

IS BAPTISM NECESSARY FOR SALVATION?

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The seemingly endless battle rages, as to whether one has to be water baptized in order to be saved. One side claims Acts 16:31, versus the opposing view's citing of Acts 2:38. The matter seems unsolvable. Surely, some scripture must be discernable that would settle the matter.

Good news! There is. If the reader will agree with one principle, the truth can be established. It is this:

There is only one way to be saved in this present age. No individual can be saved by any method, different from that by which all others get saved.

If you agree, then please continue reading.

In Acts, Chapter Ten, we read the story of the conversion of one, Cornelius. (Please read the account in the Bible, the King James Version.) Pay particular attention to verses 45-48.

Cornelius was a religious man (v.2), seeking God according to his knowledge of the Old Testament way, but had not yet been truly born again (Acts 11:14).¹ While Peter is preaching, the Holy Spirit abruptly interrupts his sermon (v.44), and baptizes that Gentile household (on an individual basis, of course), into the Body of Christ, after the manner of that which occurred on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 11:15-17). That event was followed by a manifestation of speaking in tongues. Such acts only occurred, in the Bible record, to people who were already saved.

Now, we have Gentiles, unsaved, receiving salvation, Holy Spirit baptism, and empowered to speak in tongues—but not yet water baptized! Water baptism follows their conversion and related graces. Cornelius, and his household, was not baptized until after salvation had come.

My friend, remember the principle upon which we earlier agreed: Everybody, in this age, gets saved the same way. If one person can be saved apart from water baptism, then can all.

Cornelius and his household did get water baptized (Acts 10:47,48), but it was a baptism of confession (i.e. to that which had already occurred), and not a baptism of salvation (i.e. leading to salvation).²

To illustrate the absurdity of the idea of baptismal regeneration, consider this:³ Picture an airliner, flying at 39,000 feet, on which is a born again Christian, and a lost person, seated side-by-side. Through the witness of the believer the lost person comes under conviction, truly repents, and genuinely receives Christ as Lord and Savior. Through further instruction, the new convert declares his, or her, intention to seek out a good local church, and be baptized. Suddenly, however, a terrorist's bomb explodes, killing all on board. Church of Christ friend, Pentecostal believer, Protestant church member, Roman Catholic devotee—to all of you, can you honestly say that you believe this person who just called upon the Lord to save them, died and went to Hell for the lack of water baptism? That is what your church's doctrine would require.

Please hear the Truth of the Word of God. Water baptism does not save, but rather, is a physical means of testifying to spiritual reality. In the true mode of baptism, immersion, a new believer testifies to his, or her, identification with Jesus Christ, in His death, burial, and resurrection. It is also the means

of entrance into the membership of a local church, just as Holy Spirit baptism places one into the spiritual, unseen Body of Christ

The scriptures declare "...the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). Why, then, would you want to trust in water? It is better to believe the simple gospel message, as found in Acts 10:43—

"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins", and, in John 20:31—

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

Friend, trust in the Lord today, and receive His gift of eternal life, based solely upon what He did for you on Calvary's cross.

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:9,10,13).

It is inward faith that saves the sinner, not outward ritual.

¹ The reader might want to refer to the author's work, entitled [Dispensational Distinctives](#) That Make A Difference, for more insight into this doctrinal position.

² There is, of course, no baptism of salvation taught anywhere in the Bible. The author's study on the subject of baptism, seeks to demonstrate that Acts 2:38, specifically, is not such. Therein is also considered the difference in John's Baptism (which is also that of our Lord, and His disciples), and New Testament Church Baptism.

³ The author well understands, doctrine is not established by illustrations and human reasoning. But illustrations that concur with scripture are windows through which passes much light for understanding.