

Baptism in the plan of salvation

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20).

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. (Mark 16:15-16)

Teachings about baptism

There are numerous teachings among denominations concerning the place of baptism in the plan of salvation.

1. Catholics believe that infants are born with original sin and will go to "Limbo" if they die without being sprinkled (baptized, Christened).
2. Calvinists believe that baptism is not essential to be saved, but that it is essential once a person is saved and essential in order to join the church.

We'll examine these teachings in light of Biblical passages.

John's Baptism

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. It was immersion in water, telling the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus (See Acts 19:1-5). John's baptism was part of the Old Covenant. At the death of Christ, the Old Covenant ended, and the new covenant began (Hebrews 9:15-17). A person who practiced John's baptism after the New Covenant began was required by the apostles to be baptized again in the name of Jesus (Acts 19:1-5).

This significant point demonstrates several important items:

These 12 disciples had believed accurately in the doctrine about Jesus as taught them by Apollos (See Acts 18:24 - 19:5).

They had been immersed in water as an act of obedience.

Their baptism was not acceptable, and they were required to be baptized again.

POINT: A person cannot be taught wrong and obey right, even if the "mode" of baptism is correct. One must comprehend the reason he is being baptized because it requires one to "obey from the heart a pattern of doctrine, ie baptism (See Romans 6:15-16.... the context is baptism (Romans 6:1-ff.)

New Testament Baptism

After the death of Jesus, the New Covenant went into force. The baptism of the New Testament is the one Jesus commanded to be taught throughout the world.

Mark 16:15-16

15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

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

Notice what Jesus said about the content of the Gospel that was to be preached:

Belief PLUS baptism = salvation. "Whoever believes AND is baptized will be saved"

Calvinist doctrine teaches, "Whoever believes is saved, and should be baptized!" Jesus places salvation AFTER baptism, not before!

Acts 2: 36-41

36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

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

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.

39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

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

1. These people had believed Peter's preaching that Jesus was both Lord and Christ and asked he and the other apostles, "What shall we do?" Peter told them :38 (select one)

- Come forward and say the sinner's prayer and invite Jesus into your heart and you will be saved
- Raise your hand and receive Jesus and the forgiveness of sins
- Confess your sins and you will receive forgiveness
- Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

2. Peter continued with many other words to persuade them and told them to "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation" (Note, they weren't saved yet!) What did the people do to respond to Peter's admonition to "Save themselves" (Acts 2:41)?

- They said the sinner's prayer
- They raised their hand and invited Jesus into their hearts
- They were baptized..... about three thousand of them!

NOTE: What would Billy Graham and others who believe in Calvinism tell people to do?

Acts 8:34-39

34 The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?"

35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?"

38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

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

1. This is the account of an Ethiopian Treasurer reading Isaiah 53. Phillip the evangelist comes up to him and begins to tell him the Gospel of Jesus (:35). When he heard the Gospel of Jesus, he asked Phillip: (select one)

- Shouldn't you lead me through the sinner's prayer?
- Shouldn't I confess my sins so I can be saved?
- Look here is water, why shouldn't I be baptized?

This demonstrates that baptism is inseparably connected to preaching Jesus for salvation. Baptism is part of the Gospel plan of salvation. This baptism occurred in the desert as soon as they came across enough water to be immersed, and was in no way a "public declaration". In fact, this baptism was quite private.

2. From Mark 16:15-16, what Gospel message did Jesus command to teach?

"He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

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

- Whoever believes and says the sinner's prayer is saved, and should be baptized as an obedient act to join the church later.
- Whoever believes is saved, and should be baptized
- Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved
- NOTE: If a person changes or perverts the Gospel, he will be condemned (Galatians 1:6-9).

3. Comparing Mark 16:15; Acts 2:38, with 8:38, what did the Ethiopian receive when he was baptized? (check all that apply)

(Acts 2:38 NIV) 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.

- He was saved
- He received forgiveness of his sins
- He received the gift of the Holy Spirit
- He was added to the denomination of his choice

Romans 6:1-6.

"1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin."

Read carefully and check all the statements that apply:

- Baptism puts a person "Into" Christ
- Baptism immerses a person "Into" Christ's death
- When a person is raised from this death in baptism, he is raised into a new life
- At baptism, our old self is crucified, and the body of sin is done away
- Baptism is our reenactment of Christ's death, burial and resurrection.
- Baptism adds a person to the denomination of his choice
- Baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace

1 Peter 3:20-21

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

Read very carefully and select all the following that apply from these verses:

- God used water as a means to save Noah and his family
- The water of Noah's time symbolizes Christian baptism
- Christian baptism NOW saves you
- Baptism is not a physical cleansing of the skin, but is a pledge of a good conscience toward God; therefore it is a spiritual event.
- Baptism saves you by the resurrection of Jesus
- Baptism is merely an outward sign of an inward feeling
- Baptism is a work of merit that "earns" our salvation

Galatians 3:26-29

26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,
27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Read the verses carefully and check all that apply:

- We become sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus
- We clothe ourselves with Christ when we are baptized "INTO" Christ.
- If we belong to Christ, we are heirs of the promise made to Abraham
- Baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace

Colossians 2:11-13

11 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins"

NOTE: The Jews were trying to make physical circumcision mandatory for salvation (see Acts 15:1). Paul is stating here that physical circumcision (that done with the hands of men in the removal of the foreskin) is not required for salvation. However, there is a "spiritual" circumcision that does occur. That spiritual circumcision removes the "flesh" (the sinful nature). Paul states that this spiritual circumcision is performed by Christ, and not with the hands of sinful men. When does that removal of the flesh occur? (See verse 12).

Read the verses carefully:

- Physical circumcision (the removal of the foreskin) has nothing at all to do with salvation
 - We are circumcised miraculously by Christ as he removes our "flesh" (sinful nature).
 - That circumcision of Christ occurs when we are buried WITH HIM in baptism, and raised with him
 - Baptism is not a demonstration of our faith in ourselves and our own good works
 - Baptism is a reliance upon, and demonstration of our faith in the power of God
 - When we are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ and buried with him in baptism, God makes us alive and forgives all our sins.
-

Is water baptism essential for the forgiveness of sins and salvation?

Remember, it is sin that causes a person to be lost in the first place (Romans 6:23). A person is not saved until forgiveness of those sins is obtained.

Let's look at some passages and see:

Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus told the apostles to literally "Go Disciple (disciple is a verb form in this passage) the nations. How were they to "Disciple ye" the nations? Answer: Baptizing them (the nations) and teaching them (the nations). This is similar to saying, "Go beautify the garden, weeding and watering it" "Beautify" is the command. "Weeding" and "Watering" are participles that tell how to beautify. "Disciple" the nations is the command. "Baptizing" and "Teaching" are the participles that tell how to "Disciple." Conclusion: baptism is a necessary part in discipling the nations.

Mark 16:15-16

Jesus said, "Whoever believes AND is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned"

Jesus did **not say**, "Whoever believes is saved and SHOULD be baptized after he is saved! He said that belief PLUS baptism would save a person.

An unbeliever would never be baptized in the first place, and Jesus assumes this, that's why he doesn't mention it.

Are there other places where the Bible places baptism as part of salvation? Yes:

Acts 2:38-41

Baptism is FOR the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (:38). A person cannot be saved until he receives the forgiveness of sins.

39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call." 40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

NOTE: Peter pleaded with the crowd to "Save Themselves" What did the people do to respond to Peter's Gospel? Answer: Those who accepted his message were baptized. They didn't say a sinner's prayer. They didn't raise their hand and invite Jesus into their hearts. Those who accepted Peter's message were baptized in water and received the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This Gospel sermon is in exact harmony with the Gospel that Jesus commanded the apostles to preach in Matthew 28:18-20, and Mark 16:15-16. Belief PLUS Baptism = salvation.

1 Peter 3:20-21

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

NOTE: Peter, who also preached the Gospel sermon in Acts 2:38-41, again mentions that baptism SAVES you, just as he did in Acts 2:41.

How does baptism SAVE you? Answer: It is NOT a ceremonial cleansing of the flesh as was practiced in the Old Testament. One may get baptized in a muddy frog pond, and his flesh be filthier than it was before. Baptism is NOT simply a removal of dirt from the skin.

Baptism IS a pledge of a good conscience toward God... it's a spiritual rebirth. How does it save you? It saves you by reenacting the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. (see Romans 6:3-6 for Paul's further explanation of Baptism). In baptism, we are united with Christ's death, and resurrection. Upon rising from the water, we rise to walk in a new life.

Question: Can a person be saved without being "IN" Christ? Answer: No.

Ephesians 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessings **in Christ**.

Ephesians 1:7

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

In Christ, we have every spiritual blessing. **In Christ** we have redemption through his blood, and the forgiveness of sins. Until we are "In Christ" those blessings are unavailable.

QUESTION: How does a person get "IN CHRIST?" Let's look at what the Bible says.

Romans 6:3-5

Or don't you know that all of us who **were baptized into Christ** Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 If we have been **united with him like this in his death**, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

Paul teaches that we get "INTO" Christ by being baptized INTO Christ, Baptized INTO his death, and UNITED with him like this.

NOTE: This is exactly what Peter taught in 1 Peter 3:20-21 "Baptism saves us BY the resurrection of Christ" Baptism is OUR death, burial & resurrection and in it we are united with and put IN Christ.

Galatians 3:26-27

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

NOTE: Paul mentions that it is through faith in Christ that we are sons of God. Then he elaborates on what he means, FOR all of you who were baptized INTO Christ have clothed yourself with Christ.

QUESTION: how does a person get INTO Christ? Answer: When, by his obedient faith, he is BAPTIZED INTO Christ.

QUESTION: how does a person "Clothe himself with (put on) Christ?" ANSWER: by being baptized INTO Christ.

Question: At which point is a person "Circumcised in the putting off of the flesh"? (in other words, when does a person remove the sinful old man and begin a new life and receive the forgiveness of sins?)

Colossians 2:11-12

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

NOTE: The circumcision occurs "IN HIM".

NOTE: This circumcision is NOT a physical removal of the foreskin done through physical surgery as it was in the Old Testament.

NOTE This circumcision is done BY Christ when we are "Buried with him in baptism and raised with him through faith!"

POINT: Baptism is the obedient act of faith that miraculously removes the old sinful flesh. It buries a person WITH Christ, and raises that person WITH him as an act of faith.

QUESTION: The Bible talks a lot about belief (faith), but also talks about Baptism. Aren't we saved by faith? If so, why is baptism necessary?

Faith and baptism are not mutually exclusive events. In fact, the Bible clearly teaches that water baptism IS the act of faith that saves us IN Christ.

Colossians 2:12

“having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead”

NOTE: Baptism is our faith in the power of God. We believe that in baptism, God raises us from being dead in our sins. We believe that baptism reenacts the death, burial & resurrection of Christ (Romans 6). We believe that baptism puts us "INTO" Christ and makes us sons of God (Galatians 3:26-27). WHY DO WE BELIEVE THIS? Because we believe what God SAYS about the subject, and therefore we act in faith upon what he says!

Galatians 3:26-27

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

QUESTION: How are we sons of God? Answer: Through faith in Christ.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" Baptism is the act of faith that unites us with Christ and makes us sons of God. Faith (belief) & baptism are connected.

QUESTION: What is faith and what does it do?

Faith is ALWAYS demonstrated in obedient action. God has always asked people to DO something as an act of faith before he releases the benefit of that faith. Let's see some examples:

NOTE: God commands an action and attaches a resulting blessing

When man believes God AND obeys the work of faith, God releases the blessing.

The Faith Response

BY FAITH: Noah BUILT an ark and was saved

NOTE: By Faith, Noah BUILT an ark and saved his family (Hebrews 11:7).
Was Noah saved by faith? YES. Could he have been saved by simply believing without building the ark? NO. Why? God's blessing is tied to an obedient faith action.

QUESTION: What do you think would have been the result if Noah, instead of obediently and by faith building the ark, would have led his family in **“The Sinkers Prayer?”** God didn't tell Noah to pray, he told him to build an ark. God didn't tell people to say a “Sinner's Prayer” he told us to believe, repent and be baptized to be saved!

BY FAITH: He (Moses) kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel (Hebrews 11:28).

NOTE: The keeping of the Passover and the sprinkling of the lamb's blood over the household was an obedient act of faith, without which, the destroyer would have killed the firstborn in that house.

QUESTION: Were the Israelites' firstborn saved by sprinkling lamb's blood on the door posts, or by faith? ANSWER: YES! Both! Faith in God's command and the resulting promise caused them to obey the act, and God, in turn, released his promise.

QUESTION: What would have happened if they would have simply confessed their belief in God's ability, and said a "Sinner's prayer" as a substitution and not sprinkled blood on the door posts? Answer: God would have killed the firstborn in that house because when God commands an action, you can't substitute your own idea and expect God to release his blessing.

BY FAITH: the walls of Jericho **fell after the people marched**.

NOTE: The walls of Jericho fell BY FAITH, but only after the people marched around them for 7 days. It was THEIR faith in a simple action in which God released his power to deliver Jericho into their hands (Hebrews 11:30).

QUESTION: What would have happened if Israel would have sprinkled lamb's blood on Jericho's walls instead of marching around the city for seven days? Do you think God would have caused the walls to fall? ANSWER: NO! Faith is believing in God and his word, and obeying the action he has commanded before releasing his promise and giving the victory.

WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACH IN REGARD TO BAPTISM?

Mark 16:15-16 He that believes AND is baptized shall be saved!

Belief (Faith) and baptism are tied inseparably together.

NOTE: God commands an action (Belief + Baptism) and attaches a blessing (Saved) God did not say, "Whoever believes is saved, and SHOULD be baptized" God DID say, Whoever believes AND is baptized shall be saved.

Matthew 28:18-20

Go "Disciple ye" the nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey...

Baptizing & Teaching the nations is HOW we are to disciple the nations.

John 3:3-5

Jesus said that in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, one must be born again. That rebirth has two elements, WATER and SPIRIT.

WATER is not referring to physical birth, but to the spiritual renewal of baptism. John earlier referred to physical birth in comparison to spiritual birth (see John 2:12-13). In John 3, Jesus is telling Nicodemus how to be born again now that he is old.

Peter combined Water (Baptism) and the Spirit when preaching on salvation (Acts 2:38-41). Titus also combined water & spirit, "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:5).

Acts 2:38-41

Baptism is **FOR** the forgiveness of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

When Peter told the people to "Save themselves" they responded by being baptized.

They didn't substitute this command to say a sinner's prayer, or invite the Lord Jesus into their hearts or lay their hands on each other etc.

When they believed in God and his command, they responded in faith and were baptized.

When they responded in faith, God released his promise and forgave their sins and gave them the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:35-36

Phillip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian. Immediately in the conversation, the Ethiopian asked, "Here is water, why shouldn't I be baptized?"

NOTE: This was in the desert. They were alone, so this was not a public declaration to anyone. It was done immediately.

WHY? Because Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News (Literally Gospel) to all creation. Whoever believes AND is baptized shall be saved. THIS is the Gospel that Jesus commanded to be preached. This is the Gospel that Peter preached. This is the Gospel that Phillip preached. THIS is the Gospel that we should preach.

Acts 22:16

"And now what are you waiting for, arise and be baptized and wash away your sins calling on the name of the Lord"

NOTE: Paul had seen Christ on the road to Damascus and believed that Jesus was Lord. He was led into Damascus where he prayed and fasted for three days. Ananias came to him and told him to be baptized TO WASH AWAY HIS SINS.

NOTE: Paul was still not forgiven of his sins until he had them washed away in this obedient act of faith, even though he believed in Jesus as Lord, confessed him as Lord, and had been praying and fasting three days.

WHY? Because Jesus said, "Whoever believes AND is baptized will be saved" (Mk 16:15)

WHY? Because baptism is for the forgiveness of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

Acts 16:30-33

The Philippian jailer asked Paul what to do to be saved. Paul responded "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved!" Does this remove baptism from the plan?

NO. In verse 33, the jailer and his entire household were baptized that same hour of the night.

OBSERVATIONS:

- ❑ This was well after midnight by this time.
- ❑ The jailer was in danger of being executed if it was found out that he had his prisoners outside the jail, especially in his house.
- ❑ The Jailer and his family had not heard of Jesus before. When Paul told him to believe in Jesus, the jailer invited him to his house to explain to him who Jesus was. After hearing who Jesus was, he and his entire family were NOT led in the sinner's prayer. They were baptized, that same hour, after midnight!
- ❑ The jailer thought it urgent enough that HE, and his entire household went down to a river in the middle of the night and allowed his prisoners to hold him and his family under water.

WHY? Because to believe in the Lord Jesus means believing in the Gospel of Jesus, which includes "Whoever believes AND is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15-16)

NOTE: This is also what Paul was told to Ananias. Being baptized and washing away your sins IS "Calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

Romans 6:2-6

Baptism is how we are put "In Christ" Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? (:3)

Baptism is where we are buried with him into death and raised to walk a new life (:4)

Baptism is how we are UNITED with Christ, his death, and his resurrection (:5) Baptism is how we crucify the old man and the body of sin (:6) see also Colossians 2:11-12)

Galatians 3:26-29

We are all sons of God BY FAITH in Christ Jesus FOR (here's what it means to have faith in Christ Jesus) for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

NOTE: Faith and baptism are joined inseparably

Baptism is the obedient act of faith that unites us and clothes us with Christ.

A person who is not baptized in faith is not clothed with Christ and therefore not in Christ, and therefore does not have forgiveness of sins, nor the Holy Spirit.

Colossians 2:11-12

11 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

NOTE: "In Him" is where the spiritual circumcision occurs. This circumcision is miraculous, and not a physical removal of the foreskin as the Old Testament explains. This circumcision is done by Christ.

HOW? and WHEN? does this circumcision happen? Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him THROUGH YOUR FAITH IN THE POWER OF GOD Being baptized in water is an act of faith (belief) in the power of God. In it (baptism) God removes the sinful nature miraculously and makes you alive in Christ.

NOTE: God commands an action (Baptism) and attaches a blessing (Saved, forgiven) Man believes God at his word, and obeys the action

God keeps his word and releases his blessing (forgiveness of sins)

Baptism is having faith in the power of God to release his blessing as he said he would!

THIS is what belief is all about. Believing in what God commanded and taking him at his word. To attempt to explain these verses away is UNBELIEF! in what God says!

Ephesians 4:4-5

There is ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism

Acts 19:1-5 Read

God no longer accepts John's baptism (read Acts 19:1-5)

NOTE; These disciples (followers and learners) had believed in Christ accurately

These believers had been immersed in water according to what they had been taught.

These believers had been baptized for the wrong reason, and were required to obey it again once they were taught correctly

POINT: You can't be taught wrong and obey right.

Could a person be baptized TO BE SAVED if he was taught that he was already saved before being baptized by saying a so-called "Sinner's prayer?" Answer: NO.

Could a person be baptized IN ORDER TO WASH AWAY HIS SINS, if he was taught he already had forgiveness of sins before being baptized by inviting the Lord Jesus into his heart? ANSWER: No! This is a different Gospel than what Jesus commanded and what the apostles taught (see Galatians 1:6-9).

QUESTION: How does God save us? Titus 3:5

he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

NOTE: God chose to save us through: (His choice, not man's)

The washing of rebirth (Baptism see also John 3:3-5; and Acts 2:38)

AND renewing of the Holy Spirit (which we receive upon being baptized (See also John 3:3-5 and Acts 2:38) Also, see Acts 5:32. The Spirit is given to those who OBEY him.

1 Peter 3:20-21

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

NOTE: Peter does NOT say that baptism is a symbol. He DOES say that the water of Noah's salvation is the symbol of our water baptism that NOW saves us, and that baptism saves us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Some say baptism does NOT save you. Peter, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit teaches that Baptism DOES save you.

Jesus taught that belief PLUS Baptism = salvation (Mark 16:15-16)

POINT: God saves us by the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit. (His choice!)

Romans 6:15-16

But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form [literally a "Pattern"]of teaching to which you were entrusted. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

QUESTION: What is the pattern of teaching Paul is referring to? See earlier in the same context (6:3-6), The pattern is the death, burial & resurrection of Christ replicated as we are baptized into and united with Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:8

"He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus"

What is "The Gospel?" ANSWER: The Gospel is the death, burial & resurrection of Christ (See 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

How does one OBEY the Gospel? We can understand how a person would BELIEVE the Gospel, but how do you OBEY the death, burial & resurrection of Christ? ANSWER: Baptism, which reenacts the death, burial & resurrection of Jesus (see Romans 6:3-6).
Conclusion:

It is true that it is by grace we are saved through faith (Ephesians 2:8). Faith demands that we believe ALL that Jesus said, which includes his command to preach the Gospel message. That Gospel which he commissioned is "Whoever believes AND is baptized shall be saved". That Commission is given to Disciple ye the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit.

A person cannot be saved until forgiveness of sins is received because the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Belief AND Baptism are tied inseparably together in God's choice of the plan of salvation. This is God's choice, not man's. Jesus commanded that this is the Gospel that is to be preached to every creature, "Whoever believes AND is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15-16).

There is only one valid baptism today (Ephesians 4:5). It is not John's baptism - it was done away at the death of Christ. Anyone who was baptized with John's baptism after the death of Christ was baptized with an invalid baptism and had to be baptized again with the baptism of the Great Commission (see Acts 19:1-5; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).

The one baptism is not Holy Spirit Baptism. The baptism in the Holy Spirit could only be administered by Jesus himself. The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred only two times - once on Pentecost, AD 33, upon the apostles to introduce the Gospel to the Jews, and the second time in Acts 10 (AD 43) to introduce the Gospel to the Gentiles. Even the Baptism of the Holy Spirit didn't excuse the Gentiles from being baptized with water.

That water baptism they received was for the forgiveness of their sins and to receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:38; 22:16; Colossians 2:11-12, etc).

The one baptism that is valid today is the baptism of the Great Commission, which is water baptism in the name of Jesus (Acts 8:36-38; John 3:3-5; 1 Peter 3:20-21; Titus 3:5). It is a reenactment of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-6) and is for the forgiveness of sins and to receive the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Unless a person is born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5). This one baptism in the name of Jesus is an immersion in water as an obedient act of faith in the power of God (Colossians 2:12), and it is water baptism that saves us because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:20-21). In water baptism, we obey the gospel, which is the death, burial & resurrection of Christ. This is the Pattern of teaching of which Paul referred in Romans 6:17.

Water alone does not save a person unless proper understanding, belief and faith accompany it. To immerse and unbeliever is to do nothing more than one might do in a water fight! It is by an intelligent obedient faith that a believer is saved. One must "Obey from the heart the form of teaching" (Romans 6:17). Water baptism in the name of Jesus is an obedient act of faith that must be obeyed if we are to be born again, forgiven, and saved. God commanded the action and promised the resulting benefit. Faith believes and obeys the action, and God releases the benefit. He's always worked that way.

Naaman the leper and his cleansing of leprosy is a parallel of this. It was not the water of the Jordan that healed Naaman, it was his trusting, obedient faith in God's command that healed him. Had Naaman not dipped seven times in the Jordan, however, his disease would have remained. God healed him because he believed and obeyed God's commandment to dip in water. In like manner, God will forgive us and renew us with the Holy Spirit when we obey the one baptism that he has commanded:

" And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was very angry, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. (2 Kings 5:10-14). God commanded an action and promised a blessing, Naaman in faith believed the sayings and obeyed the action, and God released his blessing.

We are all too often like Naaman. We become angry, and go away and say, "Behold I THOUGHT... instead of believing and obeying God's simple commandments. God does not save us by our own wisdom, or by making up some "Sinner's prayer", or by putting blood on our door post, or by walking around a church building 7 times, but by our

humble obedience to the Gospel message given by Jesus himself. God commands an action (belief AND baptism) and promises a blessing (Saved, forgiven) and when man believes God and obeys in faith, God releases his blessing.. One cannot claim to be a believer in Christ unless he believes the entire Gospel of Christ. You can't separate Christ from his Gospel message, and that message includes belief in his death, burial & resurrection, repentance from sins, confession of his Lordship, and water baptism for the forgiveness of sins and to receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. One must believe the whole Gospel in faith before God releases his promise.

- "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:15-16).
- "Why do you delay, arise, and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).
- "Look, here is water, what hinders me from being baptized. If you believe, you may. Then he ordered the chariot to stop and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him" (Acts 8:34-35).
- "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit... Save yourselves from this corrupt generation. Those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls (Acts 2:38, 41).
- "In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:20-21).
- "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:4-5).
- "In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:11-12).
- "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" (Galatians 3:26-29).

Verses That appear to contradict

Many people refer to other valid New Testament verses concerning salvation to attempt to nullify the essentiality of water baptism. Are these verses contradictions or do they compliment each other? Consider:

John 3:16 (This verse mentions belief, but not baptism, not confession of Jesus as Lord and not repentance)

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. NIV

Luke 24:45-47 (This verse mentions repentance, not belief, not confession and not baptism)

45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. NIV

Romans 10:9-10 (This verse mentions belief and confession, but again, not repentance and not baptism)

9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. NIV

1 Peter 3:20-21 (This verse says baptism saves you, but does not mention belief, or repentance or confession of Jesus as Lord)

20 who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, 21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God.

What is the conclusion of these verses? There are four requirements listed in Scripture to be saved:

1. Belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that he was raised from the dead. (Can't be saved without belief (John 8:24)
2. Repentance (turning away from) sin and turning to God. (Will perish without repentance (Luke 13:3)
3. Confession of Jesus as Lord (verbal acknowledgement of a surrender of control of ones life to Jesus as Master) Can't be saved unless Jesus is Lord (Luke 6:46)
4. Baptism in water (the obedient act of faith commanded by God that accomplishes the following:
 - a. Born again of water and Spirit (John 3:3-5)
 - b. Achieves forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)
 - c. Washes away sin (Acts 22:16)
 - d. Puts a person IN Christ (Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:1-7)
 - e. Clothes a person in Christ (Galatians 3:26-27)
 - f. Unites a person with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:1-7)
 - g. It saves you (1 Peter 3:20-21) (It does this based on the resurrection of Christ)
 - h. Removes the sinful nature (flesh) with the miraculous surgical procedure done by Christ as we are buried with him in baptism (Colossians 2:11-13).

NOTE: a person cannot be saved without being born again, and forgiven, and receiving the Holy Spirit and being "IN" Christ, and being clothed with Christ, and united with Christ and having the sinful nature removed. All of these things occur as a person is baptized in water. Why? Answer: Because God it!

Salvation in the Book of Acts

Place an "X" under each item mentioned in the conversion story listed:

FAITH REPENTANCE CONFESSION BAPTISM

- Acts 2:36-47 _____
- Acts 8:4-13 _____
- Acts 8:26-39 _____
- Acts 9:1-19 _____
- Acts 16:23-34 _____
- Acts 18:5-8 _____
- Acts 19:1-7 _____
- Acts 22:3-16 _____