

Why Baptism

is not

Necessary

for Salvation

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From its inception Protestant Christianity has had as one of its pillars the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ alone. This orthodox view is in opposition to many protestant churches today who say that water baptism is essential for salvation. Alexander Campbell who is credited as the founder of the Church of Christ said that people, “were not forgiven their sins by faith; but by an act of faith, by a believing immersion”(Hughey, 17). For many like Campbell faith alone does not constitute salvation because water baptism is “the inescapable condition for entry into the Church and participation in salvation” (Schneider,24). The historic orthodox view of faith alone and the faith plus water baptism view (also known as baptismal regeneration) cannot both be right. The following pages will seek to show from the scriptures that water baptism, although important, is in no way required for salvation. We will examine water baptism in the ministry and teaching of both Jesus and the apostle Paul. Secondly, we will compare the religious rites of circumcision and baptism as they relate to salvation. We will also study water baptism in the book of Acts. Lastly, we will look at alternative interpretations of passages that baptism for salvation proponents most commonly use to support their position.

The case for water baptism being essential for salvation begins with the ministry of John the Baptist. In Mark 1:4, John appeared on the scene, “preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” Alexander Campbell says of this pronouncement of John’s preaching, “It was not for remission of sins, but for *the* remission of sins. The fixtures of language could not more safely secure the intention of an institution”(Hughey, 15). Campbell concludes from this verse that God wants to form an institution based on water baptism for the remission of sins. The problem with making an institution out of John’s baptism is that John acknowledged that Christ had a more significant institution than his water baptism. Jesus was baptized in water by John the Baptist but from the

beginning John diminishes the significance of water baptism in the ministry of Jesus, when he says, "...I baptize with water; but One is coming.... He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire"(Luke 3:16). John states that Jesus' ministry would emphasize baptism by the Spirit, which takes place when one believes in Christ according to Ephesians 1:13-14. The fact that John's baptism, which Campbell claimed to be an institution, was insufficient is seen in the fact that some of those who had received John's baptism were baptized again by Paul after they heard the gospel (Acts 19:5). Paul "points out to them the difference between the preparatory work of John and the mediatorial work of Jesus" (Kistemaker, 679). Rather than John's water baptism being an institution it was something that John himself saw as inferior and preparatory to Jesus' Spirit baptism.

Baptism in the ministry and teaching of Jesus

If God were going to make baptism essential to salvation we would expect to see it as a very prominent fixture in the life and ministry of Christ. In the course of Jesus' three years of ministry (from His baptism through the resurrection) the Bible records that baptism was mentioned only once. In that one account, the Apostle John tells us that Jesus baptized no one but that His disciples did the baptizing (John 4:1-2). A study of Jesus ministry will conclude that water baptism was rarely present (one time) and by no means prominent.

Did Jesus require baptism for salvation in His personal ministry? On several occasions, Jesus proclaimed people forgiven because of the person's faith and each time there was no mention of baptism. Note the paralytic in Mark 2: 5, 'And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, 'My son your sins are forgiven.'" The sinful women in Luke 7:50, "And He said to the women, `Your faith has saved you; go in peace.' Zaccheus in Luke 19:9, 'And Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, because he too

is a son of Abraham', (those who are of faith are the sons of Abraham, Galatians 3:7). And finally the thief on the cross in Luke 23:43, 'And He said to him, Truly I say to you, ' today you will be with me in Paradise.' Here are four examples of how Jesus proclaimed salvation to a person based on their faith without any reference to baptism.

Some proponents of baptism for salvation at this point will assert that the means of appropriating salvation are different before and after the cross to try and discount these examples of Christ. There is no scriptural evidence at all that the means of appropriating salvation changed after the death and resurrection of Christ. In fact, scripture strongly concludes that the mode of salvation has always been through faith. Paul deals with the issue of the means of appropriating salvation in Romans 4 and Galatians 3. He repeatedly states that Abraham was "justified by faith". In Romans 4:3 Paul quotes Genesis 15:6, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness". Moo concludes that Paul is stressing that, " God is never obliged by His creatures; justification is a gift, freely bestowed...the faith that gained Abraham righteousness was a faith that excluded works"(Moo, 263). Faith, which can be expressed in many ways, has always been the means of appropriating salvation. For one to assert that the means of appropriating salvation have changed from faith before to faith plus baptism after the cross has no Biblical footing and denies the apostle Paul's focus on the once and forever means of appropriating salvation, faith alone.

In Jesus' personal ministry, salvation and baptism are in no way linked. If there were going to be a radical and sudden change in the means of appropriating salvation then we would expect to find very clear directions for this new means of appropriation to be carried out. There are five commissions that Jesus gives after His resurrection (Matt. 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24: 46-48, John 20:21 and Acts 1:8). If Jesus is going to change the means of appropriating salvation that He modeled to His men for three years, faith,

now is His only chance. Baptism is mentioned in only two of the five passages and in only one of those instances is baptism even mentioned in the same context as salvation. That alone speaks volumes. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commanded His disciples to, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you." Make disciples is the main verb and the other phrases are participles modifying it. Baptizing them and teaching them to observe all that I command you are both phrases that tell how disciples are to be made. Baptism is important because the Lord commands it to be done and because it is an outward sign of an inward decision. Jesus does not say that baptism is needed for salvation but that it is part of making disciples as is teaching them to observe all that He taught.

The second and final post resurrection passage in which Jesus mentions baptism is Mark 16:16, "He who has believed and been baptized shall be saved but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned". To this verse one proponent of baptism for salvation concludes, "the Saviour has seen fit to connect the two, and what the Lord has joined together, I would not dare to put asunder"(McClure, 8). The obvious question from reading the first half of this verse is 'Does salvation depend on believing and being baptized or is it just believing?' The answer is found in the second half of the verse, "he who has disbelieved shall be condemned". This clarifies that it is believing or disbelieving that determines one's eternity. If believing and baptism were required to keep from being condemned then Jesus would have said so but He says that it is an issue of faith.

Four times in these four passages Jesus pronounces salvation based on faith alone. Our examination showed how little that Jesus ministry and instruction even mentioned baptism. We have seen that Paul has authenticated that it is faith that brings salvation and

that it has always been faith. There are over 150 such passages in the Bible that repeat this truth that faith in Christ alone brings salvation. In the ministry and teachings of Jesus, baptism was by no stretch a centerpiece. It is a command of the Lord that is important but certainly not essential for salvation. If baptism were essential for salvation, Christ would have modeled it or at least mentioned it regularly, but we find neither.

Baptism in the ministry of the Apostle Paul

Paul asserts in I Corinthians 1:17, that Baptism was not what Jesus sent him to do, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel". The task that Paul received from Christ was to preach the gospel not to baptize. "More important in Paul's view than baptism...was preaching. It is this he means to stress" (Barrett, 48). Paul did baptize people (I Cor. 1:14-16), but it was not the priority of his ministry because that was the direction Jesus gave Paul. If baptism were essential to salvation, it would have and should have been prominent in Paul's message and ministry. We find just the opposite; baptism is downplayed (because the issue was splitting the Corinthians) rather than highlighted. Another significant observation from this verse is the fact that Paul clearly differentiates between baptism and the gospel. Paul says in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...". This verse states that salvation is from believing in the gospel. If baptism was essential to salvation it would be a necessary part of the gospel, but Paul says they are two different things when he states, "...Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel" (I Cor.1: 17). Paul clarifies what he means by the gospel when he explains it in I Corinthians 15:1-4. "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures". In Paul's definition of the

gospel there is no mention of baptism. Paul's gospel did not include baptism and ours should not either. Paul warns against adding to the gospel in Galatians 1: 6-9. Obviously if baptism was essential to salvation then Christ would have sent Paul to preach and baptized but Paul specially states in no uncertain terms, " ...Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel".

This focus on the gospel over baptism plays out in Paul's ministry in the book of Acts. At least five different times in the book of Acts (13:12,13:48,17:4, 17:12,17:34) Paul preaches the gospel and people believe but there is no mention of baptism at all. One instance where Paul does baptize after conversion is very telling. Acts 16:29-31 records, "he fell down before Paul and Silas and...he said, 'what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved'". Paul is asked point blank what one must do to be saved and Paul said believe and did not say anything about baptism. As was usual practice, baptism immediately followed as a sign of faith in Christ. We will compare this response to Peter's when he gets this very same question. Paul told the Corinthians that he was sent to preach the gospel not baptize. Paul's ministry clearly demonstrates the preeminence of preaching the gospel rather than baptism. He also models that salvation is based on faith alone which he repeats over and over in his epistles.

Comparing Circumcision and Baptism

Man's tendency is to focus on the outward religious symbols and God's tendency is to focus on the heart. I Samuel 16:7b states, "man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart". We see these two focuses clashing all through the scripture. Though God commanded them, He rejects Israel's fasting (Isaiah 58), festivals and sacrifices (Amos 5:21-24) because their hearts were not right. Jesus makes this same focus

on the heart when He quotes, "This people honors Me with their lips but their heart is far away from Me but in vain do they worship Me"(Matthew 15:7-8). Groups of religious people of every generation have stressed conformity to the outward symbols at the cost of the heart of the matter. God is most concerned about the heart, which He clearly points out when addressing the covenant symbols.

The deeper meaning of the rite of baptism is illumined when we examine it in comparison with the rite of circumcision. Circumcision and baptism have much in common as representative symbols of the old and new covenants respectively. Circumcision was a command given to Abraham as an outward sign of a covenant with God (Genesis 17:11). Although God desires man to heed His command for this outward sign, throughout scripture one sees how God puts a premium on the inward condition rather than the outward observance. God says He looks at the heart but man looks at the outward appearance (1 Samuel 16:7). Even though the men had been circumcised in the flesh, God states that He desires them to "circumcise then your heart"(Deuteronomy 10:16). God was most concerned with the inner circumcision of the heart.

Paul also shares God's insights into how righteousness is reckoned to a person apart from physical circumcision. Romans 4:9-11, "... Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness'. How then was it reckoned? While he was circumcised or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised but while uncircumcised; and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them". Abraham was reckoned as righteous while uncircumcised. Circumcision did not result in Abraham being declared righteous (i.e. salvation), but it was rather an outward sign of something that took place in the heart prior to

circumcision. Through Abraham's example, Paul clearly rejects the observance of an outward religious symbol as a means of salvation.

Baptism also is an outward sign of an inward work of God that has already taken place. The deeper spiritual meaning of both baptism and circumcision are beautifully explained in Colossians 2:11-12, "and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead." Notice how it says a person is 'buried in baptism and raised up with Christ through faith'. O'Hair points out, "The believer is not raised to walk in newness of life by the operation of man and water, but through the faith of the operation of the same God who raised Christ from the dead"(O'Hair, 13). When a person places their faith in Christ, they are baptized into Christ and circumcised without hands. It is an inward work of spiritual regeneration that takes place. The outward sign of a person being lowered in the water represents dying with Christ and then being raised up again shows the newness of life in Christ. The outward sign of these two rites are symbols of what has taken place in the inner person.

Paul and Barnabas had "a great dissension and debate" with some Jews who taught that circumcision was mandatory for salvation (Acts 15:1-2). Paul wrote Galatians in part to respond to Judaizers who said faith was not enough for salvation. Circumcision is one of the additional requirements that these Judaizers put on salvation. The letter to the Galatians expresses God's disdain when men try to add an outward religious symbol, albeit an important one, to the gospel. Paul says in Galatians 1: 8, "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed." As mentioned before, Paul spells out very plainly what his gospel is in I Corinthians 15. Baptism is not mentioned but faith is repeated as

the means. As seen from the book of Galatians, it is serious business when religious symbols are added as requirements for salvation.

Baptism in the book of Acts

Baptism in the book of Acts is seen in three different relationships with believing/repentance. First baptism and repentance/believing are portrayed as happening at the same time. The second relationship is that baptism follows belief/repentance (this is the most common). The final way that belief/repentance and baptism are organized in Acts in regard to salvation is that belief/repentance is mentioned but baptism is not. We will examine examples of each of these portrayals of the relationship of baptism with repentance/belief as relates to evangelism. One important note about the relationship of faith and repentance in the NT is “that repentance is a vital part of believing, and is in no way, in itself, a separate and independent condition of salvation” (Pyne,89). The use of one implies the other in the NT.

Baptism is mentioned in the book of Acts on occasion simultaneously with repentance/believe. Baptism can be a legitimate way for one to express their faith in Christ but for too many it is more than that. When I ask a person what they are depending on to get to heaven and they respond that they were baptized at age 7 and don't mention Jesus or the cross that tells me something about what they are truly trusting in for salvation. That person really is not trusting in Jesus alone but also in Baptism. When a person trusts in baptism for salvation they are putting part of their faith in this religious sign rather than in Jesus. When I personally received Christ, I said a prayer to express my faith in the Lord. The prayer didn't bring salvation but rather it expressed my faith in the person who does (Romans 10:9-10). In similar manner, baptism is a way to express ones faith in Jesus and a prominent way in the early church.

Throughout the gospel record, we see several different expressions of faith in Christ. In Luke 7:36-50, Luke gives his account of the sinful woman anointing Jesus' feet with perfume and her tears. In verse 48 Jesus says, "Your sins have been forgiven." But she did not pray and was not baptized but Jesus pronounces her saved because of her faith (7:50). She expressed her faith in Christ by anointing the Lord's feet. Later in Luke the Lord tells Zaccheus that "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham" (Luke 19:9). " Jesus is not referring to the fact that Zaccheus is Jewish but rather that he has the faith of Abraham. That "sons of Abraham" means faith and not ancestry is seen in Galatians 3:7, " Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are the sons of Abraham." Jesus says Zaccheus is saved because of his faith. How did Zaccheus express that faith? We find it in verse eight, " And Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much." One could say from this passage in isolation from other passages that you must give half your possessions to the poor to be saved. But when you compare it to the whole of scripture, it is obvious that Jesus pronounces Zaccheus saved because of the faith he expressed in his statements of repentance, not because of the mode by which he expressed it. In similar fashion the paralytic in Mark 2:5 was pronounced forgiven because Jesus saw his faith. He expressed his faith by getting four friends to carry him to Jesus on a pallet. The thief on the cross was saved because he expressed his faith in the request, " Jesus remember me when You come in your kingdom"(Luke 23:42). All four of these examples are different modes of expression saving faith. The faith is the important thing, not the mode of expressing it. Someone could take the story of Zaccheus along with a half dozen other passages and build a case for salvation by works. But when their case is held up in the light of the rest of scripture, the truth is obvious. Those who promote a faith plus baptism salvation do

the same by building their case on a handful of passages in isolation from the rest of scripture.

In the early church, baptism was often the mode of choice to express faith in Jesus Christ. This understanding of baptism as a mode of expressing faith rather than the means of obtaining salvation helps to explain some of the key passages that faith plus baptism proponents use to build their case. In Acts 2: 37-38, when Peter is asked what to do by a convicted audience, he responds, " Repent (plural) and ... be baptized (singular) in the name of Jesus Christ." Peter was telling the people to repent and then to individually express their faith in Christ through baptism. MacArthur remarks on Peter's call, "baptism would be a dramatic step for Peter's hearers. By publicly identifying themselves as followers of Jesus of Nazareth, they risked becoming outcasts in their society. Peter calls upon them to prove the genuineness of their repentance by submitting to public baptism"(MacArthur, 73). Marshall adds,"baptism is an expression of faith"(Marshall, 81). In some denominations, if you asked them what you must do to be saved they might respond by saying you need to pray the 'sinners prayer' with the promise that if you do you will be saved (Romans 10:9-10). Does the 'sinners' prayer save anyone? No. The same reason that baptism does not save anyone. Both are ways to express faith in Christ. the one who does save. As we discussed earlier, there are many possible ways to express saving faith in Jesus Christ and baptism was and is one of those possible expressions. Baptism is not required for salvation any more than reciting the sinner's prayer is.

INSERT 1PETER 3:20 INTERPRETATION IN PARAGRAPH ABOVE.

Paul's response to this same question that Peter got in Acts 2:37, What must we do to be saved? proves that faith in Christ is the determining factor. Peter responds 'repent and be baptized' while Paul simply says 'believe in the Lord Jesus'. If baptism is not an expression of faith in Christ instead of a requirement for salvation then the only other

conclusion is that Paul and Peter preached different gospels and the Bible contradicts itself. We know those not to be true so we are forced to agree with what the rest of the Bible teaches on the topic; that salvation is through faith in Christ and that baptism is one means of expressing saving faith.

That Peter knew water baptism was not essential for salvation is seen by the fact that he preaches another evangelistic message without even mentioning baptism. In Acts 3:17 - 4:4, Peter says in (v.19)..." Repent therefore and return that your sins may be wiped away...". At the end of his message the response of the crowd is recorded in Acts 4:4, "but many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand". There is no mention or hint in Peter's message regarding baptism and yet five thousand were saved. If baptism were essential for salvation then Peter made a huge blunder by not even mentioning it in his sermon. Salvation is by faith in Christ alone, but as we have seen there are many ways to express that faith. Baptism is one possible way to express saving faith in Jesus Christ but certainly not the only expression. As mentioned above, in Paul's ministry believing in the gospel is mentioned five times in Acts without a reference to baptism. Just because they are not recorded does not mean they were not baptized, I think they were. The point to note ,however ,is that when salvation experiences were recorded in the book of Acts it did not always mention baptism but it did always mention faith/repentance.

Another instance of salvation in Acts without baptism is seen in Cornelius' conversion. In Acts 10:43-48, Peter is preaching to Cornelius and his family. He finished saying, 'everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sin', then his audience was filled with the Holy Spirit. "It is apparent that when Cornelius and the other Gentiles heard that forgiveness was available through Jesus Christ they believed. In immediate response to their faith 'the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message'

(MacArthur, 304). Again Peter has not even mentioned baptism and they are filled with the Spirit. We know that only believers in Christ are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who is the seal of salvation according to Ephesians 1:13-14. Peter did not preach baptism but proclaimed, "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins"(Acts 10:43). "This is eternal forgiveness before God, and upon receiving it by faith, Cornelius and his company were subsequently baptized"(Ironsides, 29). The conversion of this large gathering before baptism gives strong proof that baptism is not necessary for salvation.

When Peter was recounting the Gentiles' response to the gospel for the Jerusalem council in Acts 15:7-11 he shares about their faith in regards to salvation but does not mention baptism. "God made a choice...that the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe...cleansing their hearts by faith...But we believe that they are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus". Peter states in no uncertain terms that the proper response to the gospel is belief, cleansing comes through faith and salvation is by grace. As Peter recounts the response to the gospel he does not mention baptism because the issue is about faith in Christ not about water. Throughout Acts, Peter and Paul are focused on faith not on the mode of its expression. To the degree that a specific mode of expressing faith (i.e. Baptism) is exalted as essential to salvation is the degree to which Christ and His cross are diminished.

I want to clarify that I am not relegating baptism to simply one mode of faith expression among many. Although baptism has been compared to other means of expressing faith, it should not be implied that it is no different from other expressions. It is a command of the Lord and is therefore a matter of obedience. However, it is not a means to obtain salvation but is an outward symbol of a Christian's salvation.

Most often in the book of Acts baptism is portrayed as an act that takes place after someone believes (16:31-33, 16:14-15). Acts 8:12-13 , " But when they believed Philip preaching the good news...they were being baptized. And even Simon himself believed and after being baptized he continued with Philip." Baptism again follows faith in Acts 18:8, "...the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized". Those who were saved in the book of Acts were almost always baptized immediately. MacArthur says of baptism in the early church, "it was inseparable from salvation" (MacArthur, 75).

Baptismal regeneration passages

There are seven to eight passages, which are most often cited by those arguing for baptismal regeneration (water baptism for salvation). These passages are said to support the view that the act of water baptism is a condition to be met for salvation. A basic and well-understood rule for interpreting scripture is to seek to explain difficult statements by harmonizing them with clear ones. In other words, if a passage has two or more possible interpretations, and only one of those fits well with other scriptures, the Bible student is bound to select the interpretation that is in harmony with the rest of Biblical revelation. Thus, though a passage may have two possible interpretations in isolation from other passages when it is placed along side of clear, unambiguous passages, only one proper interpretation exists. There is over 150 salvation by faith alone passages in the Bible, ninety-eight of which I have included at the end for your personal study. Those who conclude," The 'washing' in baptism introduces the process of sanctification, and as the

precondition and warrant for inheriting the Kingdom of God”(Schnackenburg ,107), must ignore the wealth of verses that teach that salvation is by faith in Christ alone. Should we interpret the 150 faith alone passages through the 7 - 8 baptism passages or should it be the other way around? These so-called baptismal regeneration passages should, like any passage of scripture be interpreted in light of the whole of scripture rather than in isolation. To do otherwise would be to violate another Bible study principle “the important hermeneutical principle known as analogia Scriptura (the analogy of Scripture). That principle states that no passage, when correctly interpreted, will teach something contradictory to the rest of Scripture” (MacArthur, 74).

The following brief comments are only introductory. The reader is encouraged to examine each of the following passage in the Bible itself in fuller detail. We have already addressed alternative interpretations for Mark 15:15-16 and Acts 2:38. As we established above when we understand that baptism is one possible expression of faith and was the expression of choice for the early church then some of the difficult passages are more easily understood.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Baptism is not mentioned here. The water in verse 5 refers to the water associated with physical birth. In the two verses before and the verse after there are two births being discussed, the physical and the spiritual. In (v.4) Nicodemus asks about entering a second time into his mother’s womb. Jesus continues with Nicodemus’ thought in (v.5) by referring to being ‘born of water’, water fills the womb and accompanies physical birth. Jesus’ point to Nicodemus is that physical birth is necessary but it is the second spiritual birth that brings salvation. For those who argue for the passage to mean baptism Calvin

concludes, "As far as this passage is concerned, I cannot at all bring myself to believe that Christ is speaking of Baptism (Calvin, 64).

Acts 22:16 And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.

Paul testifies of Ananias' call to him. This verse does not say wash away your sins by being baptized. The natural question is does baptism or calling on his name wash away ones sins? Romans 10:13 says, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." "The overarching term...is 'calling upon His name,' the profession of faith in Christ that is the basis for the act of baptism"(Pohill, 461). I believe that baptism was the means by which Paul called on the name of the Lord. As we established earlier, baptism was often the mode of choice to express one's faith in Christ. Did Paul pray the sinner's prayer to 'call on the name of the Lord' or was he baptized as the expression of his faith?

1 Corinthians 12:13 " For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body"

This is plainly talking about the Spirit baptism that takes place at conversion according to Ephesians 1:13-14. The "body" here is not any local church, but The Church, which is Christ's body (Eph. 1:22-23). Water baptism is not mentioned in this passage. "Paul does not imply that baptism incorporates into the body of Christ, but he writes that all are baptized by one Spirit" (Grosheide, 293).

1 Peter 3:21 And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you-not the removal of dirt from the body, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Here Peter tells us that baptism is prefigured by the deliverance of Noah's family by water (cf. 3:20). Saving baptism, therefore, is symbolic here, not actual. Peter quickly

adds two statements lest he be misunderstood. Salvation in this passage is not based upon water baptism, but upon "an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" which water baptism represents. One is buried with Christ in baptism (Romans 6:3-4). Peter emphasizes the fact that he is not talking about water baptism when he says, "not the removal of dirt from the flesh." Water baptism is a sign of an inner cleansing that takes place when one puts their faith in Christ. Marshall concludes, "although baptism is the normal means of Christian initiation, salvation is not the result of merely submitting outwardly to baptism" (Marshall, 132).

Romans 6:3-4 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

The baptism mentioned here is referring to Spirit baptism not water baptism which serves as a picture of what happens when a person trusts Christ. "Water baptism does not baptize a person into Christ. It is baptism by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13) that baptizes into Christ" (Forlines, 157). John the Baptist foretold of this baptism when he said, "I baptize with water; but One is coming.... He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire"(Luke 3:16).

Salvation is a work of God on behalf of helpless sinners. By grace alone man is saved through faith. Salvation is not of works, including the work of water baptism, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8,9). This view of salvation by faith alone in the person and work of Christ is in harmony with the orthodox protestant faith. And more importantly

as we have seen it is in agreement with the whole of biblical revelation. Jesus did not model baptism in His ministry and He did not emphasize it to His disciples. Faith has been the established means of salvation from the beginning. Faith apart from the religious rite of the covenant (circumcision) justified Abraham and it is still faith a part from the religious rite of baptism that justifies the sinner. Paul affirms that faith has been and always will be the means for salvation. Water baptism was often the faith expression of choice for those in the early church. There are many other faith expressions as shown in the ministry of Christ and in the book of Acts. The apostle Paul did not include baptism as part of his gospel and neither should we. The Bible speaks unmistakably in over 150 verses of scripture that salvation is through faith in Christ period. This doctrine is drawn from the whole of the scripture, not just a few scattered verses. The serious Bible student is obliged to insure that his interpretation lines up with the whole of scripture. These above interpretations are not only very plausible in their immediate context but in light of the rest of the Bible their conclusions, that make salvation by faith alone, are the only ones that fit the rest of the Bible. I have included ninety-eight verses below for personal study on what the Bible says is necessary for salvation.

Bible Study on Salvation as it relates to Faith

Write what you observe from the following passages as it relates to the relationship between salvation and faith. Observe what requirement is given for salvation.

1. Luke 7:50

2. Acts 3:16

3. 15:9

4. 20:21

5. 26:18

6. Romans 1:17

7. 3:22

8. 3:25

9. 3:27

10. 3:28

11. 3:30

12. 4:5

13. 4:9

14. 4:11

15. 4:13

16. 4:16

17. 5:1

18. 5:2

19. 9:30

20. Galatians 2:16

21. 3:7

22. 3:8

23. 3:11

24. Eph.2: 8-9

25. 2 Tim. 3:15

26. Hebrews 6:1

27. 6:12

28. 10:38

29. 10:39

30. 11:6

31. 11:7

32. 11:39

33. 1 Peter 1:9

34. I John 5:4

Bible Study on Salvation as related to believing

Observe what each passage says about the relationship between salvation and believing.

Observe what requirement is given for salvation.

1. Mark 1: 15

2. Luke 8:12

3. John 1:12

4. 3:15

5. 3:16

6. 3:18

7. 3:36

8. 5:24

9. 6:27-29

10. 6:35

11. 6:40

12. 6:47

13. 6:69

14. 7:38-39

15. 8:24

16. 9:35-38

17. 11:25-26

18. 12:26

19. 17:20

20. 20:31

21. Acts 4:4

22. 8:12-13

23. 8:37

24. 10:43

25. 11:17

26. 11:21

27. 13:39

28. 13:48

29. 14:23

30. 15:7-11

31. 16:30-31

32. 16:34

33. 18:8

34. 18:27

35. 19:2

36. 19:18

37. 21:20,25

38. 24:14

39. Romans 1:16

40. 3:22

41. 4:3

42. 4:5

43. 4:11

44. 6:8

45. 9:33

46. 10:4

47. 10:9-11

48. 10: 13-14

49. 1 Corinthians 1:21

50. 14:22

51. Galatians 2:16

52. 3:6

53. 3:22

54. Ephesians 1:13

55. 1 Thessalonians 4:14

56. 1 Timothy 1:16

57. Hebrews 4:3

58. 11:6

59. James 2:23

60. 1 Peter 2:6

61. 1 John 3:13

62. 5:1

63. 5:10

64. 5:13

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