

Water Baptism Is Essential To Salvation

On Bible Crossfire on April 17, 2016 we were discussing the fact that Doctrine is important and a listener called in to question the Bible truth that we have to be baptized to be saved.

The Bible does teach a person must be baptized in water to be saved. To see this is so, let's simply look at what the passages that tell us the purpose of baptism actually say. Doesn't that seem fair?

Mark 16:16

Mark 16:16 reads, "[He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned.](#)" This verse teaches baptism is necessary to salvation just like the sentence, "He that eateth and digesteth his food shall live, but he that does not eat shall die" teaches one must digest his food in order to live physically. The little word "and" shows it takes both belief and baptism to receive salvation from sin. Some say the second part of Mark 16:16 doesn't mention baptism, and therefore baptism must not be necessary. But there was no need to mention baptism in the second part; if a person doesn't believe, he is not qualified to be baptized anyway.

John 3:5

John 3:5 says "[Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.](#)" Water baptism is the only thing of spiritual significance in the New Testament that involves water. Rom 6:4,6 shows we begin our "[walk in newness of life](#)" and "[our old man is crucified](#)" (phrases analogous to the new birth) at the point of our baptism in water. So John 3:5 must be talking about water baptism, and therefore teaches unless one is baptized in water "[he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.](#)"

Acts 2:38

Acts 2:38 reads, "[Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.](#)" So both the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost are conditioned upon repentance and baptism. The primary meaning of the Greek word translated "for" in this verse ("eis") is "into." A quick glance at a Greek concordance will demonstrate that this word is translated the vast majority of time into words such as "into," "unto," and "to," indicating direction towards something. So this passage teaches baptism is in the direction toward the remission (forgiveness) of sins. That then proves baptism is necessary to the forgiveness of one's sins.

Acts 22:16

In Acts 22:16, we read, "[arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.](#)" So Acts 22:16 shows the washing away of sins (by the blood of Christ, Rev 1:5) is dependent upon baptism. Another thing it shows is that Paul's sins were not forgiven at the point of his initial faith on the road to Damascus as recorded in Acts 9:5-6, but instead they were forgiven at the time of his baptism. Salvation by "faith only" is therefore disproven.

I Peter 3:21

I Peter 3:21 reads, "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." This verse argues that the physical salvation of eight souls through water prefigures our spiritual salvation by water baptism. It does not teach baptism is the earning basis for our salvation (the death of Christ is the basis), but it does teach our salvation is conditioned upon baptism. The verse plainly says "baptism doth also now save us." What do we have to gain by arguing against it?

Galatians 3:26-27

Gal 3:26-27 reads "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." The word "For" that begins verse 27 means "to introduce the reason." Therefore Gal 3:27 shows the reason the Galatians were "all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," is that "as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." So you can't become a child of God by faith without being baptized.

Colossians 2:11-13

In Col 2:11-13 we can read the phrases, "in putting off ... the sins ... Buried with him in baptism ... having forgiven you all trespasses." So both verses 11 and 13 are talking about the forgiveness of sins, and right in the middle of that, verse 12 then is obviously telling us when that forgiveness of sins takes place (at baptism), or else Paul changed the subject from verse 11 to verse 12, and then back again in verse 13. So Col 2:11-13 taken in context is another passage proving the forgiveness of sins occurs when one is baptized.

I Corinthians 1:12-13

Another passage that proves baptism is necessary for salvation is I Cor 1:12-13. Paul teaches here that for a person to be "of Paul," Paul would have had to have been crucified for him, and that person would have had to have been baptized in the name of Paul. This implies that for a person to be "of Christ" (that is, to be a Christian), Christ would have had to have been crucified for him, and that person would have had to have been baptized in the name of Christ. There is simply no way around this. I Cor 1:12-13 proves that to be of Christ, to be a Christian, one must be baptized in the name of Christ.

Conclusion

We understand that Jesus died for all, but not all are going to be saved. Most recognize those that are going to be saved are those that qualify themselves by meeting the conditions of salvation laid down by Christ. We have just proven submitting to water baptism is one of those essential conditions to be met, just like faith and repentance are.