

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

This most basic, yet most important, question was posed by thousands of people to the apostle Peter in response to his famous sermon, some 50 days after Jesus had died (see Acts 2). Peter responded by saying, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Upon hearing Peter’s response, three thousand people put on Christ through baptism!

Many religious people today claim that baptism is not a necessary part of becoming a Christian. However, the biblical accounts concerning baptism give us a different perspective. Please consider the following:

- With Jesus’ closing words in the Gospel of Matthew, he commands his followers to make disciples of believers throughout all of the world by both baptizing and continuing to teach those believers.
- In the book of Acts, every detailed account of people becoming Christians involves them immediately being baptized once they believe that Jesus is their Savior. Don’t believe it because you read it here; believe it because you read it there!
- In Romans 6, the Apostle Paul teaches that our baptism illustrates the death and burial of our sinful past, as well as our spiritual resurrection to a new life in Jesus. He goes on to reveal how our baptism reflects our belief in the physical reality of Jesus’ death, burial & resurrection.
- Galatians 3:26-28 connects one’s faith to baptism with these words: “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
- I Peter 3:21-22 continues to connect faith and baptism and the salvation that they jointly provide Christians. When comparing our salvation through baptism to Noah’s salvation through the Flood, Peter says, “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, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.”

So that's it – just be baptized and that's all I have to do, right? Well, not exactly. You see, baptism is just the beginning of your new life in Christ. Upon your baptism, the Bible tells us we are something new. We still have our own personalities and sets of likes and dislikes, but our lives are new because we have been forgiven in Christ. If Christ went through such great lengths to forgive us of our sins, should we not return the favor by living for Him? Of course we should!

Besides, God's purpose for us was not just to get wet one time for Christ, but to truly put on Christ at our baptism and then keep living for Him. If we are going to continually wear Christ, we should think like, act like, and talk like Him. We need to serve the world as though we are a continuation of Jesus' hands, feet, and heart. And we need to show others the love that He has shown for us. Does that mean that we have attained or will at some point reach perfect Christ-likeness in our lives? Never! Do our imperfections allow us to just do whatever we want? No way. You might wonder, "Then, what's the point?" The point is that we love and live for Him because He first loved and lived (and died) for us.

Many people today are trying to explain away the necessity of baptism. Our only question is, "Why?" If we believe in Jesus and are sorry for our sins, why would we not want to be baptized? If Jesus was baptized . . . if Jesus instructed others to be baptized . . . and if all of Jesus' followers in the Bible were baptized . . . then why shouldn't we be baptized? If you have not yet put on Christ through baptism for your forgiveness, please don't wait any longer. From that moment forward, let's all live for Him together.