

Study Sheet: Is Baptism Necessary For Salvation

Section 1: Doctrine of Men

The Requisite Nature of Water Baptism and Its Relationship to Salvation



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Key Arguments & Points

1. The Modern Problem

- **Contemporary Christianity** has mitigated the importance water baptism from a demonstration of faith and trust in God to a **symbolic, “ritualistic” practice**, with little, if any, spiritual impact.
- Modern arguments are "engineered" to **undermine any correlation between baptism and eternal life.**
- Apologists bend Scripture to human reason **rather than submitting to divine will.**
- This results in "staunch opposition" to God's word itself

2. The "Faith Alone" Doctrine Critique

What opponents claim:

- **Salvation is by assent/faith alone with no supplementary actions**
- **Any requirement beyond faith = "works-based salvation"**
- **Adding anything to faith means Christ's death was insufficient**
- Baptism is just an "important step of obedience **after salvation**"

The problem:

- This view has a "suspect foundation" **due to "intense scriptural opposition"**
- **It creates a *false* separation between obedience and faith**
- Key verses:

James 2:17

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

- **Context:** James is confronting a dead, theoretical faith. He argues that true faith inevitably expresses itself in deeds of obedience—otherwise it isn’t living faith at all.
- **Takeaway:** Obedient action is the fruit and evidence of genuine faith, not a rival means of salvation.

Ephesians 2:8–10 (KJV)

“For **by grace are ye saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

- **Context:** Paul clearly states salvation is entirely by God’s grace **through faith**—so our works don’t earn salvation.
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- **Takeaway:** Yet right after affirming “not of works,” he explains that we are created **for good works. Obedient action is thus the divinely ordained outcome of our faith, not a competing pathway.**

Brief Illustration

- **Faith Alone? No**—true faith never remains alone; **it naturally produces obedient deeds** (like Baptism).
- **Works Alone? No**—works apart from faith **have no saving power.**
- **Faith + Works:** A living faith and its obedient actions **are two sides of the same coin:** faith trusts Christ to save, and works display that trust in real life.

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3. The Dichotomy of Salvation

Two perspectives explained:

God's Side (Independent of Man):

- God set the terms by which sin **could be forgiven**
- **Only God could provide atonement** (Romans 8:3, 1 John 2:2)
- Referenced verses: **John 3:16, Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 9:6**

Man's Side (Dependent on Man):

- God set the conditions by which sin **would be forgiven**
- Man must **respond with faith and obedience**
- **God cannot repent for man's sins**
- Referenced verses: **John 3:5, Acts 2:38, Acts 5:30-32**

4. Faith Requires Action

Key principle: Faith is not just cognitive acknowledgment but **must "spur compliant action"**

Required actions include:

- **Repentance** - remorse and rejection of sin (death to sin)
- **Water baptism - cancellation of sins** (Acts 2:38, Romans 6)
- **Obedience** - following God's commands (John 14:15)

Supporting verse: 1 Timothy 4:16 - "for in 'DOING' this thou **shalt both SAVE thyself**, and them that hear thee."

5. Baptism is Not "Man's Work"

Author's clarification:

- Water baptism is a "good work" but NOT a work of man (John 1:33)
- Baptism has no effect except for Christ's death, burial, and resurrection
- Man cannot cover, remit, or forgive his own sin
- Supporting passages: **Romans 6, Acts 19:1-6, Colossians 2:12**

Key Romans 6:3-6 passage: Through Baptism

- Baptized **into Christ's death**
- Buried with Him through baptism into death

- Raised to walk in newness of life
 - Old man crucified with Him
 - Body of sin destroyed (through repentance AND baptism)
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Central Scripture References

Primary Supporting Verses:

- **John 3:5** - Birth of water and Spirit (required)
- **Acts 2:38** - Repent and be baptized for remission of sins (instructive)
- **Romans 6:3-6** - Baptism into Christ's death and resurrection (instructive)
- **John 14:15** - "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (demonstrative)
- **2 Peter 3:9** - God wants all to come to repentance
- **1 Timothy 4:16** - Salvation through doing/continuing in doctrine

Additional References:

- Acts 5:30-32, Acts 22:16, Acts 19:1-6
 - Romans 8:3, Hebrews 10:4, Hebrews 11:6
 - Galatians 3:13, Colossians 2:9, Colossians 2:12
 - 1 John 2:2
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Key Theological Concepts

1. Baptismal Regeneration

- **Definition:** The belief that water baptism is necessary for salvation
- Often used **pejoratively by opponents**
- Bible defends this position as biblically sound

2. Works vs. Faith False Dichotomy

- Bible argues that **obedience is not separate from faith**
- True faith necessarily **includes obedient action**
- **Baptism is God's work through man**, not man's independent work

3. The Governor Analogy

- Salvation compared to a governor pardoning an offender
- One has power to provide pardon (God)
- Other has desire to receive pardon (man)
- Both elements necessary for the transaction

Reflection: Ask Yourself

1. How does the "dichotomy of salvation" help explain the relationship between God's grace and human response?
2. What is the difference between baptism as "man's work" versus baptism as "God's work through man"?
3. How do the passages in Romans 6 connect baptism to Christ's death, burial, and resurrection?
4. Why does the bible argue that faith and obedience cannot be separated?
5. What role does repentance play in the salvation process according to this view?

Conclusion Summary

Final Position:

- Water baptism does NOT diminish Christ's sacrifice
- Baptism is actually a testament to Christ's great sacrifice
- Only Christ's blood **removes the penalty of spiritual death**
- Baptism is a good work, **but attributed to God, not man**
- Baptism has applications **regarding sin and resurrection from sin**
- **Man cannot cover, remit, or forgive his own sin**

Core Message: "God has orchestrated our redemption and we must play the notes of HIS symphony with the instruments HE has provided!"