

Salvation According to Scripture

Entering the New Covenant

Zion's Roar Holy Spirit Ministry
Bixby, Oklahoma



Book 2 - Chapter 03 – Study 01

Remission of Sins When God Erases the Past

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Opening Warning: Have Your Sins Truly Been Remitted?

Dear Reader,

Before we begin, I want you to think about the moment someone first told you that your sins had been forgiven. What had you been taught, and what had you actually done?

Perhaps you heard the gospel, believed that Christ died and resurrected, and repeated a sinner's prayer. Someone then assured you, "Your sins have been forgiven. You are now saved. Your salvation is complete." If you asked about baptism, perhaps you were told that it could come later because it is only an outward expression of faith and has nothing to do with receiving salvation.

That is the message many people have received, and it is the assurance we have been examining in John Doe's story in our prior studies. But before accepting that assurance, we need to ask a question that cannot be answered by how confident the preacher sounded or how relieved the person felt: Where does Scripture say that remission is received the moment a person first believes?

Please understand what I am asking. Believing in Christ is absolutely necessary. No person who rejects the Son of God can receive salvation through Him. But does establishing that belief is necessary also establish that remission is automatic and that salvation is now complete? In the preceding studies, we have examined repentance, confession, faith that proceeds toward obedience, and a good conscience toward God. We now need to examine the remission of sins. If God places its reception at a particular point in the sinner's response, no pastor, church, translation, or religious tradition has authority to move it somewhere else.

This subject also requires us to examine the words we read in our Bibles. Many modern translations use "forgiveness" where the KJV uses "remission." Your own Bible may use that wording, but forgiveness and remission do not describe the same complete work. Remission includes forgiveness, but forgiveness does not

include everything accomplished through remission. Before examining that distinction further, let us look at what Christ commanded and what Peter preached.

Luke 24:47 (KJV) *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

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

Notice that repentance and remission were part of the message Christ commanded His followers to preach. Peter then instructed his hearers to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. We must preserve the word and meaning of remission because Peter was not merely describing God forgiving an individual act of sin. He was describing the believing and repentant sinner receiving the release and erasure of the sins of the former life through baptism in Christ's name.

Now, we must be careful here. Some translations and lexicons render the underlying Greek word as either "remission" or "forgiveness," but that does not prove that the two English words communicate the same complete work. Remission includes forgiveness, but it goes further. It releases the sinner from the guilt and penalty of the former life and lets those sins go as if they had never been committed. When "remission" is replaced with "forgiveness," that fuller meaning can be hidden, and the commanded connection between repentance, baptism, and the erasure of past sins can be weakened.

You see, many people understand forgiveness as something they receive immediately by privately asking God to forgive them. When they encounter the words "forgiveness of sins," they may automatically connect those words with by faith alone we are saved, by believing alone we are saved or even the sinner's prayer.

Let me explain what I mean when I say that the sinner's prayer is not biblical. I am not saying that asking God for mercy is wrong, or that confessing our sins and acknowledging Christ are wrong. Those things have a place in Scripture. The prayer may sound

beautiful and sincere, and some of its wording may express biblical truths. But putting those statements together into a prayer and then telling someone, “Because you repeated this prayer, your salvation is complete,” is a teaching we must require someone to demonstrate from Scripture.

Where did Christ or His apostles instruct people to repeat that prayer as the complete response for receiving salvation?

They did not give us that formula. It is a humanly composed prayer, and including biblical language does not give anyone authority to attach a promise of completed salvation to its repetition. We must distinguish between praying sincerely to God and claiming that a particular prayer fulfills everything God commanded.

Go back to the people at Pentecost. When they asked, “What shall we do?” Peter did not tell them, “You believed my message, so your sins have already been remitted.” Neither did he tell them to ask Christ into their hearts and arrange baptism later. He told them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

Replacing “remission of sins” with “forgiveness of sins” does not remove the words repentance and baptism from Peter’s answer, but it can hide what God accomplishes through that response. A reader who understands forgiveness as simply asking God to forgive an individual sin may assume that the sins of the former life were already erased through belief or prayer alone. Peter did not say that. He commanded the hearers to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. We must therefore preserve the distinction: forgiveness may follow repentance when a person sins, but initial remission releases and erases the sins of the former life when the believing and repentant sinner is baptized in Christ’s name.

We must also keep Christ’s sacrifice at the center of this examination. His blood was shed for the remission of sins. Without His sacrifice, remission would be impossible. But providing the sacrifice and a person receiving its benefits are not

questions we can simply treat as identical. The fact that Christ died does not establish that every person automatically received remission at His death. Neither does that fact, by itself, establish that remission is applied at the first moment of belief.

Consider the question this raises at Pentecost. If hearing and believing Peter's message had already completed the reception of remission, why did Peter direct those convicted hearers to repent and be baptized for remission?

We need an explanation that accounts for his answer, not one that passes over it.

Then consider Saul. He had encountered Christ, believed, prayed, fasted, and followed the instruction to enter the city. Yet Ananias still told him: **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 told to wash away his sins if those sins had already been washed away when he first believed?

His encounter, prayers, and fasting are important parts of the account, but we must also account for the instruction that followed them. Repeating "We are saved by faith alone" does not, by itself, answer the question. Every passage must agree, so we must examine how these accounts fit together.

Christ's blood is the only reason remission is possible. The question before us is how the sinner receives that cleansing. The conclusion I teach in this study is remission is received only through water baptism in Christ's name by a person who believes and repents. Acts **2:38** commands repentance and baptism for remission and **Acts 22:16** connects baptism with washing away sins while calling upon the Lord. In our examination, no alternative has been established that authorizes us to replace that response with a sinner's prayer and declare remission "complete". Examine the passages with me and test the conclusion against Scripture.

As you read this study, do not assume that your sins were remitted simply because someone told you they were. Neither should you accept my explanation without testing it. Open your Bible and read each passage in its complete context. Consider what the people believed, what they were commanded to do, and when their sins were described as washed away or remitted. If a prayer is being presented as the complete response to the gospel, ask where the apostles presented it that way. Do not allow a familiar teaching to silence the words you are reading.

Then bring the examination back to yourself. Have your past sins truly been remitted according to the pattern God revealed, or have you placed your confidence in an assurance you never verified? Feelings, intentions, and assumptions cannot settle that question.

Remission of Sins: When God Erases the Past

Let us return to John Doe and remember why we began this examination. John believed what Pastor X told him about Christ, prayed with him, and received the assurance that he was saved. Yet John still had questions about the things he read in Scripture. One of those questions brings us directly to the subject of this study: Why does **Acts 2:38** connect baptism with the remission of sins?

John also asked why some Bibles use “forgiveness” where others use “remission.” That question deserves an answer, but we must examine more than the difference between two English words. We need to understand what God does when He remits sins and whether the assurance Pastor X gave John agrees with the passages we are reading.

Think about what John had been told. Pastor X assured him that believing had already brought forgiveness and that baptism could wait. If that assurance was correct, we should be able to verify it from Scripture. If it was incomplete, then John’s confidence in it would not make it complete. That is why we have continued examining his story one subject at a time.

In the previous studies, we examined belief, repentance, faith, grace, confession, and a good conscience toward God. We considered how each relates to the sinner’s response to the gospel and compared what we learned with John’s experience. As we continue, we must carry that examination forward. We cannot assume that one part of his response settled every question that remained.

Now we arrive at the sins themselves. John had asked God to forgive him, and Pastor X had told him that he was forgiven. But what evidence would allow us to conclude that his past sins had actually been remitted without water baptism? To answer that, we first need to understand what remission means, why it is necessary for salvation, and where Scripture places its reception.

We will encounter baptism throughout this examination because the passages themselves connect it with remission. This study presents the basis for our conclusion that the believing, repentant sinner receives initial remission through water baptism in Christ's name. The studies that follow will examine baptism's purpose, form, and authority in greater detail and address objections to its necessity. We are carrying a stated conclusion into that examination while continuing to test its biblical support.

For this study, keep John's question in mind as we read. What is the remission of sins, why does he need it, and what does Scripture tell us about receiving it? Once we have examined those questions, we can return to his story and determine what the evidence supports.

What Is the Remission of Sins

Before we can determine whether John Doe received remission, we need to understand what we are looking for. The English word “remission” describes the release, cancellation, or removal of a debt, charge, or penalty. Applied to our examination, the question concerns what happens to the sins charged against a person.

In the New Testament, the Greek noun often translated as “remission” is ἄφεσις, transliterated aphasis and identified in Strong’s Concordance as G859.

Greek Word ἄφεσις

Transliteration: aphasis

Strong’s Definition: freedom; (figuratively) pardon

Thayers Definition

1. release from bondage or imprisonment
2. forgiveness or pardon, of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed), remission of the penalty. Its meaning includes release, liberty, and pardon.

When used in connection with sins, it describes release from the guilt and penalty associated with them. Keep that meaning in mind as we continue, because it helps us understand what Scripture is describing when it speaks of sins being remitted.

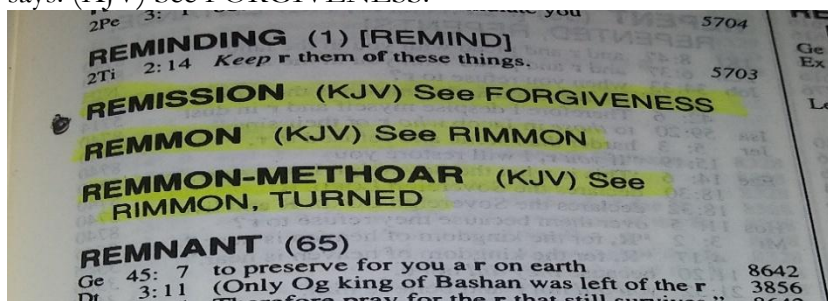
Now, you may open your Bible and find “forgiveness” in a passage where another Bible says “remission.” Some may argue that because both English words have been used to translate aphasis, there can be no meaningful distinction between them. But translation choices do not erase the difference shown by how these words operate within the complete scriptural pattern. Remission includes forgiveness, but forgiveness does not include everything remission accomplishes. Remission concerns the release and erasure of the sins of the former life through repentance and baptism in Christ’s name. After that initial remission, sins committed by the baptized believer are addressed through repentance, confession, prayer, and forgiveness. The KJV’s use of “forgiveness” in **Acts 26:18** does not give us

authority to remove remission from Acts 2:38 or separate remission from the baptism Peter commanded.

When you do a King James concordance check for the word “remission” You will find that it is used in 10 different places.

Matt 26:28, Mark 1:4, Luke 1:77, Luke 3:3, Luke 24:47, Acts 2:38, Acts 10:43, Rom 3:25, Heb 9:22, Heb 10:18.

When you do a New International Version NIV concordance check, you will NOT find the use of the word remission, but it says: (KJV) See FORGIVENESS.



The NIV concordance identifies “remission” as KJV wording and directs readers to “forgiveness,” the term used in the NIV. This shows the difference in English wording between the translations.

Read **Book 04-Chapter 05-Study 03-** “Bible Truth or Religious Poison Testing Modern Translations”.

That is where you see the importance of having a HOLY BIBLE! Would you rather read poison because it is easier to read, or would you rather have to do some work by using a real Holy bible, a dictionary, and a concordance to better understand the truth of God instead of having to fight through the lies?

The important question is what God accomplishes through remission. Remission includes forgiveness, but it does not stop there. Through remission, God releases the believing and repentant sinner from the guilt and penalty of the former life and lets those sins go as if they had never been committed.

Forgiveness alone does not describe that complete erasure and

new beginning. We must allow Scripture to explain remission rather than assume that the ordinary meaning of forgiveness includes everything the passage teaches. Let us look at how Hebrews describes it.

Hebrews 10:17–18 (KJV) *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.*

Notice how these verses connect the promise that sins will be remembered no more with the remission of those sins. When God grants remission, the sins covered by Christ's sacrifice are no longer charged against the person. The passage also tells us that where remission has occurred, there is no more offering for those sins. Christ's sacrifice has answered what another offering cannot improve upon.

But what does “will I remember no more” mean? We should not understand it as though God loses knowledge of events or becomes unable to recall what happened. It means that He will no longer hold those remitted sins against the person. The release concerns the person's guilt and standing before Him.

You see, this is what makes John Doe's question so important. He was told that his sins had been forgiven, but we are examining whether there is scriptural evidence that those sins were no longer charged against him. Understanding the meaning of remission tells us what we need to establish. It does not yet establish when John received it.

As we move forward, keep the foundation clear: the guilt and penalty are removed because of Christ's sacrifice. His blood answers the debt. Our next question is why receiving that release is necessary for salvation.

Why Is Remission Necessary for Salvation

When we talk about sin, we are discussing more than an unhealthy habit, a regrettable memory, or something that makes a person feel guilty. Sin places the sinner under condemnation and separates that person from God. Unless that guilt is dealt with, the person remains accountable for what was committed. Feeling better about the past does not, by itself, establish that the record has been cleared.

With that in mind, listen to how Zacharias described the ministry God gave to his son, John the Baptist.

Luke 1:76–77 (KJV) *And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins.*

Did you notice the connection? Zacharias speaks of giving knowledge of salvation “by the remission of their sins.” Remission addresses the very guilt that prevents the sinner from standing clean before God.

Let us ask the question plainly: Can a person whose sins have never been remitted enter the kingdom of God?

No. If his sins remain charged against him, he remains guilty, condemned, and separated from God. A person cannot already be saved while still waiting to receive remission, because remission is necessary for salvation. The believing and repentant sinner must receive the remission of his past sins through baptism in Christ’s name before he can be considered saved.

Now bring John Doe back into the discussion. He believed important truths about Christ. We have not dismissed that belief. But believing that Christ died for sins and establishing that John’s own sins were remitted are questions we must examine carefully. A person may believe many correct facts about Christ while still needing the sins of his former life to be released.

This is why the apostles preached both what Christ accomplished and how sinners were commanded to respond. His death and resurrection made salvation possible, but the hearers also needed to understand what God was calling them to do. Before we examine that response more closely, let us make certain we understand the only basis upon which remission can exist.

Christ's Blood Is the Only Basis for Remission

No ritual, minister, religious work, or amount of personal sorrow can pay the debt of sin. We need to establish that clearly before continuing, especially because this study will speak about baptism. Remission exists only because the Son of God shed His blood under the New Covenant. Listen to His own explanation.

Matthew 26:28 (KJV) *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

Christ's death certainly demonstrates His love, but His words tell us something specific about the purpose of His blood. It was shed "for the remission of sins." Every genuine remission rests upon His sacrifice. Hebrews reinforces the connection between the shedding of blood and remission.

Hebrews 9:22 (KJV) *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

Without the shedding of Christ's blood, no one could receive remission. But we must not reverse that statement and claim that, because the blood was shed, every person automatically received remission. If that were true, every person would already be released from sin, whether that person believed, repented, obeyed, or rejected God. That would amount to universal salvation, which Scripture does not teach.

Neither can we simply move from the sufficiency of His sacrifice to the claim that remission is automatically received at the first moment of belief. We still have to explain why the passages we are studying direct believing hearers toward repentance, baptism, and

the washing away of sins. Christ's sacrifice provides the only sufficient basis for remission; God then reveals the covenant response through which the sinner receives what Christ purchased.

That distinction matters for John Doe. We are not questioning whether Christ's sacrifice could answer his sin. We are examining whether the assurance given to him agreed with the response God revealed. To understand that response, we should begin with the message Christ commanded His followers to preach.

Remission Must Be Preached

After His resurrection, Christ did not leave His followers to invent a message that sounded convincing to them. He told them what was to be preached and where that proclamation was to begin.

***Luke 24:46–47 (KJV)** Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

Notice how His suffering and resurrection are connected with the preaching of repentance and remission of sins. The message was to go among all nations in His name, beginning at Jerusalem. The apostles were not sent to announce remission while leaving repentance unexplained. Neither were they sent merely to demand repentance without explaining the release from sin God offers through Christ.

The message begins with what Christ accomplished, but the hearer must also understand how God commands him to respond. When someone tells John Doe that Christ died and rose again, that person has told him essential truth. The next responsibility is to explain faithfully what Christ and His apostles instructed the sinner to do. We cannot stop at the announcement of the sacrifice and assume that every question about receiving remission has been answered.

Remission Is Promised to Those Who Believe

We must also give belief its proper place. Nothing in this examination should suggest that someone can reject the Son of God and still receive remission through His name. Peter's words in Acts make the connection clear.

Acts 10:43 (KJV) *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*

Read that statement carefully: “Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” Belief is necessary, and remission is received through His name. But we should not read those words as though every incomplete or disobedient form of belief has fulfilled the whole response God commands. In the preceding studies, we examined why biblical faith does not stop with mental agreement. Genuine belief receives God's testimony and moves the person toward obedience.

Read ***Acts 10:43*** alongside ***Acts 2:38*** and ***Acts 22:16***. Remission is promised through Christ's name to those who believe. Repentance and baptism describe the response we understand that belief to include. The absence of the word “baptism” from one sentence does not, by itself, establish permission to omit it. Neither does “shall receive,” by itself, settle the exact timing. Our conclusion rests on examining the promise together with the instructions given to those responding to the gospel.

Repentance Is Connected to Remission

Before Christ's death and resurrection, John the Baptist prepared the people through a message that connected repentance and remission. Mark describes that ministry this way.

Mark 1:4 (KJV) *John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*

Luke records the same connection.

Luke 3:3 (KJV) *And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*

When we place these passages beside Christ's command in **Luke 24:47**, we can see why repentance cannot be treated as an optional improvement to be considered after salvation has already been pronounced complete. Repentance belongs to the sinner's response to God. Christ continued to connect repentance and remission when He instructed His followers about the message they were to preach.

Think about what repentance means for the person seeking release from sin. God is not releasing him from the former life so that he can continue defending and practicing that life. The sinner turns because he believes God's judgment against sin and desires the new life God is offering. This is why we must examine Pastor X's instruction that John could regard himself as saved and deal with repentance afterward.

How did the apostles actually answer people who heard the gospel and wanted to respond? We can now turn to the gathering at Jerusalem and examine the question and answer directly.

Pentecost and the Answer to Their Question

When Peter preached Christ to the people gathered in Jerusalem, his hearers became convicted. They recognized the force of his accusation concerning their rejection and crucifixion of the Son of God. The account describes their response.

***Acts 2:37 (KJV)** Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

These were people who had heard the message and were taking it seriously enough to ask what they should do. Their conviction is important, but Peter did not answer by saying that their conviction proved their sins were already remitted. He answered their question with a command and a promise.

***Acts 2:38 (KJV)** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Peter commanded repentance and baptism, and he stated the purpose as “for the remission of sins.” He also spoke about receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. We will examine that promise after completing the baptism study, because remission, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost each deserve careful attention. For now, stay with the question of remission and notice what Peter told these hearers to do.

He did not say, “Repent and be baptized because your sins have already been remitted.” His answer directed them toward repentance and baptism for remission. Their question was “What shall we do?” and his response gave them an instruction to follow. We must account for that instruction when explaining how they were to receive the release from sin they needed.

Notice that repentance and baptism appear together in Peter’s answer. We understand “for the remission of sins” to state the

purpose of that response: receiving remission. Our conclusion is that their baptism belongs to receiving the promised cleansing. The next study will examine the proposed interpretation “because remission was already received” and explain why we reject it. Here, we are stating the understanding upon which this study’s conclusion rests.

This brings us back to Pastor X’s assurance. John Doe was told that believing had already brought forgiveness and that baptism could wait. But Peter’s answer did not present baptism as something to arrange after assuring these hearers that remission was complete. Before we accept Pastor X’s explanation, we must determine whether it faithfully accounts for what Peter actually said.

Saul and the Washing Away of Sins

Saul’s conversion gives us another account to examine. He encountered Christ on the road to Damascus, recognized the One speaking to him as Lord, and obeyed the instruction to enter the city. He then fasted, prayed, and waited for further instruction. He had experienced more than the person who is simply asked to repeat a sinner’s prayer; he had encountered the resurrected Son of God personally.

Nevertheless, Ananias still addressed the washing away of his sins.

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.*

Saul’s encounter was real. His belief, prayer, fasting, and obedience in entering Damascus were also real. We should not dismiss any of those things. Yet Ananias did not treat them as sufficient reason to tell Saul that his sins had already been washed away. He told him to arise, be baptized, wash away his sins, and call upon the name of the Lord.

What does that require us to consider about John Doe? If we are asked to accept his prayer as proof that remission was complete, we must explain why Saul, who also prayed, was still given this instruction. We cannot settle the question merely by saying that a person had a powerful experience or sincerely believed what happened to him.

Our conclusion from Ananias's instruction is that water baptism, with faith, repentance, and calling upon the Lord, is God's appointed moment for receiving initial remission. Saul's encounter, prayers, and fasting did not replace the instruction to arise, be baptized, and wash away his sins. When we examine John Doe's experience, we must account for that instruction rather than assume that his prayer accomplished everything.

Remission Concerns Sins That Are Past

Another point needs our attention before we continue. Receiving remission does not turn future rebellion into something God is required to overlook. Consider the wording Paul uses in Romans.

Romans 3:25 (KJV) *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*

Paul speaks of “the remission of sins that are past.” As we examine the release from the former life, we must not turn that release into permission for future sin. No person can erase the past through personal goodness or religious works. Only the blood of Christ can answer the debt. But neither should we claim that once remission has been received, every future sin is automatically remitted, including sins not yet committed, confessed, or repented of.

Romans 3:25 does not say that future rebellion is automatically covered. Its wording concerns sins that are past. In this study, we are examining initial remission as the clearing of the sins committed under the former life, giving the repentant sinner a

clean standing from which to begin the new life. After entering the covenant, the believer must continue walking in faith, repentance, confession, and obedience.

Later studies will examine how salvation is maintained. For now, keep the present point clear: remission addresses the sins of the former life, and it must not be turned into permission to practice future sin without judgment. This also brings us to a question many readers will have about asking God for forgiveness.

Is Asking for Forgiveness the Same as Receiving Remission

No. Forgiveness and remission are related, but they are not identical. Remission covers forgiveness because God both forgives and releases the sins of the former life as if they had never been committed. Forgiveness, however, does not necessarily describe that complete remission and new beginning. Initial remission is received once, after belief and repentance, through water baptism in Christ's name. After that remission, when a believer sins, he must repent, confess the sin, pray, and seek forgiveness. He is not baptized again because the one-time remission of his former life has already occurred.

Asking God for mercy is right. Confessing sin is right, and calling upon the Lord is necessary. We must not speak as though those responses have no value. But neither should an isolated act be used to cancel the remainder of what God commanded. A sincere prayer must be examined in relation to the whole response described in Scripture.

John Doe asked God to forgive him through the sinner's prayer. Our question is not whether he was sincere. We are asking whether Scripture identifies that prayer, by itself, as the appointed moment when an unconverted sinner receives remission of all past sins. The examples we have examined do not establish that conclusion.

At Pentecost, convicted hearers were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Saul believed, prayed, fasted,

and obeyed Christ's instructions, yet he was still told to arise, be baptized, wash away his sins, and call upon the Lord. These accounts require us to examine more than whether someone prayed. Therefore, we cannot mark remission as complete merely because John Doe asked God to forgive him. We must follow the pattern Scripture actually provides.

Receiving Remission and Addressing Sin After Baptism

At this point, someone may ask, "If baptism is connected with receiving remission, what happens when a person sins after being baptized? Does that person need to be baptized again?" That is an important question. To answer it, we must pay attention to who is being addressed, what has already happened, and what the apostles commanded that person to do.

Scripture shows a necessary distinction between initial remission and the forgiveness of sins committed afterward. In Acts 2:38, unconverted sinners were commanded to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. This remission cleared the sins of their former lives and gave them a new beginning before God. After receiving that one-time remission, a believer who sins is not baptized again. That subsequent sin must be addressed through repentance, confession, prayer, and forgiveness. Simon's account demonstrates this distinction.

Acts 8:13 (KJV) *Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.*

Notice what the account has already told us. Simon believed and was baptized. Later, when he saw that the Holy Ghost was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered money to obtain that authority. Peter rebuked him and told him that his heart was not right in the sight of God. What did Peter command him to do?

Acts 8:22 (KJV) *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*

Peter did not tell Simon that his baptism had made this later sin harmless. Neither did he instruct him to be baptized again. He told him to repent of this wickedness and pray to God for forgiveness. Now compare the situations. In Acts 2:38, the hearers responding to the gospel were commanded to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. In Acts 8:22, a man who had already believed and been baptized was commanded to repent and pray concerning a subsequent sin.

Repentance belongs in both situations. The difference is that Simon had already undergone baptism before the wrongdoing Peter was addressing. We find further instruction concerning ongoing sin in John's letter.

1 John 1:9 (KJV) *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

John includes himself by saying "we." He is addressing sin within a life of fellowship with God, not presenting a sinner's prayer as a replacement for the response commanded in Acts 2:38. The surrounding verses speak about walking in the light and being cleansed through Christ's blood. In **1 John 2:1–2**, he also explains Christ's advocacy when believers sin.

Forgiveness after baptism addresses sins committed after the believer's initial remission. John connects this forgiveness with cleansing, but he does not command the believer to be baptized again or describe another remission of the entire former life. The believer must repent, confess the sin, and seek God's forgiveness. Christ's blood remains the only basis upon which God can forgive and cleanse, but this ongoing forgiveness must not be confused with the one-time remission received through repentance and baptism in Christ's name.

How does this apply to John Doe? John asked God for forgiveness, and Pastor X assured him that his sins had already been forgiven while his baptism could wait. But before using Simon's instruction to support that assurance, we must ask whether John was in the same situation as Simon.

Simon had personally believed and been baptized before committing the wrongdoing Peter addressed. John Doe's story describes infant sprinkling and a later baptism that never took place. Those are not identical circumstances. Instructions given to someone addressing sin after baptism cannot simply be used to set aside the instructions given to people responding to the gospel. We must first establish which situation applies.

The question is not whether John Doe was allowed to pray or ask God for mercy. The question is whether his prayer fulfilled everything Scripture commanded him to do. Simon's account does not establish that conclusion. As we continue into the baptism study, we will examine the remaining questions about baptism's necessity, purpose, and validity. For now, keep this distinction clear: responding to the gospel and addressing sin after baptism must each be examined according to the instructions Scripture gives.

What Have We Established

Before we return to John's record, let us gather what we have examined without adding to it or taking anything away from it.

Matthew 26:28 tells us that Christ's blood was shed for the remission of sins, and **Hebrews 9:22** establishes that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. **Luke 1:77** connects knowledge of salvation with remission, while **Luke 24:47** includes repentance and remission in the message that must be preached in Christ's name.

We have also examined the sinner's response. **Acts 10:43** connects belief in Christ with receiving remission. **Mark 1:4** and **Luke 3:3** connect repentance with remission in John's ministry. At

Pentecost, Peter commanded convicted hearers to repent and be baptized for remission in ***Acts 2:37–38***. Saul was told in ***Acts 22:16*** to arise, be baptized, wash away his sins, and call upon the Lord. Each passage must have its place in our explanation.

Romans 3:25 speaks about the remission of sins that are past, and ***Hebrews 10:17–18*** tells us that when remission has occurred, those sins are remembered no more. Remission includes forgiveness, but it accomplishes more than forgiveness alone: it releases and erases the sins of the former life, giving the believing and repentant sinner a clean beginning through baptism in Christ's name. Simon's account and John's letter then show how sins committed after that initial remission must be addressed through repentance, confession, prayer, and forgiveness. The believer does not receive another baptism or another complete remission of the former life each time he sins.

The next study must examine baptism before we can answer every objection connected with these passages. But we can keep the conclusion of this examination clear: remission is necessary for salvation, Christ's blood is the only basis for remission, and Scripture places baptism within the sinner's commanded response for receiving remission. With that in mind, let us return to the person whose story brought these questions before us.

Let Us Return to John Doe

All we are asking is whether John Doe's salvation can be verified from Scripture at this point in the investigation. Bring forward the conclusions established in the previous studies and add only what this study has now established. The checklist allows you to compare his experience with the subjects we have examined, so consider each entry carefully rather than checking it merely because it sounds familiar.

✓ He believes Christ is the Son of God.

✓ He believes Christ died for our sins.

✓ He believes Christ resurrected three days later.

✓ He believes Christ is at the right hand of the Father interceding for us.

✓ He confessed Christ as Lord and confessed himself to be a sinner through the sinner's prayer.

✓ For this continuing examination, we have assumed that his repentance was genuine.

✓ He asked God for forgiveness and called upon the Lord through the sinner's prayer.

✓ He was sprinkled as a baby, but he did not personally believe, repent, confess, or call upon the Lord at that time.

X No full assurance of faith has been verified.

Hebrews 10:22

X His faith did not proceed through the baptism connected with a good conscience.

Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21

X No biblical confession connected with his own baptism has been verified.

Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:5

X No good conscience toward God through the scriptural pattern has been verified.

1 Peter 3:21

X No remission of his past sins has been verified. He was never personally baptized in response to the gospel for the remission of sins.

Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16

John Doe possessed sincere belief, religious experience, prayer, and intention. We have acknowledged those parts of his story throughout our examination. But sincerity cannot supply a missing part of God's revealed response. At the time of his death, he had not received the baptism Peter commanded for the remission of sins.

Therefore, based upon the evidence examined so far, we cannot declare that his past sins had been remitted. In the examination we have been following, this requirement remains unfulfilled. Our conclusion concerning his condition remains the same: John Doe remains unsaved. The questions surrounding his infant sprinkling and the baptism that never took place must now receive the fuller attention of the baptism study.

This Opens the Next Study

We have established a connection between baptism and remission, but there are necessary questions still before us. We should not answer them hastily or hide them inside a study whose immediate subject is remission. If you have been asking those questions as you read, carry them forward into the next examination.

First, is water baptism truly necessary for salvation? Does “for” in **Acts 2:38** mean “in order to receive remission,” or “because remission was already received”? Is baptism merely an outward expression of an inward change? Those questions concern the purpose of baptism and must be answered by examining the passages in context.

Then we must consider what counts as the baptism Scripture describes. Must it be performed with water, and does its manner matter? Can infant baptism satisfy the response required of a believing and repentant person? Does the purpose understood by the person being baptized matter? Must baptism be performed in the name and authority appointed by Christ, and who has authority to perform it? Can anyone baptize another person?

We also need to examine the accounts often raised as objections. What about the thief on the cross? What about Cornelius receiving the Holy Ghost before being baptized with water? Why were the disciples in Acts 19 baptized again? If someone was baptized incorrectly, should that person be baptized again? The claim that baptism is the only appointed way to receive initial remission requires us to account for these passages rather than pass over them.

These questions lead into **B2-C03-S02**, Baptism God’s Appointed Moment of Remission, and the subsequent examination of objections to baptism and salvation. After baptism has been examined, the study of baptism with the Holy Ghost will consider the relationship between water baptism, prayer, laying on of

hands, and receiving the Holy Ghost. Each subject has a place in the continuing investigation.

Final Thoughts

As we finish, return to the foundation of everything we have read. Remission begins with the blood of Christ. No person can earn it, no minister can manufacture it, and no water can replace the sacrifice that made it possible. But honoring His blood does not mean ignoring the response that Christ and His apostles commanded.

Scripture joins remission with belief, repentance, calling upon the Lord, and baptism. In the accounts of Pentecost and Saul, the hearers were given further instructions rather than being told that belief and conviction alone had completed their response. Our explanation must allow those instructions to speak. Christ paid the debt, and the sinner must receive God's provision according to the covenant pattern He revealed.

Do not allow a prayer, a childhood ceremony, a pastor's assurance, or a sincere memory to settle a question Scripture tells you to examine. If your sins were remitted according to the biblical pattern, the evidence will stand. If the pattern was never completed, humility will allow you to correct what you once assumed was sufficient.

The next study will examine baptism carefully. Bring every question, every objection, and every relevant passage with you. Do not decide its conclusion before reading the evidence. Truth does not fear examination, and neither should the person who sincerely wants to follow it.

Final Consideration

Now that you have examined these passages, consider your own response. Understanding what you read matters, but agreement on the page must lead you to examine how you live. If this study has exposed something that needs correction, do not put that concern aside merely because dealing with it will be uncomfortable. What you understand brings responsibility before God.

This is where many people struggle. They read, agree, and feel conviction, but then delay. Scripture warns, “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” Ask yourself what you will do with what you have understood. Will you obey, or begin explaining away the very thing you recognized? Will you remove what needs to be removed, or find a way to keep it? The question concerns your response to what you know is right.

God is not asking you to understand every subject at once, but you must stop defending what has already been exposed. Repent where repentance is needed, cut off what must be cut off, and obey what you already understand. Do not make a more convenient moment or stronger feelings a condition for responding. Scripture’s warning, “Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart,” calls for attention now.

The fear of the Lord should be expressed in obedience. If you find that obedience is absent, examine the fear and reverence you claim to have. Do not settle for being moved by the warning while remaining unwilling to act upon it. The responsibility to respond is yours.

Do Not Keep This Message to Yourself

If this study has caused you to examine the Scriptures more carefully, consider sharing it with someone else who may need to ask these same questions. Truth spreads when it is shared. You may request another booklet and give it to someone you love, pass this copy to a friend or family member, leave it where another person may discover it, or share it with someone who sincerely desires to understand salvation according to Scripture. The apostles spoke openly so that others could hear and examine the truth. You can help another person begin that examination too.

Continue Studying the Scriptures

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.

Test Everything by Scripture

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.



