

## FAITH, BAPTISM, AND SALVATION

### INTRO.

A. How many times have you been speaking to someone about the importance of water baptism as an essential part of God's plan of salvation and he counters by directing your attention to Bible verses that talk about faith?

1. This is done in an effort to demonstrate that "all you need to do is believe" and that water baptism is not necessary for salvation.
2. Some might even say, "For every verse that you give me on baptism, I can give you ten on faith."
  - a. There are actually a lot more verses in the Bible that talk about faith or believing than those that explicitly mention baptism.

#### New American Standard

baptism – 20	faith – 246
baptize – 9	believe – 126
baptizes – 1	believes – 29
baptized – 51	believed – 73
	believer – 4
	believers – 8
	believing – 13

b. Additionally, there are five different elements of baptism mentioned in the New Testament (the cloud and the sea (1 Cor. 10:1,2), suffering (Mk. 10:38,39; Lk. 12:50), fire (Matt. 3:11), the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11), and water (Matt. 3:5; Jn. 3:23; Acts 8:36-38)). So, every time that you read about baptism it's not talking about water baptism.

c. In my conversations with people about this subject, some seem to be unconcerned about the need to interpret the Scriptures in such a way that apparent contradictions are harmonized with one another. Instead of this, it's almost as if verses on faith are used like trump cards in a bridge game. "You've got your verses on water baptism, and I've got mine on faith. My verses on faith trump all those about baptism that you can put on the table," seems to be the attitude.

B. Some go to great lengths to reject water baptism as a necessary part of God's plan of salvation. For instance, someone once told me that the New Testament actually contains "two gospels." He said that Peter preached "the gospel of the kingdom" and that a necessary part of that gospel was baptism for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). He then said that Paul preached "the gospel of the grace of God" and that we live under this gospel today. The logical result of this teaching is that water baptism for the forgiveness of sins is not necessary!

1. It might have been a good idea to remind him about what Paul said in Gal. 1:8,9. (If Peter was preaching something different from Paul's gospel, where does that leave Peter?)
2. Actually, the book of Acts talks about one of the apostles preaching "the gospel of the kingdom"... and it wasn't Peter. It was Paul! (Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:23)
3. This is just one of many examples of how some will come up with all kinds of arguments in order to reject the idea that water baptism is necessary for the forgiveness of sins.

C. How is it possible to **HARMONIZE** the verses in the Bible that talk about the necessity of faith for salvation (Jn. 3:16; 6:47; etc) and those that speak of water baptism as a requirement for salvation (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-39; 10:47,48; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:20,21)?

## I. INTEGRATE, DON'T SEPARATE

A. The word “integrate” means to “make part of a larger unit.” It is when we “make [something] into a whole by bringing all parts together,” thus unifying them (thefreedictionary.com).

B. Many speak of faith and baptism as if they were diametrically opposed.

1. For instance, show Acts 2:38 to someone who believes in salvation by faith alone, and he will almost invariably take you to John 3:16 (“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”) In his mind, Jn. 3:16 rules out the need for water baptism in order to be saved, even though Acts 2:38 clearly says that it is necessary “for the forgiveness of your sins.” (How can one be saved unless he is first “forgiven”?)

2. By pitting Jn. 3:16; 6:47; Eph. 2:8,9; Tit. 3:5; etc. against Acts 2:38, the logical consequence is that the Bible contradicts itself! Here’s how the argument usually goes:

a. One fellow says, “Jesus told His apostles shortly before ascending to heaven, ‘He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved...’” (Mk. 16:16). The other fellow responds, “But in John 3:16 the Lord says that ‘all you have to do is believe.’”

b. One fellow says, “Ananias told Paul to ‘get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins’” (Acts 22:16, a clear reference to water baptism). The other fellow responds, “But John 6:47 says ‘all you have to do is believe.’”

C. In contrast, the faithful Bible student must learn to interpret and apply the Scriptures in such a way that apparent contradictions are **HARMONIZED**.

1. One so-called “Bible contradiction” that stands out in my mind is that of Judas Iscariot’s untimely death. A Rutgers University student was actually so skeptical about this that he wrote an article in the Daily Targum. He said that Matt. 27:5 indicates that Judas “hanged himself,” whereas Acts 1:18 says that “falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out.”

a. The skeptic demands, “Which is it? Did he hang himself or did he fall headlong and burst open in the middle?”

b. I’d like to ask him couple of questions of my own: *Why can’t it be both? Why is it too difficult for you to **INTEGRATE** the two concepts?* This is very easy to do if we realize that the rope or branch may have broken before or as he died. Hanging himself from a high place might also explain how he “burst open in the middle.”

2. Likewise, instead of creating an artificial dichotomy between faith, baptism, and salvation, the serious Bible student strives to **UNIFY** these concepts. He strives to integrate the different scriptures that talk about salvation, not pit one verse against another.

D. In this lesson, we will see how faith and baptism **WORK TOGETHER** to bring about salvation.

## II. SALVATION REQUIRES OBEDIENCE

A. **Rom. 1:5; 16:26** – The gospel of Christ “has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith.”

1. God wants “all nations” (NKJV) to obey the conditions that He has established so that they may be saved, and not simply believe in Jesus as one’s Lord and Savior.

2. Speaking of “all nations,” shortly before ascending to heaven, Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...” (Matt. 28:19). Jesus mentioned baptism as one of the conditions by which “all the nations” would be led to obedience of faith.

3. In agreement with this, Acts 6:7 tells us that “...a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.” What exactly were they doing? If we take into account Acts 2:37,38, and 41, they were believing, repenting, and being immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins, just like the rest of those were led to obedience of faith.

B. **Rom. 6:17,18** – Some people in Rome were “freed from sin” when they were “obedient from the heart” to a “form of teaching.” What is this “teaching”? The preceding context has the answer. They were baptized! (Rom. 6:3-7)

1. The apostle Paul says that upon submitting to this baptism the “body of sin” is “done away with” (Rom. 6:6).

2. In agreement with this, Peter **COMMANDED** those on the day of Pentecost to be baptized in water “for forgiveness of sins” (Acts 2:38). This is the true scriptural purpose of baptism. It is NOT for a “public testimony” that one is already saved or “an outward sign of an inward grace,” as many affirm. It is “for forgiveness of sins”!

3. Peter **COMMANDED** Cornelius and those of his household to be baptized in water (Acts 10:47,48).

4. Ananias **COMMANDED** Paul to “Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins...” (Acts 22:16).

5. This is not talking about Holy Spirit baptism, because the baptism in Rom. 6 is something to which they “became obedient” (NASB). In other words, by being baptized, they obeyed a **COMMAND**. In contrast, the **Holy Spirit baptism is never commanded anywhere in the New Testament**. It was a **PROMISE** made to the apostles! (More on this below.)

C. **1 Pet. 1:22,23** – “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.”

1. Peter says that one is “born again” when he humbly submits in “obedience to the truth.”

2. Peter witnessed this very thing on the day of Pentecost when about three thousand people submitted to the command “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38,41). It was at this very moment that they were “born again.” (More on this below.)

D. **Heb. 5:9** – Is it any wonder that Jesus is the “the author of eternal salvation to all who OBEY Him”? (NKJV)

E. **Jas. 2:19** – The demons have “faith,” but are not saved (Jas. 2:19)! They “believe,” but do not have eternal life! They know that Jesus is the Son of God (Matt. 8:29; Mk. 1:34; 5:7) but are lost! Why? Because they don’t obey.

1. This is undeniable proof that “believing” in God is more than mentally accepting Him or His Son.

2. What really matters in our service to God is “faith working through love” (Gal. 5:6). Faith “works.” It is not simply a mental state in which one “accepts Jesus as his personal Lord and Savior.”

3. **Gal. 3:26,27** – One becomes a child of God “through faith in Christ Jesus” when his faith compels him to obey the Lord in baptism. It is true that one is “justified by faith” (Gal.

3:24), but the faith that saves is not “faith alone.” Instead of this, it is an obedient and active faith that obeys what the Lord has commanded (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38).

4. The only time that we find the words “faith alone” in the entire New American Standard Bible it specifically says that “a man is justified by works and **NOT BY FAITH ALONE**” (Jas. 2:24).

5. One of the reasons that some will pit verses on faith against those that talk about baptism is that every time they see the word “faith,” they see “faith alone.” Every time they see “believe” they see “only believe.” **But faith and faith alone are two very different things!**

F. Many will cite Eph. 2:8,9 (“by grace you have been saved through faith ... not by works...”) and Tit. 3:5 (“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us...””) to rule out the necessity of water baptism. It is argued that since baptism is a “work,” and Paul includes water baptism in the phrase “not by works,” then baptism is not necessary for salvation.

1. There are several problems with this interpretation:

a. It contradicts both Jesus and Peter’s teaching on baptism. Again, Jesus said, “He who has believed AND has been baptized shall be saved...” (Mk. 16:16) and Peter clearly says that baptism is necessary “for the forgiveness of sins” (i.e., salvation).

b. Paul, the writer of Ephesians and Titus, contradicts his own conversion experience. The Lord told him to go to Damascus because there, He said, “...it will be told you WHAT YOU MUST DO” (Acts 9:6). Three days later, Ananias told Paul to “Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins” (Acts 22:16).

c. In John 6:29, Jesus clearly says that faith is a “work.”

i. Many show their prejudice by using Eph. 2:8,9 and Tit. 3:5 to rule out the necessity of water baptism for salvation, affirming that it is a “work,” but they are unwilling to apply the same standard to faith.

ii. The New Testament refers to three different kinds of works:

(1) Works of human merit which cannot save (Eph. 2:8, 9. Tit. 3:5). Man’s salvation is not by any “good works” that he has devised apart from the sacrifice of Christ. For instance, a man says that he’s going to “earn his salvation” by giving 20% of all that he has to the poor. This will not save him!

(2) Works of the Old Law (or the Law of Moses) by which man could not be justified (Acts 13:39; Gal. 2:16).

(3) “Works of God” (works that God has COMMANDED man) without which no one can be justified (Jn. 6:29; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 17:30).

d. To say that faith, repentance, confession, and baptism are necessary in order for one to receive the free gift of salvation does not invalidate the grace of God because Christ, not man, continues to be THE MEANS of God’s grace (Rom. 3:24). He who believes and is baptized, as Jesus commanded, does not exclude the grace of God, but rather depends entirely on it!

2. The kind of works that Paul has in mind when he says “not by works” in Eph. 2 and Titus 3 are works that we have devised in order to bring about our salvation apart from the sacrifice of Christ. **Belief, repentance, confession, and baptism are not works that man has devised. These works are commanded by God!**

3. The washing of regeneration in Tit. 3 is obviously water baptism. This agrees with Jn. 3:3-5; and 1 Pet. 3:21.

- a. One is born of the Spirit when the “seed” (Greek, SPERMA) or word of the Holy Spirit is planted in his heart (1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:22,23). The Holy Spirit plants His “seed” in our hearts, just as the male plants his “seed” in the woman to bring about new life.
- b. In the physical sense, the next step is to be “born of water.” A woman’s water breaks and shortly thereafter new life emerges from the womb. Likewise, only AFTER ONE HAS BEEN BURIED WITH CHRIST IN BAPTISM can it be said that he is “born again” and walks in “newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).
- c. It takes both the “renewing of the Holy Spirit” (when the seed of the word planted in one’s heart and accepted in faith) and the “washing of regeneration” (baptism) to bring about this new birth.

G. How do we know that the aforementioned verses like Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-7,17,18, etc. are talking about water baptism? As was pointed out in a recent lesson, Holy Spirit baptism was a PROMISE (Acts 1:45), while water baptism was a COMMAND (Acts 10:47,48).

1. **Again, God wishes to lead “all nations” to “OBEDIENCE of faith” (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). The true gospel teaches that Jesus died for us and that it is necessary to OBEY His conditions in order to be saved, one of which is baptism in water “for the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 2:38). This is the “one baptism” that is COMMANDED today (Eph.4:5). You MUST obey a COMMAND (water baptism); you cannot obey a PROMISE (Holy Spirit baptism), much less something that was promised only to the apostles (Jn. 14:26; 16:13; Acts 1:2,4,5,8).**
2. Water baptism is something one must actively “DO.” He must arise and go to water (Acts 2:36; 9:6,18; 22:16).
3. Holy Spirit baptism required one to “sit” (Acts 2:2) and “wait” (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4).

### III. THE BIBLE SOMETIMES REFERS TO A PART TO REPRESENT THE WHOLE

A. This is known as a “synecdoche.” A synecdoche is “a figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole...” (thefreedictionary.com).

1. For instance, 1 Thess. 5:23 talks about the three-fold nature of man. His whole being consists of “spirit and soul and body;” however, the Holy Spirit does not always use all three words to refer to man’s whole being. Sometimes just one of these words is used to **INCLUDE** the other facets of man’s nature without mentioning them explicitly.
  - a. This truth is exemplified by the use of the word “soul” in the Scriptures (Gen. 17:14; Ezek. 18:4,20; Acts. 2:41, 43). It is evident by these verses that the word “soul” (a part) is used to refer to man’s entire being (spirit, soul, and body).
  - b. Therefore, we can conclude that the word “soul” is sometimes used to **INCLUDE** the other facets of man’s nature, even though they are not mentioned explicitly.
2. Sometimes the word “flesh” (a part) is used to refer to the whole person.
  - a. “...In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?” (Psa. 56:4, NKJV).
  - b. Other versions use the word “man” instead of “flesh.” (The Greek word used in this verse literally means “flesh.”) David is not referring only to a person’s physical body, but rather to the whole man.
3. A modern example of using a part for the whole can be seen in the expression “the tickets cost \$70.00 a head.” In this case, a part (the head) is used to represent the whole (an entire person).

B. Sometimes, one act of obedience (a part) **INCLUDES** other acts of obedience (the whole), as we will see in the next point.

**IV. ONE ACT OF OBEDIENCE (A PART) IS USED TO REPRESENT COMPLETE OBEDIENCE (THE WHOLE)**

**A. "Calling on the name of the Lord" – (two examples)**

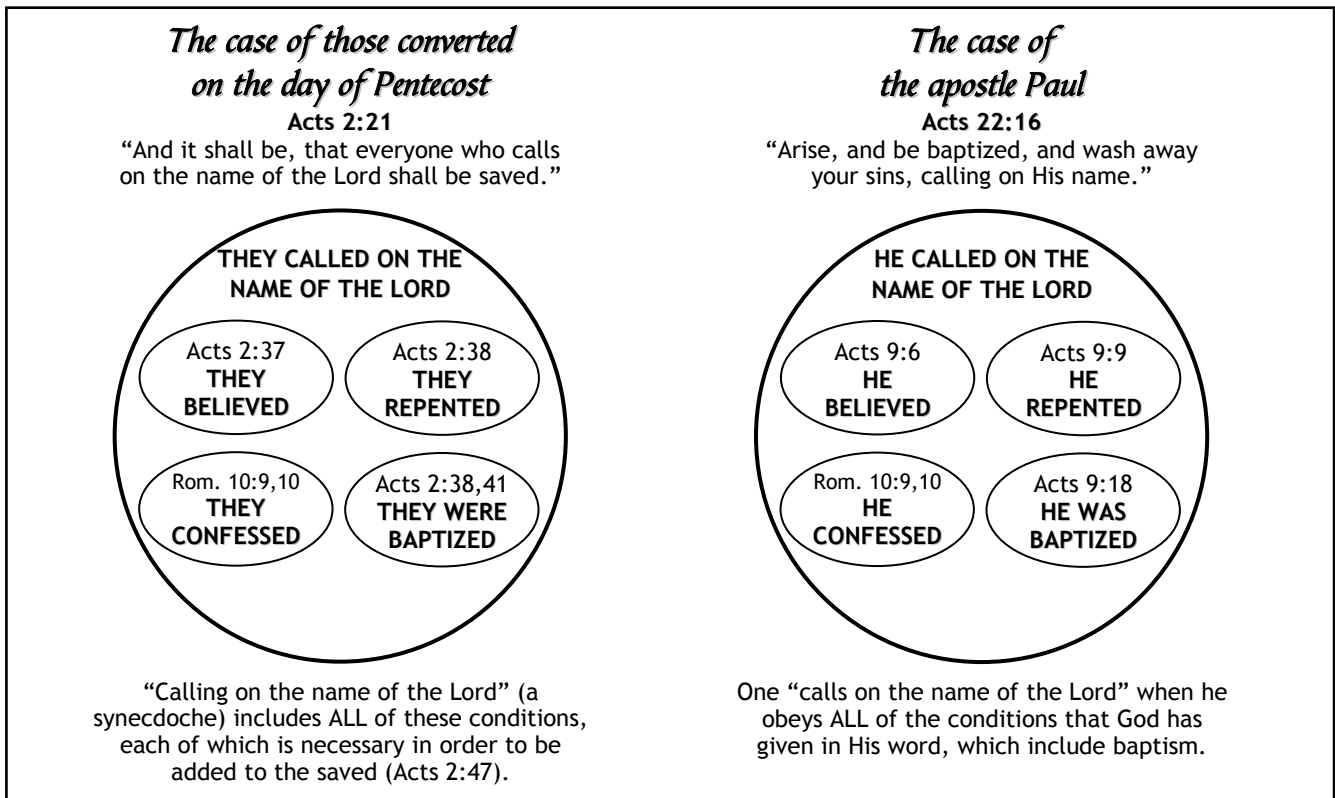
1. Those on the day of Pentecost – "And it shall be, that everyone who **calls on the name of the Lord** shall be saved" (Acts 2:21, NASB). An examination of the verses that follow clearly shows that the words "call on" are used to INCLUDE other things. How did the "about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41) "call on the name of the Lord"?

- a. They believed (2:37).
- b. They repented (2:38).
- c. They were baptized for the forgiveness of sins (2:38,41).
- d. As a result, they were "saved" (2:47).

e. Calling on the name of the Lord entails a lot more than simply saying, "I believe in you Jesus!" It is not simply "accepting Jesus in your heart as your Lord and Savior."

2. The apostle Paul – "And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, **calling on His name**" (Acts 22:16, NASB). How did the apostle Paul "call on" the name of the Lord?

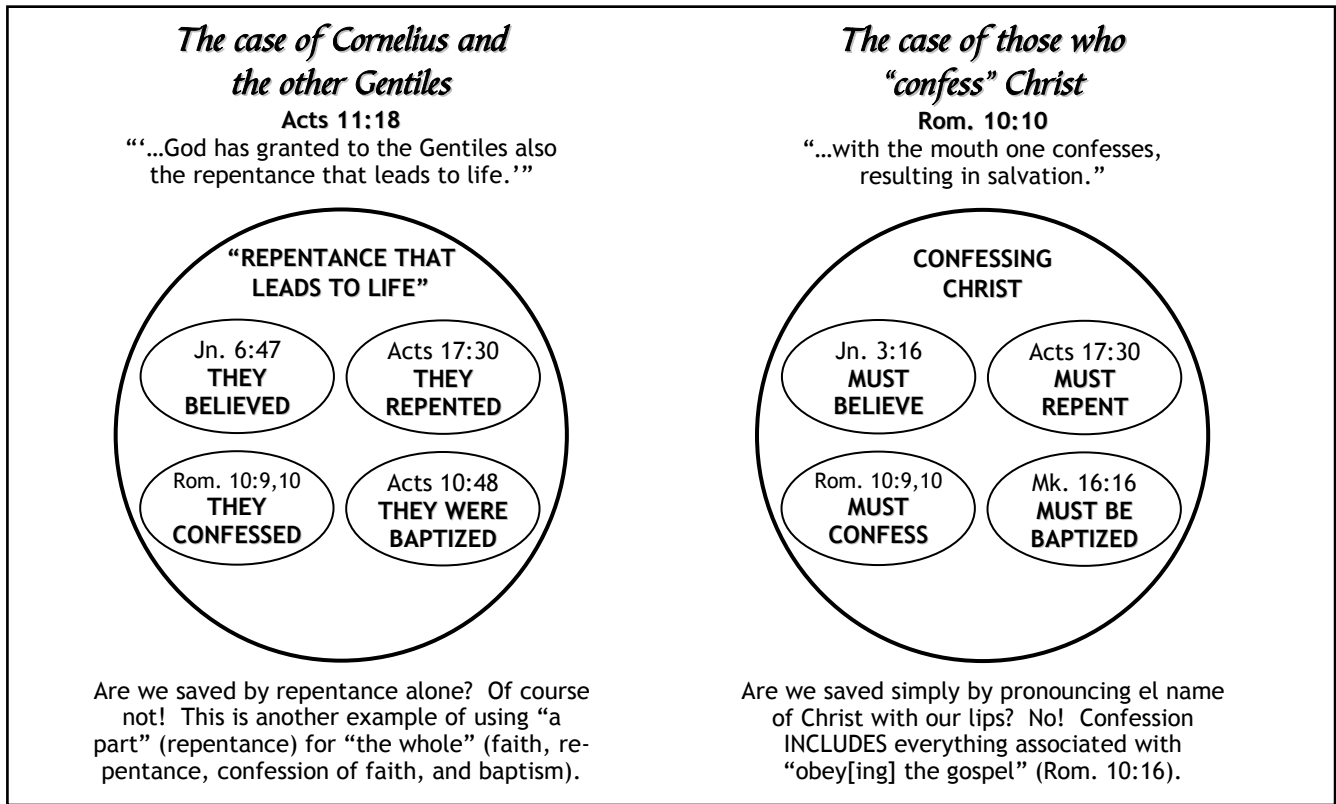
- a. He believed (9:6).
- b. He was in a state of repentance (9:9; his godly sorrow produced a change of mind).
- c. He was baptized to wash away his sins (9:18; 22:16). Acts 22:16 shows that, without a shadow of a doubt, "calling on the name of the Lord" includes baptism... because this is exactly what Ananias said!
- d. Again, "calling on His name" ENCOMPASSES OTHER THINGS. It is not simply pronouncing the name of God or Christ with one's lips.





B. **“Repentance that leads to life”** – “And when they heard this, they quieted down, and glorified God, saying, ‘Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the **repentance that leads to life**’” (Acts 11:18, NASB).

1. In the most basic sense, repentance is a “change of mind.”
2. Were the Gentiles saved by “repentance only”? No! This does not mean that all we have to do to be saved is change our minds with respect to sin or that faith is not necessary.
3. This is just another example in which a part (repentance) is used for the whole (faith, repentance, confession, and baptism).



C. **“Confession ... resulting in salvation”** – “for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and **with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.**” (Rom. 10:10, NASB).

1. Are we saved by simply pronouncing the name of Christ with our lips? No!
2. Here confession **INCLUDES** obedience to the gospel (belief, repentance, baptism). The fact that the phrase “But they have not all obeyed the gospel” (Rom. 10:16, NKJV) is contrasted with belief and confession in this chapter indicates that the Holy Spirit was using these things to encompass obedience to God’s entire plan of salvation.

D. **Baptism** – “Corresponding to that, **baptism now saves you**--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21, NASB).

1. Are we saved by baptism alone? Absolutely not!
2. This is just another example in which a part (baptism) is used for the whole (faith, repentance, confession, and baptism).
3. The words “not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience” are a parenthetical statement. The main thrust of this verse is that “baptism now saves you ... through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”!

- a. The fact that water baptism is essential in order for one to receive God's free gift of salvation does not invalidate the grace of God because Christ continues to be THE MEANS of God's grace (Rom. 3:24). **Baptism saves "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."**
- b. There is no miraculous power in the water itself. Rather God sees the obedient faith of the one who voluntarily submits to His will in baptism and applies the saving blood of Christ to that individual. In baptism, one is "united together [with Christ] in the likeness of His death" (Rom. 6:5). It is in this union with Christ that he receives forgiveness!

#### V. BELIEF IS USED TO REPRESENT OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WHOLE PLAN OF SALVATION (INCLUDING WATER BAPTISM)

A. Again, how many times have we been studying with people about the need to be baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins and they take us to passages which, according to them, teach that all you have to do is "believe" and God will save you? (They cite John 3:16; 6:47; Acts. 16:31; etc., etc.)

1. What's the problem? Their concept of the words "believe" or "believes" is far too limited. Instead of recognizing the synecdochical use of these words in the Scriptures to encompass obedience to God's entire plan of salvation, every time they see "believe" they're actually thinking "believe ONLY."

2. We should not be so naive as to think that the command "believe" simply means that we are to mentally accept that Jesus is Lord and Savior. Remember, Satan and his demons "believe," but they're lost because they don't obey! (Jas. 2:19)

B. In the New Testament we will see how the word belief (and its various forms) is used to INCLUDE other steps of the plan of salvation which are internally associated with it. Let's look at a few examples:

1. **On the day of Pentecost** – "And all **THOSE WHO HAD BELIEVED** were together, and had all things in common" (Acts 2:44, NASB). In this example, we see that a part (belief) is used for the whole. What does the Holy Spirit mean when He says that they "had believed"?

- a. That they had faith (2:37).

- b. That they had repented (2:38).

- c. That they had been **BAPTIZED** "for the forgiveness of sins"(2:38,41).

- d. Baptism and repentance, although not mentioned explicitly in Acts 2:44, are mentioned **IMPLICITLY**. Baptism is **INCLUDED** in belief.

2. **The Samaritans** – "But **WHEN THEY BELIEVED** Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, **THEY WERE BEING BAPTIZED**, men and women alike." (Acts 8:12, NASB). This is another example in which a part (belief) is used for the whole. Again, baptism is **INCLUDED** in belief.

3. **The Philippian jailer and his whole household** – "And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, **HAVING BELIEVED** in God with his whole household" (Acts 16:34, NASB). What exactly did they do so that the Holy Spirit could say that they "believed"?

- a. The preceding verse says that they were **BAPTIZED** (vs. 33)! Baptism is included as a part of true, saving belief.

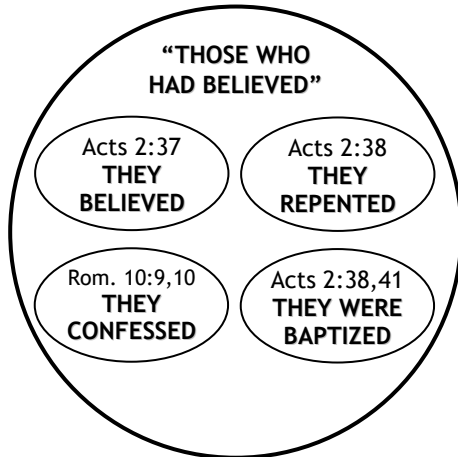
- b. Remember: when many see the words "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31, NKJV) they're actually thinking that it says "believe **ONLY** on the Lord ... and you will be saved". However, "only" is not in the text!



*The case of those converted on the day of Pentecost*

Acts 2:44

“And all those who had believed were together...”

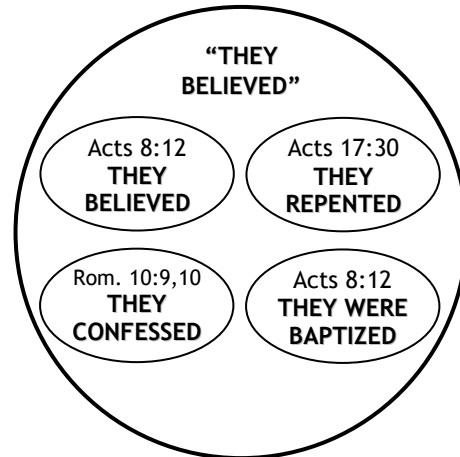


Belief in this case includes ALL of these conditions and is another example of using “a part” (belief) for “the whole” (faith, repentance, confession, and baptism).

*The case of the Samaritans*

Acts 8:12

“But when they believed ... they were being baptized, men and women alike.”



True faith includes ALL that God has commanded in order that man may be saved.

*The case of the Philippian Jailer and “his household”*

Acts 16:34

“...he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.”

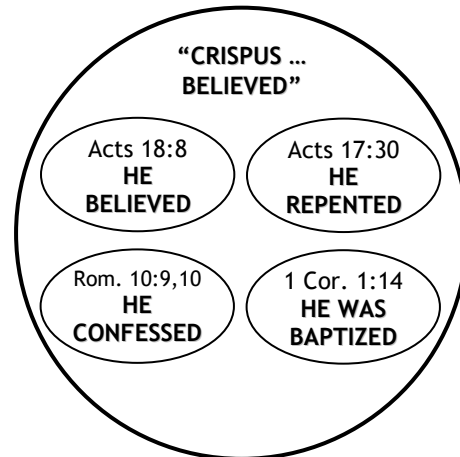


CAREFUL! In Acts 16:31, Paul and Silas said: “BELIEVE on the Lord ... and you will be saved,” not “believe ONLY...” Belief INCLUDES these conditions; the faith that saves obeys!

*The case of Crispus the leader of the synagogue*

Acts 18:8

“And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord...”



It’s very interesting to note that Acts 18:8 says only that Crispus “believed.” But this act of obedience INCLUDED BAPTISM! (1 Cor. 1:14) He wasn’t saved by “faith alone”!

4. **Crispus** – “And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, **BELIEVED** in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being

baptized” (Acts 18:8, NASB).

a. But somebody says, “You see! It says that the Corinthians were baptized but it doesn’t say anything about Crispus being baptized!”

b. Actually, it does say that he was baptized in Acts 18:8 because the word “believed” IMPLIES AND INCLUDES baptism. As proof of this fact, in 1 Cor. 1:14 we see that Crispus **HAD BEEN BAPTIZED** by the apostle Paul himself.

5. **The publicans and harlots** – In Matt. 21:32, Jesus talks about how some responded to the preaching of John the Baptist. In this verse, the Lord says that “the publicans and the harlots **BELIEVED HIM**” (Matt. 21:32). A careful examination of this verse in conjunction with Luke 7:29,30 reveals that their belief **INCLUDED REPENTANCE AND BAPTISM**.

6. Think about this principle the next time you read verses like Jn. 3:16; 6:47; and Jn. 1:12.

## CONCL.

A. I’d like to conclude with an example of those who did not believe. Matt. 21:32 says that “...John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye **BELIEVED HIM NOT**; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him” (ASV). In this example, we see that a part (the Jew’s unbelief) is used for their entire disbelief. On what basis does Jesus say that they “believed him not”?

1. In that they **REFUSED TO REPENT** (Matt. 21:32).

2. In that they **REFUSED TO BE BAPTIZED FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF THEIR SINS** (Luke 7:29,30; Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3).

B. Are you like to those who believe, those who humbly submit to God by being baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38,41,44) or are you like the Pharisees and lawyers who “...rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized [for this purpose]” (Lk. 7:30)?

1. Today, many faith-only Protestants find themselves in the same situation as the Pharisees and lawyers. They are baptized in water not in order to receive God’s gift of salvation but as a demonstration that they are already saved. This baptism is foreign to the New Testament and constitutes “another gospel” (Gal. 1:8,9)!

2. Why not be like the publicans and harlots and humbly submit to God’s plan of salvation, which includes baptism for the forgiveness of sins?

Versions of the Bible used in this lesson: NKJV (New King James Version)  
ASV (American Standard Version)  
NASB (New American Standard Version)