

IS BAPTISM NECESSARY FOR SALVATION?

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Few people will deny that baptism is important. The very fact that one cannot be a member of any church except the Quakers and the Christian Scientists, without submitting to something that is called "baptism," suggests that most religionists consider it very important. However, many people regard it more as a requirement for church membership than for salvation. If this is the case, then God has made it more difficult for one to enter the church than to enter into heaven! What saith the Scriptures?

(1) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark 16:16. In this verse Jesus listed two items, both of which precede salvation; namely, belief and baptism.

(2) To those present on Pentecost day who believed and cried out, saying, "men and brethren what shall we do?" Peter replied, saying, "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 Spirit," Acts 2:38. In this reference we observe that repentance and baptism precede "remission of sins." It might further be observed that these people had heard the word preached, the design of which is to produce faith, Rom. 10:17. They had faith (faith only), but they were not saved. Peter said they also had to "repent and be baptized."

(3) Ananias told Saul, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins," Acts 22:16. In this reference, the cleansing, the forgiveness, the washing away of sins is placed after baptism.

(4) "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ," Gal. 3:27. In this connection, let us notice verse 26: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." The word "for" (from the Greek *Gar*), means to give the cause for or to introduce the reason for the statement just made. They were "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus for" — and then he stated the reason: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." This verse also shows that one is baptized "into Christ." Baptism puts one "into Christ," resulting in that person being "in Christ," wherein God placed salvation, 2 Tim. 2:10.

(5) Peter said "...even baptism doth also now save us..." I Peter 3:21.

Many religious leaders claim one is saved and then, upon having been saved, he should be baptized in order to demonstrate the fact that he is saved. However, in every verse in which both baptism and salvation are listed together, baptism always precedes salvation. We ask, did the Lord state it wrong every time?