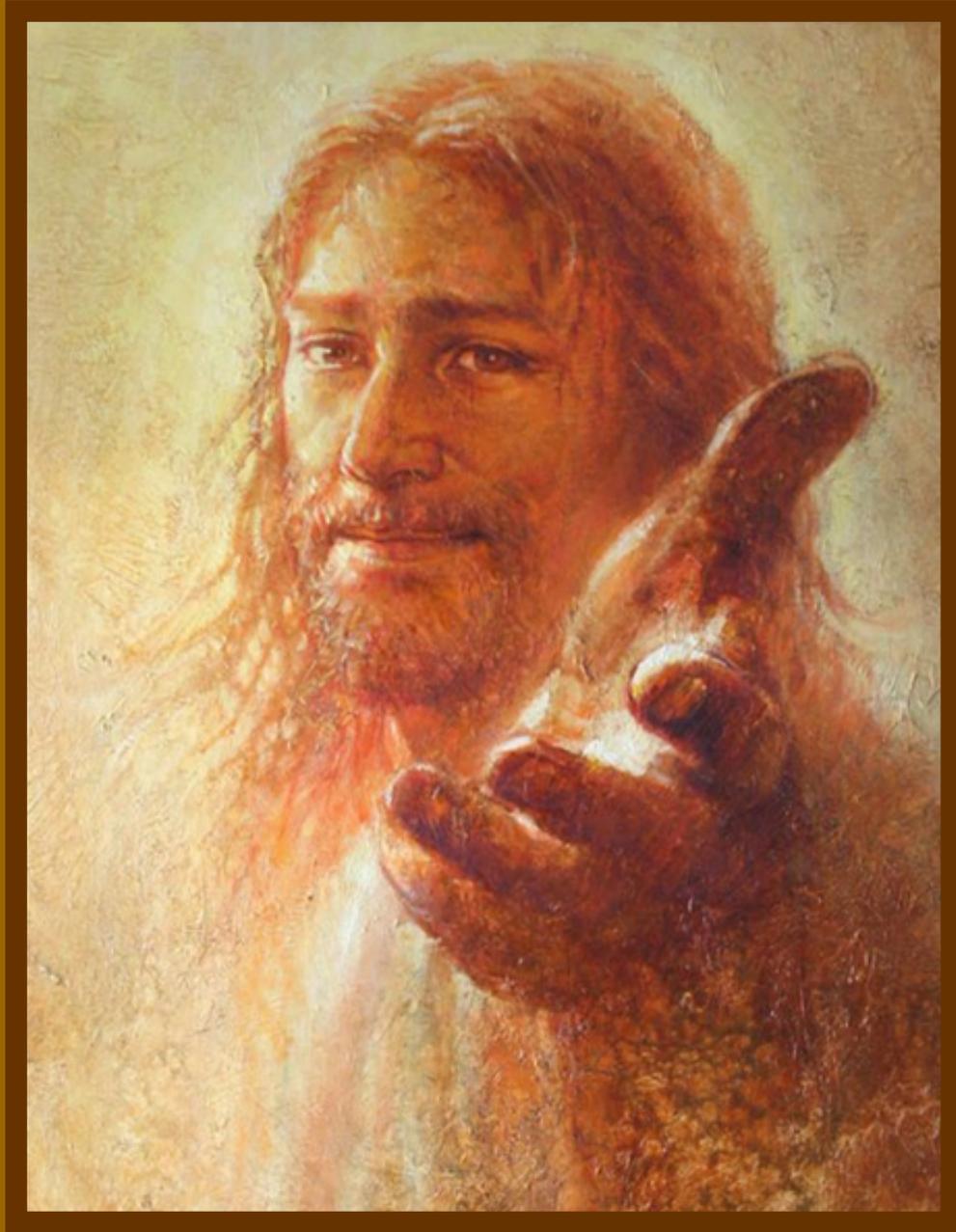


# WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?



Helping Christians Understand the  
New Testament Answer.

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## Introduction

People were asking the question thousands of years of years ago.

What must **I do** to be saved? Acts 16:30

What must **a man do** to inherit eternal life? Matt 10:17

It is a great question and there are many in the Christian world stepping forward with answers and they don't always agree with one another.

As I attempt to share my understanding of what the answer is in the New Testament I want to start with a premise that is clearly stated in the N.T.

1 Timothy 2:4 (NIV) "... who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." The WHO in this verse is God.

It is clearly stated here and in other places in the N.T. that God's plan since before creation is that all people be saved. He has gone to sacrificial lengths to make that possible.

Now there are those who aren't interested in being saved.

The world is full of such people and this is nothing new.

Acts 14:2 "But the Jews who refused to believe....."

Acts 19:9 "But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe...."

But that doesn't change the fact that God wants to save them and bring them into his family for eternity. But he can't force anyone to make such a decision. He has done a lot to persuade and convince one and all of his willingness and desire to do so.

What does being saved mean in the New Testament or New Covenant? I would say it means accepting and entering the New Covenant that God has offered to all mankind. It means that we accept Jesus as the Son of God, our Savior and our Lord. It means that we receive all he brings to us and we will give him all he asks

of us. It means we are forgiven of all of our sins against God and as a result we are cleansed, adopted into his family, become a Child of God, are born again. We will live with him now and for eternity. We will be raised from the dead at the second coming.

God becomes our Father.

He is the creator of everyone.

But he only becomes the Father of those who choose to be his child.

We receive His presence and help in this life.

It is a new and special relationship.

We begin to have a change of heart and our mind set because of that relationship.

We have a new purpose for living. We discover true joy and peace.

I love the way it is stated in Romans 5:11 LB **“Now we rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God- all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done in dying for our sins, making us friends of God.”**

What does God want? He wants a family, united in love. Ephesians 1:5 TLB “God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ.” He wants us to have a family relationship with him rather than our getting involved in a life style of ‘religiosity’.

I wrote a paper years ago with a long title. “The Incredibly Tragic Error of Becoming a Religious Person Instead of Getting Close to God.” It was my attempt to describe what unfortunately happens to way too many people. In their search for getting close to God they get sidetracked into a world of religiosity and miss the whole point of having a close personal relationship with God. Many people, are led to believe that some denominations traditions, rules, leaders, ceremonies and rituals become the most important thing to live for as a means of being right with God and assuring oneself that they are saved

Years ago I also developed a series of four lessons that are titled “It’s All About Relationship”. These are designed to help those who are interested in knowing more about having a closer relationship with God and are asking the question, “What must I do to be saved or inherit the Kingdom of God.” While those who ask that question might not be able to clearly verbalize what they are really looking for, they are interested in knowing more about God and what he wants

from them. The four lessons help show that. If you would like to see the four lessons go to [www:conduitfortheword.org](http://www.conduitfortheword.org)

You can down load a printed copy of IAAR there and then watch the four videos where I go through them one at a time. I have shared these presentations with all kinds of people over the years; atheists, agnostics, skeptics, playboys, criminals, drug addicts, people of different sexual orientation, alcoholics, professors, politicians, religious people, doctors, dentists, chiropractors, computer repair people, young, old, men and women, rich and poor as well as people of many nationalities. I trust you would find these videos interesting to watch to see how to be at peace with God and know you can be with him for eternity.

So back to the question; What must I do to be saved, or come into a personal relationship with God, be added to his family, for now and for eternity?

## FIRST THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PLAN OF SALVATION OR STEPS OF SALVATION

Some call the process the 'plan of salvation' or the 'steps of salvation'. The N.T. actually doesn't use those terms but it is quite obvious that there is a plan or a process or sequence of things involved in our being born again or saved.

It all seemed so clear and obvious when I became a Christian. Since then I have discovered that there are a number of individuals or denominations that have different teachings or theologies about the answer to the question. I have studied the history of most of them as to where their teachings came from and what their foundation is as I've sought to be sure which way was the correct way. I'm still studying but I feel comfortable with my understanding. And I realize that unfortunately all of us Christians will likely never all come to the same viewpoint. But here is my humble effort to try and explain my understanding of what the N.T. teaches on the subject after more than 50 years as a Christian and studying the Word.

While I'm always open to discussing and sharing with brothers I have no interest in 'arguing, fighting and judging' others who don't share my observations and opinions.

The whole emphasis of the New Testament is to show us why we need God in our life, how to become a child of God, and then how to live our life as a child of God till the end of our time here on earth. The four lessons of IAAR give an overview of that. God isn't interested in making us into religious weirdoes or fanatics. He is interested in bringing us into his family, loving us, living with us, helping us grow and mature and then taking us to spend eternity with him in his heavenly kingdom.

While the question "What must I do to be saved" is addressed in the four lessons of It's All About Relationship (in lesson 3 in particular) I want to attempt to give a deeper explanation or answer to that question as we would find it in the New Testament and address a couple of the different views about that process.

## WHAT SAVES US?

### **WE ARE SAVED BY GRACE.....**

is probably the most commonly stated concept about our salvation that is used, stated and quoted by Christians. And with good reason. Our salvation is by God's grace or his unearned, undeserved and unmerited love. He loved us first. We can't earn God's love or our salvation. That is what man made religions and cults teach; be good enough, long enough and you will go to heaven.

#### **What an abomination that is to God.**

He makes it clear no one can be saved by being good. Many Christians don't even have this clear in their thinking. Understanding this has been a challenge since the days of the early church. Back then, many new Jewish converts were tempted to go back to the LAW of the Old Covenant as the way to be made right with God. Much of Romans, Galatians and Hebrews was written to try and encourage them NOT to do that.

So while it is true that we are saved by God's Grace, it is interesting to see that the N.T. says there are many other factors that describe what God has done to provide us with salvation.

Let's take a look at many of those things. This is very interesting. These passages paint a broad picture of all that is involved in the wonderful GOOD NEWS. I think it would be appropriate to call it the GREAT News.

As you read the following verses you will see that the Scriptures point out many things are involved in our salvation.

<p>God's Love</p> <p>Our believing</p>	<p>John 3:16 (NIV)</p> <p><sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.</p>
<p>Calling on Lord's name</p>	<p>Acts 2:21(NIV)</p> <p><sup>21</sup>And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'</p>
<p>Name of the Lord Jesus</p>	<p>Acts 4:12</p> <p><sup>12</sup>Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."</p>
<p>Believe in the Lord Jesus</p>	<p>Acts 16:31 (NIV)</p> <p><sup>31</sup>They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."</p>
<p>Blood of Christ</p>	<p>Romans 5:9(NIV)</p> <p><sup>9</sup>Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!</p>
<p>Jesus death and life</p>	<p>Romans 5:10 (NIV)</p> <p><sup>10</sup>For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!</p>
<p>Hope</p>	<p>Romans 8:24 (NIV)</p> <p><sup>24</sup>For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?</p>
<p>Declaring faith in Jesus</p> <p>Belief in the resurrection</p>	<p>Romans 10:9 (NIV)</p>



<p>His mercy; washing of rebirth, renewal by the Holy Spirit</p> <p>See Acts 2:38</p> <p>Be born again</p> <p>Baptism, resurrection of Jesus</p> <p>Stand firm</p>	<p>you as first fruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.</p> <p>Titus 3:5 (NIV)  <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,</p> <p><b>John 3:3</b> Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are <b>born again.</b>”</p> <p>1 Peter 3:21 (NIV)  <sup>21</sup> and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,</p> <p><b>Matthew 10:22</b>  You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who <b>stands firm</b> to the end will be saved.</p>
<p>HERE IS THE QUESTION; Are all of the above items necessary for us to be saved?</p>	<p>Can you be saved with only some of them? Are there any you would say can be left out?</p>

So as we can see here, while ‘we are saved by grace’ is totally true, our salvation comes about or is the result of many things in God’s plan.

God offers this new life and His salvation through His Mercy and Grace. Those two things come out of, or are founded and grounded in his great love for us.

He is a God of compassion. All he offers us comes from his love and compassion for us. If there was no love or no compassion, then there would be no mercy or grace.

Psalms 145:8,9 (NIV)

<sup>8</sup>The LORD is gracious and compassionate,  
slow to anger and rich in love. <sup>9</sup>The LORD is good to all;  
he has compassion on all he has made.

2 Corinthians 1:3 (NIV)

<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,

John 3:16 (NIV)

<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

It all starts with He loves us.

He wants to save all of us!

He extends his mercy and grace to us to accomplish that.

I heard some definitions of mercy and grace which really help me understand what they are and how they work together.

God's **Mercy** means we '**will not receive what we deserve**'.

We deserve condemnation and death. But Jesus paid the price for our sins against God so we can be free. That is by God's mercy. He has mercy on us.

God's **grace** is that '**we receive what we don't deserve.**' We don't deserve his love, forgiveness, eternal life; all the things God promises his Children in the New Covenant that they need to live life in and with Christ forever.

These two are often mentioned together in the N.T.

Hebrews 4:16 "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may **receive mercy** and **find grace** to help us in our time of need." When we are lost, we are in a 'time of great need'.

We need them both. One without the other is not adequate.

God has set the stage; he has provided all that is needed to save us.

At this time I believe it is vital to address the issue of God and his covenants in the Bible.

## **THE NECESSITY OF UNDERSTANDING GOD IS A GOD OF COVENANTS**

The answer to the question “What must I do to be saved” really can’t be fully understood without an understanding that God reveals himself in the Bible as a God of covenants. Understanding covenant in the Bible has huge implications for our understanding the plan or process of being born again, or being saved.

We need to wear ‘covenant glasses’ and interpret the Bible through that view or perspective because that was the way God revealed himself and it is the mindset of those who wrote the Bible.

We are going to do a very simple presentation of what God’s covenants in the Bible are and how he has chosen covenants as his model for how he deals with mankind since the beginning of time.

God revealed himself in the Bible as a God who makes covenants. When I finally learned about God’s covenants the whole process of ‘how to be saved’ became so much clearer to me and I saw how the steps involved in that were so logically woven together.

God of the Bible

Is a covenant making God. Take the time to look these up and read them.

Deut 4:23, 7:9,12

1 Kings 8:23

2 Chronicles 6:14

Nehemiah 1:5

Jeremiah 22:9, 11, 3, 10

Hebrews 8:8, 13:20

We see in the Bible that God has a number of covenants;  
 He had an Eternal covenant; He speaks of this in Hebrews 13:20  
 That was his plan as to how to save mankind. We see that he had a:  
 Covenant with Adam; This is spoken of in Hosea 8:6; details in Genesis 2 and 3.  
 Covenant with Noah; He had 2 with Noah. Genesis 6:18 and Genesis 9:9,11  
 Covenant with Abraham; Genesis 15:18  
 Covenant with the Israelites; Exodus 19:5  
 Covenant with 'all the nations' through the New Covenant; Hebrews 8:6

Let me define my understanding of what a covenant is. A covenant is an agreement entered into by two parties where they both promise or pledge to advance the rest interest of the other. All of God's covenants recorded in the Bible are offered by God to a man or group of people. In the case of God's covenants, God spells what the best interest of both parties is.

We don't think up a covenant and offer it to God. While many attempt to do that, the end result is simply an empty man made religion.

God had an eternal covenant which was to bring salvation to mankind. He revealed that plan through a series of covenants with mankind, starting with Adam, then Noah, Abraham, the Israelites, and finally 'all the nations'. While these covenants are connected, each one stands on its own and leads the way to the next.

The last of all of them is the New Covenant. They all point to and lead to that one.

God offers covenants to men.

He offers them out of love for man. It is his choice to offer them to men. Men don't have to serve him for 40 years and then receive his covenant due to their having earned or merited it. It doesn't work that way.

The series of covenants listed above are his principle covenants in the Bible. In each case man had to or has to respond and accept the covenant offered to him to be a part of it.

There are serious consequences for rejecting a God offered covenant.  
 There are serious consequences for entering or accepting a covenant with God and then rejecting it later.

There are four key elements to any covenant and they can all be found in God's covenants in the Bible. They are:

**Parties**, identify who the two parties of the covenant are. In the Bible, the covenants are always offered by God to a second party (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israelites, All the nations of the earth). The 'parties' identifies and limits who is in any given covenant. I can't claim the promises of a covenant between God and another party. I'm not obligated to keep the Terms of a covenant between God and another party.

**Terms**; As you read about any of the covenants you will find what God asked the other party to do if they enter the agreement with him. The terms are easy to identify as one reads the details of each covenant.

**Promises** identify what God promises to do for the other party if they accept his covenant and enter it. These are easy to see as you read about each of the covenants.

**Consequences**; The consequences of any covenant spell out what will happen to the party the covenant is offered to IF they refuse to accept the covenant or IF they accept it, enter it and then turn their back on it and reject it or walk away from it.

All of God's covenants are offered freely, because of his love for the other party, but the other party must agree to the conditions or terms and swear allegiance to God. It is a 'win, win' situation.

While it can be said that each covenant is offered 'unconditionally', the long term fulfillment or realization of all covenants is 'conditional' upon the other party being faithful and keeping their word. God is always faithful to his word. The question is will we be true and faithful to our commitment to him. Thus John wrote in Revelation, 'be faithful unto death and you will receive the crown of life'.

If you watch carefully as you read the history of each of the covenants in the Bible God always puts an “IF” with every one of them. If you are faithful such and such will happen. If you are not faithful, then the following will happen. He makes it clear.

To repeat, the Terms and promises of any covenant are limited to the identified Parties in any covenant God has offered. A person is not obligated to keep the terms of someone else’s covenant and one can’t claim the promises God gave to someone in a different covenant.

It is also important to note that there was a specific way that God called upon those accepting one of his covenants to swear their allegiance to him, or to take an OATH of allegiance. All covenants have an ‘oath swearing’ event. In the case of the Bible, God tells the other party what that is and how to do it.

Taking the oath is like signing the dotted line of a covenant (or contract). At that point it becomes official, legal, binding, etc.

Oath taking is common in society.

People take oaths when:

They become a doctor or dentist;

They marry,

They join the military,

They become a lawyer or judge,

They become a citizen

They take many kinds of political offices,

They are a witness at a trial,

The concept of an oath is that we want to have doctor work on us who is committed to our best interest.

We want to marry someone who has sworn to live for our best interest.

We want those coming into my county to swear their allegiance to our country.

We want a judge who has sworn to do what is right, fair and honest in dealing with us.

Oaths or oath taking are part of man’s accepting God’s covenants in the Bible.

God wants to fill his Kingdom with people who are committed to Him and His ways. He doesn't want to fill his Kingdom with half hearted, half committed people.

Those God invited into a covenant had to:

**hear** what the offer was, and

**believe** that he was God and he could be trusted.

Then they had to:

demonstrate their faith in him by

**surrendering** (repenting) to Him,

renouncing their allegiance to false God's or idols,

swearing their allegiance to him by **taking the Oath** he commanded in order to enter that given covenant.

In the Bible the oath was spelled out by God for each covenant.

The covenant wasn't initiated or activated or enforced until the other party took or performed God's prescribed oath.

For a deeper study and understanding of all this I recommend you get and read, *What the Bible Says About Covenant*. Dr. Mont Smith. The only place I know it can be found now is at Amazon. It is out of print but used copies are often available.

## INVESTIGATING THE PLAN OR PROCESS OF SALVATION

“What must I do to be saved?” Acts 16:30

Or we could ask, what must I do to receive God’s Mercy and His Grace?

As I have been reading the N.T. for over 50 years there seems to be a pattern given for the answer to that question.

1. Someone has to go and share the Gospel or Good News with those who are outside of Christ; the spiritually lost. Romans 10:10
2. Those people have to hear and listen to God’s offer, the Good News. Colossians 1:5,6
3. Then they must believe in Jesus as the Savior or Messiah. John 3:16
4. A sincere belief in Jesus will result in gratitude, appreciation and love for Jesus. That love will then lead a person to obey God and obey him. Love and trust become a natural response. If He died for me and took my debt to sin away, I can then certainly trust Him with all my life. **1 John 4:19** “We love because **he first loved us.**”  
Jesus said that the greatest command of God for time and eternity is ‘to love God with all your heart, mind and soul.’ It would seem impossible to enter any relationship with him without declaring that love for him.
4. That love or gratitude will then lead that person to obey God. Jesus said, “If you love me, obey me. The message to those who come to believe in Jesus and want to born again is that they need to repent or decide to surrender their life to Jesus for eternity. That is repenting. Acts 2:38
5. That person is then told to confess those decisions; make it public; there can be no closet Christians. Romans 10: 9,10
6. That person is then commanded to be baptized into Jesus. Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38

At that point the person has done all God has commanded to enter the New Covenant. They are IN Jesus.

7. Then that person is then told to be faithful to Jesus for the rest of their life.

The letters in the N.T. give us instructions in how to do that. The N.T. tells and teaches how to do two basic things; Love God with all our heart, soul and mind, and love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus is our model in how to do both of those things.

This list reveals a PROCESS laid out in the N.T. or New Covenant for coming into relationship with God through Jesus (God in the flesh).

These prescribed steps or responses called for by God to enter His New Covenant are never described in the Bible as man initiated WORKS by which man hopes to earn, merit, purchase or try to deserve God's grace. They are God's called for responses to show we accept his wonderful offer or covenant. They are the conditions he has clearly spelled out. They aren't something we create on our own. It is his prescribed way for us to hold our hands out and accept his offer, life and promises.

These God prescribed and commanded steps are not 'meritorious' acts done on man's part trying to earn salvation.

Meritorious denotes that I think I get something because:

I deserve it,  
Have earned it,  
Have worked for it,  
I'm good enough for it,

We don't MERIT

Salvation

Eternal life

Forgiveness,

Resurrection,

Etc.

Do you remember these definitions?

MERCY; We don't get what we deserve.

We deserve condemnation and death.

But Jesus died to take that condemnation and death away and free us from it.

And then by God's GRACE we get what we don't deserve.

Salvation

Forgiveness

Holy Spirit; presence of Jesus in our life/heart

Eternal life

Promised place in heaven; with God

Etc.

Now concerning hearing, faith, love, repentance, confession and baptism, it would be a mistake to think that those are things we do to

WIN

EARN

OR

DESERVE life in Jesus.

We are simply doing what God has commanded us to do to enter his New Covenant. They aren't things we do to earn salvation but simply receive it.

Following are some thoughts by Dr. Jim Larsen on the subject.

***When my dad passed away he left a small amount of money to each of us kids in his will. In a will the intentions of the testator are all it takes to get goods to the recipients.***

***With a covenant (which explains God's 'will'), both parties sign the vehicle (document, etc). Even if the lesser party is receiving benefits from the greater party, he still must sign as well.***

***Nobody would say that by signing on the dotted line he had earned what was being offered. Since baptism involves more of our body than our fingers on a pen, it may appear as 'work' or 'works' on our part, but God never calls it that. It is God's prescribed way of our signing the dotted line, committing ourselves to His will, agreeing to the terms he set forth and claiming the promises he gives, and understanding the consequences if I reject His offer or later abandon it. It is His form of oath taking.***

***That is what Peter said baptism is...my pledge to God. Jesus dies on the cross and therein offers forgiveness to all who will declare his death to be in their stead. We are told that in the cluster of responses (faith, love, repentance, confession and baptism) we are accepting God's offer, turning from our former ways, and signing as ordered, baptism.***

***It would be an insult to God to say that I received my salvation by doing anything to earn it. But covenant ratification (oath taking) in the Bible was never seen as paying dues, making things right, paying a fine or anything of the sort. We aren't paying anything by our faithful response to God. We are accepting God's claim that we are sinners in need of redemption.***

***In baptism we act out what is really, literally happening.***

***Baptism doesn't save us in itself...but the act of baptism is an acting out of what God is doing...putting our past to death (including our sin) and giving us a new life (Romans 6:4).***

***It is so good of God to give us an accrual event/behavior to refer to as the starting point of our new life in Christ.***

While some people for a number of reasons choose some of the steps and leave out other parts of the process identified above, it really doesn't make sense when talking of God's covenants.

These are all natural, logical steps in building a relationship with God by entering the New Covenant God offers us. It is what he commanded. They are his clearly spelled out conditions for entering the New Covenant.

Let me repeat; in the case of the New Covenant, entering it includes:

Hearing the Gospel, then

Believing in Jesus, then

Responding in love and gratitude to him, then

Repenting or surrendering our life to God as my King, then

Confessing those decisions before others, and then

Being baptized into Christ, taking my oath of allegiance.

The Scriptures make it clear we are baptized INTO Jesus.

Then we are called to live the rest of our life here on earth serving and obeying Jesus in all he has commanded..

I guess it could be said this way:

No hearing will mean no believing.

No believing will mean no repenting.

No repenting will mean no confessing.

No confessing will mean no baptism.

## UNDERSTANDING SYNECDOCHE IN THE SCRIPTURES

Something that helped me tie this all together for me was to understand the Hebrew concept of synecdoche.

Here is a quote from Dr. Mont Smith: *“The process of conversion was described as calling and election (II Peter 1:10), salvation, justification, new birth, redemption, sanctification, enlightenment, adoption and the like. **Each of these terms separately referred to the entire process.** One was not first redeemed, then enlightened, then called, then new born, then saved, and later sanctified.*

*The terms were most used as synecdoche, “the part represents the whole”, and conversely, “the whole is represented by the part.” The Hebrews made quite frequent use of the figure. It can help the Bible student understand generalizations expressed by different words. For instance, hearing was said to save (Galatians 3:5). Obviously it represented the other aspects of becoming Christian. Belief was frequently used to represent the entire process of justification (John 3:16). At times repentance was the part representing the whole (II Peter 3:8). Confession was employed as the summation of all aspects of coming to God (Matthew 10:32,33). Baptism was employed as the part for the whole (I Peter 3:21). What the Bible Says about Covenant; Dr. Mont Smith; page 322*

So the idea is that a N.T. writer could write or speak of the entire process of the plan of salvation by referring to any ONE step of it. He knew his readers would understand that. He wasn't picking and choosing some as more important than others. He didn't have to repeat the entire process every time he spoke of it. One would KNOW that using one step of it was obviously including everything. They all work together.

As one man put it, “To use one piece or step in this process as if it were the only things required, instead of it representing the whole, is distortion.”

Following is an illustration of synecdoche that helps show how the steps tie together.

<p>The Hebrew word synecdoche and what it means?</p>	<p>The word synecdoche means ‘the part represents the whole.’ The whole represents the parts. The Hebrews understood this concept. When speaking of a process that involved many items, you don’t need to name every part or step every time. If you use any one of the steps it is understood you are referring to and including all of them. By using one of the steps you aren’t leaving the others out or eliminating them.</p>	
<p>There is a story that illustrates how God uses all the PARTS and how the WORK TOGETHER.</p>	<p>The story of a father and son. A man and his son lived on a sea coast where there were treacherous rocks and fierce currents all the time. One day the father saw that a ship had crashed into a small outcroppings of jagged rocks off the coast. Their ship was being battered to pieces and they were drowning. The father had mercy on them. He ordered his son to go and try and rescue the downing men. The son obeyed and went. He rowed out to where the men were. He yelled out to men. He told them to grasp the oar. He pulled them into the boat. He rowed them safely to shore.</p> <p>Now here is the great question. What ‘saved the men’? Was it:</p>	

The Fathers mercy?  
 His command to the son to go?  
 The son's obedience?  
 His rowing out?  
 The boat?  
 The oars?  
 His yelling out to the men to  
 grab on to the oar?  
 Their grabbing on to the oar?  
 Their obeying his instructions?  
 Their getting into the boat?  
 His rowing them back to the  
 shore?  
 Which ONE of those would you  
 like to leave out?  
 It was the combination of many  
 things. You can't pick and  
 choose and leave out what you  
 don't like.

Now keep this in mind as we  
 read the N.T. and what it has to  
 say about the s including:  
 conditions God has commanded  
 for those who want to enter his  
 covenant. They include:  
 Hearing, yes  
 Believing, yes,  
 Loving, yes,  
 Repenting yes,  
 Confessing, yes,  
 Baptism, yes.  
 Do these things save us  
 individually? NO! They are all  
 part of a process for accepting  
 God's covenant. They are his  
 commands, his conditions for  
 entering into a personal  
 relationship with him and being  
 saved.

Are we saved by just hearing? No.

Are we saved by just believing? No.

Are we saved by just loving? No.

Are we saved by just repenting? No.

Are we saved by just confessing? No.  
Are we saved by just be baptized? No.

Which ones do you want to leave out?  
Where does God say anyone of them can be left out?

We are not at liberty to do that.  
And there is no reason to do so.

We need to be careful in what we do. Jesus told the Pharisees, 'You nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.' Is what we are doing based on the clear teachings of the N.T. or is it based on what some later theologian or preacher started saying.

Years ago I did a simple study and learned that there are at least 14 different views or teachings about what baptism is, who needs to be baptized, why, what it results in, how, when, where and by whom. They all cannot be right.

## ARE WE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE?

Some say we are saved just by faith.

There is a problem with that.

The Scriptures make it clear that we aren't saved by faith alone, or by repenting alone, or by confessing alone or by being baptized alone.

In fact in James 5:22-24, James makes the case for synecdoche in saying that those things 'work together'.

Through our obeying the steps in the plan of salvation that we have been commanded to do by God in his covenant 'makes faith complete'.

Faith alone is 'incomplete'. James said it.

James concludes by saying that 'a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.' We can't pick and choose. It all works together. The 'does', in this case would be doing what God has stipulated in the conditions he requires to enter his New Covenant and remain in it.

I have never found a verse in the N.T. where it says that baptism is a 'work'. It is not a man created thing we do to earn our salvation. It is a step of obedience and a part of entering the New Covenant and God's family.

Actually being baptized, while a physical act, doesn't involve any work on our part. We are totally passive. Others, those baptizing me, do all the work. I quietly and passively submit myself in their hands. I just stand there. They hold

me, lean me back and lift me up. I don't do anything. They are doing what they as disciples are commanded to do. I obey God and surrender myself to Him and take the oath of the New Covenant.

ACTUALLY, other than those baptizing me, GOD is the one who works.

By God's own words in Acts 2:38 once I comply with what he has commanded, He:

Forgives me.

Justifies me.

Cleanses me.

Fills me.

Gives me His Holy Spirit.

Adopts me.

God gives the birth.

I am born again. Where I was dead, God has made me alive through Jesus.

HE DOES ALL THE WORK.

## **NOT SAVED BY WORKS; RIGHT ON.**

Much of the confusion over the 'works' issue in regards to the plan of salvation comes from a misunderstanding Paul's writing.

In most cases when Paul was talking about not being saved by our 'works' in Romans and Galatians (and the writer of the book of Hebrews) he was talking about trying to be saved by keeping the Law or the stipulations or terms of the Old Covenant. YOU can't be saved by the Law. No one can do it perfectly. All have fallen short.

In a few occasions Paul was also talking about doing something that involved some self initiated act or religious activity done on our part as an effort to EARN our salvation, or by complying with some command in 'keeping' the New Covenant or living our life in Jesus. He wasn't talking about what God gave as steps or conditions for entering the New Covenant as being 'works of law or the law.'

It is clear we can't earn, deserve, merit or gain salvation by keeping the Old Covenant LAW because no one can keep it. If we could have, then Jesus didn't need to die for us.

It is also true that neither you nor I can earn, deserve, merit or gain salvation by trying to be 'good'. As Jesus said, "Only ONE is Good."

Salvation is by God's love, shown through his Mercy and Grace. It is unmerited and undeserved. We are saved by what He did and does for us, not by our efforts

to merit or deserve salvation. But receiving that is dependent upon our accepting it.

Some say that baptism can't have anything to do with our salvation because it is a 'physical act' and thus has nothing to do with our salvation. But they rarely if ever include confession in that thinking. Confession is a physical act. It starts in the mind, but then I have to use my throat, tongue and lips to speak.

It is interesting to know where this line of thinking that nothing done physically can have anything to do with our salvations had its origins. Many who believe the idea that any physical act on our part can't have anything to do with our salvation have no idea how this thinking developed.

One source for this thinking came from a group of people who were around in the days of Jesus. They weren't Christians although their thinking unfortunately infiltrated Christian thinking. They later came to be identified as Gnostics. They taught that there is a total separation between that which is good (spiritual) and all that which is evil (everything physical). They even went so far as to say that Christ didn't have a physical body of his own, he was just a spirit because he couldn't partake of that which was evil (a physical body). They were wrong on that and many other issues. Their thinking impacted some early Christians to the point that John addresses some of the challenges they created when he wrote I John. Their thinking was not Hebrew thinking or Biblical thinking.

A second source of the false teaching was from Greek philosophy in later centuries. It also had its' impact on Christian theology as some Christian leaders even declared that they wanted to take the best of Greek philosophy (which made sense to them) and combine it with Biblical thinking. It doesn't work.

As these false ideas penetrated Christian thinking the idea then developed that the process of salvation can't have anything to do with anything physical we do such as confessing (takes muscles) and baptism, both physical acts. They taught that only that which is 'spiritual' (faith and repentance) or mental processes have anything to do with salvation. That was all poor thinking and not Biblical.

Let's take another look at Acts 2:37-40 (NIV)

<sup>37</sup>When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

<sup>38</sup>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. <sup>39</sup>The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

<sup>40</sup>With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

There are several interesting points to observe here.

This was the first evangelistic Gospel sermon preached to unbelievers once the New Covenant had started.

Peter preached about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and gave ample proof to the listeners that Jesus was the Messiah. The people were convinced. It was obvious that they now believed that Jesus was the Messiah, their Savior. They had blown it. They had killed Messiah. They were guilty. Now what?

It got to their hearts and they asked, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

And Peter's answer, in the first Gospel message to answer this question was “Repent and be baptized.” **How could he possibly get this wrong in the first evangelistic sermon ever preached?**

They asked, “What shall we DO?” They knew they had to DO something.

He didn't say, “Ah, here is the Good News. You don't have to do anything more. You believe? That's all you need to do. You ARE saved now!!!! There is nothing more you can or need to do in order to be saved!”

No, he said “Repent and be baptized.” **Now why would he say that, in the first evangelistic sermon ever preached if it was wrong?**

And it hasn't changed. When someone comes to believe in Jesus today, what would Peter tell them to do?

“Repent and be baptized.”

They didn’t ask, “What should we think, believe or feel.” They knew they had to DO something now that they believed. And they were right. And Peter told them what God wanted them to do.

Based on their belief, they were told to ACT.

He didn’t say, “Repent for the forgiveness of your sins and then you are/will be saved.” Then go and be baptized.

You can’t separate repenting and baptism here.

You believe?

Now repent,

Be baptized,

For the forgiveness of your sins.

And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

He didn’t say;

Believe and you will receive the H.S.

He didn’t say:

Believe and repent and you will receive the H.S.

Now there is another interesting point in Peters’ sermon. In verse 40 he ‘pleaded with them’ to SAVE THEMSELVES. If all they had to do was believe to be saved, then they were already saved at this point. He knew they already believed his message but he pleaded with them to “SAVE YOURSELVES.” They had to DO SOMETHING to be saved. They had to do what God had clearly commanded them to do to be beneficiaries of the New Covenant offered to them by God’s Love, Mercy and Grace.

And the results of this sermon? More than 3000 were baptized into Jesus. They completed the process.

God had done his part.

Now man had to step up and show and prove his belief in God and Jesus in the way God had laid out and commanded.

Once this idea of the separation of physical and spiritual takes root, or a misunderstanding or the word 'work's' in the N.T., men will go to great lengths to prove their point especially as it applies to baptism.

I know of two great evangelical men who have made a huge impact on the world. I have used some of their materials extensively and respect them. After reading a lot of their books (over 20) I discovered they both reject baptism as having anything to do with the plan of salvation. And they both use the same argument to advance their point.

They both have an interesting explanation of Acts 2:38 where Peter preached that upon believing one needs to 'repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.' Both these brothers point out that the word translated FOR in this verse can also be translated BECAUSE. So their premise is that we are NOT baptized 'for' the forgiveness of sin but we are baptized 'because' we have already been saved. I believe they support the idea that we are saved only by faith and repentance. Then they would suggest that we are baptized because of that and are by so doing being added to the church or body of Christ.

Now this is interesting. Both these men are a lot smarter than I am, and have done a lot more to advance the Kingdom than I would ever dream of and I still have great respect for them. But I did an investigation of 34 different English translations of the N.T. and in particular of Acts 2:38 and not ONE of those translations (most done by teams of Biblical Scholars or Bible theologians) uses the word BECAUSE here.

These translators and scholars come from many different denominational backgrounds and they know what the text says and what it means and their scholastic integrity didn't allow them to write down what they know the scriptures didn't mean in that context. It is FOR not BECAUSE!!

As I see it these two dear men and others try and force the scriptures to support their system of beliefs that they have bought into.

A friend of mine has an interesting way of looking at some of this. He asks what would happen if we were stranded on an island and a New Testament washed up in a tin container and we found it and starting reading it, never having seen it

before? And it was a New Testament without footnotes giving some man's interpretation of what the verses were 'supposed to mean'.

My friend also likes to ask others he is in conversation with about this topic the following; **“Would you feel comfortable giving the same answer to the question of what do I need to be saved that was given by the Apostles in the New Testament days? ?**

For example would you feel comfortable giving the same answer to people when they realize that they are lost in sin that Peter gave to thousands on the day of Pentecost in his first ever evangelistic sermon? Can we simply give the answer Peter gave to those who had put their faith in Jesus?

“Repent and be baptized, for the forgiveness of your sins. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Is Peter's answer right or wrong?

Or, when a person has heard the message and has repented...can I simply give the same directive as Ananias gave to Saul as reported in Acts 22:16?

“And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.”

Could it be any clearer?

Was Ananias giving the wrong message to Saul?

Did he goof it up?

And when Paul said in Galatians 3:27, “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

Did he get it wrong here?

He didn't say we were:

Believed into Christ, or

Repented into Christ or

Confessed into Christ.

Now believing, repenting and confessing are obviously important and essential, and part of the process as we understand knowing the concept of Synecdoche,

but he says we were baptized into Christ!!! It doesn't say that we are baptized in the body, or the church!

Now obviously when we are IN Christ, we are part of his church universal.

Did Paul get it wrong here?

Did he goof it up?

## FIRST SCRIPTURE CHART TO STUDY.

Here is an interesting chart. Go down it and answer the questions and then read the passages listed there.

Are the things listed on the left necessary to be saved?

In the second column give your own answer or belief; yes or no.

Then give your thought or answer to the third column.

Then read the passages in the right column

What do the passages say as to when these things actually happen or when are they realized in God's plan?

Does the N.T. teach that we need to...	Yes or No?	Would we be saved without each item? Why or why not?	What does it say how and when each of these things happen?
Die with Christ			Romans 6:3
Be buried with Christ			Romans 6:4
Be raised with Christ			Romans 6:4
Be united with Christ			Romans 6:4
Be clothed with Christ			Colossians 2:12
Wash away our sins			Acts 22:16
Be forgiven			Acts 2:38
Pledge our allegiance to Jesus			I Peter 3:21
Be circumcised in Christ			Colossians 2:11-12
Receive the Holy Spirit			Acts 2:38

Believe			John 3:15
Repent			Acts 2:38
Confess			Romans 10:9-1-
Be baptized			Matthew 28:18-20

## SECOND CHART TO STUDY; QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Here are some more items to think about.

What is the first command Jesus said new disciples had to obey?		Matthew 28:18-20
Is baptism an outward expression of an inward decision?	Where does it specifically say that in the New Testament? Is there a verse or passage that clearly says that?	_____
Some say we are saved just by being baptized.	Where does it say that? Who believes this?	_____
Some say baptism has nothing to do with our salvation.	Why do they say that? Where does it say that in the N.T.?	_____
Some say that when one is baptized it is 'into' the church.	Where does it say that in the N.T.?	_____ Galatians 3:27
Are we saved by faith alone?	Are we saved by anything else?	_____ James 2:24
Can you be a saved and not have the Holy Spirit?		Romans 8:9 James 2:26 I John 4:13-15
Where does it say or teach in the N.T. as to when one receives the Holy Spirit?		Acts 2:38 Titus 3:5

### LISTENING TO A CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO JEWISH MEN.

In the spring of 2015 I had the opportunity to go with a preacher friend of mine to a meeting he had arranged with a long time Jewish follower of Jesus (a world class scientist) and a recently converted young Jewish Rabbi. It was like sitting and listening to a conversation between Peter and Paul. They both spoke Hebrew.

During their long conversation (I just sat there and listened) the older believer shared his amazing story of how he had become a Christian. There were many Rabbis in his family. I remember his sharing that after he had started showing interest in becoming a Christian over a long period of time, one of the older Rabbis kept asking him if he had been baptized. Every time he answered no the others continued their efforts to persuade him not to become a Christian. They didn't ask him if he believed in Jesus, if he had repented or confessed Jesus.

But then came the day that he answered them with YES. He had been baptized into Christ. That was it. It was all over for them. They ended their efforts to persuade him. They understood the significance of his being baptized. It was his final act or decision in becoming a follower of Jesus. He had taken his oath of allegiance to Jesus. It was finished, over. They cut him off from the family.

### THIRD CHART WORTHY OF STUDY.

I would encourage you to keep studying the Word. Here is something for your personal study. Read the passages and see what you can learn.

Passage	What does it say about baptism? Were people commanded to be Baptized? When were people baptized? What had to precede their baptism? Why were they baptized? Where were they baptized? Who was baptized? Who baptized them? Were they sprinkled? How many were there to witness their baptism?	
Acts 2:38		
2:41		
8:12,13		
8:36,38		
9:18		
10:47,48		
11:16		
16:14,15		
16:31-34		
18:8		
19:5		
22:15,16		
Romans 6:3,4		
I Corinthians 10:2		

Galatians 3:27		
Colossians 2;12		
I Peter 3:21		
Titus 3:5		

The word baptize (Bautizo in Greek) means “to plunge or immerse”. That is the form of baptism that was practiced for the first centuries. Some MEN changed the form centuries later for a number of reasons. God never changed it.

And when the Bible was translated into English the translators did not ‘translate’ the word but they did what is called a ‘transliteration’. Instead of putting what ‘bautizo’ means (plunge, immerse) they made a new English word that previously didn’t exist. They made the new word “Baptism” thus allowing it to mean whatever you wanted to; immerse, pour or sprinkle. That has confused the issue ever since.

The word for sprinkle is a completely different and you never find it where the word baptism is spoken of.

The only records of people being baptized in the N.T. are of people who:  
 Had heard the Gospel,  
 Had believed the Gospel,  
 Had repented to follow Jesus,  
 And were willing to confess their faith.

Why risk doing it ‘man’s way’ rather than God’s foreordained way.  
 Who is my Lord?  
 Man or God?  
 Who told me to be baptized? A church? A preacher? A theologian? Or Jesus.  
 He died for me. He told me to do it and how to it. That settles it.

## FOURTH CHART TO STUDY

I ran across this chart years ago. It shows what different N.T. people taught or experienced in regards to the steps or the process in conversion.

### Chart on Conversions

<b>Conversion</b>	<b>Hear</b>	<b>Believe</b>	<b>Pray to ask Christ into your heart</b>	<b>Repent</b>	<b>Confess</b>	<b>Baptism</b>
Jesus	Luke 8:21	John 3:16		Luke 13:3-5	Luke 12:8	Matthew 28:18-20
Jews on Pentecost	Hearing Acts 2:22-37			Repentance Acts 2:38		Baptism Acts 2:38
Samaritans	Hearing Acts 8:5-6	Belief Acts 8:12				Baptism Acts 8:12
Ethiopian eunuch		Belief Acts 8:35			Confession Acts 8:37	Baptism Acts 8:36-38
Saul of Tarsus	Hearing Acts 9:4	Belief 1 Timothy 1:12-16				Baptism Acts 22:16
Cornelius	Hearing Acts 10:33	Belief Acts 15:7		Repentance Acts 11:18		Baptism Acts 10:48
Lydia	Hearing Acts 16:14					Baptism Acts 16:15
Philippian jailor		Belief Acts 16:31				Baptism Acts 16:33
Corinthians	Hearing Acts 18:8	Belief Acts 18:8				Baptism Acts 18:8
Ephesians	Hearing Acts 19:5	Belief Acts 19:2				Baptism Acts 19:5
Romans	Hearing	Belief		Repentance	Confession	Baptism

	Romans 10	Romans 10:10		Romans 2:4	Romans 10:9-10	Romans 6:3-4
Galatians	Hearing Galatians 3:2	Belief Galatians 2:16				Baptism Galatians 3:27
Colossians	Hearing Colossians 1:5-6	Belief Colossians 1:4				Baptism Colossians 2:11-12

**LOOKING AT THE STATEMENTS OF BELIEF  
OF A MAJOR EVANGELICAL DENOMINATION ABOUT BAPTISM;  
AND  
THEN ASKING SOME FAIR AND REASONABLE QUESTIONS.**

Below is a section I copied off the web site of a major evangelical denomination. It lists what they say they believe about baptism. The name of the denomination isn't an important part to even mention. I'm not 'out after them'. I'm interested in the teachings of all of us who claim to speak in the name of God. And I assure you, most all of us make mistakes at times. No one is innocent. But we must feel free to look at what we are all saying and be sure it correlates correctly with the Scriptures.

A large part of the evangelical world probably agree with the statements below. If you share their ideas, I would encourage you and challenge you to answer the questions added below their statements.

Below, I wrote my questions or comments IN CAPS to distinguish them from their statements, so there is no confusion about who is saying what. Their statements are in the shaded boxes.

I also added a few Scripture texts and I added the part about what Sacrament means.

THE DENOMINATIONS STATEMENTS ABOUT BAPTISM

\*\*\*\*\* believe that the Bible teaches that baptism is important but not necessary for salvation.

WHERE DOES IT SAY IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR SALVATION?  
VERSES?

For example, the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43),

THIS TOOK PLACE BEFORE THE NEW COVENANT HAD BEGUN. THAT CAN'T BE USED TO SUPPORT THE ARGUMENT THAT BAPTISM HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH OUR SALVATION UNDER THE N.C.

Saul on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1-18)

HERE IS THE ACCOUNT OF THAT EVENT:

Acts 9:17 (NIV)<sup>17</sup> **Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."** <sup>18</sup> **Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,**

WHERE DOES IT SAY IN THIS PASSAGE THAT BAPTISM WAS NOT A PART OF THE PROCESS OF HIS BEING SAVED?

VERSE:

HOW DOES THIS STORY SHOW BAPTISM DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH OUR SALVATION?

and the people gathered in Cornelius' house (Acts 10:24-48)

WHERE DOES IT SAY BAPTISM WAS NOT A PART OF THE PROCESS OF HIS BEING SAVED?

VERSE:

HOW DOES THIS STORY SHOW BAPTISM DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH OUR SALVATION?

all experienced salvation without the necessity of baptism.

WHERE DOES IT SAY ALL EXPERIENCED SALVATION WITHOUT THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM?

VERSE:

In his sermon at Pentecost, Peter urged those who had repented and believed in Christ to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.....

not that baptism was necessary for salvation

WHERE DOES IT SAY THAT BAPTISM WASN'T NECESSARY FOR SALVATION HERE?

VERSE:

AND, HOW CAN YOU BE SAVED IF YOUR SINS AREN'T FORGIVEN?

VERSE:

But as a testimony that they had been saved (Acts 2:1-41).

WHERE DOES IT SAY BAPTISM IS A TESTIMONY THAT THEY HAD BEEN SAVED?

VERSE:

Thus, baptism is symbolic

WHERE DOES IT SAY BAPTISM IS SYMBOLIC?

VERSE:

I PETER 3:21 SAYS NOAH AND HIS FAMILY WERE SAVED IN THE ARK FROM THE FLOOD WATERS. PETER SAID THAT THE FLOOD WATERS WERE SYMBOLIC OF N.C. BAPTISM THAT NOW SAVES YOU ALSO. THE FLOOD WATERS WERE SYMBOLIC, NOT BAPTISM. BAPTISM IS THE REALITY NOT A SYMBOL OF SOMETHING. REMEMBER IT ISN'T 'JUST BAPTISM'; REMEMBER SYNECDOCHE.

Thus, baptism is symbolic and not sacramental

WHERE DOES IT SAY IT IS NOT SACRAMENTAL?

VERSE:

WHAT IS SACRAMENTAL ANYWAY. THAT WORD DOESN'T EVEN EXIST IN THE N.T. THE FOLLOWING IS FROM THE 'INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA:

**SACRAMENTS sak'-ra-ments:**

**1. The Term:**The word "sacrament" comes from the Latin sacramentum, which in the classical period of the language was used in two chief senses: (1) as a legal term to denote the sum of money deposited by two parties to a suit which was forfeited by the loser and appropriated to sacred uses; (2) as a military term to designate the oath of obedience taken by newly enlisted soldiers. Whether referring to an oath of obedience or to something set apart for a sacred purpose, it is evident that sacramentum would readily lend itself to describe such ordinances as Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In the Greek New Testament, however, there is no word nor even any general idea corresponding to "sacrament," nor does the earliest history of Christianity afford any trace of the application of the term to certain rites of the church

SO THAT IS RIGHT. BAPTISM ISN'T A SACRAMENT. THAT IS NO ARGUMENT AGAINST IT BEING PART OF THE PROCESS OF COMING INTO JESUS AND THE N.C.. NOTHING IN THE GREEK N.T. IS SACRAMENTAL.

.....believe that the Bible teaches that baptism symbolizes that a person has been saved

WHERE DOES IT SAY THAT BAPTISM SYMBOLIZES THAT A PERSON HAS BEEN SAVED?

VERSE:

And is not a means of salvation.

WHERE DOES IT SAY BAPTISM IS NOT A MEANS OF SALVATION?

VERSE?

Baptism is not a means of channeling saving grace

WHERE DOES IT SAY THAT BAPTISM ISN'T A MEANS OF CHANNELING SAVING GRACE?

VERSE:

but rather is a way of testifying that saving grace has been experienced.

WHERE DOES IT SAY BAPTISM IS A WAY OF TESTIFYING THAT SAVING GRACE HAS BEEN EXPERIENCED?

VERSE:

It does not wash away sin

WHERE DOES IT SAY BAPTISM DOES NOT WASH SIN AWAY?

VERSE:

but symbolizes the forgiveness of sin through faith in Christ.

WHERE DOES IT SAY THAT BAPTISM SYMBOLIZED THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST?

VERSE:

While baptism is not essential for salvation,

WHERE DOES IT SAY BAPTISM IS NOT ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION?

VERSE:

it is a very important requirement for obedience to the Lord.

WHERE DOES IT SAY IT IS VERY IMPORTANT REQUIREMENT FOR OBEDIENCE TO THE LORD?

VERSE:

Christ commanded his disciples to baptize (Matthew 28:19) and therefore baptism is a form of obedience to Jesus as Lord. Baptism is one way that a person declares, "Jesus is Lord."

WHERE DOES IT SAY BAPTISM IS ONE WAY THAT A PERSON DECLARES 'JESUS IS LORD'?

VERSE:

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As I close this, I encourage one and all to continue to search the scriptures seeking what they really say, not what some man says they say!!!

God bless you in your walk with him

John Hendee

## BAPTISM AND BABIES

I was doing the third lesson of the IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP with a young man.

After going over the last step of entering the N.C., baptism, he said, "So you're saying I'm not saved?" (He had been sprinkled as a baby.)

My response was "Oh, I'm sorry, I can't say that. I'm just the Ambassador delivering the message as I understand it.

Actually you will have to study and find the answer to that question that you believe God teaches in the New Covenant.

The truth is only the King or Judge can answer your question and I believe he has. But you need to be sure or confident about that based on your examination of the subject to see what He has said. It isn't my covenant but His. Don't take it just on my word. In fact I didn't say what you just asked. But I understand how it came to your mind. I was just showing what I understand the King has said."

And the only way we can be sure of what he would say, is that any answer that anyone proposes must be supported in what the King has commanded in the writings of the New Covenant. Anything less is unacceptable.

But what I can do, based on my studying the N.C. for many years and my observations, is assure you that if you do what the King and his writers of the N.C. said, you can be totally sure that your salvation is intact and secure. Beyond that I can't speak."

"Now from what I've seen after 50 years of studying the N.C. Scriptures there is no example of anyone in the Bible being baptized as a baby or infant (in whatever form; pouring, sprinkling, immersion), or of someone baptizing an infant.

To do so would mean that a baby is baptized before their:

hearing

believing

loving

repenting and

confessing their faith in Jesus.

In the scriptures baptism always followed those decisions or actions.

Some, centuries ago some preachers put baptism first in that list of decisions or actions in a person's/babies life, and the other things followed later, often many years later. Doing so was based on their coming up with some 'new' theologies that forced them into the practice.

What they are saying is that they believe BAPTISM alone is what saves you. It doesn't. It is each individual's decision to be baptized into Christ or not.

Many churches practice of baptizing babies has led to confusion among many believers or disciples of Jesus. Many Godly parents have had their babies baptized believing that was what God called for. But in any case the parent's wishes for the salvation of their child isn't what saves them. Each person must chose to follow Christ on their own. My parents can't make that decision for me.

If one's church or denomination agrees with the Scriptures fine, if not, you will have to decide whose hands you want to put your relationship with God and eventual salvation; a church or God.

One has to examine the issues and decide for themselves' what they believe the Scriptures say.

Any individual life case that doesn't follow the pattern preached and taught in the N.C. will have to be left up to the King-Judge to figure out.

Jesus told the Pharisees on another issue that they were in danger of nullifying the Word of God for their man made 'religious traditions'. We have to be careful we don't do the same thing on this issue.

So why take any risks with something so important?

Let me ask you this.

Would you feel comfortable accepting the same answer to the question of 'what must I do to be saved' as Peter gave in the first ever evangelistic sermon in the books of Acts?

Acts 2:37-38 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Peter replied,

"Repent and

be baptized,

everyone of you,

in the name of Jesus Christ

for the forgiveness of your sins.

And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Did Peter goof here?

Do you think he got it right?

If so, then we see that a person first has to believe.

It is clear these people believed at this point.

Then they have to repent, or turn and surrender their life to Jesus.

Then they have to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.  
Then they are forgiven of their sins.  
Then they receive the Holy Spirit

We get in trouble when we start messing around with what God was saying through the Holy Spirit to the people through Peter on this day when the church was established in history.

Or would you feel comfortable accepting the same message that Ananias gave to Saul (later known as Paul) as Paul preached about that experience in the book of Acts?

God spoke to Ananias and told him what to do and what to say to Saul when he went to him. First he restored his sight, and then he asked:

Acts 22:14 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

God had spoken to Ananias (Acts 9:10-19) and told him to go to Saul. He was sent by God himself.

Do you think Ananias goofed here?

Do you think he got it right?

Paul came to believe in Jesus.

He was ready to surrender his life to Jesus whom he had been persecuting.

Why did Ananias give him THIS message from God if it was wrong?

This message was from God!

<http://markmoore.org/resources/essays/zwingli.pdf>