



The Good News

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The Case for Baptism

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It is interesting that so many people that claim to believe in New Testament Christianity do not believe in the saving nature of baptism. They may believe it has merit as an “outward sign of an inward grace”, or as a public display of commitment to God, but almost no one today understands the truth about baptism. Today, both in this article and in our morning lesson, we want to consider a body of evidence to provide friends and loved ones when discussing what the Bible teaches regarding baptism: examples of those who were saved and how that salvation took place.

When we consider the examples of those who were saved in the New Testament, we need not look further than the book of Acts. Before Acts, Christ had not yet died to purchase the Church, He had not yet been risen from the dead to provide the power to baptism to remove sins (1 Pet. 3:21-22), and He had not yet ascended into Heaven. Thus, any “examples of salvation” that our friends may provide before the Church was established are moot (such as the thief on the cross). While the epistles were written by inspired men such as Paul and Peter also provide evidence on the necessity of baptism for salvation, the book of Acts gives us actual accounts of people hearing the word of God, believing it, and then following through to being saved. Let us consider a few of these examples.

1) Acts 2:38, 41, 47 – As Peter preached to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, he was able to convince them that they were indeed guilty of the killing the Son of God, the Messiah of prophecy. As these Jews allowed that fact to sink in, they asked the apostles, “*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” (v.37) They are, in essence, asking, “What shall we do about this sin laid to our charge?” Peter responds, “*Repent, and let everyone one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*” Peter does not say, “**because** of the remission of sins” as some attest, nor is the gift of the Holy Spirit miraculous gifts, as **Eph. 2:8** clearly teaches. As we read further, we find **v.41** says, “*Then those who gladly received (literally, “gladly and fully affirmed”) his word were baptized; and that day about 3,000 souls were added (“to place additionally, to set aside”).*” And again in **v.47**, “*...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*” To what were the “saved” added? To those who had already been saved (i.e. the apostles and the others found in Acts 1), thus the term “*ekklesia*” for “church”, or the “called out”.

There is no way to logically remove baptism from the process by which these 3,000 souls were saved.

- 2) Acts 8:12,13** – Within the account of Phillip and Simon the Penitent Sorcerer, we find that Phillip went to Samaria to preach the Gospel of Salvation to the Samaritans. We find **v.12-13** say, “*But when they believed Phillip as he preached the things concerning **the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ**, both men and women were **baptized**. Then Simon himself also believed; and when **he was baptized** he continued with Phillip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.*” The account never records that Phillip preached about baptism as a requirement for salvation. Necessary inference leads us to conclude that the Gospel that Phillip preached, which contained necessary information about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, **automatically included the teaching on baptism as means of salvation**. Why else would these individuals be baptized if they didn’t need to be?
- 3) Acts 8:26-39** – As we jump forward in Acts 8, we find Phillip sent to teach the Gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch who was trying to understand the words of Isaiah. We find **v. 35-36** say, “*Then Phillip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, **preached Jesus to him**. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water, what hinders me from being **baptized?**’” Again, nowhere do we find that Phillip taught baptism to the eunuch. So why did the eunuch want to be baptized? How did he even know about baptism? We can only conclude that the teaching of baptism was included in Phillip preaching Jesus to him. We find in **vs.38-39** that both men went “**down into the water**”, and only **after** the eunuch was baptized do we see him rejoicing. It’s clear the eunuch believed **before** baptism...why was he not rejoicing at that point if “faith-only” saves? It is once again clear from this account that baptism is what removes sins, and as those sins are removed, the Lord adds them to the body of the saved, which is the Church.*

We have considered only three of the many other examples of conversion within the book of Acts. Yet these provide definitive evidence that baptism was, and is, a key requirement for a soul to be saved. If only more people would accept the simplicity of the plan of God’s salvation rather than follow along with man’s attempts to change it.