

Study Sheet: Is Baptism Necessary For Salvation

Section 4: The Obligatory Nature of Baptism

The Requisite Nature of Water Baptism and Its Relationship to Salvation



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Jesus Christ has provided all that we need to be reconciled to him through:

- **Atonement** to remove the penalty of sin (1 John 2:2)
- **Baptism** to remove personal sin (Romans 6:1-9, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16)
- **The Holy Spirit** for guidance and holiness (John 14:26)
- **Prayer, fasting, and Scripture for spiritual growth**

God's one requirement: **FAITH** (Hebrews 11:6)

The Nature of Biblical Faith

Faith is **NOT**:

- Simply cognitive acknowledgment of God

- Recitation and assertion of an affirmative state alone
- A "state of mind" without action

Faith IS:

- **Expression of God's characteristics through our actions**
- **Trust that activates God's power** (Matthew 13:54-58)
- **An impulsive response to God's will**
- **Testimony to "belief" that God exists, sees, hears, and responds**

Key Principle: *"The things that we 'do' are the expression of what we think and what we believe in our hearts."*

The Elements of Faith: Evidence → Belief → Action

1. Evidence

- **Definition:** The basis of all belief; the "fuel" that powers belief
- **Source:** God makes himself or his will known (Romans 1:20)
- **Key Verse:** *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen... so that they are without excuse"* (Romans 1:20)

2. Belief

- **Definition: The byproduct of evidence;** it is the acceptance that something is true or at minimum, "perceived" to be true.
- **Important:** Belief doesn't necessarily reflect truth, but reflects the perceived basis that something is true

3. Action

- **Definition: The manifestation of belief; authenticates trust**
 - **Biblical Basis:** *"If you love me, KEEP my commandments"* (John 14:15)
 - **Key Principle:** What we "do" authenticates what we believe
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The Availability-Acquisition Model of Salvation

Two Aspects of Salvation:

1. Availability (God's Work)

- God is architect of salvation (John 3:16)
- Provided by divine grace - unmerited favor

2. Acquisition (Man's Response)

- Man as beneficiary (Acts 2:38)
 - Requires faith-based action
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Ephesians 2:8-9 Breakdown – Basis for Availability / Acquisition

"For it is by grace you have been saved"

- **Grace = unmerited favor**
- God's choice to give man a second chance despite rebellion

"Through faith"

- Salvation comes THROUGH faith
- Faith is the "**active**" manifestation of belief in God
- Faith = **cognitive acknowledgment AND physical response**
- "*Faith without works is dead*" (James 2:26)

"And this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God"

- The chance at restored relationship is **purely divine prerogative**
- Must be "accepted" **through demonstrated action, not cognition alone**

"Not by works, so that no one can boast"

- No human actions could serve as reparations or atonement to God
 - However, eternal life **is not imparted by default**
 - Must operate within **God's salvation framework** through faith
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The Case of Cornelius (Acts 10-11)

Cornelius's Journey:

1. **Had belief in God** - so much that God sent an angel
2. **Acted on God's instruction** - followed the angel's directions
3. **Was still incomplete** - **despite belief and sincerity**
4. **Received gospel instruction from Peter** - learned what "he must do"
5. **Two required actions:** REPENT and BE BAPTIZED IN WATER
6. **Received:** Forgiveness through water baptism + new birth through Holy Spirit

Key Insight:

- Cornelius received new birth FIRST, then water baptism
 - **Order is irrelevant** - both are necessary
 - God filled Cornelius because He knew Cornelius would submit to the edict for water baptism (Matthew 28:19-20)
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Essential Biblical Passages

On Faith and Pleasing God:

- **Hebrews 11:6:** *"Without faith it is impossible to please him"*
- **Hebrews 11:6:** *"He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"*

On Unity in the Spirit:

- **1 Corinthians 12:13:** *"For by **one** Spirit are we all baptized into **one** body"*

On Actions Reflecting Heart:

- **Matthew 15:8:** *"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth... but their heart is far from me"*
- **John 15:13:** *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"*

On Obedience and the Holy Spirit:

- **Acts 5:32:** *"The Holy Ghost, whom God **hath given to them that obey him**"*

On New Birth:

- **Acts 11:18:** *"Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" Proof that receiving Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues IS the new birth and proof of God's seal.*
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Key Conclusions

1. **Faith is essential** but must be expressed through action
2. **Repentance and water baptism are not "works of man"** but expressions of faith
3. **Neither repentance nor water baptism are separate from faith** - they ARE faith in action
4. **Both water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism are necessary** for complete salvation

5. **Belief alone is insufficient** - even **demons** believe (implied from James 2:19)
 6. **God provides the path, man must walk it** through faith-based obedience
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Reelection Questions

1. How does the "Evidence → Belief → Action" model apply to your personal faith journey?
 2. What is the difference between intellectual acknowledgment of God and biblical faith?
 3. How does Cornelius's experience demonstrate that sincere belief alone is not sufficient for salvation?
 4. Why is water baptism not a "work" but an expression of faith?
 5. How does the "Availability-Acquisition" model help explain the relationship between God's grace and human response?
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Practical Applications

- **Examine your faith:** Is it merely intellectual or does it manifest in obedient action?
 - **Consider baptism:** If unbaptized, is this an expression of faith you need to pursue?
 - **Evaluate obedience:** How do your actions authenticate your stated beliefs?
 - **Seek the Holy Spirit:** Have you received the new birth experience?
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"Faith is as vital to a relationship with God as the new birth itself. However, the bible does not treat repentance or water baptism as a work of man for salvation; neither does the bible treat repentance or water baptism as something apart from faith... they are in fact the very essence of faith, belief, and trust in God."