

Study Sheet: Is Baptism Necessary For Salvation

Section 3: The Obligatory Nature of Baptism

The Requisite Nature of Water Baptism and Its Relationship to Salvation



(c) 2021-2025 Kenneth Long - The John 3:5 Project. All rights reserved.

www.j35project.com

Overview

This study examines **the biblical necessity of water baptism for salvation**, presenting arguments against the "faith alone" doctrine and affirming baptism as an essential component of the salvation process.

Key Scripture References

Primary Passages on Baptism and Salvation

Acts 2:38

"Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, 'AND' be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ 'FOR' the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**"

Romans 8:9

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, 'IF' so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you [literally]. **Now if any man have NOT the Spirit of Christ, he is NONE of his.**"

Acts 22:16

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and **be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord** (The "name" of the Lord is "Jesus" - Acts 7:59)"

John 14:15

"**If you love me**, you will keep my commandments."

Acts 5:32

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God **hath 'given to'** them that obey him."

Ephesians 2:8-9

"For by grace are ye saved **through faith** (cognition AND action); and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Main Arguments Presented

1. The Apostle Peter's Explicit Command (Acts 2:38)

- Peter's response to the Day of Pentecost crowd follows Jesus' directive from Matthew 28:19-20
- The crowd asked "what shall we DO?" - **indicating action was required**
- Peter commanded **both repentance AND baptism "for" remission of sins**
- Both **actions** are presented as **prerequisites for receiving the Holy Spirit**

2. The Role of the Holy Spirit in Salvation

- Salvation is realized ONLY through the new birth (infilling of the Holy Spirit)
- Romans 8:9 states that without the Spirit of Christ, one is "NONE of his (no new birth has taken place, no salvation.)"
- The Holy Spirit is God's seal of ownership (Ephesians 1:13)
- Receiving the Holy Spirit is predicated on BOTH repentance and water baptism

3. Ananias's Command to Paul (Acts 22:16)

- Ananias commanded Paul to "be baptized, and wash away thy sins"
- This demonstrates the **"functional purpose" of water baptism in relation to sin**
- Water baptism is identified as the means of removing sin

Theological Framework

The Dichotomy of Salvation

Salvation has two complementary aspects:

1. **God's Part:** Architect of redemption, provision of atonement, enabling grace
2. **Human Part:** Acceptance, submission, deliberate action in response to God's will

Faith vs. Action Relationship

- Biblical faith must "flower into action"
- Faith is NOT exclusive of what we "DO"
- **Actions are the authentication of belief and trust in God**
- Faith acts through: repentance (an act) and water baptism (an act)

Key Principles:

- **Repentance:** Turning from sin (death to sin - Galatians 5:24)
- **Water Baptism: Burial to sin and resurrection** from sin (Romans 6:1-9)
- **Both:** Implementations of faith (John 14:15, James 2:26)

Study Questions for Reflection

1. **Scripture Analysis:** How do Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16 specifically connect baptism to the remission/washing away of sins?
2. **Faith and Works:** How does the author reconcile Ephesians 2:8-9 (salvation by grace through faith, not works) with the requirement for baptism?
3. **Role of the Holy Spirit:** According to Romans 8:9, what is the absolute requirement for being considered Christ's? How does this relate to baptism?
4. **Biblical Obedience:** What does Acts 5:32 suggest about the relationship between obedience and receiving the Holy Spirit?
5. **Faith in Action:** How does John 14:15 ("If you love me, you will keep my commandments") support the argument that faith requires action?

Key Terms and Concepts

- **New Birth:** The literal infilling of the Holy Spirit
- **Remission of Sins:** The washing away or removal of sin through baptism
- **Biblical Faith:** Faith that manifests through obedient action
- **Servile Compliance:** Submissive obedience to God's commands
- **Divine Prerogative:** God's sovereign right to determine the means and method of salvation
- **Acquiescence:** Agreement or submission to God's requirements
- **Allocution:** A statement of remorse seeking forgiveness from the judge (Christ)

Arguments Against "Faith Alone" Doctrine

1. **Peter's Command:** Acts 2:38 explicitly requires both repentance AND baptism
2. **Paul's Experience:** Acts 22:16 shows even Paul needed to be baptized to "wash away sins"
3. **Obedience Requirement:** Acts 5:32 states God gives the Holy Spirit to "them that obey him"
4. **Love Through Obedience:** John 14:15 connects love for Christ with keeping His commandments

Critical Points for Further Study

Areas of Emphasis:

- The relationship between grace and human response
- The role of water baptism in the remission of sins
- The necessity of the Holy Spirit for salvation
- The connection between faith, love, and obedience
- The distinction between God's provision and human acceptance

Supporting References to Explore:

- Matthew 28:19-20 (The Great Commission)
- Romans 6:1-9 (Baptism as death and resurrection)
- Galatians 5:24 (Death to sin)
- James 2:26 (Faith without works is dead)
- 1 John 1:9 (Confession and forgiveness)
- 2 Corinthians 7:10 (Godly sorrow and repentance)

Summary

- Salvation is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- **Biblical faith requires obedient action**
- Both repentance and water baptism are essential for salvation
- The Holy Spirit is the seal of salvation and is given to those who obey
- Water baptism serves the functional purpose of washing away sins
- Faith alone without corresponding action is insufficient for salvation

This position rejects the "faith alone" doctrine by asserting that while salvation is entirely God's work, it requires human response through specific acts of obedience, including water baptism.