

Did Jesus Say Baptism Is Required For Entrance Into Heaven?

A Debate featuring several people from different religious backgrounds such as:

Former and Current Members of the Latter Day Saints Church

Former and Current Members of the Church of Christ

The 'formers' who answer "No" are members of the Southern Baptist Church

-Compiled from

<http://toughquestionsanswered.wordpress.com/2009/02/17/did-jesus-say-baptism-is-required-for-entrance-into-heaven/#comment-2451>

by the participant 'Timogose' in November, 2009

[Did Jesus Say Baptism Is Required For Entrance Into Heaven?](http://toughquestionsanswered.wordpress.com/2009/02/17/did-jesus-say-baptism-is-required-for-entrance-into-heaven/#comment-2337)

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The LDS Church teaches that Baptism is required for entrance into The Celestial Kingdom (Heaven). They often cite Christ's conversation with Nicodemus in John chapter 3 as evidence to support their position. However, a closer look at this conversation does not in fact support the Mormon view. Let's go through this conversation verse by verse.

¹Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. ²He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." ³In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." ⁴"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

It is important to stop here and look closely at what Christ taught and what Nicodemus asked in return. Christ said that a man must be "born again" to enter into heaven. Nicodemus was confused by what Christ meant by "born again" and followed by asking how a man could "enter the womb" again to be reborn. Keep this in mind.

⁵Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."

It is at this point most Mormons will stop and say something to the effect of "See, Christ taught that you have to be born of water – Baptized – or you cannot go to heaven." I am willing to admit that if the conversation stopped here they might actually have a case. Fortunately, Christ clarifies for us exactly what he means by born of water.

⁶"Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

Christ answers Nicodemus's question of what born again is... how can a man "enter the womb" to be reborn. Christ tells us that flesh gives birth to flesh when we are born the first time – of water from our mother's womb. Mormons get confused by what Christ meant by "born of water". It has nothing to do with baptism.... He was referring to being born of our mother. However, Christ goes further to contrast this first birth with being "born again" of the Spirit. This is the requirement for entrance into Heaven **not** baptism.

As you can see, this conversation **does not** teach that we must be baptized to enter Heaven. Don't get me wrong... I am not saying that baptism is a bad thing. In reality it is a wonderful ordinance that we should all follow once we accept Christ as our Savior. Christ most certainly taught that it is something we should do as an outward manifestation of a changed heart. However, He did **not** teach it as a mandate for salvation. Only one thing is required for salvation... a sincere and humble expression of faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior which leads to being Born Again of The Spirit.

What a beautiful concept this is! Christ's sacrifice is a gift we should all receive... it enables all who do so to enter The Kingdom of God. I will praise my Savior forever for what He has done for me.


Darrell

Comments [Leave a comment.](#)

1.  *On February 18, 2009 at 1:29 am [Justin](#) Said:*

Thanks for this. Because of hearing this explained, I was able to defend the Christian position when the LDS missionaries came the other day.

[Reply](#)

2.  *On February 18, 2009 at 1:44 pm Brad Said:*


To answer your question – no, He didn't. While some will often try to use individual passages to make their argument (John 3, 1 Peter 3, etc...), the whole of the Bible says otherwise. The overarching message of the Bible is that it is through grace ALONE that we are saved – there are no works we COULD do that could save us, even if we wanted to!

[Reply](#)

3.  *On February 18, 2009 at 2:54 pm [Justin](#) Said:*

Brad, did you read the article? 😊Y'all agree on that!

[Reply](#)

4.  *On February 18, 2009 at 8:10 pm Tyler Godat Said:*


One common example that I've always been given is the thief on the cross. He clearly was not baptized and yet Jesus said in Luke 23:43- **“Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”**

[Reply](#)

- o  *On April 27, 2009 at 10:38 pm kay Said:*

Could that not be because Jesus was alive and can do anything? He could save anyone He chose to. The old law had not died yet.

[Reply](#)

-  *On October 20, 2009 at 8:38 am walkinginlove Said:*

I know this thread is old but I want this post to be here in response to that line of reasoning.

Jesus said that if we have hate in our hearts for anyone we have already committed murder and thus have sinned. Jesus dies clearly before the Thief, the Thief clearly is alive and has his legs broken, so tell me how do you keep from sinning at that level of pain? Seriously the next time you pop a thumb with a hammer by accident think about the thief and having his legs clubbed and consider how he could keep from sinning after Jesus death?


The answer is he does not and because of his circumstances God allows him in simply through mercy. Those who argue any other reason appear to be wrong, he dies under the New Covenant because the veil has been torn the moment Jesus dies signifying the new relationship that bypasses a high priest and allows everyone to come to the father!

[Reply](#)

-  *On October 28, 2009 at 10:13 pm kay Said:*

was that not because the new law had not taken affect yet? The thief was under the old law where baptism was not required. There are other scriptures that indicate baptism is, if not necessary, very important.

[Reply](#)

- 5.  *On February 19, 2009 at 1:55 am [Ilze Henderson](#) Said:*

Thank you Darrell for this insight. I never really thought of this verse this way, but it is very interesting the way you cleared it for us. It is so true that the only access to heaven is through the blood of Jesus, our Lamb. If we accept Him in our lives we will have His life-giving blood flowing in our veins and through that blood we will be able to live forever with Him in Heaven. No other 'act' from our side is necessary to be with Him.

[Reply](#)

- 6.  *On March 5, 2009 at 9:10 pm Wes Said:*

If I may speak for some of those who place more emphasis on baptism, I am uncomfortable with the separation some people place between baptism and accepting Christ. I agree that salvation is through God's grace. There is no way for anyone to earn salvation. Baptism is God working, not a work of man (any more than reciting a sinner's prayer is a work of man). God offers us the gift of salvation, and He tells us what to do to accept (not earn) that gift.

A study of New Testament conversions shows that when someone decided to become a Christian, they were baptized. Galatians 3:26-27 says, "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." Peter told the crowd in Acts 2:38, "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." Romans 6 explains how our baptism is our death to sin – should we try to claim a place in heaven without first dying to sin? There are other verses (1 Peter 3:18-21, for example, "baptism that... saves you") that show the importance of baptism.

The thief on the cross, like all those who died before Christ did, was not able to be baptized into Christ's death. I am certain that God can allow anyone He wills into heaven whether they have been baptized or not (Romans 9:14ff), and if you are unable to be baptized (for example, if you are dying on a cross when you decide to follow Jesus) then God may indeed give you the gift of salvation anyway. However, if someone asks you what to do to be saved and you omit baptism, it seems to me that you are inconsistent with the message and example of the New Testament. I may be wrong, but I urge anyone with questions to study the Bible for the truth.

Your explanation of Jesus' answer to Nicodemus is questionable. Why would Jesus say that you must be born of your mother's womb if everyone has already done that?

I don't know what the Mormons teach about baptism or salvation. I am not trying to defend or attack any of their teachings, just to explain what I understand the Bible to teach.

I couldn't tell from your post what you consider the point of baptism to be.

[Reply](#)

- o  On March 6, 2009 at 9:35 am [Darrell](#) Said:

Wes,

Thanks for coming over to the blog! I appreciate your comments.

I attend a Baptist Church so my position on Baptism falls right in line with the Southern Baptist's... I believe that it is a very important ordinance that was taught and commanded by Jesus Christ. However, it is NOT something that is absolutely necessary for entrance into Heaven. The example of the thief on the cross is evidence of this fact.

The point of my post is to address the fallacy of those who use John 3 to support a doctrine that Baptism is REQUIRED to get into Heaven. Baptism is not being spoken of AT ALL in John 3. You asked:

“Why would Jesus say that you must be born of your mother's womb if everyone has already done that?”

Because he was responding to Nicodemus's question in verse 4. Look at verses 3 & 4:

3 “In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” 4 “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “**Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!**” (Emphasis mine)

Nicodemus was confused by Christ saying a man must be Born Again to enter Heaven. Stop here and ask yourself a question, why did Christ use the word “Again”? When are you born the first time? From your mother of course! When you are born of your mother you are born of the **flesh**. Christ was telling us we must be born not **only** of the flesh but **also** of the spirit. That is exactly what Christ references in the next two verses.

5 Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

Born the first time (verse 4) – of the water (verse 5) – which is of the flesh (verse 6)

Born Again (verse 3) – the second time (verse 4) – of the spirit (verses 5 & 6)

There is absolutely nothing in these verses to support the idea that Christ was talking about Baptism.

The Mormon Church teaches that baptism is required to get into Heaven. In addition, they teach that this baptism is only valid if it is performed by a Priesthood Holder in their church. Their missionaries frequently use John 3 to teach this doctrine. Unfortunately, just as in many other areas, they are taking the verses out of context and using them to uphold a false doctrine.

Darrell

[Reply](#)

o  *On April 16, 2009 at 11:17 am Tom Said:*

Wes,

I'm Mormon and I totally agree – Christ tells us what we must do to accept the gift (or partake as I like to put it).

He sets the terms of the covenant, and I believe baptism is an essential part of our covenant relationship with Him.

Cheers!

Tom

[Reply](#)

▪  *On April 16, 2009 at 1:56 pm [Darrell](#) Said:*

Tom,

Thanks for coming over and commenting.

As for the thief on the cross, I can see your point. One could make the argument the possibility exists he was baptized at some time prior to the cross. For me, I simply think that argument is a little far fetched. He was a thief and was being put to death for his crimes. To say that he was a follower of Christ seems to fly in the face of the facts. Did he get baptized and follow Christ into a life of crime?

Mark 16:16 is a great scripture to cite. I can see how you could interpret the first part of this scripture to support your position. However, I believe when we look at the entire passage it does not hold up. Looking closely at it's wording I find that it goes right along with my position.

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever **does not believe** will be condemned.”


So what must one do to avoid being condemned according to this passage? Believe. It does not say those who do not believe OR/AND who are not baptized are condemned. Yet that is the position you are taking by making baptism a REQUIREMENT for entrance into Heaven. You are saying those who do not take part in the LDS baptism (either in this life or vicariously in the spirit world) will not be able to go to the celestial kingdom.

I liken baptism to the other commandments we have been given... thou shalt not lie, steal, etc. It is very important and followers of Jesus Christ should obey (when my wife and I left the LDS Church and became Christian we were baptized). However there is nothing in the scriptures which tell me perfect obedience to this commandment is mandated for salvation. In addition, I see nothing supporting the LDS position that ONLY THEIR BAPTISM saves... it is simply not there. You can only find support for this in the extra-biblical writings since JS's time. In fact, this position is not even found in the BOM.

God bless!!

Darrell

[Reply](#)

-  *On October 20, 2009 at 8:43 am walkinginlove Said:*

The thief was not baptized, one account has both criminals mocking Jesus, are you going to tell me that someone who had been baptized was then mocking and then turned back again?

Thus to say that the thief was baptized is speculation at best! Nothing says he was, and scripture shows or seems to show a change of heart coming on the cross itself for the one thief, otherwise the account of both criminals mocking is wrong and thus in error and I doubt anyone wants to go there!

So the thief was bot baptized, but he did repent while on the cross!

-  *On April 27, 2009 at 10:50 pm kay Said:*

I, too, believe baptism is important. It is very important. I consider it close to a command. It alone does not save you, but I have never been a believer of death bed conversions. All a person's life they reject God, and then when are dying, they suddenly receive Him? I would think some are sincere, but also that some may not be.

Matt 3:15

Acts 10:48

Matt 28:19

1 Pet 3:20,21

Acts 8:39, 16:33,34

Gal 3:27

Rom 6:3

Col 2:12

Rom 6:4

John 3:5

Acts 33:16

Mark 16:16
Luke 7:30
Acts 2:38

When people are led to believe all they have to pray the sinner's prayer, it worries me.
Better to be safe than sorry.
k

[Reply](#)

- o  *On October 28, 2009 at 10:18 pm kay Said:*

I agree. Being raised Church of Christ, I was taught the Bible said to be baptized.

[Reply](#)

- 7.  *On April 16, 2009 at 11:14 am Tom Said:*

Darrell, how do you reconcile verses like Mark 16:16?

Also, why couldn't the thief on the cross have been baptized by John? John baptized a lot of people. Just because the guy committed a crime doesn't mean he hadn't been baptized. Even believers commit sin, sometimes severe ones.

To say that the thief "obviously" hadn't been baptized is wrong. How is that obvious? The Bible is completely silent on the man's life other than that he was a thief and was being crucified.

You may be of the opinion that he wasn't baptized, but if you want to claim the Bible and only the Bible, you have no grounds to make the claim that he wasn't baptized.

I would deem it more consistent, given Mark 16:16, that he had been baptized and on the cross was recommitting his life to the Lord. The Lord obviously recognized his sincerity (not all "deathbed" confessions are sincere, IMO).


I agree with Wes. "Partaking" is a great way to look at it. And Mormons believe that baptism is of no efficacy if the person has not truly committed themselves to Christ, a la Rom. 6.

[Reply](#)

- o  *On April 30, 2009 at 11:33 pm kay Said:*

Personally, I believe the thief on the cross was saved by Jesus, just because Jesus could do anything He wanted. He knew the heart of the thief and therefore saved him. Since Jesus was still alive at that time, the law of baptism was not effective yet. The old law was still in effect until Jesus died, therefore the thief did not need to be baptized.

[Reply](#)

-  *On October 20, 2009 at 8:44 am walkinginlove Said:*

When did Jesus stop having authority to forgive sins? Is he no longer in authority?

[Reply](#)

8.  *On April 16, 2009 at 3:20 pm Tom Said:*

And what must one do to be SAVED according to Mark 16:16?

Believe AND be baptized. Why would Jesus include both if both aren't required?

[Reply](#)


- o  *On April 16, 2009 at 3:26 pm [Darrell](#) Said:*

As I said, I can understand how you are interpreting this. Unfortunately, your interpretation does not line up with the rest of the passage. To make matters even worse your interpretation does not line up with the Biblical text as a whole. For example, how do you interpret this passage in light of Ephesians 2:8-9 and the numerous other passages which state faith is the only requirement for salvation (I am at work right now and don't have access to a Bible otherwise I would provide further examples). You are trying to build an entire theological position on one verse while ignoring many, many others. Unfortunately, this is simply bad hermeneutics.

God Bless!!

Darrell

[Reply](#)

- o  *On October 20, 2009 at 8:48 am walkinginlove Said:*

Mark 16:17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

Can anyone show me scripture where the above statement was confirmed in the Apostles lives? Please do not attempt to use Paul's snake bite journey to prove the above.

Paul did not handle a snake he was bitten by one, and I can find no account where anyone drank poison and lived.

So if Jesus is a prophet and the prophet and son of God, how can he make a statement that does not come true and remain a prophet?

Or is it simply that this longer ending of Mark was added later?

[Reply](#)

9.  *On April 16, 2009 at 4:37 pm Tom Said:*

I think Wes had it right – Baptism is no more a “work” in the context of Eph. 2:8-9 than is a sinner’s prayer. You have to offer the prayer to receive the Savior, but that doesn’t mean the prayer is what saved you. Jesus does that.


By your “not of works” logic, even a sinner’s prayer can’t be required for salvation because that’s a work and then we might boast that we had offered the prayer and thus saved ourselves.

Have you heard MadChemist’s parable of the pie? You should ask him about it. He wrote it so I’ll let him share it with you.

In the NT, when the gospel is preached and people believe, the apostles invite them to be baptized, not to say a prayer and ask Jesus into their hearts (although I’m not saying such a prayer is a BAD thing). It’s a fairly consistent pattern, and any example of praying to ask Jesus to be your personal Savior seems to be the exception, not the rule, of the NT method for receiving Christ. Also, don’t forget that Mormons believe that baptism is of no saving efficacy if the person hasn’t truly accepted Christ, thus the Savior says “He that believeth AND is baptized.”

One more thing about the thief on the cross – many people have accepted Christ and then fallen into sin, later to come back to the truth. Why not this thief? The only facts we have are that he was a thief and was being put to death. That doesn’t mean he was born a thief and lived his ENTIRE life as a thief.

[Reply](#)

- o  *On October 20, 2009 at 8:49 am walkinginlove Said:*

There is no evidence that he ever accepted “the truth” except on the cross! And he came to that truth by watching Jesus actions while dying!

[Reply](#)

10.  *On April 16, 2009 at 4:45 pm Tom Said:*

Also, someone who doesn’t believe isn’t going to be baptized, so leaving baptism out of the “condemned” half isn’t a problem for me. It’s implied by the first half of the statement.

And that’s how it’s phrased in the Book of Mormon, so I believe it. 3 Ne 11:33-34.

[Reply](#)

- o  *On April 16, 2009 at 11:14 pm [Darrell](#) Said:*

“Baptism is no more a “work” in the context of Eph. 2:8-9 than is a sinner’s prayer.”

Faith in Christ is required to get into Heaven yet as The Bible tells us this faith is actually given to us by God. It is not a work of man. Baptism IS a work of man showing obedience to Christ. Obedience does not save, faith does.

“In the NT, when the gospel is preached and people believe, the apostles invite them to be baptized, not to say a prayer and ask Jesus into their hearts (although I’m not saying such a prayer is a BAD thing).”

The belief is all that is required because the belief (faith) is what saves. Yes, they did invite them to be baptized because it is a commandment that follows saving faith. However, if you place obedience to a commandment as a prerequisite to entering into heaven you are stepping into a theological mess. For then the question becomes which commandments must I obey to enter into heaven. Numbers 1 through 10? More? Less? This is where legalism comes in... man starts creating a list of do's and don'ts which one must obey to enter heaven. How about committing adultery? We are told by Christ that anyone who looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery in his heart. Have you ever looked on a woman to lust after her? I will be honest and say I have. Will I still be able to go to heaven? How about anger? We are told that it is a sin to get angry with your brother? Do you ever do that? I have... can I not get into heaven? You say one can repent... but what if I get killed in a car accident before I have a chance to repent? What then?

You can see my point. For when you start placing works (which baptism is one of them) as a pre-requisite to heaven you have gone beyond The Bible. It gives one AND ONLY ONE prerequisite to heaven – faith. Taking one half of one verse out of context and building an entire theological position around it is practicing bad hermeneutics IMO. You must interpret this verse in light of the entire Biblical text which says FAITH is all that is required. You cannot ignore one at the expense of the other... you must interpret both in light of one another. Baptism is a commandment not a prerequisite.

“And that’s how it’s phrased in the Book of Mormon, so I believe it. 3 Ne 11:33-34.”

Yes, JS did a great job of importing scripture into the BOM from The Bible and changing it around to fit his preconceived beliefs. Adding words in which DO NOT exist in The Bible was a great way to do this. He actually did this with some of the Isaiah passages as well. This does present a good question though. If the BOM and The Bible are both the word of God as you believe, why would God provide virtually the exact same wording in both of these passages (Mark 16:16 and 3 Nephi 11:33-34) yet choose to add in the words “and is not baptized” only into the BOM? Wouldn’t a great God who is all powerful be more consistent?

Darrell

[Reply](#)

-  *On April 17, 2009 at 8:57 am Tom Said:*

Disagreements between Mark and 3 Nephi aren’t too troubling for me since I believe in the principle Nephi taught that “many plain and precious things” were taken from the Bible before it was compiled as such. When there is confusion on a point of doctrine, we consult all our standard works for clarification. So for me, 3 Nephi is a clarification, not a contradiction.

We believe that Christ sets the terms of entering the covenant with Him, and we believe the terms are faith, repentance, and baptism.

[Reply](#)

-  *On April 17, 2009 at 11:01 am [Darrell](#) Said:*

So you are of the opinion The Bible is not as reliable as the BOM? That is a standard teaching of the church as I see it (although I would be willing to bet that others would come back and accuse me of lying about LDS teachings if I were to say this – as is happening on another blog right now).

I am curious, what do you base this belief on? What proof do you have that “plain and precious truths” were removed from The Bible?

Darrell

-  *On April 27, 2009 at 10:57 pm kay Said:*


I believe baptism is obedience to a command. It is usually just done one time. That is quite different from living your life, and all your sins along the way.

[Reply](#)

11.  *On May 6, 2009 at 2:06 am kay Said:*

Faith — which kind? It takes a saving faith to be saved, not just a believing faith. Some people do not realize there is a difference. They think all they have to do is believe in God and they are saved. I have friends like that. But the devil believes in God, so that does not wash.

[Reply](#)


-  *On October 20, 2009 at 8:54 am walkinginlove Said:*

I have read the argument that the Devil also believes in God to discount belief, however the relationship with God that a believer has conforms him to Christ, the devil is not conformed to anything, thus the comparison is incorrect at best.

Baptism is death to self and to person will and new life is following God’s will by carrying the cross and enduring to the end!

Jesus said that those who stand firm or endure to the end shall be saved!

[Reply](#)

12.  *On October 20, 2009 at 8:55 am walkinginlove Said:*

person will should be personal will

[Reply](#)

13.  *On October 28, 2009 at 10:27 pm kay Said:*

I get confused. Being taught baptism was necessary, it is hard to shake that belief. I think the “sinner’s prayer” that so many teach is all you have to do to be saved is misleading. You can say that prayer all day, and if it doesn’t mean anything to you, or you don’t plan to change your

lifestyle, it does not save you. Think some try to make salvation too easy, and others too hard. As for baptism, I tend to believe it is necessary. Why was Jesus baptized? Why did he tell, ???, to hurry and go be baptized. On the other hand, you can go down into the water a sinner, and come up a sinner John Hagee says.

[Reply](#)

14.  *On October 29, 2009 at 8:30 am Timogose Said:*

Its good o study these things and I commend everyone for sharing with a good attitude. I will like to respond to some issues raised:

1) On October 20, 2009 at 8:44 am walkinginlove Said:

When did Jesus stop having authority to forgive sins? Is he no longer in authority?

Ans: Christ has all authority but is a Lord who does not violate his own word! While on earth before his death, he could and did pronounce sinners forgiven e.g. Matthew 9:1-6; Luke 23:39-43, etc. However, after his resurrection and promulgation of the new covenant, he only allows entrance into his kingdom based on the entry conditions he has COMMANDED -faith, repentance, confession/acknowledgement of his Sonship and water baptism. All of these must be obeyed for one to become a Christian since the day of Pentecost. They are always followed and each is explicitly stated or implied in the conversion cases recorded in the book of Acts.

That is the reason Jesus did NOT pronounce Saul saved on the road to Damascus or the angel to pronounce Cornelius saved, rather they were told to await someone who would come and tell them words and how they MIGHT BE SAVED. Men have to be preached to and must obey from the heart the gospel, Christ will not circumvent that!

2) "Faith in Christ is required to get into Heaven yet as The Bible tells us this faith is actually given to us by God. It is not a work of man. Baptism IS a work of man showing obedience to Christ. Obedience does not save, faith does." -Darrell

Ans: Baptism is NOT a work of man like trying to keep to a legal system. It is a requirement of God and its import is explained in Romans 6. As for obedience, the scripture says in Hebrews 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. So OBEDIENCE does save.

If one claims that baptism is a work, then so is faith because we have John 6:28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

The entry terms into Christ are unlike human works in that God set them for us to accept to be partakers of his nature and kingdom, they were not of human origin. To claim that God gives faith so it is not a work is inaccurate otherwise sinners are free to blame God for NOT giving them faith! Rather, he is calling 'whosoever will' via the gospel -" Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." There is personal responsibility to evaluate the message like the Bereans and not depend on human philosophy like some in Thessalonica or Athens. Why? "Hebrews 4:2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

There are other things I might comment upon but let us reason the above two points out.

Regards.

[Reply](#)

15.  *On October 29, 2009 at 12:07 pm [Darrell](#) Said:*

Timogose and Kay,

Thank you for coming on and participating in the conversation. This post has been inactive for a while, so I just noticed your comments. I would be more than happy to engage you in discussion.

Let's start here... Timogose said:

However, after his resurrection and promulgation of the new covenant, he only allows entrance into his kingdom based on the entry conditions he has **COMMANDED** - faith,repentance,confession/acknowledgement of his Sonship and water baptism. All of these must be obeyed for one to become a christian since the day of Pentecost.

Would you mind expanding upon what brings you to this understanding? What **specific** scriptures are giving you the understanding that Baptism is a requirement for salvation **since** Pentecost? Bear in mind what you are implying here... that there was one way to Heaven prior to Pentecost and another one since. You need to establish this change in requirements.

Darrell

[Reply](#)

16.  *On October 29, 2009 at 1:57 pm Timogose Said:*

Thanks for the response, I am happy to oblige. My understanding of the scriptures is that receiving salvation is not hinged on John 3:16 alone as that verse is NOT the only one that addresses the subject. A harmony of the Lord's teaching shows equally pertinent basic requirements. For example;

John 8:24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Matthew 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Thus some verses of scriptures (and people today) emphasize one or the other of the above but all are important and necessary or required. The book of Acts illustrates this fact. Faith in Christ saves (1 John 5:1), so does Repentance (2 Cor 7:10), Confession (Romans 10:10) and Baptism (1 Peter 3:21) but they must and do work together, none must be ignored or neglected by an alien sinner coming to the Lord under the new covenant which was first preached on the day of Pentecost. This new system is contrasted with the old in Hebrews (7-8 especially) as well as Romans and Galatians. I showed in my first post that Christ since his resurrection is maintaining the requirement for entrance into his kingdom and we should be content with that. His personal ministry was to prepare and teach us about his kingdom or church.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...

It is at the point of baptism that we die with Christ, have his blood wash our sins, get raised into the newness of life, put on Christ and receive the indwelling measure of the Spirit (Acts 2:38, Rm 6:3-11, Col 2:12-13, Gal 3:27, etc.) That was why Paul and Cornelius were COMMANDED to be baptized in the name of the Lord -Acts 10:48; 22:16.

Nobody was ever asked by an apostle or their companions to say a "sinner's prayer" and the bible is clear as to HOW people received Christ in the first century. Anything contrary to the Acts 2,4,8,9,16,22 etc. approach is dangerous for "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that OBEY NOT the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" -2 Thessalonians 1:7-8

[Reply](#)

- o  On October 29, 2009 at 3:41 pm [Darrell](#) Said:

Timogose,

It appears that we are in agreement in many areas. Coming to Christ entails much more than just a simple prayer – it is a matter of will. One can easily say a prayer with nothing having truly transpired on the inside. In addition, one can get Baptized with nothing having really occurred on the inside. There are several things that must be in place for a person to be able to exercise a saving faith. A few things that immediately come to mind: 1) Knowledge (how can one put their faith in something that they don't have any knowledge of); 2) A change of heart and mind about sin and God; 3) Acceptance of the free gift that has been provided; and 4) A willingness to trust in the Savior (although this is really a part of number 2).

Where you and I appear to part ways is in the inclusion of Baptism. You are correct, Baptism is spoken of as a commandment in The Bible. Thus, it, just like all of the other commandments, is vitally important. However, the mere fact that it is spoken of as a commandment does not, in and of itself, make it a **pre-requisite** to salvation. There are many, many things that are spoken of as commandments. For example: becoming angry without a cause. Since coming to Christ, have you ever done this? If you are like me and every other human being I know, the answer is "yes". Does breaking this commandment mean you will not go to Heaven?

Darrell

[Reply](#)

- 17.  On October 30, 2009 at 2:48 am Timogose Said:

If Christ commanded baptism and made it a condition for salvation (and He did) just like faith, repentance and confession THEN it is a pre-requisite.

Take a critical look at Mark 16:16, it is faith + baptism not faith alone that leads to salvation. Even then, we know from other verses that repentance and confession are required too. The latter

part of Mark 16:16 says 'he that believeth not shall be damned.' There is no need to say "believeth not and is not baptized" because the person who does NOT believe will NOT and/or need NOT be baptized.

Examples:

1) In Acts 16, The Philippian jailor was told to believe on the Lord for salvation since his conduct and question in verses 29-30 shows repentance. In order to know WHAT to believe, Paul and Silas preached to the man's household and baptized them that SAME night after they concurred with the gospel message. Ditto for the 3000 on the day of Pentecost, the Ethiopian eunuch, etc.

2. In Acts 26, Agrippa was almost persuaded but did not fully believe or repent so there was no need to baptize him, ditto all the opposers of the apostles who rejected their message.

It is modern human tradition that says baptism is unimportant, converts are always baptized IMMEDIATELY in the book of Acts. Have you considered the REASON for baptism which I have listed from the scriptures and the cases of Saul and Cornelius? No-one can put on Christ since Pentecost if he has NOT been baptized into Christ.

If a Christian sins (anger, lust, etc.) then he should repent and pray as we are admonished in Acts 8:20-24, James 5:16, 1 John 1:6-10, 1 John 2:1-3, etc. He does not have to be re-baptized. However, to become a Christian IN THE FIRST PLACE, a sinner must meet the basic conditions.

[Reply](#)

18.  *On October 30, 2009 at 8:46 am [Darrell](#) Said:*

If Christ commanded baptism and made it a condition for salvation (and He did) just like faith, repentance and confession THEN it is a pre-requisite.

I think that is the very point we are discussing and disagree upon. For I do not believe that the biblical text demonstrates nor have you established the fact that Christ **made** it a condition for salvation.

You seem to be forgetting that Christ Himself pronounced the thief on the cross forgiven and said that he would be with Christ in paradise on that very day (Luke 23:43). What was this based upon? Baptism? No, it was based upon one thing and one thing only: a pronouncement of true, heartfelt faith in Christ. This goes right along with the multitude of scripture which gives one and only one pre-requisite for justification: faith.

Romans 3:22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

Romans 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. (This verse is very important because it demonstrates how we have access to grace – faith.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. (How are we saved? Faith.)


There are many, many others, but I don't have time to list them now. I am running late for work.

I think you are conflating justification, which comes only through faith, with sanctification, which comes from obedience. There is a difference.

I am enjoying our conversation. Let's continue it!

Darrell

[Reply](#)

19.  *On October 30, 2009 at 10:22 am Timogose Said:*

I have shown from the scriptures that we are saved by faith when we OBEY Christ's gospel in totality.

Did Jesus make Repentance a pre-requisite? What of Confession or Belief? Are these works of man or works of God?

Why wont many accept that Christ made baptism a condition too... probably because they assume it is a work of man as they have to undergo immersion in water rather than have it as a mental thing in their mind.

You have NOT addressed any of the scriptures that deal with the purpose of baptism such as Mk 16:16, Acts 2:38, Rm 6, Gal 3:27 etc. What do you think Jesus and his INSPIRED apostles Peter and Paul mean in those verses?

My first post showed that the thief on the cross did NOT need baptism and why. It takes careful STUDY to realize that the new covenant and the command for baptism BY Christ became operational AFTER his resurrection. Please see 2 Tim 2:15.

We can NOT change his entry conditions into his kingdom but can refuse to obey them, those very words will judge us on the last day. At the point of OBEYING the gospel, we receive ALL spiritual blessings which are IN CHRIST (Eph 1:3) ... but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God -1 Cor 6:11

You have refused to comment about Saul or Cornelius or the fact that converts were always baptized immediately in the New Testament BECAUSE without it they can NOT be IN CHRIST! The Ethiopian eunuch grasped this fact... How can someone claim to have faith and refuse or delay baptism or repentance?

[Reply](#)

20.  *On October 30, 2009 at 1:47 pm [Darrell](#) Said:*

Timogose,

I have shown from the scriptures that we are saved by faith when we OBEY Christ's gospel in totality.

You are adding to faith here: faith + "obey in totality" = justification. To you, "obey in totality" means baptism. I have spoken with others who have their own version of commandments they include in "obey in totality". Perhaps if we get angry unjustifiably we are not going to heaven?

Perhaps telling a “white lie” will keep me out of heaven? If faith only saves based upon my obedience, where is the good news of the Gospel?

This is exactly what the Pharisees did. They added to God’s requirements for justification and conflated justification with sanctification. As a result, they missed the wonderful gift provided by God through faith. I am not saying you are being a Pharisee; don’t take it that way. I am only pointing out the danger of adding to what God has clearly decreed. For by doing so you take away the beauty and simpleness of the Gospel and instead go down the slippery road of legalism.

Bottom line, you have not made a clear case for Baptism being a requirement for justification. There is absolutely no way to read the totality of scripture and include it as a requirement for justification. It is only by reading some verses in solidarity that one can come to your conclusion. However, when read in light of the many, many verses that speak of faith as the only way to justification (a few of which I cited), it becomes clear that baptism is part of the process of **sanctification** not justification.

You have NOT addressed any of the scriptures that deal with the purpose of baptism such as Mk 16:16, Acts 2:38, Rm 6, Gal 3:27 etc.

The reason I did not address your verses is I have no problem with what they say, and they do not make your case. For example, you cite 2 Timothy 2:15 as evidence that Christ changed the process of justification upon His death and thereby added Baptism. Somehow you are using this verse to try and get around what Christ did with the thief on the cross. Let’s look at this verse:

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

What in this verse gives you the understanding that Christ added baptism after His death? This verse is talking about the process of sanctification and about correctly handling and delivering the Word of God. It is an admonishment to preachers to make sure they teach the Word correctly and says nothing about baptism or about Christ changing the requirements for justification on the day of Pentecost.

You have refused to comment about Saul or Cornelius or the fact that converts were always baptized immediately in the New Testament BECAUSE without it they can NOT be IN CHRIST!

What makes you think they did this because they thought without it they could not be saved? My position is they did it because it was a commandment, not because it is a requirement for justification. You have not made your case here.

How can someone claim to have faith and refuse or delay baptism or repentance?

Repentance is a change of mind and heart; it is embodied in a True and Saving Faith. I am not sure why you keep bringing it up. Have I said something that makes you think I don’t believe a person should repent? Did you read my previous comment where I spoke of having a change of heart and mind as being part of saving faith?

In addition, I can turn this around on you... how can someone claim to have faith and still tell a lie? Have you told a lie since coming to Christ? If so, maybe you aren’t “obeying in totality”. Do you see my point?

I love Hebrews 11. It gives us the Great Hall of Faith and demonstrates for us that God’s way to Him has, contrary to your claim, never changed. It has always been through faith and faith alone. As an example, Abraham was justified through faith (Romans 4:1-2). The Old Covenant with its

sacrifices was not the way in which people were justified, they were justified through their faith in God. The sacrifices were merely a foreshadowing of what was to come in the ultimate sacrifice – Christ. Christ’s sacrifice did not change the Law, it fulfilled it (Matt 5:17). The Covenant has always been enacted through faith. I am sorry Timogose, you have not made your case. The thief on the cross stands in your way.

Darrell

[Reply](#)

21.  *On October 30, 2009 at 6:04 pm Timogose Said:*

On the contrary, Saving Faith is demonstrated in Obedience. That is what the Bible teaches whether in James or in Romans or in Hebrews 11:6. Faith not ACTED upon isn’t TRUE or living faith. Yes, God justifies when He sees the intention to obey being CARRIED OUT as in the case of Abraham or anyone else but to dispute the Lord’s basic instructions due to an **UNWILLINGNESS TO OBEY** is already addressed by Heb 5:9 and 2 Thess 1:8.

Darell says “it becomes clear that baptism is part of the process of sanctification not justification.”

Ans: Jesus and the apostles, however says otherwise in Mk 16, Acts 2, Acts 22, etc. They linked baptism to salvation and remission of sins! I would rather believe them.

I cited I Cor 6:11 to point out that Salvation, justification, santification and ALL spiritual blessings which are IN CHRIST are concurrently given to the one who has been washed of his sins when baptized INTO Christ.

Darell says “you cite 2 Timothy 2:15 as evidence that Christ changed the process of justification upon His death and thereby added Baptism. Somehow you are using this verse to try and get around what Christ did with the thief on the cross.”

Ans: You refuse to see that my argument there is that one must study to realize that the new covenant and establishment of Christ’s kingdom took effect after the resurrection. Christ was born under the law but brought a new WAY and is the NEW lawgiver. I only cited 2 Tim 2:15 to point to the fact that simply because Christ did or permitted something before his death DOES NOT mean that such is the norm expected of partakers of the new covenant. When did he he give the command in Mk 16:16 and Mt 28:19, before or AFTER his death on the cross? **Failure to discern this shows a lack of careful study.** Ditto for why Saul and Cornelius were not saved from their sins at the point of their miraculous encounters but had to be PREACHED TO AND BAPTISED.

Darell says “Have I said something that makes you think I don’t believe a person should repent?”

Ans: If you claim someone need not be baptized, you might as well say he should not repent. Why the opposition to baptism? It was not difficult for new testament preachers and converts to accept and promptly obey. If you think I am adding baptism to faith as stated in your opening paragraph then you are ADDING repentance!

Darell says “What makes you think they did this because they thought without it they could not be saved? My position is they did it because it was a commandment, not because it is a requirement for justification.” [On baptism of Paul, Cornelius and other converts in the book of Acts]

Ans: The bible told us why in Mk 16, Acts 2, Rm 6, Gal 3 so do not bring up any SPECULATION. If as you think they did it because it was a commandment, why was it necessary to OBEY this commandment?? Look in those chapters, the answers are there!

Darell says “In addition, I can turn this around on you... how can someone claim to have faith and still tell a lie? Have you told a lie since coming to Christ? If so, maybe you aren’t “obeying in totality”. Do you see my point?”

Ans: You are the one refusing to see the point with an escapist approach that ‘why should one obey the gospel if he can still sin after coming to Christ?’

Neither Phillip the evangelist nor Simon who was a sorcerer took that line of reasoning. Simon believed and WAS BAPTISED. When he later sinned, he was told what to do by Peter and he humbly accepted it. You are mixing the basic conditions the Lord spelt out with everything else. ‘Do not lie’ is well known to even those who have never heard of Christ or the law of Moses! What makes the gospel different?

Christ said sinners must believe, repent, confess him and be baptized for the remission of sins. When anyone pick on baptism and claim this is a work which is unnecessary, he is not challenging me but Jesus and the plan of salvation. His argument is with the inspired scriptures not I.

If anyone assumes he or others may be saved today like the thief on the cross then good luck to them, I have declared the counsel of God as written and preached by the Lord’s apostles.

[Reply](#)

22.  *On October 30, 2009 at 7:14 pm Timogose Said:*

One other thing Darrell, about your understanding of the concepts of justification, sanctification & salvation...

You wrote “I think you are conflating justification, which comes only through faith, with sanctification, which comes from obedience.”

The Lord Jesus and His apostles state OTHERWISE.

In intimating Paul about his commission to be an apostle unto gentiles, Christ said in Acts 26:18 “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are **sanctified by faith** that is in me.”


When Paul referred to the church at Corinth as them that are “sanctified in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor 1:2), he was not basing this assertion on their obedience to laws such as ‘do not lie, do not fornicate, etc.’ as we can infer from the issues that he treated in that epistle.

Rather he based it on their initial OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL itself as evident in 1 Corinthians 6:11 “And such were some of you: but **ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.**”

What of James 2:24? “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and **not by faith only.**”

Surely, the scriptures are plain enough and with some prayerful and sincere study, any mind WILLING TO OBEY can come to a better understanding.

[Reply](#)

23.  On October 30, 2009 at 11:44 pm [Darrell](#) Said:

Okay Timogose, let's take a look at some of the verses you cite as support for the fact that Christ added the requirement of baptism upon His death.

Romans 6:3-4 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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.

This verse talks about baptism; however, it in no way mandates baptism as a requirement for salvation. In fact, just a few verses earlier, Paul himself tells us exactly how we are justified. Romans 5:1-2:

Therefore, since we have been justified through **faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by **faith** into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.[emphasis mine]

How do we gain access to grace? By baptism? No! By faith. Paul qualifies himself here and thus, your verse in Romans does not contextually stand up to the standard you have set for it.

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."

Your claim is that because Peter ties baptism together with repentance and forgiveness in this verse that it must be a requirement for salvation. However, such is not the case. Let's look just a few verses prior to this where Peter himself quotes the prophet Joel. In verse 21:

And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

It is strange that Peter did not change this verse from Joel, which according to your read, must be an error. For Peter did not qualify it by mandating baptism before salvation. In addition, in the next chapter Peter himself, while preaching to another group of people, says, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus." (Acts 3:19-20). Here Peter does not include anything about baptism. Instead, he makes it very clear exactly what brings forgiveness and the gift of Christ – turning to God in faith. It is strange that Peter left baptism out if it is required for the saving power to come upon a person.

Acts 22:14-16 "Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'"

You, again, are using this verse to mandate baptism due to the fact that it is included in with the words "wash your sins away" (meaning forgiveness). However, you are forgetting the words that follow: calling on his name (expressing faith). Is it the calling on his name (faith) that causes the sins to be washed away or the baptism? One way to find out is to look at the writings of the very

man this is speaking about: Paul. What did he have to say on the subject? I cited a few of his words in my above post this morning. I will re-cite them now and include some others.

Romans 3:22 This righteousness from God comes through **faith** in Jesus Christ to all who believe. — no baptism mentioned.

Romans 10:13 Everyone who **calls on the name** of the Lord will be **saved**. — Notice that he used the exact same words that were used in referencing his salvation experience in Acts 22. Yet here he left baptism entirely out of the picture. If salvation was necessary for being saved, why did he forget it?

Romans 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. — no baptism mentioned.

Galations 3:8 The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith... — no baptism mentioned.

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. — no baptism mentioned.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. — no baptism mentioned.

It is really strange that Paul would leave out baptism in so many verses talking about justification, yet include faith. According to you he knew it was a requirement based upon his own salvation experience. So why would he leave it out of these (and many, many others I could cite) if it was required?

I have time to look at one more verse you brought up, and then I need to head to bed.

Gal. 3:26-27 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.

You are apparently taking the words, “clothed yourselves with Christ” to mean that baptism is what causes this to happen. Yet, that is reading only part of the verse. What does the first part say? What makes one a “son of Christ”? Faith!! In addition, let’s look back at the earlier part of the chapter to see how Paul qualifies his very own words. Verses 5 -6:

Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? Consider Abraham: “He **believed** God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” Understand, then, that those who **believe** are children of Abraham.

In addition, verses 9 and 22:

So those who have **faith** are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. . . . But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who **believe**.

It is clear by Paul’s own words that faith is what brings one into the relationship with Christ. Not baptism.

That is all I have time to cover right now. Bottom line I am trying to get at here is that you have not established a change over to baptism being a pre-requisite for salvation after Christ's death. There are simply too many verses and instances where the apostles spoke of faith as being the sole justifier. Baptism is not spoken of as salvific; as a result, we are back to the thief on the cross. He received salvation based upon a simple, heartfelt, sincere, profession of faith in Christ. And Paul and Peter spoke of faith in this same manner after Christ's death. He is the counter example to your doctrinal position and thus, until you deal with him your position lacks firm footing.

You may rightly be asking yourself, "Why does he make a big deal out of this?" Just so you know, I have been baptized myself. I attend a Baptist church after all! 😊 The reason I make a big deal out of this is because there are churches out there that use baptism a tool of control and power (for example, the LDS Church – of which I was a member for a number of years). They not only claim that baptism is mandated as a requirement for salvation, they take it a step further and claim that only **their** baptism is legal and binding. In other words, salvation is only available through them. Thus, since one must have baptism to enter heaven (at least according to their teaching), and only their baptism is legal, they are the only ones who have the path to God.

This type of thinking is a travesty. I think it is vitally important to let people know that their salvation has absolutely nothing to do with man or a particular church. Salvation is available to **all** who want it. And it is easily attainable through faith in Christ.

Have a blessed night!

Darrell

[Reply](#)

24.  *On October 31, 2009 at 2:06 pm Wes Said:*

When you take all the verses referenced together, it seems clear that baptism and faith are involved in the plan of salvation. Repentance and grace are also clearly involved. Some of these words are left out of some scriptures on salvation, but to say that you can find a scripture here or there that mentions salvation but not baptism, and using those verses to "prove" something, is taking them out of context. Baptism without faith, repentance, and grace has no meaning. In the same way, to say you have faith and don't want to be baptized seems silly also.

[Reply](#)

25.  *On October 31, 2009 at 4:45 pm Timogose Said:*

Wes said "Some of these words are left out of some scriptures on salvation, but to say that you can find a scripture here or there that mentions salvation but not baptism, and using those verses to "prove" something, is taking them out of context."

This is exactly what I have been trying to impress on Darrell ever since! He is only interested in the verses that mentions faith and at times will accommodate the ones on repentance but finds it hard to accept those on baptism. **That is NOT the right way to divide the word of truth.**

I understand and accept the Romans passages he holds as proof text and has directed him to James for the complimentary perspective inspired by the Holy Spirit. Lets take a look at his submissions.

1. He claims Romans 6 “talks about baptism; however, it in no way mandates baptism as a requirement for salvation.”

Can someone who is not baptized into Christ’s death claim to have died with him? Can such who has not partaken in the likeness of his death hope to partake in the likeness of his resurrection? How can such truly walk in the newness of life?

2. Darrell says “Your claim is that because Peter ties baptism together with repentance and forgiveness in this verse that it must be a requirement for salvation. However, such is not the case. Let’s look just a few verses prior to this where Peter himself quotes the prophet Joel. In verse 21: And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

If words have meaning and if we are both reading an English Bible then I want to encourage you to believe what you read in 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.”

Peter did not of his own tie repentance and baptism to salvation or remission of sins, the Holy Spirit did. That was what Christ commanded in Mk 16:16, Lk 13:3; 24:47, Mt 28:19, etc. Leaving the clarification of the Lord on Joel’s prophecy and running around to try and delete baptism from the book of Acts cuts no ice. What ‘is the case?’ How did Saul or the Ethiopian eunuch call on the name of the Lord, or all the other converts in the New Testament after Pentecost? They did in obedient faith and got baptized PRONTO as they did so!

For your information, in Acts 3:19-20 that you cited Peter emphasized repentance NOT Faith. Does that mean faith is not required? or baptism? They were.

In Acts 22, when Paul was told to ‘Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’ -He was told to contact the cleansing blood shed at Christ’s death and confess faith in the Lord Jesus.

Saul could only do that if baptized into Christ’s death but Darrell would have none of that. To him nothing matters but justification by faith ONLY -a position which contradicts the inspired apostle, James. Even Paul in Romans 16:26 teach that the gospel “is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known **to all nations for the obedience of faith.**”

But Darell believes in justification and salvation via Faith without Obedience for he fears that to obey is to work and that would negate Grace. He has not responded to John 6:28-29 that declares *even faith to be a work!*

I have earlier cited Roman 10:17 which states that Faith comes from hearing the word and that God expects obedience. It is the doers that are justified because those are the ones that TRULY believe. The INTENTION or willingness to obey is what matters most, it spurs faith into action and God justifies the moment He sees that, not necessarily until the work is completed. That was why (and when) Abraham was justified. So don’t delay or refuse baptism rather preach it as Christ commanded and stop comparing it to a ‘do not lie’ commandment which is taken care of by the command to a sinner to Repent.

3. Darell says “There are simply too many verses and instances where the apostles spoke of faith as being the sole justifier. Baptism is not spoken of as salvific; as a result, we are back to the thief on the cross. He received salvation based upon a simple, heartfelt, sincere, profession of faith in Christ.”

The apostles TOGETHER spoke of faith as a justifier, NOT THE SOLE justifier. Read the book of Romans and James over again. Paul was contrasting the gospel system with the law of Moses so it is as Wes says 'silly' to reject the basic conditions Jesus made as entry requirements into his kingdom by classifying them as works of man.

Mk 16 and Acts makes baptism 'salvific' just like faith or repentance or confession of Christ. You may not like it and may choose to misunderstand, misinterpret or misrepresent it but those verses remains clear and permanent in the scriptures.

The thief on the cross does NOT stand in my way as you think because he was saved before the promulgation of the New Covenant. I do not live under his dispensation. However, the 3000 on the day of Pentecost, the Samaritans, the Ethiopian Eunuch, Saul of Tarsus, Cornelius, the Philippian jailor, Lydia, the Corinthians, the Ephesians, etc. and all the converts since Pentecost who believed and were IMMEDIATELY baptized without arguing are the testimony against you. You have contradicted Christ and his apostles about the terms of salvation under the New Covenant.

Since you do NOT want people to believe, repent, confess Christ and be baptized today (since according to you that involve works of man and ADDS to faith) THEN you must have Jesus come down to personally promise them paradise and pronounce their sins forgiven. You need that to demonstrate that he does not mean the commands he gave in Mk 16, Mt 28 etc. after his resurrection. That those instructions are not for 'all creature or all nations' but that he makes exceptions and respect of persons.

I have news for you; the Lord will NOT circumvent or violate his word which can never return void. He has demonstrated that with the conversion of Saul, Cornelius and others. **Since the day of Pentecost, only those who by faith have been baptized INTO CHRIST can access ALL spiritual blessings which are IN CHRIST JESUS.**

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1.  *On November 1, 2009 at 12:26 am Brad Said:*

Timogose, you're not espousing any new, unique arguments that people haven't heard before. I haven't, and don't have time to, read everything written between you and Darrell, but I can see there's a LOT of detail and various Scriptures and differing interpretations flying around. All of it is somewhat pointless, b/c the basics aren't even being agreed on. We're all interpreting Scripture through different lenses, so we'll naturally come to different conclusions about what verses mean.

I'd be very curious, Timogose, what denomination you belong to. Would you care to share? I am currently Southern Baptist, but grew up in the Christian Church/Church of Christ, so I grew up hearing these arguments ALL THE TIME. My dad, in fact, is a former COC pastor, now retired. He and I, to this day, still disagree on this aspect of baptism. He's used all these arguments that you've set forth, and frankly, these arguments bring forth questions and premises of their own that must be dealt with, in order to make sense. So again, I'd be curious what your denomination is.

From what I've gathered, you seem to believe that baptism was NOT a requirement for salvation until AFTER Christ's death, at which time it became one under the "new covenant." Is this correct?

If that's the case, then you are implicitly stating that there are AT LEAST 2 different methods of salvation, depending on when people lived. There's no way around that. Is that also what you believe?

Further, if you say that baptism is a REQUIREMENT for salvation after Christ's death (and you are saying that), then would you also say that anyone who has NOT been baptized since then has NOT been saved? That would be the natural progression of your line of thinking, but would like you to acknowledge it.

Once I hear your answers to this post, I'll continue, but it's important to know your answers before I do. And do me, and everyone else hear who is either reading or responding, a favor – don't be wishy-washy, or vague, or non-committal. If you believe it, say it. If you don't, say you don't. Don't qualify everything, b/c then you're not dealing with absolutes, and your doctrine can change just as easily.

Looking forward to your responses, Timogose.


[Reply](#)

2.  *On November 1, 2009 at 7:55 am Wes Said:*

My understanding is that if you want to follow the Bible's plan for salvation, be baptized. I am not going to say that you can't be saved without baptism, because God is our judge and can make exceptions if He pleases. It is not my belief that He will make many exceptions, but that is His prerogative. However, I believe the Bible's plan for salvation includes baptism, and if your own plan for salvation excludes baptism, then you will be depending on God to make an exception for you. He has given us His word, which has plenty of reasons to be baptized, and explains baptism's significance (Romans 6, cited earlier, is a great text for this).

I don't like arguing this point too much with Baptists, since I think most Baptists get baptized. It annoys me that there seems to be an effort to delay baptism until after their conversion experience (to demonstrate that it is not part of salvation?), but as long as you get baptized, then arguing whether you were saved between the time you said your sinner's prayer and were baptized (usually several days later) seems like a waste of time. If someone decides they will never be baptized because it is unnecessary for salvation, then the lengthy argument is worthwhile.

[Reply](#)

- o  *On November 1, 2009 at 7:47 pm Brad Said:*

Wes, I'm assuming you realize that you speak as if the issue has been settled, calling being "saved without baptism" an "exception." It's far from settled. There are many, myself included, who believe it is just as crystal clear in the other direction, that baptism is something Christ commanded us to do AFTER salvation, but not as a condition OF salvation. If you are going to speak as though it's been settled, when it hasn't, then don't be surprised when I, or others, speak of the situation differently, as though it also has been settled.

Have you asked yourself WHY you believe the way you do? Is it b/c you were taught or brought up this way? Do you belong to a church that espouses this belief? I was, as I've said earlier, but later in life, when I investigated it for myself, apart from the Church of Christ and apart from what my dad believed, I simply found that the Bible does not, in my

opinion, make the case for baptism being a condition OF salvation, but rather an act of obedience AFTER salvation. Important to do? Yes, undeniably. But effective for salvation? I don't believe so. To say that one MUST be baptized for salvation opens a can of worms that, if truly thought out and brought to its natural conclusion, can lead to multiple methods of salvation (something the Bible clearly does not teach) and the obvious need for "exceptions", in order to support the idea. I just don't see it, and in all the years I've discussed it with people, including my father, a former Church of Christ pastor, no good argument has ever been made that doesn't lead to other problems.

I would be curious why you believe it, and if you say it's your understanding of the Bible, rather than the way you've been taught, would like to walk through the inherent problems that this particular belief holds.

[Reply](#)

3.  *On November 2, 2009 at 7:29 am Wes Said:*

Brad,

If you are going to be baptized anyway, I do not feel it is worthwhile to argue about whether you are saved before or after you are baptized. If you want to see why I believe baptism is important to salvation, please reread the comments for this post. Timogose went through numerous scriptures that I believe support my position. At this point it looks like the commenters are all standing firm in their beliefs and have made their points, so I think further discussion is not going to make progress or promote unity.

It is gladdening that I am not being accused of a strange or new doctrine. My goal is to encourage each person to study and believe the scriptures especially on this topic of whether Christ commanded baptism for salvation under the new covenant.

It is only FAIR that you should have read EVERYTHING between myself and Darell ... so as to make unbiased, relevant, unrepeated and informed contributions.

If the exchanges are pointless, why add to it? I thought we are discussing about how any soul could acquire ETERNAL salvation.

Since God is not the author of confusion but wants us to have the same mind or ONE faith then it is helpful to reason together if peradventure this will lead either party or onlookers to come to a better understanding of His word.

Truth is not many but unique, so at least one of our different positions must be erroneous in light of the scriptures. We do not need the lenses of human philosophy, creeds or tradition; let us make an effort to look into the Bible with an open mind.

I am just a Christian and member of the Church of Christ, in Lagos, Nigeria. **The bible condemns the establishment and promotion of denominations which neither abides in the doctrine of Christ nor glorify His name.** That is another topic on its own, so let us not digress for now.

You can either ignore or simply refute any argument that does not make sense biblically.

It is not what I believe that matters but WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES.

During the latter part of the Old Covenant, John the fore-runner of Christ introduced water baptism (Matthew 3:4-8). The baptism of John was for the remission of sins -Mark 1:4 (though Jesus was baptized for a different and unique purpose - Matthew 3:13-16, John 1:29-34)

Concerning, John's baptism we have this INTERESTING observation about how some religious folks responded to it in Luke 7:29-30

And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

Later, during Christ's personal ministry, His followers were baptizing people to increase His disciples but His own actions about it then are instructive -John 4:1-3

It was after his resurrection that He commanded baptism and made it a condition for salvation under the new covenant. As I wrote before, the apostles and the converts recorded in the book of Acts had no problem understanding or promptly obeying this, do you?

One may say that 'since Jesus PROBABLY made an exception from John's baptism for the thief on the cross, He would equally do same for people from His own commanded baptism today?' Recall that "the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins"... Now that He has given instructions and ascended to heaven it would be unwise to ARGUE that we disobey His commandment and hope for a waiver!

If water baptism is unnecessary, the Lord would have saved Saul of Tarsus and Cornelius without it but He did NOT. They needed to hear the gospel from a man and be baptized for the remission of their sins as they confessed faith in Him. God who sees the heart and knows all things has the prerogative on salvation but I will do nothing but preach the new covenant as written and obeyed since the day of Pentecost. See also Acts 19:1-5.

There has always been ONE way of salvation: Obedient Faith in Jehovah God.

This faith is one that trusts in the Lord alone and is eager to do those things that are pleasing in His sight, it is not a professed faith that refuses to obey Him or that seeks to devise its own means of claiming or earning salvation.

The ONE way of salvation has been executed through DIFFERENT MEANS depending on when people lived! God expects people who lived under different dispensations to demonstrate faith by their belief in Him and their willingness to obey whatever instruction He gives unto them. Noah's Ark for the Flood, Blood marking on doorpost during the Passover in Egypt, circumcision and the law for Israel, Repent and be baptized, etc. are but typical examples and one can NOT be saved if he willingly disobeys them no matter how great he thinks his self-deluded-faith is.

Can we know God's will for our era? "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days SPOKEN UNTO US by his Son..". - Hebrews 1:1-2

Has Christ the savior spoken anything about baptism and salvation? Were the chosen and inspired apostles mistaken on this matter? In the new covenant, the Holy Spirit came to reveal all truth, confirm Christ's teachings and glorify Jesus. From your New Testament scriptures, does He really endorse what you, Darrell and some espouse today that 'baptism is a work of man, an ordinance not required for salvation, etc.'? **I have previously SHOWN that such position and Darell's understanding of salvation, justification and sanctification CONTRADICTS the express teaching of Christ and His apostles by simply comparing his statements to theirs. That ought to scare one and be a wake-up call!**

Sentimentally, one may not like that line of reasoning but my answer is a series of fundamental questions:

1. If God has commanded all men every where to repent and believe in Jesus as the Christ, then would you also say (noting John 14:6, Acts 4:12; 17:24-31, Romans 2:11-16, etc.) that anyone who has heard the gospel and has NOT OBEYED since Pentecost has NOT been saved?

2. If No, Why?

If Yes, (a) Why? (b) Biblically, how did people since Pentecost accept Jesus and the salvation that He offers?

There it is! I hope I have NOT been “wishy-washy, or vague, or non-committal.”

Now, you do everyone else the favor of addressing ALL that I have raised before you continue. My sincere regards to all.

Brad, it seems as if you assert that Jesus said “he that believeth and is saved may/should be baptized...” RATHER than “he that believeth AND is baptized shall be saved...”

Would you please confirm what you believe and THEREFORE give us the corresponding Bible verse?

Timogose,

Sorry it took me so long to reply. Work, family, Seminary, and Church have been keeping me fairly busy.

I think we may have reached the point where our discussion is going to be fruitless as I don't believe either of us is going to convince the other they are wrong.

As I mentioned previously, the thief on the cross creates a huge problem for you. Despite your insistence to the contrary, you have yet to demonstrate from scripture that the path to salvation changed after Christ's death and resurrection. The verses you cite simply do not support your contention. Hermeneutics and contextual integrity demand that the verses you cite be interpreted in light of the numerous verses which speak of faith as the sole justifier. In addition, Hebrews 11 and Romans 4:1-2 demonstrate that the path to salvation has remained the same since the time of Abraham: Faith.

Brad brings up a great point. Your doctrinal position creates two ways to Heaven: one before Christ and one after Christ. The problems that this brings into the picture are numerous, for Christ Himself said there is but one way to Heaven.

Interesting statistic:

Number of verses in The Bible that contain *Baptize/Baptism/Baptized/Baptizing*: 74

Number of verses that contain *Faith or Believe*: 573

Kind of makes you wonder, huh?

Blessings,

Darrell



On November 4, 2009 at 6:00 am Timogose Said:

Darrell,

Thanks for the reply and the discussion.

My own submission is that it is obedient faith or a belief that is ready to be acted upon without making excuses that saves. That is what Hebrews, Romans and James discuss. The Hall of Faith in Heb 11 is full of people willing to DO something the Lord expected or commanded, not those who just relied on a mental believe and ignored His commandments.

I equally know that there are exceptions to baptism (e.g. for children, those born mentally retarded, etc.). I am discussing those CAPABLE of hearing and believing the gospel, **those who are accountable and whom the Lord is giving the opportunity to ‘repent and be baptized’**. For us or such to deliberately ignore or delay baptism for any reason while claiming to be saved by faith ONLY is contrary to the biblical injunctions and examples, if we rightly divide the word of truth.

I agree with you that each has made his point and “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.”

Regards.

[Reply](#)



On November 4, 2009 at 6:46 am Timogose Said:

Brad,

Your questions are SKEWED but anyone who can make a little effort to read my ‘wordy’ response will admit that I have provided answers.

Perhaps you make too many assumptions and fail to read the posts carefully based on your super-confidence of being familiar with the subject-matter because of your background.

You can choose to ignore the issues I have raised by claiming that I have NOT answered with a simple YES/NO but I am used to such.

[Reply](#)



On November 4, 2009 at 10:51 pm Brad Said:

My questions are skewed? That doesn’t even make sense, buddy.

I asked simple questions, and asked for simple answers. Evidently that’s too difficult. That’s fine, if you don’t want to answer and discuss. I don’t mind discussing, but don’t want to argue, and I think that’s all it would turn into with you, frankly.

Am I super-confident, based not only on my background but also my study of the subject matter? Yes, I am. I firmly hold that the view you espouse is completely wrong. Will you convince me otherwise? No. Doesn’t mean I still wouldn’t like to discuss it, but I’ve studied it enough to know that I believe your views are incorrect.

I'm not choosing to ignore anything. Again, I asked 3 simple questions, which could be answered with 3 simple answers. YOU, my friend, have chosen to spend longer saying that you WON'T answer them in that manner, than you would have spent if you would just have answered them! Comical, really, but up to you.

Either way, whether you agree or not, I'm satisfied that my understanding is Biblically correct, which is what I'm worried about.

Good day.

[Reply](#)



On November 4, 2009 at 9:54 am Wes Said:

If I read them right, some of the comments here are saying the way to salvation was no different before Jesus' death and resurrection than after. My sin requires a sacrifice. Before Jesus' death, there was no sufficient sacrifice for my sin. How would someone tell me that Jesus' death could cover my sin before He died? I don't think I understand what you're saying. At Jesus' death, the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom, and we moved from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. My discussions have been about salvation under the New Covenant.

[Reply](#)



On November 5, 2009 at 8:42 am Timogose Said:

In conclusion Wes, this is the summary of the matter:

Some assert that Faith only is required under any dispensation to be saved and we do NOT have to obey ANY DIVINE COMMAND as that would in their opinion, amount to seeking 'justification by works of man.' However, when we obey God's terms for salvation, the Bible says 'we are working the works of God'.

Biblically, no-one was regarded as having Faith who NEVER obeyed or pleased God. Hebrews 11:7-8 STATES that Noah and Abraham OBEYED the Lord to demonstrate their faith and that to me, did not negate the fact that they were saved by grace.

Our friends will have us believe that the coming of Christ has no impact on how one is saved in the new covenant, they just want people to 'claim to have faith' and to delay or ignore baptism which true obedience of faith requires of us. Our friends expect to be exempted from this or other requirements citing the thief on the cross.

Even that thief met the COMMANDS the Lord has laid down for salvation AS AT THEN: 'believe, repent and confess me before men' Compare John 8:24, Luke 13:3 and Matthew 10:32 with Luke 23:32-43. It was after His resurrection that Christ personally commanded baptism in Mk 16:16 and Mt 28.

Saul had faith after meeting the Lord on the road to Damascus but was still in his sins hence Ananias told him what to do to be saved in Acts 22:16. Cornelius had faith in God yet the angel told him to send for Peter "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house SHALL BE SAVED."

Would Noah, Abraham, Saul, Cornelius, etc. have been saved if their Faith was NOT obedient? Our friends teach against obedience CONTRADICTING Paul and James in Rm 16:26, Heb 5:9, 2 Thesss 1:7-8, James 2:17-24, etc.

Jesus said ‘he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved’ but some make a deliberate effort to CONTRADICT Him and claim that what he means is ‘he that believes and is saved may be baptized.’ These are surely TWO different statements!

Every one reading can choose to follow the plain teachings of Christ and His apostles or the doctrines of men.

So long, everybody. I am done with this thread!

Timogose,

You are creating a strawman here, my friend. If you are going to try to describe what other’s believe you need to be more careful to present an honest and accurate picture. Your caricature could easily be seen as dishonest.

Wes,

To answer your question, yes, my assertion is that the pathway to God has not changed. It has always been faith. The Bible clearly teaches that the Law in the Old Testament was not what justified people (Romans 8:3; Hebrews 7:18; Acts 13:39). Rather, the Law was put forth to convict people of their sins (Romans 7:7, 3:20) and to point people towards God. It was a type and shadow of what was to come – Christ.

Romans 4:1-3; Gen 15:6; gal 3:6; and James 3:23 all make it clear that Abraham was justified through faith. Christ’s sacrifice is spoken of as an **Eternal** sacrifice. This sacrifice is efficacious for **all** who put their faith in the One True God. In the Old Testament they worshipped Him according to the knowledge they had of Him. Today, we have more revelation and know more about Him. As a result, we are able to worship Him more intimately because “in these last days He has spoken to us through His Son “(Hebrews 1:1).

Due to Timogose’s false portayal, I feel the need to clarify my position. His strawman might lead one to believe that I believe commandments to be something that one can pick and choose to obey. Such is not the case.

What we have been talking about on this post, and which Timogose fails to distinguish between, is what is salvific versus what is not. Baptism is not salvific; rather, it is a commandment that we should follow. It is a human work. Works do not save... faith does (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Timogose is correct when he says that empty faith does not save. True faith will spur one on to living a life trying to follow God – it embodies obedience. However, we must be careful between conflating our obedience with what provides salvation. Your obedience **has nothing to do with** saving you. Your faith saves you! Then, your faith will spur you on to obedience.

This might seem like a minor difference, but as C.S. Lewis said “it is a razors edge difference but makes all the difference in the world.” For, if you believe your obedience saves you: 1) You have taken the glory which only belongs to God and placed it upon yourself and 2) You have opened the door to asking what other commands are required for salvation. This leads down the slippery slope of legalism and pride (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Blessings,

Darrell



On November 5, 2009 at 10:38 pm Brad Said:

And rather than stay around and intelligently discuss it, Timogose chooses to pick up his toys and leave the playground. Hey, it happens all the time.

But it's one of the problems with Christians nowadays. They are unwilling to DISCUSS what they believe, choosing either to argue about it or not engage in any discussion at all. It's too bad, really.

To those who may have been reading this who were not involved in the discussion, look at the 3 simple questions I asked. Were they so difficult to answer, especially to someone like Timogose who is die-hard in what he believes? They shouldn't have been. So why not easily answer them? Very strange. I suspect there are other reasons, but such is the way it usually goes.



On November 6, 2009 at 3:16 am [Alan Foos](#) Said:

Wow, perhaps I'm going to get in deeper, but I didn't want to argue about what baptism was or if necessary to be saved. I'm familiar with the ceremony of being baptized in the spirit as following the ceremony of baptism with water, but baptism in the spirit isn't just a ceremony, but a strongly felt unfusion with God. Nor does being born of the spirit require this ceremony, I know, but it sometimes happens with it and sometimes without. My question is only this. If a person is talked into submitting to baptism of the spirit but not truly convinced of God's reality, in other words insincere, then I assume the baptism will not take. That is then an embarrassment I think, of some kind, and not a good thing, anyway.



On November 6, 2009 at 12:16 pm Wes Said:

Brad,

Show some kindness to Timogose. He came into a forum to present his views to a group that mostly disagreed, and presented post after post backing up his position with Bible verses, and without attacks. I assume that's what this blog is for. After repeatedly presenting his opinion, it did not seem like anyone's mind had changed, and there was nothing to be gained by further back-and-forth.

Darrell,

Thanks for the explanation. I had not heard that view before. People for all time had a need for forgiveness, but in the Old Testament there was no sacrifice like Jesus. Since I believe our baptism is into Christ's death (Rom. 6:4) it would not make sense to teach baptism into His death before He actually died. I agree that faith has always been important for God's people. The Old Testament references about mercy being more desired than sacrifice show that actions are not enough.

By the way, I don't believe baptism is a work of man. All man's work does is get you wet. By that argument the act of saying a (sinner's) prayer is a work of man as well. These are both ways of acknowledging and accepting God's gift of grace to us. I am not arguing that if we are baptized then God owes us salvation. My understanding is that God has told us what to do to be saved, but following His plan does not make grace any less a gift. In answer to Alan's post, if baptism were a work of man then it might not matter if it were sincere or not. You would be wet anyway.

On November 6, 2009 at 12:53 pm Timogose Said:

I am not shying away from discussion but felt much has been said without people believing what is evident from the scriptures, and I provided not few but ‘wordy’ references to show clarifications as well as anticipated objections.

I am glad my summary provoked some thinking and allowed my friends to exhibit more of their beliefs and character. I will show in due course that it is NOT a false portrayal but a true reflection of the various positions espoused.

I perceive that Darrell is sincerely mistaken and is now hopeful that we can re-examine the relevant scriptures on the fundamentals together.

As for Brad, I can only hope that his arrogance and failure to read posts carefully will not stand in the way.



On November 6, 2009 at 1:01 pm Timogose Said:

Darrell, you say we are saved by only Faith and that our obedience has NOTHING to do with our salvation. To you, obedience results in ‘works’ in which a man may glory and such will negate Grace. You cite Eph 2:8-9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

I say that none can claim to have Faith who has not obeyed or positively responded to divine will. To me, obeying the basic conditions/commands that God gave for salvation today (believe, repent, confess Jesus and be baptized) is not seeking to be ‘justified by works of man’ but rather ‘working the works of God.’ I cite Hebrews 5:9

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

You have cited Romans where Paul emphasized justification by Faith while I have cited James who CLARIFIED that we are not justified by Faith ONLY but also by works or obedient or godly actions spurred by our professed belief. Incidentally both Paul and James used the story of Abraham to buttress their points.

If the Bible is inspired and not contradictory (and it is) then both of them must be right at the same time. I believe that would be so if we distinguish between the works of God and the works of man even as Jesus taught the people concerning faith AS A WORK in John 6:28-29.

My understanding of Eph 2:8-9 is that our salvation is not rooted in ourselves but in the benevolent God. We do not earn it or work for it but rather it is a gift that He offers which we may either accept or reject. God’s grace made the provision, by trusting Him, we reach out to embrace or accept the gift (demonstrating obedience to the gospel call rather than depending on our ability). Our acceptance by submitting to the COMMANDS to believe in Jesus, Confess Him, Repent and be Baptized is not trying to save ourselves by human works (the Bible NEVER referred to them as such the way you do), rather it is simply summarized as “obedience to the Faith” in Acts 6:7, Romans 1:5; 6:17; 16:26

We should not boast of being saved because of anything we might have done or could do because Jesus is the saviour. We should humbly accept his terms for salvation which are the entry conditions into His kingdom.

Examples:

1. The Pharisee in Luke 18:9-14 was basing his self-righteousness or justification on his OWN GOOD

WORKS. Such is wrong because Jesus says “*when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.*”

2. Noah was saved by Grace (Genesis 6:8). It was also by Faith because he OBEYED all that the LORD commanded (Genesis 6:22, Hebrews 11:7). **If Noah had 'simply claimed to believe' without building the Ark to divine specifications or entering with his family when instructed, they would NOT have been saved.**

Was Noah saved by 'the works of man'? No!

Did he have to do ANY 'work' during the process of being saved by Faith? Yes, he did for many years building the Ark during which time the DISOBEDIENT were busy mocking -1 Peter 3:20, Matthew 24:38.

3. Why is Abraham called 'the Father of Faith'? It could be for several reasons inclusive but not limited to the following;

- a) When God commanded him to depart into a strange land, he not only claim to have believed but also OBEYED (Hebrews 7:8, Genesis 12:4)
- b) His disposition and activities indicated that he was expecting the promised child despite his aging and his wife's (Romans 4:18-21)
- c) When asked to sacrifice Isaac his promised heir, he offered up his son and was willing to obey (Genesis 22:1-12, Hebrews 11:17)

Was Abraham justified by faith, Yes according to Paul.

Did his works or intention to always OBEY Jehovah have anything to do with the REVELATION of his faith? Yes according to James, for faith without works is DEAD and can NOT be shown. The works by which we are justified are not those things we do to try and maintain a righteous living (as no-one is perfect but Jesus) rather they are appropriated to us by God in Christ when we INITIALLY OBEYED his terms of salvation -1 Cor.6:11. Those who seek to establish their own righteousness have zeal and not knowledge -Romans 10:3

Can we claim to have faith today while we willfully refuse to OBEY the gospel? No!
All such people will be punished by Christ at his return -2 Thess. 1:7-8

How did people receive the gospel under the New Covenant? The book of Acts forward deals with that. It is simply "by faith" when they believe and acknowledge that Jesus the Son of God is the savior, repent of their sins and get baptized into Christ as commanded by the Lord and his apostles. **Those who follow this biblical pattern are NOT saved by the works of man but by the grace of God. Those who reject it and seek to be saved otherwise are either deceiving or being deceived.**

The inspired wording of verses dealing with the purpose of baptism in Mk 16, Acts 2 & 22, Rm 6, etc. shows that like Faith, Repentance or Confession, it is 'salvific' we only need to promptly obey as the early converts of the scriptures, we should not make excuses such as we dont like the way some misuse it to put a hold on their members. Ironically, such groups are the very ones who DELAY baptism in order to first indoctrinate people with their unscriptural opinions and traditions. The total or true gospel if preached as Philip did to the Ethiopian eunuch will result in the results recorded in Acts 8:35-36 *Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?*



On November 6, 2009 at 1:05 pm Timogose Said:

Brad,

In case you missed my answers the first time, let me provide them again for the benefit of others who are reading.

1) From what I've gathered, you seem to believe that baptism was NOT a requirement for salvation until AFTER Christ's death, at which time it became one under the "new covenant." Is this correct?

Ans: **Incorrect**

I showed it was from the time of John the fore-runner of Christ. We can not state with CERTAINTY whether the thief on the cross was baptized or not. Besides, as God in the flesh, Jesus could make exceptions if He so wishes but you can NOT assume that He will make one for you today and willfully CONTRADICT his post-resurrection statement in Mk.16:16.

2) If that's the case, then you are implicitly stating that there are AT LEAST 2 different methods of salvation, depending on when people lived. There's no way around that. Is that also what you believe?

Ans: **No**

Obedient faith is the only method but God requires this by different means depending on when people lived. For some, it is build an ark, observe the Passover, etc. For us, it is "believe the gospel, repent and be baptized."

Submitting oneself for water baptism is not as much work as building an ark or preparing the Passover lamb and marking the doorpost with its blood. *None can be saved who is deliberately disobedient to the terms of salvation for his generation.*

3) Further, if you say that baptism is a REQUIREMENT for salvation after Christ's death (and you are definitely saying that), then would you also say that anyone who has NOT been baptized since then has NOT been saved? That would be the natural progression of your line of thinking, but would like you to acknowledge it.

Ans: **Yes**

Since Christ's death, anyone who could have but has not OBEYED Mk 16:16/Acts 2:36-38 has NOT been saved. Those who have not received special revelation [the law of Moses or the gospel] are covered by Romans 2 but many God-fearing people like Cornelius are being given an opportunity. Little children are not subject to this but are innocent and automatic members of the kingdom of heaven as declared by Jesus in the book of Matthew. (Only accountable people who CAN COMPREHEND AND DECIDE are preached to and/or baptized in the bible).

Brad,

By now it should be obvious that you either LIED or was mistaken because you REFUSED TO SEE when you claimed that you asked me ONLY three questions and that I refused to answer.

Not only did I answer all your questions (which were more than three) with my first response to you but you were quick to jump at, gloat over and reharsh the one that suited you.

If you will **spend half the time you devote to boring us** with "I was raised in YOUR present denomination... I am familiar with the argument... my dad is a retired COC pastor and I disagreed with him..., etc." **on ADDRESSING the scriptures and issues I have raised** then one will be hopeful that a real discussion will take place.



On November 8, 2009 at 11:15 pm Brad Said:

Brad,

In case you missed my answers the first time, let me provide them again for the benefit of others who are reading.

Seriously? This is the first time you have given SPECIFIC responses to my 3 numbered questions, which were originally asked on Nov 4, and later repeated on Nov 5, verbatim. There was no “first time” for your specific responses to my questions before this – this IS the first time. Just to be clear, you know, for the readers.

1) Ans: Incorrect

I showed it was from the time of John the fore-runner of Christ. We can not state with CERTAINTY whether the thief on the cross was baptized or not. Besides, as God in the flesh, Jesus could make exceptions if He so wishes but you can NOT assume that He will make one for you today and willfully CONTRADICT his post-resurrection statement in Mk.16:16.

Which is why I asked for clarification, so I didn't miss your interpretation. So you say it's only from the time of John the Baptist – got it.

You're right, nobody can state with absolute certainty that the thief on the cross wasn't baptized – the Bible doesn't explicitly tell us he wasn't, nor does it say he was, so there's no absolute way to tell. Of course, using that same logic, we also can't state WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY that Mary, Jesus' mother, wasn't blue in color, b/c the Bible neither explicitly confirms or denies that. So, we should all hold open the possibility that Mary was blue as a blueberry, b/c it COULD be possible...

Ans: No

Obedient faith is the only method but God requires this by different means depending on when people lived. For some, it is build an ark, observe the passover, etc. For us, it is “believe the gospel, repent and be baptized.”

Submitting oneself for water baptism is not as much work as building an ark or preparing the passover lamb and marking the doorpost with its blood. None can be saved who is deliberately disobedient to the terms of salvation for his generation.

You SAY no, but your whole answer shows that you don't really believe that, b/c your whole answer focuses on nothing except differing methods of salvation, for different people at different times, just like I said! And you don't see this – amazing...

Ans: Yes

Since Christ's death, anyone who could have but has not OBEYED Mk 16:16/Acts 2:36-38 has NOT been saved. Those who have not received special revelation [the law of Moses or the gospel] are covered by Romans 2 but many God-fearing people like Cornelius are being given an opportunity. Little children are not subject to this but are innocent and automatic members of the kingdom of heaven as declared by Jesus in the book of Matthew. (Only accountable people who CAN COMPREHEND AND DECIDE are preached to and/or baptized in the bible).

You're starting out with qualifiers already – that it must be POSSIBLE, otherwise God doesn't require it. I'm sorry, does the Bible explicitly say that? If not, then you can't say with ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY that that's true, can you? Nope. You then further bolster MY point from #2 that you DO believe in different methods, b/c you state that certain people are “covered by Romans 2”, while others are not. As to little children, where does the Bible explicitly say (not just your interpretation, but an explicit statement, since that seems to be the criteria) that they are “automatic members”, as you say? I'd love to see that.

No, Timogose, you haven't made your case, I'm afraid.



On November 6, 2009 at 5:11 pm Timogose Said:

Brad,

By now it should be obvious that you either LIED or was mistaken because you REFUSED TO SEE when you claimed that you asked me ONLY three questions and that I refused to answer.

Not only did I answer all your questions (which were more than three) with my first response to you but you were quick to jump at, gloat over and reharsh the one that suited you.

If you will **spend half the time you devote to boring us** with “I was raised in YOUR present denomination... I am familiar with the argument... my dad is a retired COC pastor and I disagreed with him..., etc.” **on ADDRESSING the scriptures and issues I have raised** then one will be hopeful that a real discussion will take place.



On November 8, 2009 at 11:26 pm Brad Said:

By now it should be obvious that you either LIED or was mistaken because you REFUSED TO SEE when you claimed that you asked me ONLY three questions and that I refused to answer.

It’s “were mistaken”, by the way. Further to the point, as I mentioned earlier, I originally asked the questions on Nov 4, reasserted them later on Nov 5 (after they were not specifically addressed, which I had asked you for), and only received your specific answers on Nov 6. Anyone can feel free to check the dates, as they’re posted, to see if this is verifiable fact or not.

Not only did I answer all your questions (which were more than three) with my first response to you but you were quick to jump at, gloat over and reharsh the one that suited you.

Again, you and anyone else can check the actual posts and actual dates to see if you indeed provided SPECIFIC answers to my THREE questions in your first post after I asked them, which is what I asked you to do. I challenge anyone to see if that truly is the case, since it’s easily verifiable by looking at the dates of your posts. Seriously, you’re debating a losing position that can be verified by simply looking back at the posting history. As to there being more than 3 questions – really? I mean, they were NUMBERED, for goodness sakes! And the NUMBERS only went to 3!! Wow, there must be something different in the water over there...

Further, if you want to infer I may be a liar, let’s look back at the end to a post you made on Nov 5 at 8:42, as follows:

So long, everybody. I am done with this thread!

All it takes to show that is an erroneous statement is for you to have made just ONE post since posting that. It seems pretty clear you have. So what does that make you – a liar, or just mistaken?

If you will spend half the time you devote to boring us with “I was raised in YOUR present denomination... I am familiar with the argument... my dad is a retired COC pastor and I disagreed with him..., etc.” on ADDRESSING the scriptures and issues I have raised then one will be hopeful that a real discussion will take place.

I have addressed your answers to the 3 questions I asked – we can start there for discussion, if you like. There’s no use in even going down the Scripture blitz you’ve tried to present everyone with until we unpack everything a bit.



On November 7, 2009 at 2:32 pm [Darrell](#) Said:

Timogose,

We are going in circles here. Despite all of your conjecture you have yet to deal with the thief on the cross. You dismiss him as an **exception**. Would you mind showing me where in scripture it says that he was an exception?

I believe you are **inferring** that he is an exception, and this inference is being forced upon you because of your incorrect exegesis on the subject of baptism.

Unfortunately, The Bible does not say that the thief was an exception. As a result, your interpretation is strained, and when taken in light of the multiple verses that reference faith as the only requirement for justification, your interpretation is demonstrated to be in complete error.

Onto the subject of works and obedience. There are many areas where we are in agreement. James 2 is a wonderful chapter! For it demonstrates what saving faith will do: produce a changed life. If someone professes to have faith, yet continues to live a life of horrific sin, then we would fully justified in questioning their faith. James 2:14 says, “What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?” As this shows, it is only faith that brings forth a change that will save. In fact, faith that doesn’t bring forth a change is actually no faith at all – it is dead and useless (James 2:20).

Bear in mind, however, that is not the question we are talking about. We are talking about **what is salvific**: Faith or the works that the faith produces? Let me give an example... Is an apple tree an apple tree because it produces apples? Or, does an apple tree produce apples **because** it is an apple tree?

Think about that for a second. Because it is precisely the same thing we are dealing with here. Are we saved because of our works? Or, do we do good works **because** of being saved? Ephesians 2:10 gives us the answer.

For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

We are not saved because of baptism, helping the old lady accross the street, sponsoring the child in China, etc. We are saved because we place our faith in Christ Jesus alone. Then, based upon being saved, we are given a new life in which we can do good works and be obedient to God. Just like the apple tree being an apple tree before it ever brings forth the first apple, so we are saved before we ever commit the first act of obedience.

Darrell



On November 8, 2009 at 11:03 am Timogose Said:

Darrell:Despite all of your conjecture you have yet to deal with the thief on the cross. You dismiss him as an exception. Would you mind showing me where in scripture it says that he was an exception? I believe you are inferring that he is an exeption...

Ans:Common, do you really call all that I have presented from the Bible about Noah, Abraham, “obedience to the faith,” Works of man Vs Works of God, etc. CONJECTURE? What of Hebrews 11 which shows that faith is REVEALED in obedience?

You are the one going beyond what is WRITTEN, speculating and inferring based on conjecture! Your belief is totally wrong; I have not stated that the thief on the cross was exempted from baptism. This is what I wrote:

1. One may say that 'since Jesus PROBABLY made an exception from John's baptism for the thief on the cross, He would equally do same for people from His own commanded baptism today?'
2. "We can not state with CERTAINTY whether the thief on the cross was baptized or not."

Even if one assumes that the thief was granted an exception, that would be another of Christ's MIRACLES (by definition) hence I draw your attention to post-resurrection commands and patterns, as well as Hebrews 2:1-3.

Darrell: your interpretation is strained, and when taken in light of the multiple verses that reference faith as the only requirement for justification, your interpretation is demonstrated to be in complete error.

Ans: You are the one interpreting the scriptures erroneously because the epistle of the Lord's brother (James 2:24) clarifies the topic and knocks off your argument! You gave some statistics the other time as faith (573) vs baptism (74) as if the Bible is contradictory and truth must be determined by polls; such thinking is unfortunate. Good Bible students familiar with Luke 18, Acts 15, Galatians 2, etc. are aware that the emphasis on justification by faith is because of Judaizers who taught that salvation is based on self-righteousness or keeping the law of Moses.

Darrell: Bear in mind, however, that is not the question we are talking about. We are talking about what is salvific: Faith or the works that the faith produces?

Ans: True faith which is obedient equally believes the Bible when it teaches that Repentance and Baptism are necessary for salvation (Acts 2:38, Acts 3:19, 1 Peter 3:21).

The other time when I wrote "*I have shown from the scriptures that we are saved by faith when we OBEY Christ's gospel in totality.*"

You responded "*You are adding to faith here: faith + "obey in totality" = justification. To you, "obey in totality" means baptism.*"

That was a wrong interpretation and accusation. I simply meant that 'Faith = Obedience in totality' just as Paul often used the term "obedience of faith" which I have equally explained. Your wrong equation could only be valid if I had stated 'we are saved by faith if IN ADDITION we obey all commandments in totality'

The basic conditions Christ gave for salvation are UNIQUE, to partake of the Christian Faith one must believe/acknowledge Jesus as Son of God, repent and be baptized. I think the real problem is that to justify your DELAY and/or rejection of Baptism, people like you decided to classify or regard baptism as a human work and equate it to '*the commandment not to tell a lie, helping the old lady accross the street, sponsoring the child in China, etc.*' To be CONSISTENT, you have to classify repentance likewise regarding it as a work of man meant to produce good deeds.

I have some questions that I would imploer you to think about, you dont have to answer them if you are NOT SURE of the answers.

1. Do you assert that repentance is NOT a condition for salvation?

[Note that faith does NOT equal repentance, they are TWO different concepts. Some might wonder if you say 'Yes' that would mean that we are not saved by faith ONLY but have to OBEY the command in Acts 17:30 ...while if you say 'No' that would mean we are free to continue in sin, afterall we are saved by grace though faith, and not of ourselves or of works.]

2. What is your understanding of Romans 16:26, Heb 5:9 and 2 Thess 1:8?

3. Why have you not addressed John 6:28-29?

4. If building the ark as the LORD commanded did NOT prevent Noah from being saved by grace through faith, what makes you think that obedience to God's command to "repent and be baptized"

makes one saved by works today?

5. Where in the scriptures can you find ANY verse that refers to baptism as ‘the work of man’?

6. What is your real MOTIVE for insisting that baptism should be delayed or ignored?

7. Are you aware that by comparing your statements to that of Jesus and the apostles, I have shown severally that you contradict them?

Darrell: We are saved because we place our faith in Christ Jesus alone... Just like the apple tree being an apple tree before it ever brings forth the first apple, so we are saved before we ever commit the first act of obedience.

Ans: My friend, the FIRST ACT of obedience is believing the gospel itself, the others (repentance, confession and baptism) follow in quick succession or are supposed to. At least they always do in the New Testament and still do among those who respect God’s word. I have stated earlier that God justifies the moment He sees our intention to obey... *the issue now is your unwillingness to obey and your refusal to properly teach and PROMPTLY baptize those turning to the Lord.*

Christ’s instruction is ‘preach the gospel, baptize recipients, then teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.’ Evidently, He expects us to as a matter of urgency, baptize converts for the remission of their sins. He does NOT equate baptism to commandments such as ‘anyone who looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery in his heart, it is a sin to get angry with your brother, etc.’ which should be taught later. The apostles understood this, why CANT you?

Honestly, I think that you should have created a thread to discuss “Faith vs Works” for the question “Did Jesus Say Baptism Is Required For Entrance Into Heaven?” is **UNEQUIVOCALLY ANSWERED** in Mark 16:16 **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.** Jesus MEANS what He said, PERIOD!



On November 9, 2009 at 12:42 am [Darrell](#) Said:

Timogose,

Even if one assumes that the thief was granted an exception, that would be another of Christ’s MIRACLES (by definition)...

This is question begging at its best. It is only a miracle if you assume baptism is a requirement for salvation. Which, it is not.

Allow me to answer your questions.

Do you assert that repentance is NOT a condition for salvation?

Before I answer this, would you mind sharing with me how *you* define repentance?

What is your understanding of Romans 16:26, Heb 5:9 and 2 Thess 1:8?

Simple – we are to obey. I have no problem with obeying God. The only thing I have a problem with is that **your interpretation** of what God said is wrong. I am not beholden to your interpretation... I am only beholden to God.

Why have you not addressed John 6:28-29?

Uuuuuuuuuu, you think this verse somehow supports baptism as a requirement for justification? Not sure how you come up with that one. Here’s what it says:

Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

Believe in the One He has sent... well, that is exactly what I have been saying all along. So, how do I address these verses? I love them because they support my position that belief justifies.

If building the ark as the LORD commanded did NOT prevent Noah from being saved by grace through faith, what makes you think that obedience to God’s command to “repent and be baptized” makes one saved by works today?

Building the ark did not justify Noah. Faith did. In the same way, faith justifies us today – it is not being baptized or obeying the commandments that justifies. It is faith. Obedience is a wonderful thing – but it in no way saves us.

Where in the scriptures can you find ANY verse that refers to baptism as ‘the work of man’?

I never claimed scripture said this. I said it.

What is your real MOTIVE for insisting that baptism should be delayed or ignored?

Can you point to where I said baptism should be delayed or ignored? Please point to **exactly where** I said these words. I never did. You are once again building a straw man.

Are you aware that by comparing your statements to that of Jesus and the apostles, I have shown severally that you contradict them?

No, you haven’t. You’ve shown that my words contradict your **incorrect** interpretation of what Christ and the apostles said. I don’t have a problem with that.

If you don’t mind sharing, I have some questions for you as well.

- 1) It is your position that unless one is baptized they cannot enter heaven, correct? Allowing, of course, for your qualifications – babies, disabled, etc.
- 2) When does one receive the Holy Spirit – before baptism or after?
- 3) Does one need to be saved to have the Holy Spirit?

I have a few comments on some scriptures. There are multiple places throughout The Bible where Christ pronounced people forgiven and saved without requiring baptism and where He commented on what is required for salvation. When pronouncing people forgiven He never once required baptism. Take for example, Luke 7:47-50:

Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.” Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” Jesus said to the woman, “Your **faith** has saved you; go in peace.” [emphasis mine]

How was she saved? Faith, without baptism.

Another example of Christ demonstrating how faith is what justifies comes in Luke 8:12 where He explains the parable of the sower.

Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not **believe** and be saved. [emphasis mine]

What would have saved them? Belief. There is no mention of baptism.

There is another instance in John 5:24.

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and **believes** him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. [emphasis mine]

Once we hear and believe, we **have** Eternal Life... we have already crossed over into a new life. Such a wonderful promise!

The famous John 3:15-16:

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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever **believes** in him is not condemned, but whoever **does not believe** stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. [emphasis mine]

If we believe, we are given Eternal Life. However, if we don't we are condemned. Pretty clear. There is no mention of baptism as a requirement for justification.

In John 6:40 Christ said:

For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and **believes** in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. [emphasis mine]

Everyone who believes in the Son has Eternal Life. No baptism is required.

I could keep going with these as Christ said stuff like this over and over again. You get my point.

You brought Mark 16:16 up again. I addressed it earlier, but allow me to explain again. Let's look at the verse:

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

The first thing to understand here is that you cannot interpret only half of the verse. You have to read the whole verse and interpret it in light of what the rest of scripture says... especially what Christ Himself said earlier in His ministry.

The second half tells us exactly what condemns a person – lack of belief. This is important because you would have us say that it is not only lack of belief that condemns, it is also lack of baptism. Fortunately, that is not what it says. It says lack of belief condemns. Period, end of story.

In addition, the first half of the verse does not make baptism a requirement for salvation, it only says that those who believe and are baptized will be saved – which is TRUE. If they believe they will be saved AND NOT BE CONDEMNED, regardless of whether they are baptized or not. For example, we could

also say “Those who believe (and are chaste, and are moral, and are honest, etc) will be saved...”. That is not to say that the chastity, morality, honesty is REQUIRED for salvation. The second half of the verse is what makes it clear what is required... faith.

What is important to note here is that this verse does not say that *ONLY* those who are baptized after believing will be saved. Yet, this is how you are interpreting it.

To help out let's look again at what Christ said in John 5:24:

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

Christ tells us here what gives eternal life (faith) and what condemns (no faith). I don't think it could be any clearer.

Bottom line, you can't create a doctrine based upon one half of one verse. You have to look at it in light of the rest of the verse (which tells us exactly what condemns a person – unbelief) and the rest of what Christ Himself said (Faith saves!!). Then and only then can you hope to get your exegesis correct.

One last verse and then I am calling it a night. You love to quote from Acts, so let's look at Act 16:30-31. Paul was talking to the jailer and clearly told him exactly what he needed to do to be saved.

He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

Believe and you will be saved. He did NOT say you must be baptized... he said you must *BELIEVE*. Praise the Lord!

Now, you might say, “But they were baptized afterwards.” I realize that and have no problem with it as I think it is wonderful to do. All I am saying is that the baptism was not part of what *saved* (which is what you contend to be true). When Paul answered the direct question about what must be done to be saved he did not say anything about the baptism. He only said to believe. In addition, please note that Paul's words ring true with what Christ Himself professed while on earth (as I have notated repeatedly above).

Blessings,

Darrell



On November 9, 2009 at 10:35 am Timogose Said:

Brad,

My first statement on this forum was to commend everyone for sharing with a good attitude. Somehow, you and I got angry enough to violate that and I sincerely apologize; to you, the readers and above all, to the Lord Jesus and ask/pray for forgiveness. Ideally, our goal should not just be to defend our positions but to establish or confirm the truth from the scriptures. Let's get back on track, ok?

I counted the question where you asked about my religious affiliation and believe that all the specific answers which I provided later were already discernible in my initial response. Now,

1. The analogy that “the Bible neither explicitly confirms or denies... So, we should all hold open the possibility that Mary was blue as a blueberry” would be tenable IF in general, the people of her community were BLUE... so either the thief was baptized or he was exempted. I have no problem with

either because Jesus commanded baptism AFTER his resurrection... and the baptism of John WAS REALLY NO LONGER NECESSARY THE MOMENT JESUS WAS IDENTIFIED AS THE MESSIAH! -John 1:25-32; 3:26-30; John 4:1-3, Acts 19:1-4. **This conclusion is evident from a proper exegesis of the above verses.** It is therefore NOT surprising that Jesus pronounced sins forgiven (Matthew 9:2, Luke 23:43, etc.) BEFORE His death. After all, He is God in the flesh!

2. Brad: "You SAY no, but your whole answer shows that you don't really believe that, b/c your whole answer focuses on nothing except differing methods of salvation"

Ans: No, I insist it is One requirement (obedient faith) executed by different means under different dispensations.

What I posit is that Noah could NOT have been saved if he claimed to believe but did not obey the command to build the Ark to given specifications, the Israelites would not have been spared if they did not observe the Passover on the night the Egyptians lost their firstborns. Similarly, we can not be saved if we claim to have faith but refuse to 'repent and be baptized.'

Note that 1 Peter 3:21 states that "*baptism doth also now save us ... by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*" **How?** Colossians 2:12-13, Romans 6:3-5, Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38; 22:16 shows that the moment of Baptism is WHEN we partake of Christ's death or die with Him, WHEN our sins are washed away (by His Blood shed at His death), WHEN God quickens us and raises us with Him into the newness of life (new creature) with an assurance on the final resurrection to immortality. It may sound strange but because the Bible TEACHES SO, I simply believe it. Could God have done it otherwise? Yes BUT He has chosen to do it this way and baptism INTO Christ is an instruction we must obey to partake of the New Covenant.

3. You say "You're starting out with qualifiers already – that it must be POSSIBLE, otherwise God doesn't require it..."

Ans: Christ made the qualifier when he said *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.* Response to the gospel is FROM THOSE PREACHED TO! If someone never came across the gospel message defined in 1 Cor 15:1-4, how could such believe or reject it? God definitely knows how to handle such cases and Romans 2 gives us an insight.

(Romans 10:12-16) For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all OBEYED the gospel...

Recall that when sinners OBEY or 'call upon the name of the Lord' for salvation under the New Covenant, it is always accompanied by repentance and baptism. So anyone who claims to believe and profess faith in Jesus but refuses to "repent and be baptized" is deluding himself. **Similarly, anyone who claims to preach Jesus today but does not tell sinners that they must repent and be baptized into Christ is preaching 'another gospel' different from what the apostles preached. The case of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 more than anything brings this to the fore.**

Mark 10:13-15 tells us about children. It is not just my interpretation BECAUSE on this forum, in the thread, "Does God Give Every Person a Chance to Be Saved,"

On July 23, 2009 at 10:35 am Brad Said:

Scripture seems to reference an age of accountability, which when also viewed in light of God's loving

and perfect nature, would seem to suggest that those with the mental (handicapped) or physical (age) incapacity to understand would not be sent to hell – I believe that would be wholly inconsistent with God’s nature. In fact, David speaks in 2 Samuel 12:7, about the death of his infant son, and says “But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.” Now, while some may interpret this as death only, I tend to view this as David being reunited with his infant son in Heaven. Either way, when viewed in light of Scripture as a whole, I do believe that these will be in Heaven.

Friend, I agree with YOU on that or whoever wrote it!

NB: Its okay you picked on me for coming back after I wrote that “I am done with this thread” but I am sure everyone understands why...

Regards.

On November 9, 2009 at 2:22 pm Timogose Said:

Darrell,

I appreciate this discussion and like most, have found it beneficial.

For us today, I understand that ‘believe, repentance, confession/acknowledgement and baptism’ are requirements for salvation SIMPLY because Christ commands it. The NT scriptures however summarizes THESE and those who meet them since Pentecost are simply described as “obedient to the faith” or said to have “obeyed the truth/gospel.” **It is possible for one to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, etc. and not be willing to OBEY and be saved. There are even instances in the bible -John 3:1; 11:47-48; 12:42-43, Acts 26:26-28.** No wonder James 2:19-20 says *‘Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?’* That is also why Hebrews 11:6-forward shows that faith is REVEALED IN OBEDIENCE!

A review of your answers to my questions:

1. I doubt if an explicit definition is provided in the Bible, my understanding based on passages such as Ezekiel 18:30-32, Jonah 3-4, Luke 17:3-4 and Matthew 21:28-29 is that Repentance is a change of attitude followed by a positive change in conduct. It produces good works in man since it is stimulated by godly sorrow for one’s wrong-doing. *No wonder it is preached by many religions.*
2. You wrote “we are to obey.” I was looking forward to you stating WHAT are we to obey and HOW, as well as the consequences of disobedience!
3. I am greatly AMAZED at how you misrepresent my quotations! The other time, you misunderstood why I cited 2 Timothy 2:15 and I had to clarify. I cited John 6:28-29 to show that FAITH IS A WORK which ‘we must work.’ Furthermore, this passage distinguishes between the works of God and the works of man, the works of the law or the works of the flesh.
4. You wrote “Obedience is a wonderful thing – but it in no way saves us.”

I have always agreed that Christ is the savior and the verses in 2 (above) shows that those who have faith in Jesus are the ones who have obeyed the gospel.

5. I asked “Where in the scriptures can you find ANY verse that refers to baptism as ‘the work of man’?”

Darrell responded, *“I never claimed scripture said this. I said it.”*

Wow! Can anyone realize the gravity of this position? Darrell's whole argument is premised on this UNBIBLICAL ASSUMPTION that baptism is a 'work of man' and as such is NOT necessary for salvation. He claim we are saved by faith ONLY hence I asked whether Repentance is also a 'work of man' and NOT a condition for salvation.

Friend, your position contradicts the teaching of Christ in Mk.16:16 and the purpose and promptness of baptisms as shown by the inspired apostles in Acts 2:36-41, etc.

In Matthew 21:25, Christ asked the religious leaders; *The baptism of John, whence was it? **from heaven, or of men?** And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?* This is instructive because Luke 7:29-30 states that they *rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of John.*

In my last post to you I wrote:

Christ's instruction is 'preach the gospel, baptize recipients, then teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' Evidently, He expects us to as a matter of urgency, baptize converts for the remission of their sins. **He does NOT equate baptism to [other] commandments ... which should be taught later. The apostles understood this, why CANT you?**

6. Darrell says "Can you point to where I said baptism should be delayed or ignored? Please point to **exactly where** I said these words. I never did. You are once again building a straw man."

My mistake, I apologize for you have NOT EXACTLY used those words, you have always stated that "it is not salvific." Also, in your response to Wes On March 6, 2009 at 9:35 am You Said: **..it is NOT something that is absolutely necessary for entrance into Heaven.**

I think that with those statements, you provided YOUR answer to the thesis of this thread or topic, and have somehow *implied* that baptism could be delayed or ignored. I wonder if I am the only one who has reasoned that way.

7. You claim not to have contradicted Christ and the apostles and blame my 'incorrect interpretation'? Let me refresh our memories;

You wrote "I think you are conflating *justification, which comes only through faith, with sanctification, which comes from obedience.*"

In my post On October 30, 2009 at 7:14 pm, I cited the passages which expressly state OTHERWISE.

Friend, you got 'wordy' like me in your last response so I will continue my reply later. However, note my last response to Brad on why BEFORE His death, Christ pronounced many [like the thief on the cross] forgiven.



On November 9, 2009 at 3:58 pm Timogose Said:

Darrell,

Yes, I love to quote from Acts when discussing conversion under the NEW covenant (as opposed to the Old Covenant [Hebrews 7-9] or the period of transition [Christ's personal ministry]) because Acts shows the establishment of Christ's church and how we are translated into this Kingdom of His (Colossians 1:13).

I am glad you are giving me an opportunity to discuss about the Philippians Jailor in detail.

Acts 16:29-34 *Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*

You say “All I am saying is that the baptism was not part of what *saved* (which is what you contend to be true). When Paul answered the direct question about what must be done to be saved he did not say anything about the baptism. He only said to believe.”

I totally agree that the jailor was simply asked to ‘believe on the Lord Jesus.’

His action and question in vs 29 shows that he was already repentant. However, the man DID NOT REALLY KNOW ABOUT JESUS OR WHAT to believe! That was why the apostles PREACHED the gospel to his household.

Note that as in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, we can INFER that teaching the word of the Lord to sinners include telling them that Christ commanded baptism for those that believe (Mk 16) and that it is an imperative and fundamental principle of the doctrine of Christ -Roman 6.

Thus baptism was promptly done to put the Jailor’s household INTO Christ. In describing this family’s conversion, the scriptures did NOT elaborately say that they “trusted in and confessed Jesus, repented and were baptized to wash away their sins.” That is evident and is simply SUMMARIZED as “believing in God,” another way of stating “obedient to the faith.”

When Paul told the jailor to ‘believe on the Lord Jesus,’ he was in a way paraphrasing Peter’s inspired response to the equivalent question asked on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

...Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..

Can you see that Peter said something about baptism to the direct question ... just like Paul did in his FULL answer to the jailor ... and that this rings true with what Jesus commanded AFTER His resurrection?

Even when Saul of Tarsus himself in similar circumstances (Acts 9:6) “*trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*” What did the messenger (Ananias) tell Saul in the city?

...And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

So my friend, to be saved by faith TODAY, one must OBEY the gospel. To OBEY the gospel, one must believe / call on the Lord, repent and be baptized for the remission of sins!

God willing, my next post will address your questions.

Brad,

Just for the record, I cross-checked the posts and dates as you advised and confirmed that you are still mistaken.

Indeed, you originally asked four questions which were not numbered On November 1, 2009 at 12:26 am.

I gave my initial response On November 2, 2009 at 1:00 pm.

On November 9, 2009 at 11:53 pm Brad Said:

Timogose, I'm out, no point in continuing, neither of us will convince the other, and I don't believe I stand to gain anything by continuing to read your arguments.

Take care.



On November 11, 2009 at 4:22 am Timogose Said:

Unto Darrell's questions...

1) It is your position that unless one is baptized they cannot enter heaven, correct? Allowing, of course, for your qualifications – babies, disabled, etc.

Ans It is the resurrected Christ's position that when we preach to sinners, "he that believes and is baptized shall be saved." He that does NOT believe (will of course, not be baptized and) shall be damned. *Pretty clear, isn't it?*

In their ministry, the apostles did not know of unbaptized believers. Neither did they force non-believers to be baptized. Matter of fact, they always ensured that recipients of the gospel were baptized 'straightway' or 'the same day.'

2) When does one receive the Holy Spirit – before baptism or after?

3) Does one need to be saved to have the Holy Spirit?

Ans: The answers are interwoven.

God gives the indwelling measure of the Spirit unto every individual who believes, repent and is baptized -Acts 2:38-39, 1 Corinthians 6:19. The converts at Pentecost, Samaria or even the Ethiopian eunuch, etc. received this immediately because ...*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* -Romans 8:9b. This measure is different from the baptismal measure given to the apostles and Cornelius household or the imparted miraculous measure obtained 'by the laying on of the apostles hands.'

You once quoted Galatians perhaps to suggest that the Spirit is given before water baptism. Let's examine Galatians 3:1-7

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

Paul's epistle was to show that those who believe or are of faith (Christians) are really the heirs of the Abrahamic promise NOT those who trust in the works of the law -Galatians 4:21-5:4

Friend, after hearing the word of Christ, the Galatians received the pure, not a 'perverted' gospel. Later, they started listening to some Judaizers who taught that one must keep the law of Moses to be saved. Paul reminded them of how they were saved by grace rather than by the works of the law. They were informed that the law was to prepare the Jewish nation for the Messiah. Now all men are under Christ's reign and testament. Verses 26-27 says *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

How does one become a child of God? By faith when he believes on the Lord and puts on Christ to become a Christian. We already know what it really means to 'believe on the Lord Jesus' from Romans 10 and Acts 16. The Spirit is a gift 'whom God hath given to them that OBEY him' -Acts 5:32

This truth is equally evident in Ephesians 1:3,7,13

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ...In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace...In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise

The passage says that spiritual blessings are IN Christ. Now, we get INTO Christ by baptism into His death, at which time His blood washes us to grant forgiveness (remission) of sins. We were sealed with the Spirit AFTER we believed or obeyed the gospel of our salvation. Since Pentecost, only Cornelius household was recorded to have received the Spirit BEFORE water baptism. That was God's way to convince the Jews [Acts 10:44-47; 11:2-18; 15:7-9] to accept that "the Gentiles also has been granted repentance unto life."



On November 11, 2009 at 4:45 am Timogose Said:

Brad: "Timogose, I'm out, no point in continuing, neither of us will convince the other, and I don't believe I stand to gain anything by continuing to read your arguments."

Ans: I thought that with your background, you would be in a good position to refute me if what I teach is erroneous. After all, this is not just about convincing each other, it is also about obeying 1 Peter 3:15 and presenting the facts to the readers.

Could it be that I have presented overwhelming evidence from the scriptures to support the truth of the matter? Perhaps the long exchanges would be unnecessary if we had addressed the basics!

What is the GOSPEL?

The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to document the answer in 1 Corinthians 15

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Thus the gospel is the good news of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ for our sins. It is not enough for one to give a mental assent to these facts and live just anyway s/he likes, we must obey the gospel for our salvation.

HOW do we obey the gospel?

Put differently, how do we OBEY the DEATH, BURIAL and RESURRECTION of Christ for our sins?

The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to document the answer in Romans 6

*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? **Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:** Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord... But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, **but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.***

This is in perfect with agreement with I Peter 3:20b-21 *...the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) **by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:***

Are you encouraging sinners to obey that FORM of DOCTRINE?

Which doctrine? ...The gospel or news of Christ's death, burial and resurrection for our sins!

Which form? ...Believe, repent and be baptized into Christ's death so as to be raised spiritually now and into eternity later!

In baptism, God graciously makes spiritually dead sinners alive and raises them together with Jesus - Ephesians 2:4-6. The wonderful things which takes place DURING baptism clearly shows that it is NOT 'the work of man' BUT 'the operation of God' -Colossians 2:12-13.

Since God has not given us the spirit of fear, may I SUGGEST that you copy and save this thread into a personal document so as to be able to read it more carefully later on.

Regards.



On November 11, 2009 at 2:30 pm Timogose Said:

After the preliminary definition of the gospel and how it is obeyed, one could go on to address...

The Thief On The Cross

The account of the thief is as follows: Luke 23

39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Clearly, the thief was SAVED by Jesus. Some neglect baptism today and claim it is not essential to salvation by citing the case of the thief on the cross. It is either they are right or they are wrong. If wrong, it is either such are sincerely mistaken or brazenly making excuses for their religious errors and traditions. We can establish the truth by rightly dividing the word of God. That is the purpose of this study.

Since John the fore-runner of Christ baptized people for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4) and *we can not state with CERTAINTY whether this thief had been baptized or not* but was saved by Jesus, how do we explain the situation?

One may reason that since he knew about the fear of God, his guilt and Jesus' innocence, the fact that Jesus is Lord and would reign in His kingdom, that there is life after death, etc. that he might have been baptized by John or Christ's disciples before relapsing into sin. That is probable but is just a speculation because the scriptures have not so stated. Besides, it does not answer the OTHER cases where Jesus FORGAVE or pronounced people saved.

Examples:

1. He forgave the sins of a sinful woman in Luke 7:47-50
2. He forgave the sins of a man sick of the palsy in Matthew 9:2-8
3. He forgave an adulterous woman in John 8:1-11

There are at least THREE reasons why such people could be saved by Christ without baptism.

1. The baptism of John was NO LONGER NECESSARY **the moment Jesus was identified as the messiah** -John 1:25-33; Acts 19:1-4.

God instructed John to baptize people so that John would be able to recognize and confirm that Jesus is the Christ. Multitudes were being baptized to prepare people for the Lord's ministry and Jesus was so identified when the Spirit descended on Him. Henceforth, John's ministry was to decrease and Christ's own to increase. In other words, people should THEN begin to believe on and follow Jesus, NOT John.

2. The Son of man 'hath power on earth to forgive sins,' and He could do so in ANY WAY unto any one as He pleases. Such people need not necessarily be baptized because Christ is God manifest in the flesh with them (Emmanuel). Thus He could forgive anyone because He knew their hearts and circumstances.

This is paralleled by the situation described in Matthew 9:14-15.

Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

Just as His disciples did NOT have to fast while He was with them to grant their prayers so also did sinners NOT have to be baptized while He was personally around to pronounce remission or forgiveness of sins. After all, He had not YET shed His blood for that purpose. In like manner as John, Christ's disciples baptized people during His earthly ministry. The record however suggests that Jesus permitted it, NOT that He expressly commanded it at that time -John 3:26-30; 4:1-3.

3. Christ was born and lived under the law of Moses or Old Testament -Gal 4:4-5. His ministry was to prepare people for the New Covenant which was enacted with His Blood upon His death -Mt 26:28, Heb 9:14-17. The Father has committed all judgment unto the Son. **The conditions under which Jesus forgave people BEFORE His death are not the exact terms of the gospel as it was not yet in effect (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Also, a man may distribute his possessions to anyone he wishes in any way he pleases during his lifetime. But after his death, no one has any right to receive anything from his estate except according to the terms of his will or testament.**

The will does not come into effect until He dies. Even so with Christ! People today receive forgiveness only by complying with the terms of His will or testament. During Christ's personal ministry before His death, he had stated the necessity that one should 'Believe (John 8:24), Repent (Luke 13:3) and Confess faith in Him (Matthew 10:32-33). It was after His death and upon His resurrection that Jesus commanded "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" – Mark 16:15-16.

Upon believing the gospel and repenting, during water baptism a sinner contacts the blood shed at Christ's death for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38) and ALSO partakes in a form of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus -Romans 6:3-5. That is the way to obey the gospel (1 Peter 3:21) and those who do NOT OBEY will be punished in flaming fire at Christ's return -2 Thess 1:7-8. The apostles understood the importance of baptism (Colossians 2:12-13, Galatians 3:27) hence recipients of the gospel were always baptized IMMEDIATELY in the scriptures since the day of Pentecost.

After specifying the terms of salvation under the New Covenant, Christ expects those who have reached the age of accountability (capable of comprehending and making a decision) to respond individually. Each person must choose whether to submit to God's plan of salvation; those who truly believe will "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." That was what 3000 souls did when convicted of their sins and their need for a Savior on the day that the full gospel was first preached -Acts 2:31-41. Those who do NOT believe (and consequently will NOT be baptized) will be damned.

Jesus after His ascension to heaven has not changed His post-resurrection commandment or requirement for mankind's salvation under His Testament. This is easily seen in the case of Saul of Tarsus. After Paul's encounter on the road to Damascus he was simply asked to go and wait for instructions on what to do.

Saul had confessed Jesus as Lord, was repentant and demonstrating faith via prayer and fasting. But he was still in his sins because he had not contacted the cleansing blood. (This is done when a sinner is baptized into Christ's death by the operation of God and gets raised spiritually as a new creature IN Christ). That was why Ananias came to him and said **And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**

This is my understanding and a distillation of all my posts.

On November 11, 2009 at 2:58 pm [Darrell](#) Said:

Timogose,

I don't think we are getting anywhere. You have your mind made up, as do I. I don't agree with your exegetical process; you are clinging to a misinterepretation of a few scriptures and are failing to read them in light of the myriad of scriptures that teach faith as the sole justifier. In addition, you continue to paint a straw man of my position so as to enable you to knock it down. As a result, I believe it may be time for our discussion to come to a polite end.

There is an article a friend recently sent me that I would highly recommend you check out. It is by John Macarthur and can be found here: <http://www.gty.org/Resources/Questions/QA79> For your convenience, I will copy and paste the article in this comment. I wish you all the best in the future and hope you have a wonderful Christmas.

God Bless!
Darrell

Is Baptism Necessary for Salvation?

No. Let's examine what the Scriptures teach on this issue:

First, it is quite clear from such passages as Acts 15 and Romans 4 that no external act is necessary for salvation. Salvation is by divine grace through faith alone (Romans 3:22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30; 4:5; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 3:9, etc.).

If water baptism were necessary for salvation, we would expect to find it stressed whenever the gospel is presented in Scripture. That is not the case, however. Peter mentioned baptism in his sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38). However, in his sermon from Solomon's portico in the Temple (Acts 3:12-26), Peter makes no reference to baptism, but links forgiveness of sin to repentance (3:19). If baptism is necessary for the forgiveness of sin, why didn't Peter say so in Acts 3?

Paul never made water baptism any part of his gospel presentations. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Paul gives a concise summary of the gospel message he preached. There is no mention of baptism. In 1 Corinthians 1:17, Paul states that "Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel," thus clearly differentiating the gospel from baptism.

Those passages are difficult to understand if water baptism is necessary for salvation. If baptism were part of the gospel itself, necessary for salvation, what good would it have done Paul to preach the gospel, but not baptize? No one would have been saved. Paul clearly understood water baptism to be separate from the gospel, and hence in no way efficacious for salvation.

Perhaps the most convincing refutation of the view that baptism is necessary for salvation are those who were saved apart from baptism. The penitent woman (Luke 7:37-50), the paralytic man (Matthew 9:2), the publican (Luke 18:13-14), and the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43) all experienced forgiveness of sins apart from baptism. For that matter, we have no record of the apostles' being baptized, yet Jesus pronounced them clean of their sins (John 15:3—note that the Word of God, not baptism, is what cleansed them).

The Bible also gives us an example of people who were saved before being baptized. In Acts 10:44-48, Cornelius and those with him were converted through Peter's message. That they were saved before being baptized is evident from their reception of the Holy Spirit (v. 44) and the gifts of the Spirit (v. 46) before their baptism. Indeed, it is the fact that they had received the Holy Spirit (and hence were saved) that led Peter to baptize them (cf. v. 47).

One of the basic principles of biblical interpretation is the *analogia scriptura*, the analogy of Scripture—we must compare Scripture with Scripture in order to understand its full and proper sense. Since the Bible doesn't contradict itself, any interpretation of a specific passage that contradicts the general teaching of the Bible is to be rejected.

Since the general teaching of the Bible is, as we have seen, that baptism and other forms of ritual are not necessary for salvation, no individual passage could teach otherwise. Thus we must look for interpretations of those passages that will be in harmony with the general teaching of Scripture.

With that in mind, let's look briefly at some passages that appear to teach that baptism is required for salvation.

In Acts 2:38, Peter appears to link forgiveness of sins to baptism. But there are several plausible interpretations of this verse that do not connect forgiveness of sin with baptism. It is possible to translate the Greek preposition *eis*—"because of," or "on the basis of," instead of "for." It is used in that sense in Matthew 3:11; 12:41; and Luke 11:32.

It is also possible to take the clause “and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” as parenthetical. Support for that interpretation comes from that fact that “repent” and “your” are plural, while “be baptized” is singular, thus setting it off from the rest of the sentence. If that interpretation is correct, the verse would read “Repent (and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ) for the forgiveness of your sins.” Forgiveness is thus connected with repentance, not baptism, in keeping with the consistent teaching of the New Testament (cf. Luke 24:47; John 3:18; Acts 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18; Ephesians 5:26).

A third possibility exists, as Wallace explains in *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*:

It is possible that to a first-century Jewish audience (as well as to Peter), the idea of baptism might incorporate both the spiritual reality and the physical symbol. In other words, when one spoke of baptism, he usually meant both ideas—the reality and the ritual. Peter is shown to make the strong connection between these two in chapters 10 and 11. In 11:15-16 he recounts the conversion of Cornelius and friends, pointing out that at the point of their conversion they were baptized by the Holy Spirit. After he had seen this, he declared, “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit...” (10:47).

The point seems to be that if they have had the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit via spiritual baptism, there ought to be a public testimony/acknowledgment via water baptism as well. This may not only explain Acts 2:38 (viz., that Peter spoke of both reality and picture, though only the reality removes sins), but also why the NT speaks of only baptized believers (as far as we can tell): Water baptism is not a cause of salvation, but a picture; and as such it serves both as a public acknowledgment (by those present) and a public confession (by the convert) that one has been Spirit-baptized.

Mark 16:16, a verse often quoted to prove baptism is necessary for salvation, is actually a proof of the opposite. Notice that the basis for condemnation in that verse is not the failure to be baptized, but only the failure to believe. Baptism is mentioned in the first part of the verse because it was the outward symbol that always accompanied the inward belief.

I might also mention that many textual scholars think it unlikely that vv. 9-20 are an authentic part of Mark’s gospel. We can’t discuss here all the textual evidence that has caused many New Testament scholars to reject the passage. But you can find a thorough discussion in Bruce Metzger, et al., *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, pp. 122-128, and William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Mark*, pp. 682-687.

Water baptism does not seem to be what Peter has in view in 1 Peter 3:21. The English word “baptism” is simply a transliteration of the Greek word baptizo, which means “to immerse.” Baptizo does not always refer to water baptism in the New Testament (cf. Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; 7:4; 10:38-39; Luke 3:16; 11:38; 12:50; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16; 1 Corinthians 10:2; 12:13).

So Peter is not talking about immersion in water, as the phrase “not the removal of dirt from the flesh” indicates. He is referring to immersion in Christ’s death and resurrection through “an appeal to God for a good conscience,” or repentance. Again, it is not the outward act that saves, but the internal reality of the Spirit’s regenerating work (cf. Titus 3:4-8).

I also do not believe water baptism is in view in Romans 6 or Galatians 3. I see in those passages a reference to the baptism in the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13). For a detailed exposition of those passages, I refer you to my commentaries on Galatians and Romans, or the transcripts my sermons on Galatians 3 and Romans 6.

In Acts 22:16, Paul recounts the words of Ananias to him following his experience on the Damascus road: “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.” It is best to connect the phrase “wash away your sins” with “calling on His name.” If we connect it with “be baptized,” the Greek

participle epikalesamenos (“calling”) would have no antecedent. Paul’s sins were washed away not by baptism, but by calling on His name.

Water baptism is certainly important, and required of every believer. However, the New Testament does not teach that baptism is necessary for salvation.



On November 12, 2009 at 9:01 am Timogose Said:

Darrell,

It is not by ‘playing a straw man’ but by ‘reasoning from the scriptures’ that I have tried to knock down your position. Permit me to make some comments on the article which you have provided. I KNEW that our discussion can not come to an end until you raise the statement of Paul in I Cor 1:17, I am so glad to finally address it.

I have earlier stated that a HARMONY of the Lord’s teaching shows that belief, repentance, confession and baptism are required for salvation today. **Some verse (and people) emphasize a few over the other but ALL are required.**

Paul defined the gospel which is preached and which one must obey in 1 Cor 15:1-4. He explains HOW to obey it in Romans 6. I am hardly surprised your referenced article (YRA) is suggesting Romans 6 (and others) are not discussing water baptism but baptism of the Spirit; *such exegesis is “wrestling of the scriptures.”*

YRA: “In 1 Corinthians 1:17, Paul states that *Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, ...If baptism were part of the gospel itself, necessary for salvation, what good would it have done Paul to preach the gospel, but not baptize? No one would have been saved...*”

Ans: Paul himself was baptized and after his conversion, preached to and baptized many people including the Corinthians -Acts 18:1-8. However, while he did a lot of preaching, it is evident from his statements in 1 Corinthians 1:16 that he did not do most of the baptisms with his own hands, meaning that his companions or fellow-labourers must have done that. [This is not surprising for they often assisted with the writing of his letters, to which he would just append his signature greetings -Romans 1:1; 16:22, 1 Cor 1:1; 16:21, Col 1:1; 4:18, 2 Thess 1:1; 3:17]

What Paul does mean in 1 Cor 1:10-17 is that **“it is not the person that taught one the gospel or that baptized one that is important, rather it is the Person about whom we are taught, the One INTO WHOM we are baptized (Christ) that matters!”**

Read 1 Cor 1:10-17 carefully... *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.*

Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

The Corinthians were segregating themselves based on their favourite preacher or who converted them (1 Cor 3:3-11) and Paul was rebuking this, NOT that he was downplaying baptism. He was on the contrary, teaching against denominationalism and, declaring that no one may be called a Christian who HAS NOT BEEN BAPTIZED INTO Christ -1 Cor 1:13-15.

Since the Corinthians were baptized into Christ (evidently he is discussing water baptism) not into Paul or his companions' names, the apostle was stressing the fact that they should not glory in the messenger God used to bring them unto Christ.

YRA: "Perhaps the most convincing refutation of the view that baptism is necessary for salvation are those who were saved apart from baptism..."

Ans: I have addressed that in my previous post and showed that people holding such view fail to understand the promulgation and administration of the New Testament of our Lord Jesus. No wonder the inspired apostle says, *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

YRA: "The Bible also gives us an example of people who were saved before being baptized. In Acts 10:44-48, Cornelius..."

Ans: I have addressed that and it is evident from the scriptures why God made this sole exception.

YRA: "In Acts 2:38, Peter appears to link forgiveness of sins to baptism. But there are several plausible interpretations of this verse that do not connect forgiveness of sin with baptism..."

Ans: Straining at a gnat, eh? Peter was not telling the Jews (just convicted of their sins) who asked "what shall we do?" that they should be baptized '*because they were already saved*' rather he was inspired to link Mt 26:28, Lk 24:47 with Mk 16:16 to inform them on what Jesus instructed so that they might RECEIVE remission of sins.

However, if it is Repentance that is linked to salvation as YRA alternatively suggest THEN we are still not saved by 'faith only' as we MUST NOW OBEY the command in Acts 17:30

YRA: "Mark 16:16, a verse often quoted to prove baptism is necessary for salvation, is actually a proof of the opposite. Notice that the basis for condemnation in that verse is not the failure to be baptized, but only the failure to believe..."

Ans: Mark 16:16 *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

Note the difference between what men say and what the Bible says:

Men say: He who believes is saved and may then be baptized.

The gospel says: He who believes and is baptized will be saved.

Anyone who reads the verse with an open mind can see that he who does not believe does NOT need to be baptized and if baptized, will surely not be saved. Christ means what He said, PERIOD!

YRA: "Water baptism does not seem to be what Peter has in view in 1 Peter 3:21..."

Ans: That is what you get when you have made up your mind NOT to believe the plain bible teaching on baptism. I suggest that you read 1 Peter 3:20-21 in context!

Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ

YRA: 'In Acts 22:16, Paul recounts the words of Ananias to him following his experience on the Damascus road: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." It is best to connect the phrase "wash away your sins" with "calling on His name..."'

Ans: Really? Bottom-line is Paul (like the Ethiopian eunuch and other converts we read about in the book of Acts) was PROMPTLY baptized, why?

In a YRA interpretation of Acts 2:38, it was 'Repentance' that provided 'the remission of sins.' All of a sudden it is now claiming the provision is via 'Confession'

This summersault is done in an effort to deny what the Bible teaches -that at the moment of baptism into Christ's death, a sinner is spiritually washed with the blood shed for the remission of sins and is spiritually raised into newness of life as a new creature IN Christ.

Friend, I am afraid that YRA does more damage to your position which is no longer standing well if it still stands at all!

I look forward to the Christmas holidays but do not celebrate it since that was not what Christ referenced when He said, "do this in remembrance of me."

I wish you the best too.
Regards and Shalom!

Personal Notes:

A series of 25 horizontal dotted lines providing space for writing notes.