

Salvation According to Scripture

Entering the New Covenant

Zion's Roar Holy Spirit Ministry
Bixby, Oklahoma



Book 2 - Chapter 03 – Study 02

***Baptism God's Appointed Moment of
Salvation***

Revised September 17, 2026

This publication may be freely copied, printed, and distributed for personal study, teaching, and ministry purposes. No permission is required.

The content may **NOT** be altered, edited, or sold for profit without written permission from **Zion's Roar Holy Spirit Ministry Inc.** Proper credit should be given to the original source when this material is shared or reproduced.

Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible.

Published by:
Zion's Roar Holy Spirit Ministry
Bixby, Oklahoma

For additional studies and biblical resources:
www.zionsroar.org
Email: www.zionsroar.org@gmail.com
Text: 918-814-1593

Opening Warning: Who Has the Right to Make a Sinner Wait?

Dear Reader,

A person hears the gospel, becomes convicted, believes in Christ, and desires to turn away from sin. He then asks to be baptized. Instead of baptizing him immediately, someone tells him: "You need to understand more first." "You need to finish our baptism classes." "You need to learn more about the kingdom of God." "We need to make sure you are serious." "The pastor is not ready." "We only perform baptisms on certain dates." "We want to wait until your family can attend." "We would rather baptize several people together."

Some of these reasons may sound wise and responsible. Surely no one should be baptized without hearing the gospel, believing in Christ, understanding the need for repentance, and knowing why he is entering the water. But how much must a person understand before he may be baptized?

Who determines what is enough?

Does Scripture require a person to understand the complete purpose of God's kingdom before baptism?

Must he complete a course?

Must he attend church for a certain amount of time?

Must he understand every doctrine taught by the congregation?

Must he prove himself to the satisfaction of a pastor?

Or have religious leaders added requirements that God never placed between the repentant sinner and baptism?

These questions matter because the person asking to be baptized may not have unlimited time. He could die while waiting. He could become discouraged. He could begin to believe that he will never understand enough. He could conclude that following God is too complicated and eventually return to the life he was trying to leave.

If baptism is only a public ceremony performed after salvation is already complete, delaying it may appear harmless. But what if

baptism has a God-appointed purpose connected with salvation?
What if Scripture connects baptism with the remission of sins?
What if baptism is connected with washing away sins?
What if baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God?
What if Christ and His apostles expected prepared sinners to be baptized immediately?

If any of these things are true, making someone wait could place that person in spiritual danger. This study will not ask you to accept that conclusion merely because it has been stated. We will examine the passages and determine whether Scripture actually teaches it.

Why Did Biblical Baptisms Happen So Quickly?

When the Ethiopian eunuch saw water, he asked Philip: **Acts 8:36 (KJV)** *See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?*

That question should not be passed over: What hindered him?

Philip examined whether the eunuch believed with all his heart. After the eunuch confessed his belief, they stopped the chariot and entered the water. Why was he not required to wait? Had he already learned everything concerning the kingdom of God?

Had he completed a baptism class?

Had he demonstrated several months of faithful church attendance?

Did Philip know everything about the eunuch's past?

Why did Philip consider him ready?

The Philippian jailer and his household were also baptized with urgency. **Acts 16:32-33 (KJV)** *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*

They first heard the Word of the Lord. But after hearing it, they were baptized during the same hour of the night. Why did Paul and Silas not wait until morning?

Why did they not schedule the baptism for a later gathering?

Why does Scripture emphasize that it happened “straightway”?

Saul was also confronted about waiting. ***Acts 22:16 (KJV)*** *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

Why was Saul asked, “Why tarriest thou?” Why was baptism treated as something that should not be delayed?

Why was baptism mentioned together with washing away his sins and calling upon the name of the Lord?

These examples raise a serious possibility: Perhaps the apostles understood baptism to be more urgent than modern Christianity does. This study will examine whether that possibility is true.

What If the Person Performing the Baptism Is Not Appointed by God?

There is another question that must be examined. Who has the authority to baptize? Is baptism valid simply because someone places another person under water? Does a religious title prove that a person was appointed by God? Does ordination from a religious organization establish divine authority? Can someone properly perform baptism while denying the purpose Scripture assigns to it?

Christ told His apostles: ***John 20:21-23 (KJV)*** *Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

This passage raises important questions. What authority did Christ give to those He sent?

What does it mean to remit or retain sins?

Was this authority limited to the apostles, or was it entrusted through those whom God appoints and sends?

Can a person exercise this responsibility without understanding remission?

What happens when the person performing a baptism believes remission occurred before baptism?

What happens when he teaches that baptism is only symbolic?

What happens when he does not believe baptism saves in any sense?

Is he performing the baptism taught by the apostles, or is he conducting a religious ceremony that resembles it?

These questions must not be answered through assumption. This study will examine whether the person performing a baptism must be appointed, what authority that person exercises, and whether the purpose understood by both participants matters.

What Is the Danger of Misunderstanding Remission?

Very few people understand what the word “remission” means. Most people are familiar only with the word “forgiveness,” partly because many modern Bible translations use “forgiveness” in passages where the King James Version uses “remission.” As a result, many readers never encounter the word remission in connection with sin and are never taught to examine whether remission expresses something more than simply asking God to forgive them.

Because this distinction is rarely explained, people are often taught that their sins are completely dealt with the moment they believe or repeat a prayer. They are then told that baptism may take place later because their sins have already been handled. But if asking God for forgiveness is not the same as receiving the remission of sins, that assurance must be examined carefully.

Is that the pattern shown in Scripture?

Why did Peter tell convicted hearers to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins?

Why was Saul told to be baptized and wash away his sins after he had already encountered Christ, believed, prayed, fasted, and obeyed?

Does asking God for forgiveness by itself fulfill everything Scripture connects with remission?

Is remission merely another word for forgiveness, or does it concern the sinner's actual release from the guilt and penalty of past sins?

These questions also affect those who perform baptisms. If ministers do not understand what remission means, can they safely decide that baptism may be delayed?

If they believe baptism has nothing to do with remission, do they understand the act they are performing?

If they assure someone that his sins were already remitted before baptism, are they teaching the same pattern presented by Peter and Ananias?

The purpose of this warning is not to answer these questions before the evidence has been examined. It is to show why they cannot be ignored. If Scripture distinguishes between asking God for forgiveness and receiving the remission of sins, then misunderstanding that distinction could affect both the person seeking salvation and the minister responsible for instructing and baptizing him.

Two Possible Dangers

There may be danger on both sides. The first possible danger is baptizing someone carelessly. A person should not be baptized without hearing the gospel, believing in the Son of God, understanding the need for repentance, and willingly submitting to

what God commands. Baptism should not become an empty ritual performed upon someone who neither believes nor understands what he is doing.

The second possible danger is withholding baptism from someone who is prepared. A minister may require more knowledge than Scripture requires. A church may create unnecessary delays. A pastor may wait for a more convenient date. A religious organization may place its procedures above the urgency demonstrated by the apostles.

One danger is baptizing without proper understanding. The other is refusing or delaying baptism after sufficient understanding has been established. This study must determine where the biblical line stands between them.

Questions This Study Must Answer

Before reaching a conclusion, we must examine the Scriptures and answer:

1. What is biblical baptism?
2. Does baptism require physical water?
3. Who may be baptized?
4. What must a person believe and understand first?
5. Must repentance and confession precede baptism?
6. Does baptism save, or is it only symbolic?

7. What does Peter mean when he says that baptism saves us?
8. How is baptism connected with the remission and washing away of sins?
9. Is baptism part of being born of water and of the Spirit?
10. Must baptism involve immersion, or can sprinkling satisfy the biblical pattern?
11. Does the purpose for which someone is baptized matter?
12. Why were some people baptized again?
13. In whose name and authority must baptism be performed?
14. Who has authority to perform a baptism?
15. Can a person baptize himself according to Scripture, even if others are present as witnesses?
16. Can someone properly administer baptism while denying its biblical purpose?
17. Why were people in the book of Acts baptized immediately?
18. What about the thief on the cross?
19. Is baptism a human work that attempts to earn salvation, or an obedient response commanded by God?
20. What happens when someone knows he should be baptized but chooses to delay?
21. What responsibility does a minister carry when he makes a prepared sinner wait?

Do not decide the answers before examining the evidence. Do not accept the conclusions of this letter simply because they sound convincing.

Open your Bible. Read every passage in context. Examine what happened before each baptism. Examine what happened during it. Examine what Scripture says baptism accomplished. Examine how quickly the apostles responded when someone was ready. Examine who performed the baptism and under whose authority it was done. Then determine whether the baptism practiced by the religious world agrees with the baptism taught in Scripture.

If delaying baptism is harmless, Scripture will establish it. If baptism is only a public symbol, Scripture will establish it. If anyone may perform it without divine appointment or understanding, Scripture will establish it.

But if baptism is an urgent and necessary part of God's appointed response to the gospel, then every person who delays it, denies its purpose, performs it carelessly, or prevents a prepared sinner from receiving it should fear the responsibility he carries before God.

The warning has now been given. Let the Scriptures reveal whether it is true.

If what you believe is true, it will stand.
If it is not, it must fall.

In service to Christ and with concern for every soul,

John
Servant, Disciple, and Witness of Christ
Zion's Roar Holy Spirit Ministry

Baptism: God's Appointed Moment of Salvation

The previous study established that the blood of Christ is the only basis for the remission of sins. No water, minister, ceremony, or human work can replace His sacrifice. We also established that remission is not automatically applied to every person simply because Christ died. Scripture connects the reception of remission with the sinner's response to the gospel.

Peter told convicted hearers: **Acts 2:38 (KJV)** *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins.*

Ananias told Saul: **Acts 22:16 (KJV)** *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

Those passages brought us to baptism, but they also opened several questions. Is baptism necessary for salvation?

Does baptism require physical water?

Is baptism merely a symbol of something that already happened?

Can infants be baptized?

Does baptism require immersion?

Does the purpose of the baptism matter?

Why were some people baptized again?

Can anyone perform a baptism?

Why were people in the book of Acts baptized immediately?

What about the thief on the cross?

This study will examine those questions from Scripture. We will not yet examine everything concerning baptism with the Holy Ghost. That belongs to the next study. First, we must establish what biblical water baptism is and what God appointed it to accomplish.

What Is Baptism?

The Greek word translated “baptize” is *baptizō*. It can describe dipping, immersing, submerging, washing, or overwhelming. When used concerning Christian baptism, it describes the person being placed into water as part of the response commanded by Christ.

We should not establish the manner of baptism from a dictionary alone. We must also examine what happened when people were baptized. John baptized where sufficient water was available.

John 3:23 (KJV) *And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.*

Why did John choose a place where there was “much water” if only a small amount was necessary for sprinkling?

When Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, both men entered the water. **Acts 8:38-39 (KJV)** *And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip.*

They went down into the water, then the eunuch was baptized and once done they came up out of the water. The biblical description fits immersion. It does not describe Philip placing a few drops of water upon the eunuch’s head.

Baptism is also described as a burial. **Romans 6:3-4 (KJV)** *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Colossians 2:12 (KJV) *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

A burial involves being placed under and then raised. Immersion visibly follows the pattern Paul described: The person is lowered

into the water as one being buried with Christ. The person is raised from the water as one entering newness of life. Sprinkling does not present that burial and resurrection pattern.

Baptism Requires Physical Water

Some teach that New Covenant baptism refers only to a spiritual baptism and that physical water is unnecessary. But the book of Acts repeatedly identifies water.

The Ethiopian eunuch asked: **Acts 8:36 (KJV)** *See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?*

If physical water had no part in baptism, the eunuch's question would make no sense.

When Peter preached in the house of Cornelius, he commanded water baptism even after the Holy Ghost had fallen upon those who heard. **Acts 10:47-48 (KJV)** *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.*

Peter specifically asked whether anyone could forbid water. Whatever unusual events occurred in the house of Cornelius, Peter did not conclude that receiving the Holy Ghost eliminated the command to be baptized with water. The complete meaning of what happened to Cornelius will be examined in the study concerning baptism with the Holy Ghost.

For this study, the point is plain: Peter still commanded water baptism.

Who May Be Baptized?

Biblical baptism is not presented as an action performed upon someone who cannot believe, repent, confess, or knowingly call upon the Lord.

The Ethiopian eunuch first heard Christ preached. **Acts 8:35-37 (KJV)** *Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Christ. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.*

Philip established a condition: “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.”

The eunuch then confessed: “I believe that Christ is the Son of God.”

After believing and confessing, he was baptized.

At Pentecost, the hearers were first convicted by the preaching of the gospel. Peter then commanded them to repent and be baptized. **Acts 2:38 (KJV)** *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins.*

The biblical pattern requires a person who can:

- * Hear the gospel
- * Understand the message
- * Believe in Christ
- * Recognize his sin
- * Repent
- * Confess
- * Willingly submit to baptism
- * Call upon the name of the Lord

An infant cannot personally perform those actions. An infant cannot understand the gospel. An infant cannot believe with all his heart. An infant cannot repent of his sins. An infant cannot confess Christ. An infant cannot call upon the Lord with understanding. An infant cannot knowingly request baptism.

No explicit example in Scripture describes an infant being baptized. Some appeal to household baptisms and assume that infants must have been included. But an assumption is not proof.

In the house of the Philippian jailer, Paul and Silas first spoke the Word of the Lord to everyone in the house. **Acts 16:32-33 (KJV)** *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*

The passage presents a household that heard the Word and responded. It does not say that an infant incapable of hearing, believing, repenting, and confessing was baptized.

Therefore, John Doe's childhood sprinkling cannot be accepted merely because someone called it baptism. We must examine whether it satisfied the conditions shown in Scripture.

What Must Precede Baptism?

Baptism is not an isolated action. It is part of the sinner's complete response to the gospel.

The Gospel Must Be Heard

The Ethiopian eunuch heard Christ preached before requesting baptism. **Acts 8:35 (KJV)** *Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Christ.*

The Philippian jailer and his household heard the Word before being baptized. **Acts 16:32 (KJV)** *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.*

A person should not be baptized without understanding the gospel. But understanding the gospel is not the same as understanding every doctrine found in Scripture. The person does not need to master the complete plan of prophecy, every

commandment, church organization, or every detail concerning the kingdom of God before baptism.

The person must understand enough to respond truthfully:

- * Who Christ is
- * What Christ accomplished
- * Why sin has condemned him
- * Why repentance is necessary
- * Why he needs remission
- * What baptism is for
- * That he is submitting to the authority of God

Belief Must Precede Baptism

Mark 16:16 (KJV) *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

Christ placed believing before baptism and joined both with salvation. Philip also required belief before baptizing the eunuch.

Acts 8:37 (KJV) *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. Baptism without belief is not the response described in Scripture.*

Repentance Must Precede Baptism

Acts 2:38 (KJV) *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins.*

Peter did not command unrepentant people to enter the water while intending to continue serving sin. Repentance does not mean that the person has already lived a perfect life. It means the person has turned toward God and has chosen to leave the former rule of sin.

Confession Is Connected With Baptism

Those who came to John were baptized while confessing their sins.

Matthew 3:6 (KJV) *And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.*

Mark 1:5 (KJV) *And were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.*

The Ethiopian eunuch confessed his belief in the Son of God before baptism. Biblical baptism is not performed upon a silent infant who cannot confess. It is the response of someone who recognizes his sin and openly confesses whom he now believes and intends to obey.

Calling Upon the Lord Is Connected With Baptism

Ananias told Saul: **Acts 22:16 (KJV)** *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

Calling upon the Lord should not be separated from what Ananias commanded Saul to do. Saul was not told to replace baptism with a private prayer. He was told to be baptized, wash away his sins, and call upon the Lord.

Does Baptism Save?

This question should be answered by Scripture, not by a denominational statement.

Christ said: **Mark 16:16 (KJV)** *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*

Peter wrote: **1 Peter 3:21 (KJV)** *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.*

The religious world commonly says: “Baptism does not save.”

Peter says: “Baptism doth also now save us.”

Those two statements are not the same. We must not pretend that they are.

This does not mean baptism saves independently of Christ, belief, repentance, faith, grace, or the resurrection. Peter explains that baptism saves **by the resurrection of Christ**. Water did not resurrect. The person performing the baptism did not resurrect. The person being baptized did not earn salvation. Christ died and resurrected. Baptism joins the believing and repentant person to what Christ accomplished according to the pattern God established.

Therefore, the correct conclusion is not: “Water alone saves.” Neither is it: “Baptism has nothing to do with salvation.”

The scriptural conclusion is: God saves through Christ, and baptism is part of the obedient response through which the sinner enters what Christ accomplished.

Therefore, is baptism necessary for salvation? According to the revealed pattern of Scripture, yes. A sinner cannot enter the kingdom while remaining guilty of his past sins, and Scripture connects the sinner’s initial remission with repentance and baptism. Baptism does not replace Christ’s blood, earn salvation, or save independently of Christ. It is the necessary response appointed by God through which the believing and repentant sinner receives the remission Christ purchased.

Noah and Baptism

Peter connected baptism with the days of Noah.

1 Peter 3:20-21 (KJV) *Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.*

Peter identifies a connection between the Flood and baptism. The same water that judged the disobedient world separated Noah and his family from the world that was passing away.

Noah was not saved because water possessed independent saving power. He was saved because he believed God, obeyed God’s instructions, entered the ark, and passed through the judgment according to the provision God supplied. Noah could not have remained outside the ark while claiming that faith alone would save him. His faith was demonstrated through obedience.

In the same way, baptism does not save because water possesses supernatural power within itself. Baptism saves through the resurrection of Christ because the believer submits to God’s appointed response.

Not the Washing of Physical Dirt

Peter continued: **1 Peter 3:21 (KJV)** *Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.*

Peter was not describing a bath. Removing dirt from the skin does not save anyone. The spiritual purpose of baptism cannot be reduced to ordinary physical washing.

However, Peter's clarification does not cancel his previous statement. He did not write: "Baptism does not save because it only removes dirt." He wrote: "Baptism doth also now save us," and then explained the kind of washing he meant.

Baptism is connected with a good conscience toward God through the resurrection of Christ. The Greek word translated "answer" in the King James Version is *eperōtēma*. Because it appears only once in the New Testament, translations and interpreters differ over whether it should be understood as an answer, appeal, request, pledge, or assurance.

We should not pretend that there is no disagreement about the English translation. But none of those possible meanings removes Peter's direct statement that baptism also saves. Whether understood as the answer, appeal, or assurance of a good conscience, Peter places that relationship with God at baptism.

The previous study established that a person does not simply declare his own conscience clean. Christ purges the conscience, and Peter identifies baptism as the point connected with the good conscience toward God.

Has God Used Physical Water in Acts of Cleansing?

If baptism is not an ordinary washing of dirt from the body, why did God require physical water?

Some may assume that physical water cannot be connected with spiritual cleansing because water is a material substance. However, Scripture repeatedly shows God appointing physical washing in connection with purification, consecration, and approaching His holy presence. The water did not possess independent spiritual power, but the person was still required to submit to the washing God commanded.

When Aaron and his sons were consecrated for priestly service, God commanded: **Exodus 29:4 (KJV)** *And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.*

Their calling, sincerity, priestly clothing, and family relationship did not eliminate the commanded washing. Before beginning their priestly service, they were brought to the appointed place and washed with physical water.

God also placed a laver containing water between the tabernacle and the altar. Aaron and his sons were commanded: **Exodus 30:20-21 (KJV)** *When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not.*

The water did not possess the power of life and death within itself. The seriousness came from the authority of the God who commanded the washing. The priests could not refuse to wash and then argue that their sincere desire to serve should be accepted as a substitute. God had connected physical washing with their preparation to approach and serve in His holy place.

The same pattern appears in the laws concerning uncleanness. **Leviticus 22** required an unclean person to wash his flesh with water before eating the holy things. **Numbers 19** describes the water of separation as being used for purification and warns that

the person who remained unclean and refused purification would be cut off from the congregation. These washings concerned ceremonial uncleanness and purification of the flesh. They did not provide the complete remission of moral guilt or permanently cleanse the conscience. Nevertheless, they demonstrate that God has the authority to appoint physical water as part of a required act of cleansing and that rejecting the appointed washing carried real consequences.

God also used the language of water when promising future spiritual cleansing: **Ezekiel 36:25-27 (KJV)** *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

Ezekiel joined the imagery of clean water with cleansing from idolatry, receiving a new heart, receiving a new spirit, and walking in obedience. This prophecy is not being used to establish the manner of Christian baptism. The New Testament examples and the burial pattern must establish how baptism is performed. Ezekiel's prophecy shows that using water in connection with inward cleansing is not foreign to the way God revealed His work.

Hebrews explains both the purpose and the limitation of the Old Covenant washings: **Hebrews 9:10, 13-14 (KJV)** *Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

The Old Covenant washings purified the flesh but could not permanently purge the conscience. The blood of Christ performs the cleansing that physical water could never accomplish by itself. Yet Hebrews later brings inward cleansing and bodily washing

together: **Hebrews 10:22 (KJV)** *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

Therefore, we must avoid two opposite errors. We must not claim that ordinary water possesses independent power to erase sins, purge the conscience, or replace the blood of Christ. But neither may we claim that God cannot appoint physical water as part of the response through which spiritual cleansing is received. God used physical washings under the Old Covenant to teach purification, separation from uncleanness, consecration, and the seriousness of approaching His presence according to His command.

Under the New Covenant, the Father grants remission through the blood, sacrifice, and mediation of Christ. Nevertheless, God appointed physical water as the outward element of baptism and connected that baptism with washing away sins, remission, a good conscience, burial with Christ, resurrection, and salvation. The power does not originate in the water. The cleansing comes through Christ. But when God appoints water as part of the commanded response, no person has authority to remove it or replace completed obedience with sincere intention.

Is Baptism Merely an Outward Expression?

The phrase “outward expression of an inward change” does not appear in Scripture. It is a theological explanation created by men. The phrase may sound reasonable, but we must test what it implies.

If it means baptism visibly expresses the person’s faith, repentance, burial with Christ, and entrance into newness of life, then baptism certainly has an outward and visible element. But most churches use the phrase to claim that every saving event occurred before baptism and that baptism only tells other people what already happened. That conclusion conflicts with the language Scripture uses.

Peter says baptism saves. Peter connects baptism with a good conscience toward God. Peter commands baptism for the remission of sins. Ananias connects baptism with washing away sins. Paul connects baptism with burial and resurrection with Christ. Christ connects believing and baptism with salvation. None of those passages describes baptism merely as a public announcement to other people.

The Ethiopian eunuch was traveling away from Jerusalem. Scripture does not describe a church audience gathering to celebrate his baptism. Philip baptized him immediately when he confessed his belief and water became available. The biblical focus was not upon the audience. The focus was upon the eunuch’s response to God.

Baptism and the Remission of Sins

The previous study examined remission fully. We will not repeat the entire argument here. We must, however, retain the central command: **Acts 2:38 (KJV)** *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins.*

Some argue that “for the remission of sins” means “because your sins have already been remitted.” But the people in Acts 2 had just asked what they needed to do. Peter did not tell them that remission had already occurred.

The ordinary movement of the passage is toward remission: They heard. They became convicted. They asked what to do. Peter commanded repentance and baptism for remission. Those who received his word were baptized.

Acts 2:41 (KJV) *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized.* Baptism was not evidence that they rejected Peter’s instruction. It was evidence that they gladly received it.

Saul’s example confirms the same movement.

Acts 22:16 (KJV) *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

Saul was not baptized because his sins had already been washed away. Ananias commanded baptism and the washing away of sins together. The blood of Christ performs the spiritual cleansing. Baptism is the God-appointed covenant response in which the sinner calls upon the Lord for that cleansing.

Baptism and Burial With Christ

Paul did not describe baptism as an optional picture added after someone had already entered every part of the new life. He wrote:

Romans 6:3-4 (KJV) *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.*

Paul connects baptism with:

- * Entering Christ
- * Entering His death
- * Burial with Him
- * Rising to walk in newness of life

He gives the same pattern in Colossians: ***Colossians 2:12 (KJV)*** *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God.*

Notice the role of faith. The person is raised through faith in the operation of God. Baptism is not faith in water. It is faith in what God performs through the death and resurrection of Christ.

This answers the accusation that baptism competes with faith.

Biblical baptism is an act of faith. The person submits because he believes God will accomplish what He promised.

Baptism and Newness of Life

Paul continues: **Romans 6:4 (KJV)** *That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Baptism identifies a dividing point. The former life is buried. The person rises to walk in newness of life. This does not mean the person will never again face temptation, stumble, or require correction. It means that the person has changed masters and entered a life that must now be lived under the authority of God.

The purpose is not to enter the water while planning to continue the former life unchanged. Repentance turns the person toward God. Baptism buries the former life with Christ. The person rises with the responsibility to walk faithfully in the life received.

Is Baptism Part of Being Born Again?

Christ told Nicodemus: **John 3:5 (KJV)** *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Some interpret “water” as physical birth. Others interpret it as the Word, cleansing, or water baptism. **John 3:5** does not use the word baptism directly. Therefore, we should not claim that the verse alone settles every question. We must compare it with the rest of Scripture.

The New Testament connects baptism with:

- * Water
- * Washing away sins
- * Burial and resurrection
- * Newness of life
- * The answer of a good conscience
- * Salvation
- * Remission of sins

When **John 3:5** is placed beside these passages, baptism fits the water side of the new birth pattern. Water baptism must not be

separated from the work of the Spirit. But the complete reception of the Holy Ghost requires its own examination.

For now, *John 3:5* agrees with the pattern that entrance into the new covenant life involves water and the Spirit.

Is Baptism a Work That Earns Salvation?

A common objection says: "If baptism is necessary, salvation is being earned through works."

But obedience to a condition does not mean the person earned the gift. Naaman did not earn healing by washing in the Jordan. God gave the healing, but Naaman still had to obey the instruction. Noah did not earn deliverance by building and entering the ark. God provided the warning and the means of deliverance, but Noah still had to obey. Israel did not earn deliverance from Egypt by placing blood upon the doorposts. The blood supplied the protection, but they still had to obey the instruction God gave.

In each example, God supplied what human beings could not produce. Obedience did not purchase the gift. Obedience received God's provision according to His command.

The same principle applies to baptism. The person being baptized does not create the blood of Christ. He does not force God to save him. He does not merit grace. He submits to the command because he believes God.

Paul described baptism as faith in the operation of God. Therefore, baptism is not a work through which a sinner boasts in himself. It is an act in which the sinner stops defending his own plan and submits to God's plan.

Does the Purpose of Baptism Matter?

Suppose someone was placed under water but was taught: “You were already completely saved.” “Your sins were already remitted.” “This baptism has no saving purpose.” “This is only a public symbol.”

Was that person baptized with the understanding shown in **Acts 2:38** and **Acts 22:16**? The physical motion may resemble biblical baptism, but baptism is not an empty motion.

The Ethiopian eunuch first heard Christ, believed, confessed, and requested baptism. The Pentecost hearers understood that they were responding for the remission of sins. Saul was told to be baptized and wash away his sins while calling upon the Lord.

Purpose matters because faith requires knowledge of what God promised. A person cannot deliberately reject the purpose God assigned to baptism while claiming faith in that purpose.

This does not mean the person must possess perfect Godly knowledge. No person understands everything at the beginning. It means the person must understand the essential act: He is a believing and repentant sinner calling upon the Lord, submitting to baptism under Christ’s authority, and seeking the remission and cleansing God promised through Christ.

Why Were Some People Baptized Again?

Acts 19 records disciples who had received John’s baptism but had not received the complete New Covenant instruction.

Acts 19:3-5 (KJV) *And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Christ.*

Paul asked: “Unto what then were ye baptized?”

That question shows that the purpose and understanding of a baptism matter. Their previous baptism was not dismissed because John’s work had been evil. John’s baptism came from God. But it pointed forward to Christ. After Christ had completed His work and the New Covenant message was being preached, these disciples needed to respond to the complete revelation. They were baptized again.

This establishes that receiving a previous religious baptism does not automatically mean nothing can be corrected. If the earlier baptism did not follow the covenant truth now revealed, baptism may need to be performed again.

Pride says: “I was already baptized, and I refuse to question it.”

Humility asks: “Unto what was I baptized, what did I believe, and did it agree with the gospel?”

In Whose Name Is Baptism Performed?

Christ commanded: **Matthew 28:19 (KJV)** *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

The book of Acts also repeatedly speaks of baptism in the name of Christ.

Acts 2:38 (KJV) *Be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ.*

These passages should not be made to contradict each other.

Matthew 28:19 records the command given by Christ. Acts emphasizes the name and authority of the One whom the people had rejected and now needed to confess.

To baptize in someone’s name is to act under that person’s authority. Therefore, baptism must not be performed under the

authority of a denomination, personal ministry, religious organization, or human tradition. It belongs to God.

The person administering baptism should obey the instruction of Christ and acknowledge the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The exact spoken wording should not be used to hide a rejection of the authority the wording represents. Saying the correct words while denying the purpose of baptism does not prove obedience. Neither should someone reject Christ's direct instruction in Matthew 28:19 while claiming to honor His name.

Who Has Authority to Baptize?

Christ did not send people to appoint themselves. He told the apostles: **John 20:21 (KJV)** *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

He then spoke about the responsibility concerning sins:

John 20:23 (KJV) *Whoso soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

Both parts of this statement must be taken seriously. Christ spoke not only about sins being remitted, but also about sins being retained. This shows that the servants He sent were entrusted with a real responsibility concerning the spiritual condition of those to whom they ministered. They were not merely passive observers. They were responsible for preaching the gospel, explaining God's conditions, examining a person's response, baptizing those who were prepared, and refusing to treat an unprepared person as though God's conditions had been fulfilled.

This does not mean that a minister possesses independent power to pardon sins according to his personal judgment. No servant of God replaces Christ, controls the blood of Christ, or possesses personal authority to erase someone's sins. God alone knows the heart, and only God can cleanse the sinner through the blood of Christ. The minister does not create the conditions for remission, and he cannot change those conditions according to his own beliefs or preferences.

God the Father is the One from whom forgiveness and remission ultimately come. He grants them through the authority, blood, sacrifice, name, and continuing mediation of His Son. Christ did not lose His authority to forgive when He ascended into heaven. After His ascension, Peter declared that God had exalted Christ to be "a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Christ now sits at the Father's right hand as our advocate, mediator, and High Priest, making intercession for His people. Therefore, when an appointed servant baptizes a

repentant believer for the remission of sins, the servant is not personally forgiving that individual or producing remission through his own power. He is administering the act Christ commanded, while the Father grants remission through the blood, authority, and mediation of His Son. The authority of the baptizer is delegated authority, not independent authority.

The second half of Christ's statement must not be overlooked: "whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." The servant who carries responsibility concerning the remission of sins also carries responsibility concerning the retention of sins. He is not required to place anyone under water merely because that person requests it. He must determine, as far as Scripture enables him, whether the person has heard and believed the gospel, repented of sin, confessed Christ, understood the purpose of baptism, and willingly submitted to what God commanded.

If a person has not met the conditions established by God, the minister must not perform the baptism as though that person were prepared. By withholding baptism on scriptural grounds, the minister does not personally create the person's guilt or condemnation. He recognizes that God's conditions have not been fulfilled and therefore cannot truthfully administer baptism for the remission of sins. In this ministerial sense, the person's sins are retained because the response God connected with remission has not been completed.

This authority is not unrestricted. The minister does not have the right to decide according to personal preference whose sins will be remitted and whose sins will be retained. His judgment must remain under the authority of God's Word. He cannot reject someone because of personal dislike, social position, former reputation, race, wealth, poverty, or any requirement that God did not establish.

The opposite responsibility is equally serious. When a person has met the conditions established by God and is prepared to be

baptized, the minister has no authority to retain that person's sins by creating unnecessary obstacles, demanding requirements God never commanded, or postponing the baptism for personal convenience. He must administer the baptism without unnecessary delay. Both decisions carry accountability before God: baptizing someone who is not prepared and withholding baptism from someone who is prepared.

This must also be distinguished from claiming personal authority to forgive sins committed after baptism. When a baptized disciple sins, Scripture directs that person to repent, confess his sins, and seek forgiveness from God. A minister may teach, correct, pray, and help restore that person, but he cannot personally absolve sins by his own decree or assume the place that belongs to God. Administering baptism for the remission of sins is not the same as claiming personal power to pardon every sin another person commits.

Scripture shows that appointment may occur directly through God or through servants who have already been entrusted with responsibility. Ananias is identified simply as a disciple, but the Lord personally sent him to Saul, and Saul was then baptized. The authority did not come from a religious title. It came from the fact that he had been sent by the Lord.

Scripture also shows the Holy Spirit working through an established body of believers. In **Acts 13:1-4**, the Holy Spirit called Barnabas and Saul for a particular work. The believers fasted, prayed, laid their hands upon them, and sent them away. Paul later appointed Titus to ordain elders in every city, and he instructed Timothy to commit what he had received to faithful men who would be able to teach others also. These examples demonstrate an order in which those already entrusted with responsibility recognized, instructed, and appointed others to continue the work.

The ultimate authority still came from God. Being appointed by another servant did not permit someone to act contrary to Scripture. Neither did human appointment create divine authority where God's qualifications and truth were absent. Those appointed through established servants remained accountable to Christ and were required to teach and practice what He commanded.

This means that a person should not assume divine appointment merely because he holds a religious title. A church vote does not automatically equal appointment from God. A diploma does not establish spiritual authority. A certificate created by men does not prove that Christ sent the person. At the same time, a person should not appoint himself, act independently, and assume that sincere intentions give him authority God never entrusted to him.

The person administering baptism must understand the gospel he is administering. He must understand what baptism is for and recognize the responsibility connected with the remission and retention of sins. He must not replace God's conditions with his own, baptize carelessly, or withhold baptism carelessly. He must remember that his decision affects a person who is seeking to enter the covenant and that he will answer to God for how he handled that responsibility.

For this reason, administering baptism must never be treated as an honorary part in a religious ceremony that may be offered to a father, mother, sister, brother, or friend merely because the occasion would feel more personal or meaningful. A family member is not disqualified simply because he is related to the person being baptized, but neither does that relationship give him authority to baptize. He must still be a properly instructed, faithful, and appointed disciple who understands the gospel and the remission connected with baptism. Scripture warns that those who teach will receive greater judgment, and it commands the servant of God to take heed both to himself and to the doctrine because his teaching affects both himself and those who hear him.

If an uninstructed or unauthorized person administers baptism without understanding its purpose, he may give the recipient false assurance that his sins were remitted when the scriptural requirements were not fulfilled. The recipient has much at stake, and the person who instructed and baptized him will answer to God for treating that responsibility carelessly.

These warnings also require every reader to examine the person who performed his own baptism. Do not conclude that someone was appointed by God merely because he was kind, sincere, respected, or held the title of pastor. Do not base that conclusion upon feeling peaceful, joyful, emotional, or convinced that God was present during the baptism. Feelings cannot establish divine appointment, and a powerful personal experience cannot prove that the truth was taught or that God's requirements were fulfilled. Scripture commands us to test those who claim to speak and act for God rather than accepting their claims because of appearances, titles, relationships, or emotions.

Apollos provides a serious example. He was eloquent, fervent in spirit, diligent, and mighty in the Scriptures, yet his knowledge was incomplete because he knew only the baptism of John. Aquila and Priscilla therefore took him aside and explained the way of God to him more perfectly. His sincerity, ability, and knowledge in other areas did not remove his need for correction. A person may genuinely desire to serve God while still being unprepared to teach or administer a part of God's plan that he does not properly understand.

Therefore, examine the person who baptized you. Who taught and appointed him?

What plan of salvation did he believe and teach?

Did he understand what remission means and how Scripture connects it with baptism?

Did he teach that baptism was for the remission and washing away of sins, or did he tell you that your sins had already been removed and that baptism was only an outward display?

Did he understand the promised receiving of the Holy Ghost and the responsibility connected with laying on of hands?
Could he faithfully explain what he claimed to administer?
If he denied the purpose God assigned to baptism, on what scriptural basis should you conclude that God appointed him to administer that baptism?

Do not answer these questions merely by remembering how you felt. You may have loved and trusted the person who baptized you, and you may remember the experience with deep emotion. Nevertheless, sincerity does not turn error into truth, kindness does not establish divine appointment, and entering water does not by itself prove that biblical baptism occurred. You must examine the doctrine that was taught, the purpose for which the baptism was performed, the authority claimed by the person administering it, and what you understood yourself to be receiving. If the person who baptized you did not understand God's plan of salvation and denied the purpose Scripture gives baptism, you must seriously question whether he was prepared and appointed by God to administer baptism at all.

The complete question of how God appoints and sends ministers requires more examination than can be provided in a single section. Nevertheless, Scripture gives sufficient warning against treating baptism as nothing more than one private person placing another private person under water. Biblical baptism involves a prepared sinner submitting to God's command and an appointed servant administering that baptism under the authority and order established by God.

A genuine baptism does not receive its authority merely from the person performing it. Its authority comes from God, its cleansing comes through the blood of Christ, and its administration is entrusted to servants who understand and faithfully carry out what God commanded. The servant must neither grant baptism carelessly nor withhold it wrongfully, because Christ has placed a real responsibility into the hands of those He sends.

Why Was Baptism Performed Immediately?

The book of Acts repeatedly presents baptism as urgent.

At Pentecost: **Acts 2:41 (KJV)** *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

The Ethiopian eunuch was baptized when water became available. The Philippian jailer was baptized during the same hour of the night. Saul was asked why he was waiting.

These examples do not mean a person should be baptized without understanding or repentance. They show that once sufficient understanding, belief, repentance, confession, and willingness are present, unnecessary delay is dangerous.

A minister should determine whether the person understands the essential gospel and purpose of baptism. He should not require the person to master everything the minister knows. He should not turn baptism into a reward for completing a religious program. He should not delay because the church wants a more convenient date. He should not make a prepared person wait for a larger audience.

No person knows how much time remains. A planned baptism is not a completed baptism. Intention is not obedience. Since baptism is connected with remission and washing away sins, making a prepared sinner wait carries a grave responsibility.

What About the Thief on the Cross?

The thief on the cross is commonly used to cancel every passage connecting baptism with salvation. The thief appealed directly to Christ. **Luke 23:42-43 (KJV)** *And he said unto Christ, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Christ said unto him, Verily I say unto thee To day, shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

Christ personally declared the thief's destination. The Son of God possesses authority to forgive sins directly. During His earthly ministry, Christ forgave people before the New Covenant gospel command was delivered to all nations.

The thief also died before Christ resurrected and before Christ commanded the apostles to preach the completed gospel among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. The New Covenant was established through Christ's death. Hebrews 9:16-17 (KJV) For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead.

The thief's salvation does not prove that people living after the death and resurrection of Christ may reject the command Christ subsequently gave. Christ also healed people directly. That does not give us authority to reject every instruction concerning prayer, anointing, or laying on of hands.

Christ's personal declaration to one dying man cannot be used to erase the commands later delivered through His apostles. If Christ personally appears and declares that someone is saved, His word settles the matter. But no pastor today is Christ. No church possesses authority to use the thief's exceptional encounter as permission to reject the ordinary pattern Christ commanded for everyone else.

What If Someone Dies Before a Scheduled Baptism?

We do not possess authority to invent exceptions or determine that sincere intention can replace completed obedience. God alone renders the final judgment, but He has already revealed the requirements connected with salvation and remission. His perfect knowledge of every circumstance guarantees that His judgment will be righteous. It does not give us permission to promise salvation where His revealed requirements were never fulfilled. Human sympathy, personal opinions, and assurances that “God understands” cannot change the standard God established.

If a person dies before being baptized, the baptism did not occur. Wanting to be baptized is not baptism. Requesting baptism is not baptism. Planning a baptism is not baptism. Having a baptism scheduled for a later date is not baptism. Although these things may demonstrate sincere intention, intention does not produce the remission, washing, covenant entrance, or other work that Scripture connects with the act God commanded. According to the revealed requirements already biblically established in this study, a person who dies without completing that commanded response did not receive the remission connected with baptism and therefore remained unsaved.

Responsibility for the failure may differ according to what happened, but the missing requirement does not change. A person who knowingly refuses or postpones baptism is accountable for his own disobedience. A minister who unnecessarily postpones the baptism of a prepared sinner is accountable for placing that person in spiritual danger and creating a delay that God never commanded. The minister’s guilt, however, cannot supply the baptism that never occurred, and the sinner’s sincere intention cannot complete it after death. Neither intention nor a scheduled baptism is the baptism Scripture commanded.

We are not making this judgment according to personal authority or claiming to know something God has not revealed. We are applying the standard God gave. Scripture declares that God “will

render to every man according to his deeds” and that “there is no respect of persons with God.” God does not establish one plan of salvation for one person and a different plan for someone else because his circumstances produce greater human sympathy. His requirements remain His requirements whether we accept them or reject them, understand them or misunderstand them, like them or dislike them.

Our feelings cannot change His Word, and our compassion cannot create an exception He never revealed. If God established conditions for salvation, we have no authority to remove one of those conditions because the outcome troubles us emotionally. Declaring a person saved cannot make him saved, just as declaring him unsaved does not create his condemnation. God’s judgment remains unchanged by our opinions. According to His revealed standard, when the requirements connected with salvation were not completed, the promised salvation was not received. This is why a prepared sinner must be baptized without unnecessary delay.

What Have We Established?

Biblical baptism involves physical water.

Acts 8:36-39; Acts 10:47-48

✓ Baptism follows hearing the gospel.

Acts 8:35; Acts 16:32

✓ Personal belief must precede baptism.

Mark 16:16; Acts 8:37

✓ Repentance is connected with baptism.

Acts 2:38

✓ Confession is connected with baptism.

Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:5; Acts 8:37

✓ Calling upon the Lord is connected with baptism.

Acts 22:16

✓ Baptism is connected with the remission and washing away of sins.

Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16

✓ Scripture says baptism saves through the resurrection of Christ.

1 Peter 3:21

✓ Baptism is connected with the answer of a good conscience toward God.

1 Peter 3:21

✓ Baptism joins the believer with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12

✓ The person is raised to walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:4

✓ Biblical examples support immersion as the burial pattern of baptism.

John 3:23; Acts 8:38-39; Romans 6:4

✓ Infant sprinkling does not fulfill the personal belief, repentance, confession, and willing response shown in Scripture.

✓ The purpose and understanding of baptism matter.

Acts 19:3-5

✓ An incomplete baptism may need to be corrected.

Acts 19:3-5

✓ Baptism must be performed under the authority established by God.

Matthew 28:19; John 20:21-23

✓ Prepared believers were baptized without unnecessary delay.

Acts 2:41; Acts 8:36-39; Acts 16:32-33; Acts 22:16

✓ Baptism does not earn salvation. It is an obedient response of faith in the operation of God.

Colossians 2:12

Let Us Return to John Doe

John Doe believed in Christ. He confessed Christ through the sinner's prayer. For the purpose of this continuing examination, we have assumed that his repentance was genuine. He asked God for forgiveness. He intended to be baptized later. He had also been sprinkled as an infant. We must now compare those facts with what this study established.

Could John Doe's infant sprinkling satisfy biblical baptism? No.

As an infant, John Doe could not:

- * Hear and understand the gospel
- * Believe with all his heart
- * Repent of his sins
- * Confess Christ
- * Confess his sins
- * Call upon the Lord
- * Understand the purpose of baptism
- * Willingly submit to burial with Christ

His infant sprinkling also did not present the burial and resurrection pattern shown in ***Romans 6*** and ***Colossians 2***.

What about his plan to be baptized later? A future intention is not completed obedience. John Doe's church chose to wait for a scheduled group baptism. Before that date arrived, John Doe died.

The question is not whether John Doe wanted to obey eventually. The question is whether the baptism commanded by Christ ever occurred. It did not.

Therefore:

- * X John Doe was not personally baptized after believing the gospel.
- * X John Doe was not immersed as one buried and raised with Christ.

- * X John Doe did not receive baptism for the remission of his past sins.
- * X John Doe was not baptized while calling upon the name of the Lord.
- * X John Doe did not receive the answer of a good conscience toward God through baptism.
- * X John Doe did not complete the response Christ joined with salvation in Mark 16:16.
- * X John Doe's intention to obey later did not become actual obedience.

John Doe believed, prayed, and intended to be baptized, but the baptism never occurred. According to the scriptural requirements established in the previous study, he did not receive the initial remission connected with baptism. His pastor's assurance could not supply what remained unfulfilled. Therefore, according to the revealed standard examined in these studies, John Doe remained unsaved.

This Opens the Next Study

Water baptism has now been examined, but ***Acts 2:38*** contains another promise: "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

That statement opens questions that should not be answered carelessly:

1. Is receiving the Holy Ghost automatic at water baptism?
2. What is the difference between water baptism and baptism with the Holy Ghost?
3. Why had the baptized Samaritans not yet received the Holy Ghost?
4. Why were Peter and John sent to them?
5. Why did the apostles pray for them?

6. Why did they lay hands upon them?
7. Why did Paul lay hands upon the disciples in Acts 19 after baptizing them?
8. What authority is required to lay hands for the Holy Ghost?
9. What happened differently in the house of Cornelius?
10. Is an emotional experience with the Spirit the same as the permanent indwelling of the Holy Ghost?
11. Can the Holy Ghost work around or upon someone before permanently dwelling within that person?
12. How can someone know whether the Holy Ghost truly dwells within him?

These questions belong to the next study:

B2-C03-S03: Baptism With the Holy Ghost

FINAL THOUGHTS

Baptism is not an empty religious ceremony. It is not merely a photograph, celebration, or public announcement. It does not possess saving power apart from Christ. But Scripture connects baptism with faith, repentance, confession, calling upon the Lord, remission, washing away sins, burial with Christ, resurrection, newness of life, a good conscience, and salvation.

We do not honor Christ by removing baptism from the response He commanded. We do not protect grace by teaching people to disobey. We do not defend faith by separating faith from the obedience it produces. We do not make salvation free by declaring God's conditions unnecessary.

Christ paid the entire price. The sinner could never earn what He purchased. But Christ still possesses the authority to determine how the gift must be received.

If you were baptized, examine your baptism. Were you capable of hearing and understanding the gospel, believing with all your heart, repenting, confessing Christ, and knowingly submitting to baptism?

Did you understand the gospel? Had you repented?

Did you confess Christ?

Did you understand that you needed the remission of your past sins?

Did you call upon the Lord? Were you baptized with water?

Were you immersed according to the burial pattern?

Was the baptism performed under God's authority?

Did the person performing it understand what Scripture says baptism accomplishes?

Do not defend a ceremony merely because it happened in the past. If it followed Scripture, examination will confirm it. If it did not, humility will correct it.

Examining your baptism is not the same as doubting God. Scripture tells us to examine ourselves and to make our calling and election sure. Questioning whether a past ceremony truly followed Scripture is not questioning God's faithfulness. It is making certain that we responded to His Word as He commanded.

If you were baptized before but still have honest doubts about whether you understood the gospel, truly repented, knew the purpose of baptism, or were baptized according to Scripture, you may be baptized again correctly. You should not allow fear, embarrassment, or the opinions of others to prevent you from making certain that you have obeyed the gospel.

A new baptism cannot reach backward and cancel a baptism that was already valid. If your first baptism was performed correctly and for the scriptural purpose, being immersed again does not erase or invalidate what previously took place. On the other hand, if your former baptism was not according to Scripture, then being baptized correctly is not merely repeating an old ceremony. It is correcting what was lacking and obeying the command of Christ as it should have been obeyed.

If someone enters the water believing that the baptism is only symbolic, only for show, or completely unnecessary for salvation, while still placing confidence in an earlier unscriptural ceremony, that person has not truly submitted in obedient faith to the baptism taught in Scripture. A person cannot knowingly reject the purpose God gave to baptism and, at the same time, claim to have received that baptism for its God-appointed purpose. Correct words spoken by the minister cannot overcome unbelief in the heart of the recipient.

This also affects the promise of the Holy Spirit. Peter commanded the people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, and then declared that they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. If a person rejects remission of sins as the purpose of baptism and does not believe that God is working through that obedient

response, they should not presume that merely being placed under water secured the promise they refused to receive by faith.

This is not the same as experiencing fear, confusion, or questions sometime after a sincere and scriptural baptism. Later struggles do not automatically cancel earlier obedience. The issue is whether the person understood and believed the gospel when submitting to baptism, or whether they knowingly treated the baptism as an empty performance that had nothing to do with receiving remission of sins and entering into Christ.

Therefore, before baptizing someone again, make certain that you are not merely agreeing to enter the water. Know what the baptism is for, believe your past sins will be remitted, and whether you are truly placing your faith in God's promise. You must understand that if your earlier baptisms were unscriptural, you cannot continue defending those ceremonies as the moment of salvation while treating the present baptism as meaningless. You must let go of confidence in what was wrong and sincerely receive, through faith, what God has appointed in His Word.

If you have heard and understood the gospel, believed in Christ, repented, confessed Christ, understood the purpose of baptism, and are ready to obey, do not delay baptism for convenience, embarrassment, family expectations, or a future church celebration. If a church or minister is making you wait, ask what Scripture requires you to learn before you may obey.

A scheduled baptism is not a completed baptism. Wanting to obey is not the same as obeying. No person knows how much time remains.

Why tarriest thou?

Do Not Keep This Message to Yourself

If this study has caused you to examine the Scriptures more carefully, do not keep that examination to yourself.

Truth spreads when it is shared.

Consider passing this booklet to someone else who may also need to ask these same questions.

You may:

- Request another booklet and give it to someone you love
- Give this booklet to a friend or family member
- Leave it where another person may discover it
- Share it with someone who sincerely desires to understand salvation according to Scripture

The apostles did not hide the truth. They spoke it openly so that others could hear it and examine it.

You can do the same.

Continue Studying and Test Everything by Scripture

This booklet is only the beginning.

Additional Bible studies that examine salvation, obedience, and the teachings of Christ and the apostles are available here:

<https://zionsroar.org/biblical-studies>

Take time to search the Scriptures carefully and test everything that you have been taught.

Do not accept or reject anything without examining the Word of God for yourself.

Truth never fears examination.

Do not believe this booklet simply because you have read it.

Open your Bible.

Search the Scriptures.

Examine every claim carefully.

The Bereans were called noble because they searched the Scriptures daily to verify whether the things they heard were true.

Follow their example.

Test everything by the Word of God.

NEED HELP?

You were not meant to figure this out alone.

If you have questions, need clarification, or want to go through these studies with someone, reach out.

We will study the Scriptures with you, step by step, so that what you learn is clear, proven, and grounded in truth.

**If what you believe is true, it will stand.
If it is not, it must fall.**

Zion's Roar Holy Spirit Ministry

Proclaiming the Gospel of Christ and calling believers back to the foundation laid by God in Zion, the doctrine of Christ delivered through His apostles.

