

Study Sheet: Is Baptism Necessary For Salvation

Section 2: The Biblical Perspective

The Requisite Nature of Water Baptism and Its Relationship to Salvation



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Core Question

Does the Bible offer any connection between water baptism and eternal life?

Key Principles for Biblical Interpretation

Foundation for Understanding

- **Source of Truth:** God's Word and Spirit are our sole source of truth regarding spiritual matters
- **Approach:** Must rely on what the Bible "says" and reasonable interpretation of Scripture
- **Warning:** Should not wrap God's Word around human doctrine or what seems rational to the mind

Biblical Authority

Hebrews 4:12 - "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Key Points about Scripture:

- Examines the heart and identifies man's motives
 - Judges and prescribes remedy for corrupted nature (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
 - Product of single author, superior to human doctrine (2 Peter 1:20-21)
 - True doctrine is found in Bible alone, unfiltered by denominations
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The Problem of Sin and Its Remedy

Human Condition

- Man is aware of darkness within but cannot fully comprehend his sinful impulses
- Cannot remedy corrupt nature through a corrupt nature (Matthew 7:18, Romans 7:18-24)
- Requires assistance from uncorrupt entity with power above sin - only found in God

God's Remedy: Blood

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

Old Testament: Animal blood required for both collective and individual sins (Leviticus 16:8-34, 17:11)

New Testament: Jesus Christ's shed blood provides universal remission through His death on the cross

The Conditional Nature of Salvation

Not Against Man's Will

John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever believeth in him [conditional]** should not perish, but have everlasting life."

2 Peter 3:9 - God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should [ideally and availability] come to repentance." **NO ONE is lost by God's will.**

Key Distinction

- Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection **afforded** the opportunity to acquire forgiveness
 - It did **NOT** automatically wipe or cancel sins of the unrepentant (Acts 2:38)
 - **Requires human response and obedience**
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Water Baptism is Obligatory

1. Direct Command from Jesus Christ

Matthew 28:19-20 - "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe [practice] ALL things whatsoever I have commanded you..."

2. Example of Jesus' Baptism

Matthew 3:13-16 - **Jesus insisted on baptism despite John's resistance**

Key Insights:

- **John resisted** because he understood **Jesus was without sin**
- Jesus replied: "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh US to fulfil all righteousness"
- **Jesus submitted as our example**, like a dance instructor demonstrating steps
- **Critical Logic:** If Jesus (who had no sin) was baptized, how can any person (who needs both repentance and forgiveness) reasonably deny baptism's role?

3. Biblical Parallel: Circumcision in Old Testament

- Just as circumcision was required under Old Covenant
 - God enforced circumcision strictly (Exodus 4:24-26 with Moses)
 - Both baptism and circumcision (in the Old Testament) are commanded by God
 - Both signify entrance into covenantal life
 - Neglecting either (at the time of their instruction) overlooks clear divine requirement
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Supporting Scripture References

Baptism and Sin

- **Acts 2:38** - Peter ties baptism **directly to forgiveness of sins**
- **Acts 22:16** - Baptism washes away sin

- **Romans 6:3-5** - Baptism as **burial** with Christ **and resurrection** to new life

Baptism's Function

- Has application in terms of sin
 - Not merely symbolic or ceremonial
 - Required step in believer's journey
 - Part of path to eternal life (no eternal life without forgiveness of sins)
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Study Questions for Reflection

1. What is the primary source of truth for understanding spiritual matters according to this study?
 2. How does the author argue that human doctrine differs from biblical doctrine?
 3. What role does blood play in the remediation of sin, both in Old and New Testaments?
 4. Explain the "conditional" nature of salvation as presented in John 3:16.
 5. What are the two main arguments for why water baptism is obligatory?
 6. How does Jesus' baptism serve as an example for believers?
 7. What parallel does the author draw between New Testament baptism and Old Testament circumcision?
 8. According to the study, what is the relationship between baptism and the forgiveness of sins?
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Key Theological Position

Main Argument: Water baptism is not merely symbolic but is necessary for salvation because:

- It is directly commanded by Jesus Christ
- It follows the example set by Jesus himself
- Scripture consistently connects it to forgiveness of sins
- It represents obedience to God's will, not optional ceremony
- Neglecting it contradicts clear biblical requirements

Central Verse: Acts 2:38 - Baptism is tied directly to the forgiveness of sins

Further Study References

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (Scripture's purpose)
- 2 Peter 1:20-21 (Scripture's origin)

- 1 John 2:27 (Spirit's leading)
- 1 Corinthians 2:9-14 (Spiritual discernment)
- Romans 6 (Baptism's meaning)
- Luke 7:30 (Baptism as God's will)