

Baptism—

Is it necessary for salvation?

Certainly not!

Is it necessary for assurance of salvation?

Absolutely!

Have I contradicted myself? Not at all. Let's look at what the Bible says.

Jesus told us to baptize.
Jesus said:

Matthew 28:19-20a Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Jesus said:

Mark 16:16 Whoever believes **and is baptized will be saved**, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

In every case recorded in the Bible of a person responding to the Gospel, the person was baptized.

...For the forgiveness of your sins

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and **be baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins**. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

...All who accepted

Acts 2:41 **Those who accepted his message were baptized**, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

...When they believed

Acts 8:12 But **when they believed Philip** as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, **they were baptized**, both men and

women.

...Simon believed and was baptized

Acts 8:13 **Simon himself believed and was baptized**. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

...Even though the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon them

Acts 8:16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; **they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus**.

...“Why shouldn't I be baptized?”

Acts 8:36-38 36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. **Why shouldn't I be baptized?**" (37 omitted in NIV) 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both **Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him**.

...He got up and was baptized

Acts 9:18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. **He got up and was baptized**

...Immediately sought even after receiving the power of the Holy Spirit

Acts 10:47 "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."

...She responded and got baptized

Acts 16:14-15 14 One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. **The Lord opened her heart to respond** to Paul's message. 15 **When she and the members of her household were baptized**, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

...Immediately he and his family got baptized

Acts 16:33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately **he and all his family were baptized**.

...Those who believed got baptized

Acts 18:8 Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of **the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized**.

...When they heard of Jesus' baptism they got baptized again!

Acts 19:3-5 3 So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied.4 Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." 5 On hearing this, **they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus**.

...What are you waiting for? Wash your sins away!

Acts 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, **be baptized and wash your sins away**, calling on his name.'

Baptism is the immediate and logical conclusion to preaching "Jesus."

Acts 8:35-36 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and **told him the good news about Jesus**. 36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. **Why shouldn't I be baptized?**"

Acts 16:32 Then **they spoke the word of the Lord to him** and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately **he and all his family were baptized**.

Acts 8:12-13 12 But **when they believed Philip** as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, **they were baptized**, both men and women. 13 Simon himself **believed and was baptized**. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

Acts 18:8 Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the

Lord; and many of the Corinthians who

heard him **believed and were baptized**.

Even people who had already received the Holy Spirit got baptized.

Acts 10:47 "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."

These believers were in a transitional state which was not complete until they were baptized!

The person did not rejoice until he was baptized.

Acts 8:39 **When they came up out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and **the eunuch** did not see him again, but **went on his way rejoicing**.

Acts 16:33-34 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately **he and all his family were baptized**. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; **he was filled with joy** because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family.

It is how we "put on Christ."

Gal.3:26-27 26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were **baptized into Christ** have clothed yourselves with Christ.

It is the moment of our spiritual circumcision.

Col.2:11 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with **the circumcision done by Christ**,¹² having been **buried with him in baptism** and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

It is how we obey, as Noah did, so that our faith can save us.

1Peter 3:20b-21 ... when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, 21 and this water symbolizes **baptism that now saves you** also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

You see, it's a matter of obedience. The same water that saved Noah destroyed everyone who was not in the ark. In the same way Noah could **not** have expected to be saved if he had simply "believed" God but had not obeyed, we cannot lay hold of the promise of salvation if we do not obey.

We are buried with Him and are raised with Him in baptism.

Romans 6:3 Or don't you know that all of us who were **baptized into Christ Jesus** were baptized into his death?

Romans 6:4 We were therefore **buried with him through baptism** into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too **may live a new life.**

They explained to Apollos the way more adequately — beyond the baptism of John.

Acts 18:24-26 24 Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, **though he knew only the baptism of John.** 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and **explained to him the way of God more adequately.**

The default position is that all believers were baptized.

1Corinthians 1:13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? **Were you baptized into the name of Paul?**

From Paul's statement we can conclude it was simply true that all Christians were baptized. It was a matter of course. Paul is not saying we're not to be baptized. He was saying it doesn't matter who does the baptizing.

Baptism is one of the "elementary teachings" about Christ.

Hebrews 6:1-2 1 Therefore let us leave the **elementary teachings** about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, 2 instruction about **baptisms**, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

The writer of Hebrews is saying he wants to go deep and that his students should already have a good grasp on these subjects. That we are to be baptized is an elementary teaching. (See Hebrews 5:12-14) How is it that people who call themselves Christians have such trouble accepting this clear **elementary** teaching of God?

Jesus is the savior of all who obey him.

Hebrews 5:9 and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation **for all who obey him.**

"Yeah, but..."

What about people who were saved without being baptized?

These are exceptions and special cases. We shouldn't focus on exceptions, but concentrate on the teaching of Christ and the Apostles. We shouldn't base our faith on hoping an exception will apply to us. Our goal should be to obey God to the best of our ability, not to see how far we can push the limit of His mercy. God will address exceptions as he sees fit. Nevertheless, let's look at some of the common exceptions people raise.

The "thief on the cross" (Luke 23:40-43) is one case in particular where a person was not baptized but was definitely "saved." There were some extenuating circumstances:

First, he was up on a cross. He couldn't act even if he had to. This shows the mercy of God extending to the person in his unique circumstances—to the point of his ability to obey.

Second, Christ had not yet died for anyone's sin. You couldn't be "buried with Christ" because Christ had not yet died.

Third, Jesus granted him special dispensation. However, before Jesus spoke to him, the man had no assurance of salvation, or reason to expect it.

There are many cases where people who were not baptized were probably saved or would have been saved if they had died before they eventually were baptized. For example: Apollos, as we saw above, in Acts chapter 18 starting at verse 24, had been traveling around the region preaching Christ, but with an incomplete gospel that probably originated from before Christ's crucifixion, or at least from before the day of Pentecost.

If Apollos had died before he met Acquila and Prisca, I believe he would have been saved. However, if he had refused to accept the corrective teaching of Acquila and Prisca, I believe his salvation would have been in question. The same is true for the disciples Paul met at Ephesus, in

Acts chapter 19 (see p.3).

In Acts Chapter 16, the jailer washed Paul and Silas' stripes before he was baptized. If he had died during that time, I believe he would have been saved. The same would be true of any such case today. I believe God's justice and mercy is such that He grants salvation based on faith according to the extent of one's knowledge and ability — as long as our actions demonstrate our faith in obedience.

But do I know they were saved?

No, I do not, and neither does anyone else. Were they assured of salvation before they were baptized, according to the scriptures? No they were not — according to the scriptures!

Baptism is a prescribed outward act that marks, for the person and all who are in that person's presence, a moment of change. It secures for that person a reference point of assurance — a beginning. If we are not willing to do this **simple act of obedience**, how will we ever be willing to do more? If we deny our Lord's authority over our lives in this, have we really accepted his Lordship at all?

It doesn't stop there...

2Timothy 2:19 Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, **"Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."**

1Peter 1:16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

So, even if we are baptized, we have the responsibility of pursuing righteousness and holiness. I do not believe God looks upon us favorably if we do not.

...What are you waiting for?

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Modified Date: September 17, 2022