Which being heard, he plunges himself and comes up, and, behold, he is an Israelite in all things."

In Acts 2:38 Peter says, “**Repent and be baptized...**” A short while later, he says, “**Repent and be converted...**” Did Peter change his story so soon? Or is he saying the same thing? Jews understood that the conversion process involved **tevillah**—which is the Jewish term for what Christians call **baptism**. (See explanation of [John 3:1-5](#)) So although Peter did not use the word “baptism” in Acts 3:19 he **was** speaking of it! **The phrase, “Repent and be baptized...” is synonymous with “Repent and be converted...”**

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

This is perhaps the most often quoted verse in the New Testament. It is often isolated and set apart from the rest of the dialogue in which it took place. **To “believe in Jesus” means to believe the gospel message, and baptism is a part of that gospel message.** It must also be remembered this verse is only one small part of a much larger conversation that Jesus had with Nicodemus. Verse 16 (of chapter 3) deals with **faith** in the Son. **Repentance** is talked about in regards to the snake that was lifted up and then again in verses 19-21. Verses 3 and 5 deal with **baptism**. This shows the importance of looking at the overall picture and not focusing in on any single verse or passage.

Furthermore, the NIV is the only translation that uses the word “shall” in John 3:16. All other translations render this verse, “...whoever believes in him **should** not perish but have eternal life.” The NIV erroneously takes a “maybe” and turns it into a “will be”. **God gave us His Son so that we shouldn’t have to perish.**

According to James, faith alone, by itself, will not save us:

James 2:19-20

You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?

Faith must have actions to back it up with.

Acts 16:30-31

He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household."

This verse is often quoted but then the questioner stops short right in the middle of the story. People like to quote verses 30 and 31 but they don't quote verses 32 and 33. Those very next two verses state that the Word of the Lord was preached to them and then they were immediately baptized. We know from James 2:19-20 that the jailer did not stop once he had a belief in Jesus. Indeed, there was more as verses 32-33 illustrate so clearly. See [Acts 16:16-33](#) for more detail. It does no good to tell someone about baptism unless they are first told the message of Jesus Christ. The first step is to believe, *then* baptism will be effectual. Faith in Christ is what gives baptism its significance. Obviously, it does no good to tell someone to get baptized unless they have first heard the message of the cross and the story of Jesus.

Romans 10:9-10

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," **and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.**

Remember first, Paul just finished explaining in chapter 6, and in great detail, the role of baptism. This verse does not nullify that chapter. But it is of significance, however, to note the commentary on this verse in the NIV study Bible that states, --"*Jesus is Lord*", *the earliest confession of Christian faith, probably used at baptism.*" The verbal confession of faith that Jesus is the Christ is made at *baptism*, and is what is seen in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch in [Acts 8](#). Notice the eunuch asks to be baptized and Philip tells him "if you believe with all your heart, you may." **And then the Ethiopian eunuch confesses faith in Christ with his mouth**, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." He is then *baptized*. This model is also referred to in the first letter of Paul to Timothy:

1Timothy 6:12 -14

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

The reference to "eternal life" and the "good confession" makes perfect sense in the light of the correct understanding of baptism. It makes even more sense when one understands also, since the first century, it has always been the practice to make a verbal confession of faith in Christ at baptism. This passage is a reference to that very practice. The confession Jesus made before Pilate was, of course, that He was indeed the Christ.

There are several verses that speak of *belief* and what is *tied* with that *belief* and being *saved*:

Confess with mouth and believe will be saved (Romans 10:9-10)

Believe and is baptized will be saved ([Mark 16:16](#))

Believe will be saved....and are then baptized ([Acts 16:16-33](#))

Notice belief never stands alone, by itself. There is always some other action associated with it. Jesus started preaching by telling us to “repent and believe the Good News.” Jesus also said in Luke 13:3 that unless we repent we will all perish. So we can add one more to the above list:

Repent and believe (**Mark 1:15**)

Remembering we cannot isolate one verse from another, but putting all these scriptures together, let's see what kind of a picture we get:

Confess with mouth and believe will be saved

Believe and is baptized will be saved

Believe will be saved....and are then baptized

Repent and believe

What is tied to *believing*?

Repentance

Confession

Baptism

Looking at it from another angle, notice also that **baptism** always has something else **tied to it**:

Believing (Acts 8:37; Mark 16:16)

Repentance (Acts 2:38) { Luke 13:3,5}

Confession of faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 8:36-37)

Which all leads to:

Being baptized (in water) for the forgiveness of sins.

This is where we get:

- 1.) Hear **the Word**
- 2.) Believe
- 3.) Repent of our [sins](#)
- 4.) Confess **faith in Christ**
- 5.) Be baptized for the forgiveness of sins

It's that simple.

Some protest the need for baptism, saying something like, “We are not saved by baptism, we are saved by the blood of Christ.”

“The objection is sometimes raised that to insist that immersion in water is a scriptural condition of salvation equals a doctrine of “water salvation.” If that is the case, then it is such scriptures as Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16, etc., that should be blamed for the teaching, rather than those who believe it. However, such verses attribute no merit to water as a spiritual cleansing agent whatsoever. **These verses do not say what the cleansing agent is. They only tell us when the cleansing occurs.** It is plain from other scriptures that the blood of Christ is the agent of cleansing or forgiveness (1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 1:5, etc.). The old song is absolutely correct: “What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.””*

The Bible clearly states that [baptism saves us](#) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This ties directly into [Romans 6:3-6](#) which is how we become united with Christ. We also become clothed with Him when we are [baptized into Christ](#). **In being united with Him in this manner, we become one with Him and the shed blood of *Christ’s* body now comes to cover *us* also, who are now *members of His body*.**

1 Corinthians 12:27

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Through the sacrifice of Christ’s physical, fleshly body, His blood becomes available.

Hebrews 10:19-22

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our **bodies washed with pure water**.

“...since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by ...his body.”

It is through Christ’s body that we gain access to His blood.

What is Christ’s body?

Besides 1Corinthians 12:27 quoted above, there are many other places in Scripture that teach the church is a spiritual illustration of the **body of Christ**.

1Corinthians 6:15

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?

Colossians 1:18

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Colossians 1:24

Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

Ephesians 1:22-23

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Ephesians 5:23

For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

How do we become a part of His body (which is the church)?

Through baptism:

1Corinthians 12:13

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Through baptism we become a part of Christ's *body—the church*, and we therefore gain access to Christ's blood. (See also [Romans 6:3-4](#)-- take note of the phrases "into Christ", and "through baptism.")

We gain access to Christ's blood
through His *body*.

We gain access to Christ's body
through *baptism*.

1Corinthians 12:13

Romans 6:3

Galatians 3:27

BAPTIZED>>>>INTO CHRIST

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. – Ephesians 1:7-8

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus – Romans 8:1

“We are not saved by baptism; we are saved by grace.”

Indeed, we *are* saved by grace. But just what *is* ‘grace’? The Oxford American Dictionary defines grace as: *God’s loving mercy toward mankind*. Other words that may be found in a thesaurus as synonyms for “grace” include: *mercy, favor, kindness, blessing, and compassion*.

And it is because of God’s mercy, His favor, His kindness, His blessing and His compassion that He has provided mankind with a salvation plan! We are saved by God’s mercy. We do not deserve the blessings God has given us.

Ephesians 2:4-9

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.

Baptism in no way minimizes or nullifies God’s grace as some critics argue that baptism does. They make this argument because they do not understand the role baptism plays in God’s salvation plan. Baptism confirms and verifies God’s grace to us! God’s grace is manifested in baptism! And after we are baptized, His grace **continues** to cover us.

Notice this passage says:

God made us alive in Christ when we were dead—and this is God’s grace.

God raised us up with Christ

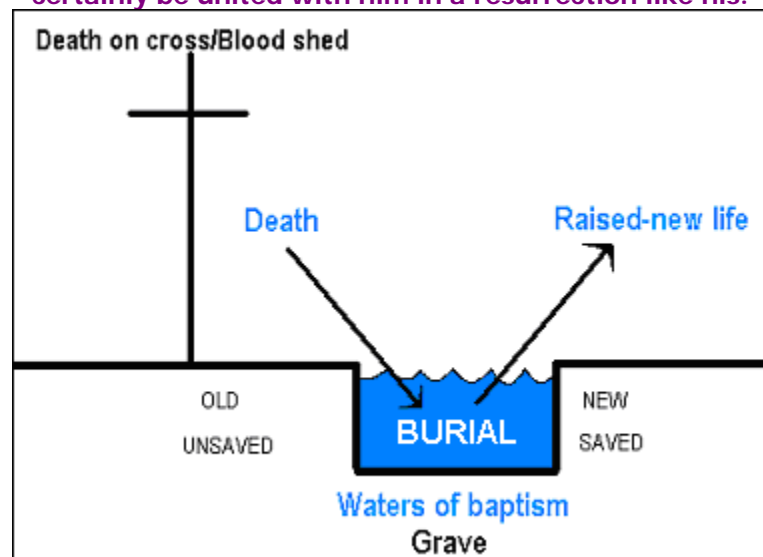
God expresses His grace to mankind by giving us Christ Jesus

God’s grace is through faith.

When did God make us *alive* when we were *dead*, and raise us up with Christ? What is Paul talking about?

Romans 6:3-5 describes just such a scenario-- when we were dead in sin and God raised us up with Christ:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.



The Bible says that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). And when we had sinned and were dead, and had received only what we *deserved*, God in His mercy and grace provided a way for us to be saved—He provided His Son, Jesus Christ. And without Jesus, baptism is meaningless. Baptism, coupled with faith, is the means by which we become unified with Christ. Baptism is how we are “put into” Christ.

It is by God’s grace that He has given us a salvation plan—and this salvation plan, through His Son, Jesus Christ, includes *faith, repentance* and *baptism*.

We should be grateful and thankful beyond measure that God has provided a salvation plan for us who deserve nothing but death.

We are saved by God. We are saved by *grace*. We are saved by *faith*. We are saved by *baptism* (**1Peter 3:21**). We are saved by *all of these combined* because in *baptism God’s grace is manifested through our faith*. In baptism, God’s salvation plan to mankind—which is purely a gift by His grace-- becomes a reality.

2 Timothy 1:8-11

So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the **gospel**, by the power of **God, who has saved us** and called us to a holy life--**not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.** And of this **gospel** I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.

What is Paul talking about? He is talking about God’s salvation plan for mankind as revealed in the Scriptures. Paul is telling us it is by God’s mercy that He has given mankind a salvation plan. We did nothing to “earn” it. This salvation plan was in God’s mind before the world was even created. Paul also tells us this salvation plan (the Gospel, i.e. “good news”) is something that is taught. And if it is taught, it must also be learned by those on the receiving end of the teacher. Where do we learn about this “good news”? Through the Scriptures:

2Timothy 3:14-17

But as for you, continue in what you have **learned** and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you **learned** it, and how from infancy you have known **the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture** is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be **thoroughly equipped** for every good work.

And--

Colossians 1:5-7,12-14

the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in **the word of truth, the gospel** that has come to you. All over the world **this gospel** is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard **it** and understood **God’s grace** in all its truth. You **learned** it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf...

...giving thanks to the Father, who has **qualified** you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the **kingdom of light**. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and **brought us into the kingdom of the Son** he loves, in whom we have **redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

How does God “bring us into the kingdom”? Remember when Jesus said no one can enter the kingdom unless they are “born of water and the Spirit”? Notice the mention of

redemption and the forgiveness of sins with being in Christ (“in whom”). And we know we can only be in Christ by being baptized into Him:

Do you not know that all of us who have been *baptized into Christ Jesus* were baptized into his death? –Romans 6:3

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as were *baptized into Christ* have clothed yourselves with Christ. -- Galatians 3:26-27

For we were all *baptized* by one Spirit into one body...--1Corinthians 12:13

And that body is the body of Christ—the church (Colossians 1:24).

1Corinthians 12:13

Romans 6:3

Galatians 3:27

BAPTIZED>>>>INTO CHRIST

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. – Ephesians 1:7-8

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus Romans 8:1

God's grace involves a bigger picture than we sometimes realize. Supposedly, at one point, there was a rebellion in heaven in which some of the angels chose to follow Lucifer and abandoned their positions in heaven in rebellion against God. For these, God has provided no salvation plan. There is no hope for them, no chance of salvation. They will be eternally damned to hell when the Day of Judgment arrives. God has not provided a way for them to attain redemption. But for mankind, on the other hand, God in His mercy and grace has given us His Son and a way to be redeemed. He has given us a salvation plan! And this is by His grace. God did not give Jesus to the rebellious angels. He only gave Jesus to mankind. God had this salvation plan in mind from the very beginning:

Titus 1: 1-3

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness-- a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior

What is this “faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life”? It is the Gospel—God's salvation plan.

Are we not saved by faith? We must *believe* just as we must be baptized. Yet those who argue baptism is a “work” will never argue *believing* is a work! But believing is something we must do!

Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”
—John 6:29

Are we not saved by grace? Of course we are! *Baptism* is just one component of God's salvation plan. Are we not saved by God's salvation plan? Baptism is the manifestation of God's grace. It is the materialization of God's salvation plan in an individual's life. When combined with faith and repentance, baptism, Peter says, saves us!

If we say we are not saved by baptism, we are saying we are not saved by God's salvation plan.

Here is yet another hint:

Acts 20:24-27

However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the **gospel of God's grace**. "Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about **preaching the kingdom** will ever see me again. Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the **whole will of God**.

Notice how Paul talks about the **good news of God's grace** and then in the very next breath talks about the kingdom. We know from **John 3:3-5** that we enter the kingdom through **baptism!** And what is the will of God?

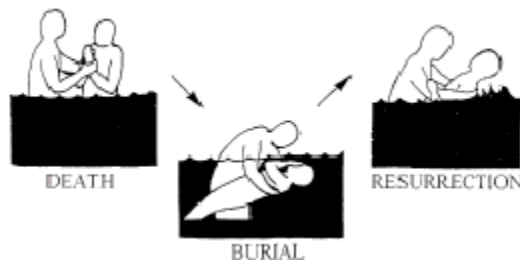
1Timothy 2:3-4

This is good, and pleases **God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.**

God wants everyone to be saved and to know the truth. It is by God's abundant mercy and grace that he provides us with a way out of the darkness. His salvation plan is available to every human being! His invitation is extended to *everybody* and it is by His grace that anyone gets an invitation **at all**. Yet even though His salvation is open to all, we must each, **individually, respond** to this invitation, to His grace, and to His call. We do this by believing, by repenting, by confessing our faith in Christ and by being baptized so that our sins will be forgiven.

**The work of the cross is God's offer of life...
Baptism is our acceptance.**

If God allows us to participate in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (an event which occurred 2000 years ago), **through baptism**, it can *truly* be said we are saved through faith and God's **grace!**



Many times someone will object to baptism being essential for salvation because they don't like the answer they get when they ask the question:

“What happens to a person if they die before they are baptized?”

The scenario goes along these lines: A person hears the message that Jesus died for their sins and rose again; they believe and repent of their sins and come to understand the need to be baptized so that their sins will be forgiven. But before they can make it into the water to be baptized, death overtakes them.

This objection to baptism arises on the argument that God would not keep a person in such a situation from heaven. So according to this line of reasoning, *therefore* if baptism isn't required in that situation, it is NEVER required because God is perfectly fair and just. This line of reasoning, usually comes from either:

- 1.) The philosophical person who would also ask a question like, “If God is all powerful, can He make a rock so large that He can't lift it?”
- 2.) Or the person who has been taught “faith alone” saves us (such as Baptists for example).


First, to build an entire doctrine around the topic of salvation based on a hypothetical situation, while completely ignoring at least a dozen passages that plainly teach baptism is a part of God's salvation plan, is utter and complete folly, besides just going against common sense.

It is noted though, that from a human standpoint, this scenario is seemingly difficult. It is recognized that God “will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, ([Romans 9:15](#)) and God is the Judge and all His decisions are perfectly just and righteous. If God decides when looking at something, He wants to grant an “exception to the rule”, that is **His place, not man's**. God can do whatever He wants. God will still be God. God has an infinitely better ability to make judgments than man. Yes, God is merciful, but it MUST be remembered there is NO scriptural support for such a person being saved. **God is under no scriptural obligation in such a case.**

Could God make an exception? Yes, He *could*. But does that mean He *would*? That is not a question any human being can answer with certainty. Only God, Himself, in His infinite wisdom and righteousness, can know the answer to this question.

When God has gone to such inexpressible lengths to give us such a wonderful salvation, it would be wise not to ignore it and put ourselves in the place of God and tinker with His salvation plan, attempting to grant things that only God can grant. Remember, it is God who “makes the rules”, not man! Only a fool would trade something that is absolutely certain for something that is highly questionable.

God expects from us what we are *able* to do, not what we are *unable* to do. [Romans 10:9](#) teaches one part of God's salvation plan. We know this verse is not exclusive of other verses, because Jesus also said **unless we repent we will all perish** ([Luke 13:3-5](#)). So Romans 10:9 **cannot** exclude repentance (or other components of God's salvation plan, such as baptism). Looking at Romans 10:9, what would happen to the person who has a deformed tongue and cannot speak? Would God expect them to obey this verse? Obviously not. **But just because God *might* make an “exception to the rule”, does not mean we throw out the rule! We cannot throw this verse out and build a doctrine around *excluding* this verse! Sadly, that is what the denominational world has done with baptism.**

However, the issue is not whether the person of this scenario will go to heaven or hell, no, that is a judgment left to God--the issue always has been and always will be—What is God's salvation plan as revealed in Scripture? 

God's salvation plan teaches to be saved we must:


- 1.) **Hear the "good news" of Jesus Christ** (Romans 10:14)
- 2.) **Believe** (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 8:37; Mark 16:16)
- 3.) **Repent of our sins** (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30; Mark 10:15)
- 4.) **Confess faith in Jesus Christ** (Acts 8:36-37; Romans 10:9)
- 5.) **Be baptized (in water) for the forgiveness of sins** (Acts 2:37-41; 1Peter 3:21; John 3:3-5; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-8; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:26-27; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:34-39; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 4:5)
- 6.) **Remain faithful for the rest of our lives and carry our cross daily** (Revelation 2:10; Matthew 24:13; Luke 9:23)

The Bible does not always spell out what we have to do to be lost. *Instead, it tells us what we have to do to be saved* and expects us to realize that, if we don't obey it, we will be lost. If God gives us a plan, that when followed, will save us, why try and see how close to the *line of being lost* we can get?

If you can follow God's plan of salvation and know for certain that you will be saved, why would anyone want to NOT follow it and depend on being the "exception to the rule?" (For which there is no Scriptural basis)

In the sport of American football, if a team is behind by 5 points and they get the ball to the one-inch line but do not cross the goal line before the clock runs out, they lose. It is the same with baptism and death. **The Bible teaches baptism is that dividing line and death is the clock.** There has to be a dividing line somewhere and Jesus said without baptism no one enters heaven ([John 3:5](#)). Baptism is part of the salvation plan. The Bible says: Follow it and be saved; Fail to follow it and be lost.


If God were to say, we must believe and then stand on one foot and clap three times to be saved, then that is what we would have to do to be saved!

Ok, someone reading this still wants to count on being the exception. But we must emphasize the issue again: **WHAT IS GOD'S SALVATION PLAN?** 

So let's say there is agreement that God has a salvation plan. It's just that we differ **where** the dividing line is between lost and saved. Is it when a person comes to faith? Or is it when a person has faith and is **baptized for the forgiveness of their sins**? Even people who believe in "faith alone" will know there is a dividing line somewhere between lost and saved. So let's play out a similar scenario to the "faith only" people:

A preacher goes to preach the Gospel to some African Bushmen who have never heard the name or story of Jesus Christ. The preacher gathers the group together and he begins to speak. But just as he opens his mouth a guerilla fighting a civil war enters the hut and sprays everyone with gunfire. Everybody dies. If the preacher had been able to preach his sermon, the Bushmen **would have** believed and repented. But since none of this ever happened (and faith is a requirement for salvation), what happens to the Bushmen? According to "faith alone" teaching—where do they go?

For those that believe "faith alone" saves, the answer to this question HAS to be the same exact answer as the answer to, "**What happens to a person if they die before they are baptized?**"

See, the issue is NOT what happens to a person who *dies before* they obey God's salvation plan (that answer is obvious), the issue is **What IS God's salvation plan!** 

Furthermore, there is only one place in the Bible where the phrase, "faith alone" is used, and it is used in saying we are NOT saved by faith alone!

James 2:24

You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

That's what the Word of God says.

So in conclusion, baptism is when our sins are forgiven, and if the "baptism" is NOT for the purpose of having our sins washed away, it is NOT the ONE baptism in [Ephesians 4:4-5](#). It needs to be done CORRECTLY. Lastly, this is WHY baptism is so important and it is why [Paul baptized the Jailer in the middle of the night](#) without delay. The jailer's eternal destiny changed **when** he was baptized, and that was not something that could wait until morning.

Here is an e-mail regarding this topic with some very important points:

A person must take advantage of the time that God has given them to respond. A squandering of that time cannot be laid to the feet of God! This question (If a person intends to be baptized and dies before he does it, is he saved or lost?) is usually asked by those who want to avoid what the Bible teaches about baptism and its purpose. If we ask this kind of question about baptism, would it not be fair to ask the following questions: (1) If a person intends to accept Christ, but dies before he actually does it, is he saved or not? (2) If a person accepts Christ, but dies before he repents of his sins, is he saved or not? (3) If a person accepts Christ, repents of his sins and intends to confess Christ, but dies before doing so, is he saved or lost? **Why single out the act of baptism? Why not address all of the required steps for salvation, because what is true of one is true of all! If not, why not? All of the steps of salvation are necessary unto salvation. God has given all of us, who are of age and sound mind, time to do what He requires. If we do not take advantage of the time given, the fault lies with us, not with God!**

Some denominational organizations reject the biblical approach to immediate baptism for the remission of sins, i.e., Acts 2:41, "the same day;" Acts 8:36, "as they went on their way;" Acts 16:33, "the same hour of the night;" Acts 22:16, "arise and be baptized." Certainly, **when this biblical approach is ignored** and people are "saved up" until Easter or some other occasion, the possibility increases immensely that one will die with the intent to be baptized. However, in the great majority of these cases candidates are not baptized for the right reason anyhow and, therefore, the baptism is invalid as a result even when it does occur!

In over fifty years as a Christian, I have never known one to have believed, repented of sin, publicly confessed Christ before men, and then died on his way to the water. Surely, the fact that they, in response to biblical teaching, went immediately to the water to be baptized played a part in this experience.

What we do know is that Christ our Lord spoke the words by which we will one day be judged (John 12:48) "He that believeth "and" is baptized shall be saved!" The word "and" is a coordinating conjunction that connects two values of equal import, both of which are necessary to the result of the indicated compound command, i.e., salvation! Who has the right to say that only one or the other is necessary, or that only one is necessary under certain conditions? To do so is to abrogate the words of our Lord! It is to assume that we have the right to override His authoritative command based on human rationale. God forbid that we should be so found guilty!

Cordially,

David Amos

“What about the word “*eis*” in verse 38?”

Meaning of "*eis*" in Acts 2:38

Some, in wishing to deny the importance and purpose of baptism, claim that the original Greek word *eis* in Acts 2:38 means "be baptized *because you already have* remission of sins." But such a translation and interpretation cannot be supported with a responsible study of Scripture and the Greek language.

In Acts 2:38 (KJV), Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **FOR** (Greek *eis*) the remission of sins." According to one source, *eis* is translated in this way in the King James Version:

Into – 571 times
To -- 282 times
Unto -- 208 times
In -- 131 times
For -- 91 times
On -- 57 times
Toward -- 32 times
That -- 30 times
Against -- 25 times
Upon -- 25 times
At -- 20 times
Among -- 16 times
Concerning -- 5 times
“because of” – 0 times

According to Thayer's lexicon, *eis* means "entrance into, or direction and limit: into, to, towards, for, among." The majority of the words listed above are consistent with that meaning. Many wish to believe/teach that Peter said repent and be baptized "because of" the remission of sins. **There is, however, not a single instance of the Greek word *eis* in the KJV ever translated as "because of."** Nor is there apparently any version of the Bible that translates Acts 2:38, "Repent, and be baptized . . . because of the remission of sins." <There are several versions though, that translate the phrase "for the forgiveness of sins" as "**so that your sins will be forgiven**">

To better understand the meaning, consider the entire phrase "for the remission of sins." In the original Greek it reads: *eis aphasis ton hamartion humon*. That phrase is also found in Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3 where John preached "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Did John preach and baptize because they already had forgiveness, or was it leading up to that time of forgiveness through Christ?

The real test, though, is found in Matthew 26:28. There Jesus said His blood "is shed for many **for the remission of sins**." What did He mean by that? Would He shed His blood **because people already had forgiveness or in order that they might obtain it**?

If Jesus used the word/phrase to mean "in order to receive remission of sins," then is it not reasonable to conclude that Peter, by inspiration of the Spirit sent by Jesus, would mean **the exact same thing** when he used **the exact same phrase**? Surely Peter's command to be baptized in Acts 2:38 means what it clearly says: **baptism is for/in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins.**

The above article was contributed from the [Manassas church of Christ](http://www.manassaschurchofchrist.com) website.

Furthermore, if their sins were *already* forgiven, why in the world would Peter tell them to **repent**? Repentance is for those who still have their sins counted against them. If their sins were *already* forgiven, (and they were therefore already saved) why would Peter (in verse 40) tell them to "**save yourselves...**"?

The argument that we are saved *before* baptism is a **lie!** It originates from the father of lies who was a murderer from the beginning and in whom is no truth.

The following is an selection from [J.W. McGarvey's commentary](#) on Acts 2:37-38

37. It has already been observed, that up to the moment in which Peter arose to address the audience, although the immersion in the Holy Spirit had occurred, and its effects had been fully witnessed by the people, no change had taken place in their minds in reference to Jesus Christ, neither did they experience any emotion, except confusion and amazement at a phenomenon which they could not comprehend. This fact proves, conclusively, that there was no power in the [37] miraculous manifestation of the Spirit, which they witnesses, in itself alone, to produce in them the desired change. All the power which belonged to this event must have come short of the desired effect, but for a medium distinct from itself, through which it reached the minds and hearts of the people. The medium was the *words* of Peter. He spoke; and when he had announced the conclusion of his argument, Luke says: (37) "*Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the other apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?*" In this exclamation there is a manifest confession that they *believe* what Peter has preached to them; and Luke's declaration that they were pierced to the heart shows that they felt intensely the power of the facts which they now believed. Since Peter began to speak, therefore, a change has taken place both in their convictions and their feelings. They are convinced that Jesus is the Christ, and they are pierced to the heart with anguish at the thought of having murdered him. In the mean time, not a word is said of any influence at work upon them, except that of the words spoken by Peter; hence we conclude that the change in their minds and hearts has been effected *through* those words. This conclusion was also drawn by Luke himself; for in saying, "when they *heard* this, they were pierced to the heart, and cried out," he evidently attributes their emotion and their outcry to what they *heard*, as the cause of both.

If Luke had regarded the change effected as one which could be produced only by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit, he could not have expressed himself in these words, for his language not only entirely ignores such an influence, but attributes the effect to a different instrumentality. We understand him, therefore, to teach that the whole change thus far effected in these men was produced through the word of truth which they heard from Peter.

Let it be observed, however, that what they had heard concerning Christ, they had heard not as the words of the mere man Peter; for, previous to introducing the name of Jesus, he had clearly demonstrated the *inspiration* of himself and the other apostles. This being established beyond the possibility of rational doubt, from the moment that he began to speak of Jesus they were listening to him as an inspired man. But the Jews had long since learned to ascribe to the words of inspired men all the authority of the Spirit who spoke through them; hence this audience realized that all the power to convince and to move, that the authority of God himself could impart to words, belonged to the words of Peter. If they could believe God, they must believe the oracles of God which find utterance through Peter's lips. They do believe, and they believe because the words they hear are recognized as the words of God. Faith, then, comes by hearing the word of God; and he who hears the admitted word of God, must believe, or deny that God speaks the truth. This is true, whether the word is heard from the lips of the inspired men who originally gave it utterance, or is received through other authentic channels. The power by which the word of God produces faith is all derived from the fact that it *is* the word of *God*.

No words, whether of men or of God, can effect moral changes in the feelings of the hearer, unless they are believed; nor can they when [38] believed, unless they announce truths or facts calculated to produce such change. In the present instance, the facts announced placed the hearers in the awful attitude of the murderers of the Son of God, who was now not only alive again, but seated on the throne of God, with all power in his hands, both on earth and in heaven. The belief of these facts necessarily filled them with the most intense realization of guilt, and the most fearful anticipation of punishment. The former of these emotions is expressed by the words of Luke, "*They were pierced to the heart;*" the latter, in their own words, "***Brethren, what shall we do?***" **They had just heard Peter, in the language of Joel, speak of a possible salvation; and the question, What shall we do? unquestionably means, What shall we do to be saved?**

38. This is the first time, under the reign of Jesus Christ, that this most important of all questions was ever propounded; and the first time, of course, that it was every answered. Whatever may have been the true answer under any previous dispensation, or on any previous day in the world's history, the answer given by Peter on this day of Pentecost, in which the reign of Christ on earth began, is the true and infallible answer for all the subjects of his authority in all subsequent time. It deserves our most profound attention; for it announces the conditions of pardon for all men who may be found in the same state of mind with these

inquiries. It is expressed as follows: (38) "*Then Peter said to them, **Repent and be immersed, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.***"

That the offer of pardon, made to the world through Jesus Christ, is conditional, is denied only by the fatalist. We will not argue this point, except as it is involved in the inquiry **as to what the conditions of pardon are**. When we ascertain the prescribed conditions of pardon, both questions will be settled in settling one.

Pardon is the chief want of the human soul, in its most favorable earthly circumstances. The rebel against God's government, though he lay down his arms and becomes a loyal subject, can have no hope of happiness without pardon for the past; while the pardoned penitent, humbly struggling in the service of God, knows himself still guilty of shortcomings, by which he must fail of the final reward, unless pardoned again and again. The question as to what are the conditions of pardon, therefore, necessarily divides itself into two; one having reference to the hitherto-unpardoned sinner, the other to the saint who may have fallen into sin. It is the former class who propounded the question to Peter, and it is to them alone that the answer under consideration was given. We will confine ourselves, in our present remarks, to this branch of the subject, and discuss it only in the light of the passage before us.

If we regard the question of the multitude, What shall we do? as simply a question of duty under their peculiar circumstances, without special reference to final results, we learn from the answer that there were two things for them to do--*Repent*, and *be immersed*. If Peter had stopped with these two words, his answer would have been satisfactory, in this view of the subject, and it would have been the [39] conclusion of the world, that the duty of a sinner, "pierced to the heart" by a sense of guilt, is to *repent* and *be immersed*.

But if we regard their question as having definite reference to the *salvation* of which Peter had already spoken, ([verse 21](#).) and their meaning, What shall we do to be *saved*? then the answer is equally definite: it teaches that what a sinner thus affected is to do to be saved, is to *repent* and *be immersed*.

From these two observations, the reader perceives, that so far as the conditions of salvation from past sins are concerned, the duty of the sinner is most definitely taught by the first two words of the answer, taken in connection with their question, without entering upon the controversy concerning the remainder of the answer. If it had been Peter's design merely to give an answer in concise terms, without explanation, no doubt he would have confined it to these two words, **for they contain the only commands which he gives**.

But he saw fit to accompany the two commands with suitable explanations. He qualifies the command to be immersed by the clause, "in the name of Jesus Christ," to show that it is under his authority that they were to be immersed, and not merely under that of the Father, whose authority alone was recognized in John's immersion. That we are right in referring to this limiting clause, "in the name of Jesus Christ," to the command to *be immersed*, and not to the command *repent*, is evident from the fact that it would be incongruous to say, "*Repent in the name of Jesus Christ.*"

Peter further explains the two commands, by stating their specific *design*; by which term we mean the specific blessing which was to be expected as the consequence of obedience. **It is "for the remission of sins."** To convince an unbiased mind that this clause depends upon both the preceding commands, and express their design, it would only be necessary to repeat the words, "Repent and be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ *for the remission of sins.*" But, inasmuch as it has suited the purpose of some controversialists to dispute this proposition, we here give the opinions of two recent representative commentators, who can not be suspected of undue bias in its favor.

Dr. Alexander (Presbyterian) says, "The whole phrase, *to (or toward) remission of sins*, describes this as the end to which the multitude had reference, and which, therefore, must be contemplated in the answer." Again: "The beneficial end to which *all this led was the remission of sins.*"

Dr. Hackett (Baptist) expresses himself still more satisfactorily: "*eis aphasis hamartion, in order to the forgiveness of sins*, ([Matt. 26:28 Luke iii: 3](#).) we connect, naturally, with the both the preceding verbs. This clause states the motive or object which should induce them to repent and be baptized. It enforces the entire exhortation, not one part of it to the exclusion of the other."

The connection contended for can not be made more apparent by argument; it needs only that attention be called to it, in order to be perceived by every unbiased mind. It is possible that some doubt might arise in reference to the connection of the clause with the term [40] *repent*, but one would imagine that its connection with the command *be immersed* could not be doubted, but for the fact that it has been disputed. Indeed, some controversialists have felt so great necessity for denying the last-named connection, as to assume that the clause, "for the remission of sins" depends largely upon the term *repent*, and that the connection of thought is this: "Repent for the remission of sins, and be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ." It is a sufficient refutation of this assumption to remark, that, if Peter had intended to say this, he would most certainly have done so; but he has said something entirely different; and this shows that he meant something entirely different. If men are permitted, after this style, to entirely reconstruct the sentences of inspired apostles, then there is no statement in the Word of God which may not be perverted. We dismiss this baseless assumption with the remark, that it has not been dignified by the indorsement of any writer of respectable attainments, known to the author, and it would not be noticed here, but for the frequency of its appearance in the pulpit, in the columns of denominational newspapers, and on the pages of partisan tracts.

The dependence of the clause, "for the remission of sins," upon both the verbs *repent* and *be immersed*, being established, it would seem undeniable that remission of sins is the blessing in order to the enjoyment of which they were commanded to repent and be immersed. This is universally admitted so far as the term *repent* is concerned, but by many denied in reference to the command *be immersed*; hence the proposition that immersion is for the remission of sins is rejected by the Protestant sects in general. Assuming that remission of sins *precedes* immersion, and that, so far as adults are concerned, the only proper subjects for this ordinance are those whose sins are already pardoned, it is urged that *for* in this clause means "on account of" or "because of." Hence, Peter is understood to command, "Repent and be immersed on account of remission of sins *already enjoyed*." But this interpretation is subject to two insuperable objections. 1st. To command men to repent and be immersed because their sins were already remitted, is to require them not only to be *immersed* on this account, **but to repent because they were already pardoned.** **There is no possibility of extricating the interpretation from this absurdity.** 2d. **It contradicts an obvious fact of the case. It makes Peter command the inquirers to be immersed because their sins were already remitted, whereas it is an indisputable fact that their sins were not yet remitted.** On the contrary, they were still pierced to the heart with a sense of guilt, and by the question they propounded were seeking how they might obtain the very pardon which this interpretation assumes that they already enjoyed. **Certainly no sane man would assume a position involving such absurdity, and so contradictory to an obvious fact, were he not driven to it by the inexorable demands of a theory which could not be otherwise sustained.**

We observe, further, in reference to this interpretation, that even if we admit the propriety of supplanting the preposition *for* by the phrase *on account of*, the substitute will not answer the purpose for [41] which it is employed. The meaning of this phrase varies, according as its object is *past* or *future*. "*On account of*" some past event may mean *because it has taken place*; but *on account of* an event yet in the future, would, in the same connection, mean *in order* that it *might* take place. The same is true of the equivalent phrase, "because of." If, then, the parties addressed by Peter were already pardoned, "*on account of* the remission of sins" would mean, because their sins had been remitted. But as this is an indisputable fact that the parties addressed were yet unpardoned, what they are commanded to do *on account of* remission of sins must mean, *in order that their sins may be remitted*. Such a rendering, therefore, would not even render the obvious meaning of the passage less perspicuous than it already is.

It will be found that any other substitute for the preposition *for*, designed to force upon the passage a meaning different from that which it obviously bears, will as signally fail to suit the purpose of its author. If, with Dr. Alexander, we render, Repent and be immersed "*to* (or *toward*) remission of sins," we still have remission both beyond repentance and immersion, and depending upon them as preparatory conditions. Indeed, this rendering would leave it uncertain whether repentance and immersion would bring them *to* remission of sins, or only *toward* it, leaving an indefinite space yet to pass before obtaining it.

If, with others still--for every effort that ingenuity could suggest has been made to find another meaning for this passage--we render it, Repent and be immersed *unto* or *into* remission of sins, the attempt is fruitless; for remission of sins is still the blessing *unto* which or *into* which repentance and immersion are to lead the inquirers.

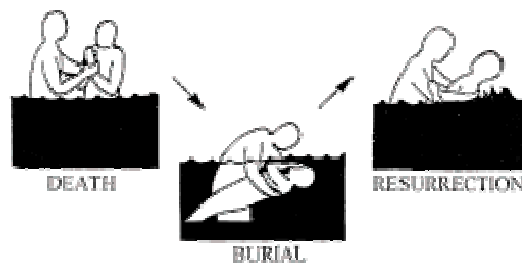
Sometimes the advocates of these various renderings, when disheartened by the failure of their attempts at argument and criticism, resort to raillery, and assert that the whole doctrine of immersion

for the remission of sins depends upon the one little word *for* in the command, "be immersed *for* the remission of sins." If this were true, it would be no humiliation; for a doctrine based upon a *word of God*, however small, has an eternal and immutable foundation. But it is not true. On the contrary, you may draw a pencil-mark over the whole clause, "for the remission of sins," erasing it, with all the remainder of Peter's answer, and still the meaning will remain unchanged. The connection would then read thus: "Brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be immersed every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus." Remembering now that these parties were pierced to the heart with a sense of guilt, and that their question means, What shall we do to be saved from our sins? The answer must be understood as the answer to that question. But the answer is, Repent and be immersed; therefore, to repent and to be immersed are the two things which they must do in order to be saved from their sins.

The reader now perceives, that, in this first announcement to sinners of the terms of pardon, so guardedly has Peter expressed himself, and so skillfully has Luke interwoven with his words the historic facts, that whatever rendering men have forced upon the leading [42] term, the meaning of the whole remains unchanged; and even when you strike this term and its dependent words out of the text, that same meaning still stares you in the face. The fact is suggestive of more than human wisdom. It reminds us that Peter spoke, and Luke wrote, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. That infinite wisdom which was dictating a record for all time to come is displayed here, providing for future controversies which no human being could anticipate. Like the sun in the heavens, which may be temporarily obscured by clouds, but will still break forth again, and shine upon all but those who hide from his beams, the light of truth which God has suspended in this passage may be dimmed for a moment by the mists of partisan criticism, but to those who are willing to see it, it will still send out its beams, and guide the trembling sinner unerringly to pardon and peace.

If there were any real ground for doubt as to the proper translation and real meaning of the words *eis aphasis hamartion*, for the remission of sins, when connected with the term *immersion*, a candid inquirer would resort to its usage when disconnected from this term, and seek thus to determine its exact import. It happens to occur only once in connection suitable to this purpose, but no number of occurrences could more definitely fix its meaning. When instituting the supper, Jesus says, "This is my blood of the new covenant, shed for many for the remission of sins," *eis aphasis hamartion*. It is impossible to doubt that the clause here means *in order to* the remission of sins. In this case it expresses the object for which something is to be done; in the passage we are discussing, it expresses the object for which something is *commanded* to be done: the grammatical and logical construction is the same in both cases, and, therefore, the meaning is the same. Men are to repent and be immersed in order to the attainment of the same blessing for which the blood of Jesus was shed. **The propitiation through his blood was in order to the offer of pardon, while repentance and immersion are enjoined by Peter upon his hearers, in order to the attainment of pardon.**

**The work of the cross is God's offer of life...
Baptism is our acceptance.**



9 questions for those that still want to insist salvation occurs before baptism:

ACTS 2:36-41

- 1.) When the crowd asked what they must do, did Peter say, “Repent and **BELIEVE!**” or did he say, “Repent and **be BAPTIZED!**”?
- 2.) When the crowd asked what they must do, did Peter say, “Ask Jesus to come into your heart! Pray and ask God to forgive you!” or did he say, “Repent and **be BAPTIZED!**”?
- 3.) When the crowd asked what they must do, did Peter lead them in the “sinner’s prayer” or did he tell them to “Repent and **be BAPTIZED!**”?
- 4.) If they were already saved before they were baptized, then why did Peter tell them to “**Repent!**”? (Verse 38)
- 5.) If they were already saved before they were baptized, why did Peter tell them, “**SAVE yourselves...!**”? (Verse 40)
- 6.) If “**eis**” means “because of”, where is there even one single credible version of the Bible where the translators translated this phrase “because of” and not “**for**”, or “**so that**”?
- 7.) Forgiveness only comes after repentance (Luke 13:3,5). So if “**eis**” means “because of”, why would Peter tell them to “**Repent because** your sins have already been forgiven!”?
- 8.) If baptism is not when our souls become saved, then why does it say, in verse 41, “Then they that gladly received his word were **BAPTIZED**: and the same day there were **added** unto them about three thousand **SOULS**.”?
- 9.) If baptism is not for today, then why did Peter tell them, “For the **promise** is unto you, and to your children, **and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.**”? (Verse 39)

“But Paul said he was not sent to baptize...”

(1Corinthians 1:17)

Let's first look at the whole passage in question:

1Corinthians 1:10-17

¹⁰I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. ¹¹My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. ¹²What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

¹³Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? ¹⁴I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. ¹⁶(Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.)

¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel--not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

The following quote is taken from Biblelessons.com :

“In 1 Corinthians 1:10ff, Paul condemns the Christians at Corinth for their division. Apparently many were holding an improper allegiance to the one who baptized them (verse 12). In verse 14, Paul stated that he was therefore thankful that he had baptized only a few there in Corinth. He did not seek any particular status in the minds of those who were baptized; **it made no difference to him who actually did the baptizing.** He says in verse 17 and in Acts 9:15 that Jesus had called him to **preach. Others could do the baptizing as well as Paul, but not necessarily the preaching.** Remember John 4:1-2 says that Jesus made and baptized many disciples, but it was His disciples that actually did the physical act of baptizing.

Was Paul saying that baptism is not important? **Certainly not. Remember it was Paul who said that we put on Christ in baptism (Galations 3:27).** Actually, the passage is very consistent in showing that baptism is very important. It is obvious that the Christians in Corinth had been baptized; this is inferred in 1 Corinthians 1:13 and stated in Acts 18:8. **And Paul, in this passage, actually indicates that two things are required before a person may call himself after another person. First, Paul would have to die for that person; and second, that person would have to be baptized in the name of Paul.** This actually parallels perfectly with Biblical teaching that Christ had died for us, and we rightfully call ourselves Christians when we put Christ on in baptism.”

The divisions that were occurring with the Corinthians apparently got started because they were placing improper importance and significance on **who** baptized them. Whether it was Paul or some other teacher, it did not matter.

But notice something very important about Paul's words that actually demonstrate the necessity of baptism:

To re-state, according to verse 13, in order to be called after Christ, at least two things must happen:

- 1.) Christ must die for that person (which He did)
- 2.) That person must be **baptized** into the name of Christ!

If one has not been baptized into Christ, one cannot rightfully call themselves a Christian.

Even though Paul may have only baptized a few of the Corinthians himself, personally, they **ALL were** baptized! (1Corinthians 12:13)

1Corinthians 12:13

For we were ALL baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

“But God has answered my prayers for a long time, so how could I not be saved?”

Answered prayer is not “proof” we are saved. God answers prayers of unsaved people all the time. That is how loving, caring, all-powerful, all-knowing, merciful, and perfect God is.

“He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” –Matthew 5:45

When God answers our prayers even before we are saved, He is drawing us to Him. When we reach out for God, He does not push us away. He answers so we will know He is there. He answers so we will know he is real. He answers so we will believe He exists. God answers so we will continue to seek after Him.

It is not unusual for God to hear the prayers of people that are seeking Him, even before they are saved. See Cornelius in [Acts chapter 10](#):

Verses 30-33

Cornelius answered: "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

God not only heard Cornelius' prayer before he was saved, He sent an angel in response to provide him with more information through Peter! Peter later told Cornelius the rest of the message so that he could be saved.

Jesus warned us that even miracles performed in His name does not mean we are saved:

Matthew 7:21-23

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

In the above verse, how could these people cast out demons unless they pray? How could they perform any of these works without prayer? **Notice Jesus does not deny they did these things.** But Jesus tells them to depart because they did not do His will. How do we know what God's will is? By reading the Scriptures and doing what they say.

Think about this: If God did not answer our prayers at all before we were saved, how would we ever find Him?

Imagine a parent that loses their child in a store. Does the parent not cry out and call to that lost child? And when the child hears his mother or father, does he not run in the direction of that voice?

That is what God does with us!

And, in God's eyes, we are not considered found until we are **in Christ**:

Do you not know that all of us who have been *baptized into Christ Jesus* were baptized into his death? –Romans 6:3

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as were *baptized into Christ* have clothed yourselves with Christ. -- Galatians 3:26-27

For we were all *baptized* by one Spirit **into** one body...--1Corinthians 12:13

1Corinthians 12:13

Romans 6:3

Galatians 3:27

BAPTIZED>>>>INTO CHRIST

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. – Ephesians 1:7-8

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are **in** Christ Jesus – Romans 8:1

We must be sure we have followed what the Scriptures teach regarding *salvation*, *conversion*, and *how to be saved*, and not follow our own feelings, and traditions. Our feelings will lead us astray every time, but God's Word is always true.

**"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."
—James 1:22**

"I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." – John 8:51

Baptism in the name of Jesus, or baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

Some people think that being baptized "*in the name of Jesus Christ*" and being baptized into the "*name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit*" are two different things. **They are, in fact, the same thing. It is half a dozen in one hand or six in the other.** Some think that by obeying this **direct command and wording of Jesus Himself** in Matthew 28:19 it is somehow not the same as being baptized into Christ and makes baptism in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, invalid (even if it is full water immersion for the forgiveness of sins and done in conformity to Christ's exact Words). The reason these people use is that the wording found elsewhere in the New Testament and especially the book of Acts uses the term "Jesus Christ" or simply "Jesus" (which can further open a can of worms...is it "Jesus Christ"(as Peter said), "Christ Jesus" (as Paul said), "Jesus"(Paul again) or "Christ" (Paul)? The New Testament uses all these terms). But if the Scriptures are the infallible Word of God, then both of these renderings would be correct. Part of this confusion stems from misunderstanding two things:

- 1.) the whole Bible is the Word of God and Matthew 28:19 cannot be excluded**
- 2.) the nature of Christ as God the Father and of God Himself**

So if we see supposedly two examples in Scripture—"Jesus Christ" and "the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" and only one of them is valid, that would invalidate the other, which in turn would invalidate the Word of God. And God is not a liar. His Word is Truth. Are these "two" ways really two? Are they contradictory? **Or are they the same? Is Jesus Christ not the Son?**

If we come to understand from the Word of God the nature of our Creator, we can start to grasp what Jesus was telling us when He referred to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This idea is perhaps one of the hardest for us mortals with finite minds to grasp and this author does not claim to fully fathom the depth of himself. It is just accepted on faith. This exploration is by no means complete, as it will only scratch the surface of what is called the doctrine of the Trinity-- a single God who is three, but is also **one**. Let's begin by looking at a few verses that explore this mind-boggling idea:

John 10:29-31

" My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. " I and the Father are one." The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.

John 14:8-10

**Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."
Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.**

John 17:10-12

and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. "I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.

"While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

What is the name the Father gave to the Son? Is it not JESUS? The name given to the Son, Jesus says, is also the name of the Father.

John 17:20-21

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

1 John 5:7

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

The Word is the Son—Jesus Christ:

Revelation 19:12-14

His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written that no man knew, but He Himself.

And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is called, The Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven, clothed in fine linen white and clean, followed Him upon white horses.

In Scripture, Jesus has many names. Here are just a few of them:

Word	Son of David	Most high	Beloved Son
Word of God	King of kings	Lord	The Root And
Offspring Of David			
Christ	Lord of lords	Immanuel	Abraham's Seed
Messiah	Redeemer	Faithful Witness	Son Of Joseph
Prophet	Bright morning star	Rock	Son of God
Holy One	High Priest	Chief Cornerstone	Firstborn
Righteous One	Good Shepard	Savior	Resurrection
Son of Man	The gate	Ruler	the last Adam
The Way	Prince of Peace	Wonderful	king of Israel
The Truth	Counselor	Mighty God	I AM
The Life	Alpha and Omega	Son Of Abraham	Lamb
Light of the world	Beginning and end	Only Begotten Son	Lion of Judah
Bread of life	True vine	Bridegroom	Mystery of God

God is ONE. Using any of His names *still* is a reference to Him.

Perhaps the most famous and well know verse that teaches *Jesus is the Father* is in the Old Testament and is one we sing about every Christmas but then quickly forget about:

Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

So whether we are baptized into "the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" or into "Jesus Christ" it makes no difference--they are both the same thing.

"Ok, but what about the Holy Spirit?"

Many are surprised to learn the Spirit is not an "it", "it" is a "who":

Acts 11:15

"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as He had come on us at the beginning.

So *who* is this "He"?

Acts 16:6-8 ASV

And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Yes indeed, the Holy Spirit too, is Jesus. Confused yet? You are not alone. But it is what the Bible says...

(Hang on now, it is going to get worse...) So the Bible says Jesus is the Father, and the Father is Jesus. It also says the Holy Spirit is Jesus. Jesus is the Son. He was begotten of the Father. But the Holy Spirit also was involved:

Matthew 1:18

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

But wasn't it the Father who begat the Son? Yes! So how could Jesus be of the Holy Spirit too? Is the Holy Spirit the Father as well? Remember 1John 5:7 above? It says the Father, the Word (which is the Son), and the Holy Ghost are ONE. This is where faith comes in. Our small, puny minds cannot grasp the true immensity of this notion. This is a very deep concept, one perhaps we will never fully understand until we are in heaven. Perhaps the phrase the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is a more complete, all inclusive, all encompassing name that best describes aspects of God that a singular name cannot. This gives insight into the mystery of God's very personality, which appears to be of a compound nature. After all, God has shown us this is so from the very beginning:

Genesis 1:26,3:22

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

So, because the three are one, baptism in "*the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit*" is just as valid as baptism "*in the name of Jesus Christ*." Likewise, baptism "*in the name of Jesus Christ*" is just as valid as baptism in "*the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit*." In Mathew 28:19 Jesus told

The Apostles (Peter being present) to baptize in "*the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit*". In Acts 2:38 we see Peter telling the crowd to be baptized "*in the name of Jesus Christ*." It's a big circle. Peter did not disobey, nor did he improve upon Christ's commands. This should tell us both wordings are acceptable to God.

Furthermore, the power in baptism does not consist of which exact words or "formula" is uttered at time of immersion. What happens in baptism is done by God.

"Thus, if a person is baptized with an understanding and recognition of the Scriptural purpose of baptism, if a person desires for his/her sins to be washed away by the blood of Jesus, if a person realizes that they are dependent on that precious gift of God through Christ, then surely that person has been baptized "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" and also "in the name of Jesus," regardless of the words spoken at the time." –Bob Williams

There are many people who acknowledge Jesus Christ as a human being who lived about 2000 years ago. They do not however, acknowledge Him as the Son (of God). If anyone wants

to be contentious about this, using their own line of “reasoning” it can be argued (erroneously) that using the name Jesus only does not acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God—and anyone who denies the Son also denies the Father as well:

1 John 2:23

Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

Notice this verse uses “the Son” not “Jesus”. But no one with any understanding will say that if someone confesses “Jesus” they will be denying the Father. This would be a misuse of Scripture.

If someone does something *in the name of the President of the United States*, it is just the same as saying someone does something *in the name of George Bush*. One phrasing acknowledges the power and authority of the office while the other phrasing is more personable. But both phrases mean the same thing. It is six in one hand, half a dozen in the other.

Furthermore, much of this dispute seems to arise from a divisive and legalistic mindset among those that should otherwise be unified brothers in the body of Christ. Paul warns against factions and divisions of this nature. We should be careful we do not fall into this category:

1 Timothy 6:4-5

...he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw thyself.

If it is to be disputed that baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is invalid because it doesn't say that in Acts, then the same exact argument can be made that baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is invalid because that is not what Jesus Christ Himself said to do. Do you see how ridiculously silly this gets? It is quibbling over semantics. It is a classic case of what Paul warned Timothy about. Notice Paul also mentions that these people like to argue over words and are after financial gain. Currently, there is another site on the Internet that the author has bet anyone \$10,000 to find anywhere in the New Testament where it shows baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (other than Matthew 28:19, of course). This is an unhealthy interest in controversy over words for financial gain as quoted by Paul above.

Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God? –Mark 12:24

Other baptism tidbits

Repentance and Baptism

John preached repentance and baptism.

Acts 13:24

Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel.

Peter preached repentance and baptism.

Acts 2:38

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins will be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Repentance and baptism was what John and Peter both taught. So then why do so many churches *not* teach this today?

John taught *repentance and baptism* and John was the one who told us to "prepare the way for the Lord." How do we "prepare the way for the Lord"? It begins with repentance and baptism.

Baptism for the forgiveness of sins

Although John's baptism was a baptism of repentance (Acts 19:4) it was however, for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark1:4

And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

Luke3:3

He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

Likewise, the baptism that the apostle Peter preached was also for the forgiveness of sins.

Acts 2:38

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

When the Pharisees wanted to know by whose authority Jesus taught, Jesus asked them—

"John's baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven or men?" —Matthew21:25

So today we must ask ourselves, "This teaching on baptism for the forgiveness of sins—where did it come from? Was it from heaven or from men?" If it is from men, then how do we account for the teachings of the apostles written down for the last 2000 years? And if it is from heaven, then why do we not obey?

The power of darkness, the kingdom of light, and baptism

Colossians 1:13-14

He has delivered us from the **dominion of darkness** and transferred us to the **kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom** we have **redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

How and when are we transferred from the *dominion of darkness* into the **Kingdom of God**? Hint: This transference involves the "**forgiveness of sins.**"

Acts 2:38 teaches **baptism** is when we receive the **forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit**:

Acts 2:38

"Peter replied, "Repent and be **baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins.** And you will receive the gift of the **Holy Spirit.**"

Jesus Himself said that one **must be born of water and the Spirit** in order to **enter** the kingdom of God:

John 3:5

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, **unless** one is **born of water and the Spirit**, he cannot **enter** the **kingdom** of God.

Looking back to Acts 2:38 we see both the "water" and the "Spirit" that Jesus spoke about.

If we tie Colossians 1:13-14, Acts 2:38, and John 3:5 all together, we plainly see **baptism** is when and how we are transferred from the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of light. Knowing this fact, we can also confirm from Peter's writings that before we become a part of God's "holy nation" or, God's kingdom, we are in darkness:

1Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

And baptism, according to John 3:5 is how we enter God's **kingdom**, or His "**holy nation**" as Peter put it.

Before baptism we are not in God's kingdom. Before baptism we are not in God's "holy nation". Before baptism we do not belong to God. Before baptism we have not received mercy. Before baptism we have not received the forgiveness of sins. Before baptism we have not yet received redemption.

But there is a very simple and easy solution to this: **BE BAPTIZED!**

The Role of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit:

Is called the Comforter KJV
Is called the Counselor NIV--**John 14:16,26**

Will be with us forever--**John 14:16**

Is the Spirit of Truth
Lives in us--**John 14:17**

Teaches us all things
Reminds us of Christ's teachings--**John 14:26**

Will testify about Jesus--**John 15:26**

Convicts the world of guilt--**John 16:8**

Guides us into all truth--**John 16:13**

Takes from what is Christ's and makes known to us-- **John 16:14-15**

Intercedes for us
Helps us in our weakness—**Romans 8:26-27**

Searches all things
Reveals truth —**1Corinthians 2:10**

How and when do we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? At baptism when our sins are forgiven and washed away:

Acts 2:38

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Remember also, it was at Christ's baptism that the Spirit descended upon Him.

Galatians 3:26-27,4:6

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ...Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who cries out, "Abba", Father."

As a result of baptism into Christ we become sons. If we are sons, must not we be born? How are we born then? How can we be born when we are old? Nicodemus asked that same question--

John 3: 3-5

Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old?

Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

And if we are born, we are sons. And when were are born in this manner (through baptism), we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Resurrection and baptism

The resurrection has always been the pivot point of the Gospel. The teaching of the resurrection was relentlessly the main thrust of the message that the apostles proclaimed to the world. The Apostle Paul tells us without the resurrection, we are still dead in our sins. It was Christ's resurrection from the dead that was His ultimate triumph over Satan. The resurrection of Jesus Christ proves that Jesus is the Son of God and that He has the power to save us from our sins. The teaching of the resurrection was what always got people into trouble with those who opposed them. The resurrection was the "flash point."

Acts 4:1-3

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. **They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.** They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day.

Acts 4:33

With great power the apostles continued to **testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus**, and much grace was upon them all.

Acts 17:18

A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." **They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.**

Acts 17:32

When they heard about **the resurrection of the dead**, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject."

Acts 23:6

Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in **the resurrection of the dead.**"

It is no wonder that the resurrection is such an important component of the Good news. It is by the resurrection that God has proven to the world that Jesus Christ is indeed the prophesied Redeemer. The resurrection is the ultimate miracle.

Romans 1:1-4

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness **was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Acts 17:30-31

In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. **He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.**"

So what does the resurrection have to do with baptism? Let's look at what the apostles Peter and Paul taught:

1Peter 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us **new birth** into a living hope **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ** from the dead,

1 Peter 3:21

and this water symbolizes **baptism that now saves you also**--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. **It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

Peter ties together three things in these verses:

- 1.) New birth (See [John 3:1-5](#))
- 2.) Baptism
- 3.) The resurrection of Jesus Christ

Peter tells us that baptism **saves** us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ and baptism is a *new birth*. This is in perfect harmony with the rest of the scriptures. Paul explains how the **resurrection** and **baptism** tie together:

Romans 6:3-5

Or don't you know that all of us who were **baptized** into Christ Jesus were **baptized into his death**? We were therefore **buried with him through baptism** into death **in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.**

One cannot teach baptism correctly without teaching that Jesus rose from the dead. It is through **baptism** that we become united with Christ in His death and consequently also in his **resurrection**.

To reject baptism, is to personally reject the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And to reject the resurrection of Jesus Christ is to reject Him as the Son of God.

Therefore, if we deny baptism, we deny Christ from raising us from death.

To be anti-baptism is to be
anti-resurrection.
To be anti-resurrection is to be
anti-Christ.

The Gospel, “Speaking the Word of the Lord”, “Preaching Jesus”, and baptism

The term “**gospel**” is a Greek term and simply means “**good news**”. Notice that passages in the New Testament relating to non-Christians being taught the Gospel, or, the “Word of the Lord”, always teach or illustrate, in the very same breath, that **baptism** is the correct **response** to this good news.

Acts 8:12

But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Mark 16:15-16

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

The Bible does not always spell out what we have to do to be lost. *Instead, it tells us what we have to do to be saved* and expects us to realize that, if we don't obey it, we will be lost.

The pattern set in the New Testament for Biblical conversion includes these three elements combined:

- 1.) Faith
- 2.) Repentance
- 3.) Baptism for the forgiveness of sins

Acts 8:35-38

Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

Notice the account of the Ethiopian eunuch undeniably illustrates that baptism is in water. This is no baptism “in the Spirit.” And Ephesians 4 :4-5 says the there is only ONE baptism. After having the Gospel told to him, the eunuch responds by requesting baptism. This can only mean that Philip's teaching of the Gospel (good news) included proper instruction on the purpose of baptism.

Acts 16:12-15

From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Notice the Scripture says that Lydia **responded** to Paul's **message**. What must have been part of Paul's message? Well, she **responded** to his message by being **baptized**, so Paul's message **had** to include the topic of **baptism!** --**And being baptized is equated with belief.**

Notice also, that Lydia's response to the preaching of the kingdom of God was identical to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26-40 and the Samaritans in Acts 8:5,12. They all **responded** by being **baptized**. **If baptism is when our sins are forgiven and we become saved, baptism**

absolutely has to be part of the message of the kingdom of God! And this is why baptism always has been part of the message of the good news!

Acts 16:30-33

He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household." Then they **spoke the word of the Lord** to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then **immediately** he and all his family were **baptized**.

See notes on [Acts 16:25-33](#).

To reject baptism is to reject Christ's gospel. (Of course, Biblical baptism also means faith and repentance from our sins have been fulfilled as a prerequisite). According to Jesus, baptism is when we are re-born:

John 3:3-5

In reply Jesus declared, "**I tell you the truth**, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is **born again**."

"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "**I tell you the truth**, **no one** can enter the kingdom of God **unless** he is **born of water and the Spirit**."

And we see this birth of "water and the Spirit" starting in Acts 2:38:

Acts 2:38-41

Then Peter said to them, "**Repent**, and let every one of you be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**; and you shall receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. For the **promise** is to you and to your children, and **to all** who are far off, **for all** whom the Lord our God will call." And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "**Be saved** from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were **baptized**; and that day about three thousand **souls** were added to them.

Now if the gospel message includes proper instruction in the purpose of baptism, then it only stands to reason that rejecting baptism is rejecting the gospel. And rejecting the Gospel, the Bible warns us, is playing with fire. Literally:

Galatians 1:6-10

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a **different gospel**-- which is really **no gospel at all**.

Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a **gospel other than the one we preached** to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a **gospel other than what you accepted**, let him be eternally condemned! Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

In this very same letter Paul teaches about baptism two chapters later. See [Galatians 3:26-27](#).

But the real issue here isn't baptism. The real issue at hand is the *gospel* and whether we believe it. If baptism is a part of the gospel and we reject this message, we fall under condemnation because we do not **believe the message God has given us**. **If the Bible says we have to be baptized to be saved and we do not believe this, we do not believe the Word of the Lord and will be condemned as an unbeliever. That is why Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."**

2Thessalonians 1:5-10

All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

Paul's testimony covered many things. But from his writings it can be clearly seen his teaching on baptism remained absolutely consistent with the rest of Scripture: Baptism is a part of the Gospel message. Why? Because baptism is a requirement for salvation.

And just what is the gospel? Let's see what the *Bible* says about the gospel:

1Corinthians 15:2-4

By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

Notice three things about the gospel. It involves the-

- 1.) Death of Christ
- 2.) Burial of Christ
- 3.) Resurrection of Christ

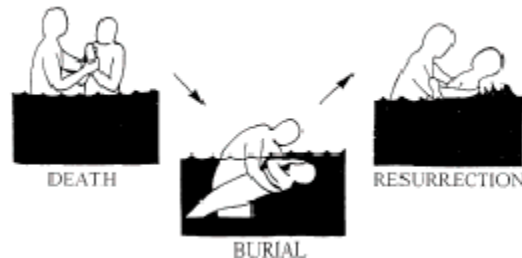
Remember [2Thessalonians 1](#) above? It says we must obey the gospel or we will be lost. This is a "life and death" statement! So, how does one "obey the gospel"? How does one obey the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—an event that happened 2,000 years ago?

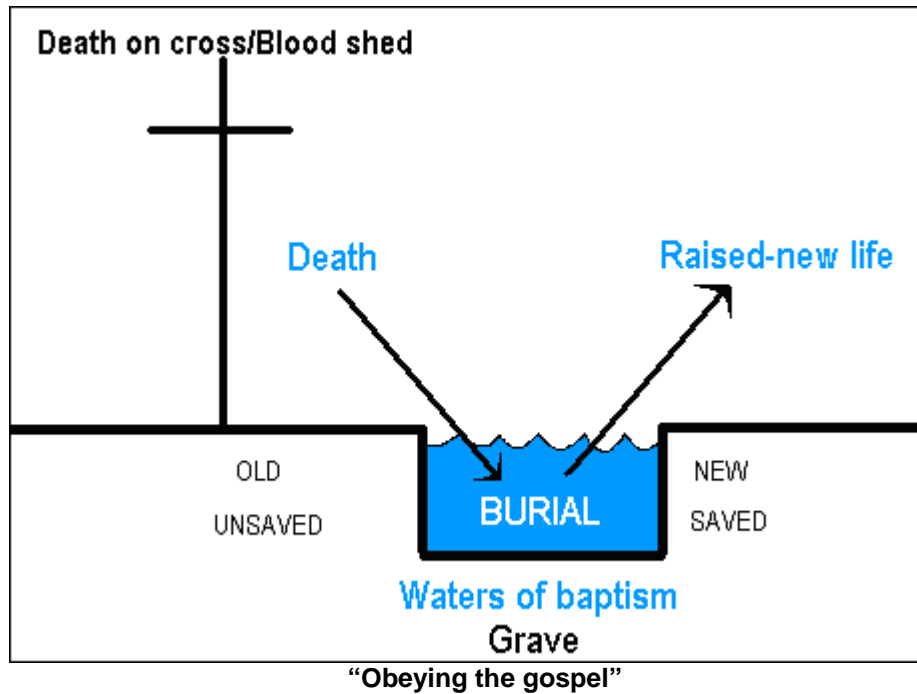
Easy.

Romans 6:3-4

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

We obey the gospel—the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ through baptism!





“If we died with him, we will also live with him;” –2Timothy 2:11

If we *accept* baptism, we *accept* Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection—and will be saved. But if we *reject* baptism, we *reject* Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. We will then be shut out from the Lord’s presence, the Bible warns, and punished with everlasting destruction. This is a very serious matter. Take heed.

Justification, Reconciliation, Sanctification, and baptism

There are many teachings on this topic. But let's look at what the Bible, and the Bible only says regarding *justification, reconciliation, and sanctification*:

Romans 5:9

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

Q: What does justification have to do with Christ's blood and baptism?

A: Everything!

Hebrews 10:19-22

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

"...since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by ...his body,"

It is through Christ's body that we gain access to His blood.

What is Christ's body?

Besides 1Corinthians 12:27 quoted above, there are many other places in Scripture that teach the church is a spiritual illustration of the **body of Christ**.

1Corinthians 6:15

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?

Colossians 1:18

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Colossians 1:24

Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

Ephesians 1:22-23

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Ephesians 5:23

For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

How do we become a part of His body (which is the church)?

Through baptism:

1Corinthians 12:13

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Through baptism we become a part of Christ's *body—the church*, and we therefore gain access to Christ's *blood*. (See also [Romans 6:3-4](#)— take note of the phrases "*into Christ*", and "*through baptism*.”)

We gain access to Christ's blood
through His *body*.
We gain access to Christ's body
through *baptism*.

1Corinthians 12:13

Romans 6:3

Galatians 3:27

BAPTIZED>>>>INTO CHRIST

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. – Ephesians 1:7-8

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus – Romans 8:1

Colossians 1:22

But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—

1Corinthians 6:11

And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

When were we “washed”? When was God's Spirit given to us? See [John 3:5](#) and [Acts 2:38](#).

The Greek word for “washed” in 1Cor 6:11 is “apolouo” (**απολουω**)
This is the same exact Greek word used in [Acts 22:16](#). In fact, “apolouo”, (Strong's Number **628**) **is only used twice in the New Testament; in 1Cor 6:11, and Acts 22:16—where it is directly connected to baptism.**

Comments from Thayer's Lexicon on 1Cor 6:11:

“Whoever obtains remission of sins has his sins put, so to speak, out of God's sight—is cleansed from them in the sight of God. Remission is obtained by undergoing baptism; hence those who have gone down into the baptismal bath are said to have washed themselves, or to have washed away their sins, i.e. to have been cleansed from their sins.”

Here are word tense/stem results of Acts 22:16:

The imperative mood corresponds to the English imperative, and expresses a command to the hearer to perform a certain action by the order and authority of the one commanding. Thus, Jesus' phrase, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mk.1:15) **is not at all an "invitation," but an absolute command requiring full obedience on the part of all hearers.**

The middle voice indicates the subject performing an action upon himself (reflexive action) or for his own benefit.

When we are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified. Therefore we are reconciled to God.

If Jesus gave his body over to death and Christ shed His blood for us nearly *2,000 years ago*, and it is at the point of baptism we can come into contact with the blood of Jesus, it can *truly* be said we are saved through faith and grace!

BORN OF “WATER AND SPIRIT”, SALVATION, AND BAPTISM

SALVATION	WATER	and	SPIRIT
John 3:3,5 no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again...I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is...	born of water...	and	the Spirit
Titus 3:5 He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the ...	washing of rebirth	and	renewal by the Holy Spirit
Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be..."	baptized , every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.	And	you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
1Corinthians 6:11 And that is what some of you were. But you were...	washed , you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ	and	by the Spirit of our God.
Matt 3:16-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, John 1:31-32	At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water , he saw heaven being torn open	and	the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

<p>Psalm 51:7-10 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;</p>	<p>Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow... Create in me a clean heart, O God,</p>	<p>and</p>	<p>renew a steadfast spirit within me.</p>
<p>1Corinthians 10:1-4 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the...</p>	<p>cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;</p>	<p>and</p>	<p>did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.</p>
<p>Ezekiel 36:25-26 I will sprinkle clean</p>	<p>water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart</p>	<p>and</p>	<p>put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.</p>
<p>1Corinthians 12:13 For we were all</p>	<p>baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--</p>	<p>and</p>	<p>we were all given the one Spirit to drink.</p>
<p>Galatians 3:26-27,4:6-7 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,</p>	<p>for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ...</p>		<p>Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.</p>

Baptism Trivia

An interesting thought

Just for fun...

I Peter 3:21

...who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved **through water**, and this water is a symbol of **baptism, which now saves you** - not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, **it saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

In the days of Noah, God looked down on the earth and was grieved at all the evil he saw upon the world (Genesis 6). Before Noah's flood, the earth was filled with sin and corrupt. God used the waters of Noah's flood to wipe out the old and bring about a new beginning. God "wiped the slate clean" and started all over again.

The phrase, "***this water***" is a reference to the **water of Noah's flood**. ***The water of Noah's flood is an illustration of baptism.*** God "cleansed" the earth with water and though this water a new beginning came about.

Understand there is nothing "magical" in the actual water itself. But **when** we obey God's command to be immersed in water in order to have our sins forgiven, **God** is faithful and **God** cleanses our sins through the blood of Christ at this point of our obedience and faith.

New Thought:

"The Earth is pretty much a 'closed system,' like a terrarium. That means that the Earth neither, as a whole, gains nor loses much matter, including water. Although some matter, such as meteors from outer space, are captured by Earth, very little of Earth's substances escape into outer space. This is certainly true about water. This means that the same water that existed on Earth eons ago is still here. Thanks to the water cycle, the same water is continually being recycled all around the globe. It is entirely possible that the water you drank for lunch was once used by Mama Alosaurus to give her baby a bath." –**United States Geological Survey**

Now if water, in its various forms (vapor, ice, liquid), does not increase nor decrease in amount, but remains the same, recycling throughout the earth, then that means the very same water we are baptized in today, was at one time, long ago, a part of the same body of water that enveloped the earth during the time earth was flooded when Noah and his family were in the ark.

When Jesus said, "*I tell you the truth, unless one is born of **water and** the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God*" (John 3:5), we can understand that we are baptized in (an extremely small amount of) the very same water with which God used to "cleanse" the earth during Noah's life--and also the very same water which was present in Genesis at creation.

God has always brought forth creation from His Spirit with water being present. It has been like this from the beginning:

Genesis 1:2

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

MARTIN LUTHER ON BAPTISM

Although Martin Luther still had not shaken entirely the trappings of the false teachings of the Catholic Church, such as the false doctrines of “original sin” (which leads to the non-Biblical practice of infant baptism), and sprinkling or pouring instead of immersion, he did nonetheless understand baptism with its meaning and purpose in great clarity.

Note: Although Martin Luther still had not shaken entirely the trappings of the false teachings of the Catholic Church, such as the [false doctrines of “original sin”](#) (which leads to the non-Biblical practice of infant baptism), and sprinkling or pouring instead of immersion, he did nonetheless understand baptism with its meaning and purpose in great clarity.

The Large Catechism
by Martin Luther
Translated by F. Bente and W.H.T. Dau
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of the Ev. Lutheran Church*
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pp. 565-773

XIII.
Part Fourth
Of Baptism.

We have now finished the three chief parts of the common Christian doctrine. Besides these we have yet to speak of our two Sacraments instituted by Christ, of which also every Christian ought to have at least an ordinary, brief instruction, because without them there can be no Christian; although, alas! hitherto no instruction concerning them has been given. But, in the first place, we take up Baptism, by which we are first received into the Christian Church. However, in order that it may be readily understood we will treat of it in an orderly manner, and keep only to that which it is necessary for us to know. For how it is to be maintained and defended against heretics and sects we will commend to the learned.

In the first place, we must above all things know well the words upon which Baptism is founded, and to which everything refers that is to be said on the subject, namely, where the Lord Christ speaks in the last chapter of Matthew, v. 19:

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Likewise in St. Mark, the last chapter, v. 16:

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

In these words you must note, in the first place, that here stand God's commandment and institution, lest we doubt **that Baptism is divine, not devised nor invented by men.** For as truly as I can say, No man has spun the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer out of his head, but they are revealed and given by God Himself, so also I can boast that **Baptism is no human trifle, but instituted by God Himself,** moreover, **that it is most solemnly and strictly commanded that we must be baptized or we cannot be saved,** lest any one regard it as a trifling matter, like putting on a new red coat. For it is of the greatest importance that we esteem Baptism excellent, glorious, and exalted, for which we contend and fight chiefly, because the world is now so full of sects clamoring that Baptism is an external thing, and that external things are of no benefit. But let it be ever so much an external thing here stand God's Word and command which institute, establish, and confirm

Baptism. But what God institutes and commands cannot be a vain, but must be a most precious thing, though in appearance it were of less value than a straw. If hitherto people could consider it a great thing when the Pope with his letters and bulls dispensed indulgences and confirmed altars and churches, solely because of the letters and seals, we ought to esteem Baptism much more highly and more precious, because God has commanded it, and, besides, it is performed in His name. For these are the words, Go ye baptize; however, not in your name, but in the name of God.

For to be baptized in the name of God is to be baptized not by men, but by God Himself. Therefore although it is performed by human hands, **it is nevertheless truly God's own work.** From this fact every one may himself readily infer that it is a far higher work than any work performed by a man or a saint. For what work greater than the work of God can we do?

But here the devil is busy to delude us with false appearances, and lead us away from the work of God to our own works. For there is a much more splendid appearance when a Carthusian does many great and difficult works and we all think much more of that which we do and merit ourselves. But the Scriptures teach thus: Even though we collect in one mass the works of all the monks, however splendidly they may shine, they would not be as noble and good as if God should pick up a straw. Why? Because the person is nobler and better. Here, then, we must not estimate the person according to the works, but the works according to the person, from whom they must derive their nobility. But insane reason will not regard this, and because Baptism does not shine like the works which we do, it is to be esteemed as nothing.

From this now learn a proper understanding of the subject, and how to answer the question what Baptism is, namely thus, **that it is not mere ordinary water, but water comprehended in God's Word and command, and sanctified thereby, so that it is nothing else than a divine water; not that the water in itself is nobler than other water, but that God's Word and command are added.**

Therefore it is pure wickedness and blasphemy of the devil that now our new spirits, to mock at Baptism, omit from it God's Word and institution, and look upon it in no other way than as water which is taken from the well, and then blather and say: How is a handful of water to help the soul? Aye, my friend, who does not know that water is water if tearing things asunder is what we are after? But how dare you thus interfere with God's order, and tear away the most precious treasure with which God has connected and enclosed it, and which He will not have separated? For the kernel in the water is God's Word or command and the name of God which is a treasure greater and nobler than heaven and earth.

Comprehend the difference, then, that Baptism is quite another thing than all other water; not on account of the natural quality, but because something more noble is here added; **for God Himself stakes His honor His power and might on it.** Therefore it is not only natural water, but a divine, heavenly, holy, and blessed water, and in whatever other terms we can praise it, -- **all on account of the Word, which is a heavenly, holy Word, that no one can sufficiently extol,** for it has, and is able to do, all that God is and can do [since it has all the virtue and power of God comprised in it]. Hence also it derives its essence as a Sacrament, as St. Augustine also taught: *Acedat verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum.* That is, when the Word is joined to the element or natural

substance, it becomes a Sacrament, that is, a holy and divine matter and sign.

Therefore we always teach that the Sacraments and all external things which God ordains and institutes should not be regarded according to the coarse, external mask, as we regard the shell of a nut, but as the Word of God is included therein. For thus we also speak of the parental estate and of civil government. If we propose to regard them in as far as they have noses, eyes, skin, and hair flesh and bones, they look like Turks and heathen, and some one might start up and say: Why should I esteem them more than others? But because the commandment is added: Honor thy father and thy mother, I behold a different man, adorned and clothed with the majesty and glory of God. The commandment (I say) is the chain of gold about his neck, yea, the crown upon his head which shows to me how and why one must honor this flesh and blood.

Thus, and much more even, you must honor Baptism and esteem it glorious on account of the Word, since He Himself has honored it both by words and deeds; moreover, confirmed it with miracles from heaven. **For do you think it was a jest that, when Christ was baptized, the heavens were opened and the Holy Ghost descended visibly, and everything was divine glory and majesty?**

Therefore I exhort again that these two the water and the Word, by no means be separated from one another and parted. For if the Word is separated from it, the water is the same as that with which the servant cooks, and may indeed be called a bath-keeper's baptism. But when it is added, as God has ordained, it is a Sacrament, and is called Christ-baptism. Let this be the first part regarding the essence and dignity of the holy Sacrament.

In the second place, since we know now what Baptism is, and how it is to be regarded, **we must also learn why and for what purpose it is instituted;** that is, what it profits, gives and works. And this also we cannot discern better than from the **words of Christ above quoted: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Therefore state it most simply thus, that the power, work, profit, fruit, and end of Baptism is this, namely, to save.** For no one is baptized in order that he may become a prince, but, as the words declare, that he be saved. **But to be saved.** we know. is nothing else than to be **delivered from sin, death, and the devil, and to enter into the kingdom of Christ, and to live with Him forever.**

Here you see again how highly and precious we should esteem Baptism, because in it we obtain such an unspeakable treasure, which also indicates sufficiently that it cannot be ordinary mere water. For mere water could not do such a thing, **but the Word does it,** and (as said above) **the fact that the name of God is comprehended therein.** But where the name of God is, there must be also life and **salvation,** that it may indeed be called a divine, blessed, fruitful, and gracious water; for by the Word such power is imparted to Baptism that it is a laver of regeneration, as St. Paul also calls it, Titus 3, 5.

But as our would-be wise, new spirits assert that faith alone saves, and that works and external things avail nothing, **we answer:** It is true, indeed, that nothing in us is of any avail but faith, as we shall hear still further. **But these blind guides are unwilling to see this, namely, that faith must have something which it believes, that is, of which it takes hold, and upon which it stands and rests.** Thus faith clings to the water, and believes that it is **Baptism, in which there is pure salvation**

and life; not through the water (as we have sufficiently stated), but through the fact that it is embodied in the Word and institution of God, and the name of God inheres in it. Now, if I believe this, what else is it than believing in God as in Him who has given and planted His Word into this ordinance, and proposes to us this external thing wherein we may apprehend such a treasure?

Now, they are so mad as to separate faith and that to which faith clings and is bound though it be something external. Yea, it shall and must be something external, that it may be apprehended by the senses, and understood and thereby be brought into the heart, as indeed the entire Gospel is an external, verbal preaching. In short, what God does and works in us He proposes to work through such external ordinances. Wherever, therefore, He speaks, yea, in whichever direction or by whatever means He speaks, thither faith must look, and to that it must hold. Now here we have the words: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. To what else do they refer than to Baptism, that is, to the water comprehended in God's ordinance? **Hence it follows that whoever rejects Baptism rejects the Word of God, faith, and Christ, who directs us thither and binds us to Baptism.**

In the third place since we have learned the great benefit and power of Baptism, let us see further who is the person that receives what Baptism gives and profits. This is again most beautifully and clearly expressed in the words: **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. That is, faith alone makes the person worthy to receive profitably the saving, divine water.** For, since these blessings are here presented and promised **in the words in and with the water, they cannot be received in any other way** than by believing them with the heart. Without faith it profits nothing, notwithstanding it is in itself a divine superabundant treasure. Therefore this single word (He that believeth) effects this much that it excludes and repels all works which we can do, in the opinion that we obtain and merit salvation by them. For it is determined that whatever is not faith avails nothing nor receives anything.

But if they say, as they are accustomed: Still Baptism is itself a work, **and you say works are of no avail for salvation; what then, becomes of faith? Answer: Yes, our works, indeed, avail nothing for salvation; Baptism, however, is not our work, but God's** (for, as was stated, you must put Christ-baptism far away from a bath-keeper's baptism). God's works, however, are saving and **necessary** for salvation, and do not exclude, but demand, faith; for without faith they could not be apprehended. For by suffering the water to be poured upon you, you have not yet received Baptism in such a manner that it benefits you anything; but it becomes beneficial to you if you have yourself baptized with the thought that this is according to God's command and ordinance, and besides in God's name, in order that you may receive in the water the promised salvation. Now, this the fist cannot do, nor the body; but the heart must believe it.

Thus you see plainly that there is here no work done by us, but a treasure which He gives us, and which faith apprehends; just as the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross is not a work, but a treasure comprehended in the Word, and offered to us and received by faith. **Therefore they do us violence by exclaiming against us as though we preach against faith; while we alone insist upon it as being of such necessity that without it nothing can be received nor enjoyed.**

Thus we have these three parts which it is necessary to know concerning this Sacrament especially that the ordinance of God is to be held in all

honor, which alone would be sufficient, though it be an entirely external thing like the commandment, Honor thy father and thy mother, which refers to bodily flesh and blood. Therein we regard not the flesh and blood, but the commandment of God in which they are comprehended, and on account of which the flesh is called father and mother; so also, though we had no more than these words, Go ye and baptize, etc., it would be necessary for us to accept and do it as the ordinance of God. Now there is here not only God's commandment and injunction, but also the promise, on account of which it is still far more glorious than whatever else God has commanded and ordained, and is, in short, so full of consolation and grace that heaven and earth cannot comprehend it. But it requires skill to believe this, for the treasure is not wanting, but this is wanting that men apprehend it and hold it firmly.

Therefore every Christian has enough in **Baptism** to learn and to practice all his life; for he has always enough to do to believe firmly what it promises and brings: victory over death and the devil, **forgiveness of sin**, the grace of God, the entire Christ, and the Holy Ghost with His gifts. In short, it is so transcendent that if timid nature could realize it, it might well doubt whether it could be true. **For consider, if there were somewhere a physician who understood the art of saving men from dying, or, even though they died, of restoring them speedily to life, so that they would thereafter live forever, how the world would pour in money like snow and rain, so that because of the throng of the rich no one could find access! But here in Baptism there is brought free to every one's door such a treasure and medicine as utterly destroys death and preserves all men alive.**

Thus we must regard Baptism and make it profitable to ourselves, that when our sins and conscience oppress us, we strengthen ourselves and take comfort and say: Nevertheless I am baptized; but if I am baptized, it is promised me that I shall be saved and have eternal life, both in soul and body. For that is the reason why these two things are done in Baptism namely, that the body, which can apprehend nothing but the water, is sprinkled, and, in addition, the word is spoken for the soul to apprehend. Now, since both, the water and the Word, are one Baptism, therefore body and soul must be saved and live forever: the soul through the Word which it believes, but the body because it is united with the soul and also apprehends Baptism as it is able to apprehend it. We have, therefore, no greater jewel in body and soul, for by it we are made holy and are saved, which no other kind of life, no work upon earth, can attain.

Let this suffice respecting the nature, blessing, and use of Baptism, for it answers the present purpose.

Some common traditions of men vs. the Word of God

The Word of God says:

“He who believes and is **baptized** will be **saved** “ (Mark 16:16)

Denominations teach:

He who believes and is **saved**, should be **baptized**

The Word of God says:

“Repent and be baptized **for** the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38)

Denominations teach:

Repent and be baptized **because** your sins have already been forgiven

The Word of God says:

‘Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, **unless** one is born of water and the Spirit, he **cannot** enter the kingdom of God.’ (John 3:5)

Denominations teach:

Baptism is not essential for salvation. This “birth of water” is natural childbirth.

The Word of God says:

“We were buried therefore with him **by baptism** into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4)

Denominations teach:

We were buried therefore with him **by belief** into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

The Word of God says:

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, **one baptism**, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Ephesians 4:4-5)

Denominations teach:

There are many baptisms and many bodies, and many faiths.

The Word of God says:

“...who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through **water, and this water is a symbol of baptism, which now saves you** - not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, **it saves you** by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (1Peter 3:21)

Note: Look at the above verse carefully. It teaches the water of Noah’s flood is a symbol of baptism--and baptism saves us. The “it” in the phrase “it saves you” is referring to *baptism*...So this verse actually states two times that baptism saves us!

Denominations teach:

Baptism does not save you--baptism is merely a symbol.

The Word of God says:

“and **you** were buried with **him in baptism**, in which **you** were also raised with him through **faith** in the **working of God**, who raised him from the dead.” (Colossians 2:12)

Denominations teach:

Baptism is a work of Man.

The Word of God says:

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as were **baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**” (Galatians 3:26-27)

Denominations teach:

Baptism does not put us into Christ--belief alone does.

The Word of God says:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

Denominations teach:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, **telling them to pray for me to come into their life**, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.

The Word of God says:

“Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is **water**. What hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, “**If you believe with all your heart, you may.**” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch **went down into the water**, and he baptized him. Now when they **came up out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.” (Acts 8:36-39)

Denominations teach:

Baptism is required, but not in water. Baptism is in “spirit”.
And if water is used, sprinkling or pouring is ok.
And candidate for baptism need not believe (such as with infants).

The Word of God says:

“And now why do you wait? Rise and **be baptized**, and **wash away your sins**, calling on his name.” (Acts 22:16)

Denominations teach:

Paul had been **praying** and **fasting** for **three days** at this point, and called **Jesus “Lord”**, so he was already saved. Baptism had nothing to do with having his sins washed away.

The Word of God says:

“You see that a person is justified by what he does and **not** by faith alone.” (James 2:24)

Denominations teach:

We **are** justified by faith alone.

CONCLUSION

**Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the whole duty of man.**

We thirst for money as if it will save us. Yet even all the money in the world only can buy a temporary reprieve. Sooner or later all men go to the same place—the grave and the place of judgment. Our eyes have become blind to the things that really matter. We labor, we toil, we sweat. We manipulate. We lie, we cheat, we steal in order to “get ahead.” But get ahead of *what?* What good is it to gain the whole world, yet loose or forfeit your very soul? We can only outrun death for so long before it overtakes us. It cannot be escaped from. We even have deceived ourselves into thinking that doctors can “save” lives. But the truth is there has never been a single doctor that has saved even one single life. All a doctor can do is postpone death to some future date. Throughout all history there has only been One who has the ability to save anybody. His name is Jesus Christ. Only He rescues us from the grave. Only He saves us from death and destruction. He pulls us from the depths of the pit; He pulls us from the very clutches of the devil. He redeems us and gives us eternal life. When we are baptized He bestows on us a treasure we can only pray we begin to comprehend the depths of. May He enlighten the eyes of our hearts to understand the riches of the eternal inheritance in which He has so lavishly blessed us with. May we seek to begin to grasp and comprehend the vast and unsearchable riches that He has so freely given us.

There is no one who escapes death. There is no one who gets out of life alive. That much is certain. That is, unless they belong to the One who purchased them from the grave. Our physical bodies will die. But our soul has hope through Jesus Christ our Lord. Even the richest and most powerful will one day die and face the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

**Look, he is coming with the clouds,
and every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him;
and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.**

" 'the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'

"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Every heart will melt and every hand go limp; every spirit will become faint and every knee become as weak as water.' It is coming! It will surely take place, declares the Sovereign LORD ."

All the rich and powerful of times past have come and gone. They have had their day in the sun and now it has passed from them. Even the greatest of the earth are not spared from the grave; even they are not spared from the shadowy fate that overtakes all who live upon the face of the earth. Even now, their names are gone and have vanished from this world. For their glory was brief, but the Word of the Lord is eternal.

So how then, will you, O little man, escape the sickle of the angel of death?

I will tell you how. I will tell you now: By believing in the name of Jesus Christ –the One who rose from the dead; by believing the Good News and repenting of your sins; by being baptized into Him for the forgiveness of your sins that all your transgressions may be washed away and blotted out for all eternity and you enter into His eternal kingdom of light—A kingdom that will never perish, spoil or fade. He has paid the price for you long ago-- before you were even born. Now accept His offer of life. Accept it and repent and be baptized. There is only one Name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. Salvation is found in no one else. Jesus Christ is that Name. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Him. "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

"Consider, if there were somewhere a physician who understood the art of saving men from dying, or, even though they died, of restoring them speedily to life, so that they would thereafter live forever, how the world would pour in money like snow and rain, so that because of the throng of the rich no one could find access! But here in Baptism there is brought free to every one's door such a treasure and medicine as utterly destroys death and preserves all men alive. Thus we must regard Baptism and make it profitable to ourselves..."

To cling to this life and this world is but to cling to a speck of dirt that is swirling down the bathroom drain. For this world in its present form is passing away. And when the Lord of Glory is revealed the earth and the sky and the stars above will melt away in the fervent heat and fire of His judgment. But those that are found in Him and clothed with him will pass through the flames in the same way that Daniel and his companions passed through the fiery furnace without even so much as a singed hair. Those who have believed and been born of water and the Spirit and remain faithful will pass through the flames and will receive the crown of life, their eternal hope-- the salvation of their souls. And when we have been there 100 billion billion years, we will have no less days than when we first begun.

Now to the only wise and true God, the faithful and true witness, to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory, honor, power and praise in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death--
even death on a cross!
**Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

What is the Church of Christ?

That's a good question! Simply put, we are a non-denominational, New Testament church.

Members of the church of Christ:

- † Seek to duplicate the non-denominational church of the first century.**
 - † Take the Bible as our supreme guide.**
 - † Reject doctrines and practices that were introduced after the close of the New Testament.**
 - † Seek to be Christians only.**
 - † Believe this is the one and only way to unite all who are seeking to follow Christ.**
-

WHO ARE THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST AND WHAT DO THEY BELIEVE IN?

By: Batsell Barrett Baxter

WHAT IS THE DISTINCTIVE PLEA OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

It is primarily a plea for religious unity based upon the Bible. In a divided religious world it is believed that the Bible is the only possible common denominator upon which most, if not all, of the God-fearing people of the land can unite. This is an appeal to go back to the Bible. It is a plea to speak where the Bible speak and to remain silent where the Bible is silent in all matters that pertain to religion. It further emphasizes that in everything religious there must be a "Thus saith the Lord" for all that is done. The objective is religious unity of all believers in Christ. The basis is the New Testament. The method is the restoration of New Testament Christianity.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

One of the earliest advocates of the return to New Testament Christianity, as a means of achieving unity of all believers in Christ, was James O'Kelly of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1793 he withdrew from the Baltimore conference of his church and called upon others to join him in taking the Bible as the only creed. His influence was largely felt in Virginia and North Carolina where history records that some seven thousand communicants followed his leadership toward a return to primitive New Testament Christianity.

In 1802 a similar movement among the Baptists in New England was led by Abner Jones and Elias Smith. They were concerned about "denominational names and creeds" and decided to wear only the name Christian, taking the Bible as their only guide. In 1804, in the western frontier state of Kentucky, Barton W. Stone and several other Presbyterian preachers took similar action declaring that they would take the Bible as the "only sure guide to heaven." Thomas Campbell, and his illustrious son, Alexander Campbell, took similar steps in the year 1809 in what is now the state of West Virginia. They contended that nothing should be bound upon Christians as a matter of doctrine which is not as old as the New Testament. Although these four movements were completely independent in their beginnings eventually they became

one strong restoration movement because of their common purpose and plea. These men did not advocate the starting of a new church, but rather a return to Christ's church as described in the Bible.

Members of the church of Christ do not conceive of themselves as a new church started near the beginning of the 19th century. Rather, the whole movement is designed to reproduce in contemporary times the church originally established on Pentecost, A.D. 30. The strength of the appeal lies in the restoration of Christ's original church.

HOW MANY CHURCHES OF CHRIST ARE THERE?

The most recent dependable estimate lists more than 15,000 individual churches of Christ. The "Christian Herald," a general religious publication which presents statistics concerning all the churches, estimates that the total membership of the churches of Christ is now 2,000,000. There are more than 7000 men who preach publicly. Membership of the church is heaviest in the southern states of the United States, particularly Tennessee and Texas, though congregations exist in each of the fifty states and in more than eighty foreign countries. Missionary expansion has been most extensive since the second World War in Europe, Asia and Africa. More than 450 full time workers are supported in foreign countries. The churches of Christ now have five times as many members as were reported in the U.S. Religious Census of 1936.

HOW ARE THE CHURCHES ORGANIZATIONALLY CONNECTED?

Following the plan of organization found in the New Testament, churches of Christ are autonomous. Their common faith in the Bible and adherence to its teachings are the chief ties which bind them together. There is no central headquarters of the church, and no organization superior to the elders of each local congregation. Congregations do cooperate voluntarily in supporting the orphans and the aged, in preaching the gospel in new fields, and in other similar works.

Members of the church of Christ conduct forty colleges and secondary schools, as well as seventy-five orphanages and homes for the aged. There are approximately 40 magazines and other periodicals published by individual members of the church. A nationwide radio and television program, known as "The Herald of Truth" is sponsored by the Highland Avenue church in Abilene, Texas. Much of its annual budget of \$1,200,000 is contributed on a free-will basis by other churches of Christ. The radio program is currently heard on more than 800 radio stations, while the television program is now appearing on more than 150 stations. Another extensive radio effort known as "World Radio" owns a network of 28 stations in Brazil alone, and is operating effectively in the United States and a number of other foreign countries, and is being produced in 14 languages. An extensive advertising program in leading national magazines began in November 1955.

There are no conventions, annual meetings, or official publications. The "tie that binds" is a common loyalty to the principles of the restoration of New Testament Christianity.

HOW ARE THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST GOVERNED?

In each congregation, which has existed long enough to become fully organized, there is a plurality of elders or presbyters who serve as the governing body. These men are selected by the local congregations on the basis of qualifications set down in the scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-8). Serving under the elders are deacons, teachers, and evangelists or ministers. The latter do not have the authority equal to or superior to

the elders. The elders are shepherds or overseers who serve under the headship of Christ according to the New Testament, which is a kind of constitution. There is no earthly authority superior to the elders of the local church.

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE?

The original autographs of the sixty six books which make up the Bible are considered to have been divinely inspired, by which it is meant that they are infallible and authoritative. Reference to the scriptures is made in settling every religious question. A pronouncement from the scripture is considered the final word. The basic textbook of the church and the basis for all preaching is the Bible.

DO MEMBERS OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST BELIEVE IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH?

Yes. The statement in Isaiah 7:14 is taken as a prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ. New Testament passages such as Matthew 1:20, 25, are accepted at face value as declarations of the virgin birth. Christ is accepted as the only begotten Son of God, uniting in his person perfect divinity and perfect manhood.

DOES THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BELIEVE IN PREDESTINATION?

Only in the sense that God predestines the righteous to be eternally saved and the unrighteous to be eternally lost. The statement of the apostle Peter, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable unto him" (Acts 10:34-35) is taken as evidence that God did not predestine individuals to be eternally saved or lost, but that each man determines his own destiny.

WHY DOES THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BAPTIZE ONLY BY IMMERSION?

The word baptize comes from the Greek word "baptizo" and literally means, "to dip, to immerse, to plunge." In addition to the literal meaning of the word, immersion is practiced because it was the practice of the church in apostolic times. Still further, only immersion conforms to the description of baptisms as given by the apostle Paul in Romans 6:3-5 where he speaks of it as a burial and resurrection.

IS INFANT BAPTISM PRACTICED?

No. Only those who have reached the "age of accountability" are accepted for baptisms. It is pointed out that the examples given in the New Testament are always of those who have heard the gospel preached and have believed it. Faith must always precede baptism, so only those old enough to understand and believe the gospel are considered fit subjects for baptism.

DO MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH HEAR CONFESSION?

No. Ministers or evangelists of the church have no special prerogatives. They do not wear the title of Reverend or Father, but are addressed simply by the term Brother as are all other men of the church. Along with elders and others they do counsel and advise those seeking help.

ARE PRAYERS ADDRESSED TO THE SAINTS?

No. God the Father is considered the only one to whom the prayers may be addressed. It is further understood that Christ stands in a mediatorial position between God and man (Hebrews 7:25). All prayers are therefore offered through Christ, or in the name of Christ (John 16:23-26).

HOW OFTEN IS THE LORD'S SUPPER EATEN?

It is expected that every member of the church will assemble for worship on each Lord's day. A central part of the worship is the eating of the Lord's supper (Acts 20: 7). Unless providentially hindered, each member considers this weekly appointment as binding. In many instances, as in the case of illness, the Lord's supper is carried to those who are hindered from attending the worship.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS USED IN THE WORSHIP?

As a result of the distinctive plea of the church - a return to New Testament Faith and practice - a cappella singing is the only music used in the worship. This singing, unaccompanied by mechanical instruments of music, conforms to the music used in the apostolic church and for several centuries thereafter (Ephesians 5:19). It is felt that there is no authority for engaging in acts of worship not found in the New Testament. This principle eliminates the use of instrumental music, along with the use of candles, incense, and other similar elements.

DOES THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BELIEVE IN HEAVEN AND HELL?

Yes. The statement of Christ in Matthew 25, and elsewhere, are taken at face value. It is believed that after death each man must come before God in judgment and that he will be judged according to the deeds done while he lived (Hebrews 9:27). After judgment is pronounced he will spend eternity either in heaven or hell.

DOES THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BELIEVE IN PURGATORY?

No. The absence of any reference in the scriptures to the temporary place of punishment from which the soul will eventually be released into heaven prevents the acceptance of the doctrine of purgatory.

BY WHAT MEANS DOES THE CHURCH SECURE FINANCIAL SUPPORT?

Each first day of the week the members of the church "lay by in store as they have been prospered" (1 Corinthians 16:2). The amount of any individual gift is generally known only to the one who gave it and to the Lord. This free-will offering is the only call which the church makes. NO assessments or other levies are made. No money-making activities, such as bazaars or suppers, are engaged in. A total of approximately \$200,000,000 is given on this basis each year.

DOES THE CHURCH OF CHRIST HAVE A CREED?

No. At least, there is no creed in the usual sense of the word. The belief of the church is stated fully and completely in the Bible. There is no other manual or discipline to which the members of the church of Christ give their allegiance. The Bible is considered as the only infallible guide to heaven.

HOW DOES ONE BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

In the salvation of man's soul there are 2 necessary parts: God's part and man's part. God's part is the big part, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory" (Ephesians 2:8-9). The love which God felt for man led him to send Christ into the world to redeem man. The life and teaching of Jesus, the sacrifice on the cross, and the proclaiming of the gospel to men constitute God's part in salvation.

Though God's part is the big part, man's part is also necessary if man is to reach heaven. Man must comply with the conditions of pardon which the Lord has announced. Man's part can clearly set forth in the following steps:

Hear the Gospel. "How shall they call on him whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14).

Believe. "And without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Repent of past sins. "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent" (Acts 17:30).

Confess Jesus as Lord. "Behold here is water; What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believeth with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:36-37).

Be baptized for the remission of sins. "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Live a Christian life. "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

OPEN INVITATION

Now that you are aware of a church in the 21st century which is built according to the blue prints of Christ's original church, why not become a member of it? In becoming a member of it, you will be called upon to do nothing which you cannot read in the New Testament. You will then live and worship just as the apostle-guided Christians of the first century did.

Not only is this return to New Testament Christianity a wonderful basis upon which all believers in Christ can unite, it is absolutely solid ground. If we do just what our Lord commanded we know that our salvation is certain. Come with us as we go back to the Bible, back to Christ and his church!

A Call Back to the Word of God

Over the past 2,000 years the teachings within what is commonly thought of as the church has changed drastically. To take one point for example, even modern critics of baptism will acknowledge that the very first Christians taught that baptism was for the purpose of having one's sins forgiven and washed away. Baptism back then, was for the purpose of being reborn and entering into Christ after a person heard the gospel message, believed, and repented of his or her sins. With this acknowledgement, critics will then deny that baptism for the forgiveness of sins is something for us today, even though the Apostle Peter in his very first recorded sermon explained that "The promise is for you and your children and for **all** who are far off--for **all** whom the Lord our God will call." ([Acts 2:39](#))

Is God calling **you right now**? Yes! He is! And therefore this promise is for **you** as well! ([Acts 2:38](#))

Up until the Reformation, baptism was always taught as being essential for salvation. This is undeniable. Even in the early stages of the Reformation, most of its leaders still acknowledged

baptism was required for salvation. The teaching that baptism is not required for salvation has only been around for perhaps 5 or 600 years.

A careful study of church history will reveal, among other things, that the early Christians:

- 1.) taught baptism was essential for salvation and one was not saved until they were baptized
- 2.) only administered baptism to those who were old enough to understand the gospel message, believe it, and repent of their sins, deciding to commit their life to Christ
- 3.) did not baptize infants because they taught infants were born pure into the world and without sin
- 4.) only had one baptism and it was in water
- 5.) were organized in local, self governing, autonomous congregations, governed by elders and deacons
- 6.) did not use instrumental music in worship
- 7.) met on the first day of the week (Sunday) to partake of the Lord's Supper and to worship

They did not pray to saints, only to God. They did not worship Mary. There was not yet a "pope" (which means "father"). Peter would allow no one to even revere him ([Acts 10:25-26](#)). They did not call anyone else on earth "father" and took very seriously the Lord's instructions in [Matthew 23:9](#). In fact, they would sooner die than blaspheme God. And large numbers laid down their lives rather than compromise. They were chained, mocked, ridiculed, scorned, spit on, laughed at, beaten, stoned, stabbed, speared, eaten by wild animals, hacked to pieces with swords, burned alive, sawed and torn in two, boiled, buried, beheaded, crushed, tortured, dragged, hanged, tarred, and drown. They died in any manner that man in his evil could dream up. They lived in caves and holes in the ground. They often lived as wanderers, homeless, naked, and hungry. This world did not deserve them. But they did these things and underwent these agonizing tortures because they knew Him who took the nails for them, who died in their place, who gave up His place in heaven, and loved them so much as to die on a cross so that they might be saved. They had such an allegiance to Jesus Christ that nothing could remove it from them.

Today, "Christians" are split into thousands of different denominations. There have been many traditions and teachings added that are not in the Bible. Today, it is possible to be a Christian and a Christian only. But in order to be obedient to the will of Christ we must put aside our traditions, and come out of Denominationalism, come out of Catholicism, come out of Judaism, come out of Islam, come out of all false religions, come out of the world, and restore the pure teachings of the New Testament. To do this, we must:

- Take the Bible as the Word of God and our sole source of God's truth
- Reject doctrines, teachings, and practices introduced after the close of the New Testament
- Seek to be Christians only

This is the one and only way to unite all who are seeking to follow Jesus Christ.

If you would like to visit a church of Christ, we invite you to come this Sunday. You may find the congregation nearest you by entering your zip code at www.churchzip.com

The latest online version of this book is found at www.bebaptized.org

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Matthew 28:19-20

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.

Revelation 22:17

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

