

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Mr. Mathis, Lamar Mathis, Ms. Matchett, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Sowder, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Is Baptism a Prerequisite to Salvation?

By Derek Long

The purpose of baptism is a divisive topic among those claiming to follow the Bible. God is not pleased when people speak different things. God's word calls upon us to "speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). God would have us all to teach and believe the same thing regarding the purpose of baptism. Ephesians 4:5 points out there is "one baptism." The only way to arrive at an understanding of the purpose of baptism is to examine the various verses dealing with the subject and see what God's word says is its purpose. We must be willing to accept God's word whether it aligns with our previously held convictions or not. We must be willing to allow God to be true and every man a liar (Romans 3:4). We can conclude baptism is an important topic from the simple fact it is mentioned so often throughout the New Testament. We cannot simply ignore talking about the subject of baptism and be teaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:20, 27).

In Jesus' commission to the apostles before He ascended back to heaven, He gives us information about the purpose of baptism. In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus says, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Jesus commanded the apostles to make disciples and He tells them how they will make disciples. Making disciples involves baptizing individuals and teaching individuals. Therefore, a person cannot be made a disciple of

Christ without being baptized. Must a person be a disciple of Christ to be saved? If so, then a person must be baptized to be saved. In Mark 16:15-16 Jesus again is recorded as saying, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." Jesus describes the person who will be saved in these verses. The person who will be saved is the one who believes and is baptized. If this passage teaches belief as a prerequisite to salvation, which it clearly does, then it must also teach baptism as a prerequisite to salvation. Both belief and baptism stand in a similar relation to the reception of salvation in the passage. If one can contend a person is saved prior to baptism, why can a person not equally say a person is saved prior to believing? If one can believe and latter be baptized, why can a person not be baptized and latter believe? If a person can be saved prior to baptism, why can they not be saved before belief and baptism? Jesus places baptism prior to salvation. Failure to accept the plain statements of our Lord puts us into the camp of those who harden their hearts and close their eyes to the truth (Matthew 13:13-15; Mark 8:17-18).

Peter on the Day of Pentecost makes a clear statement regarding the purpose of baptism. In Acts 2:37 the audience is crying out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They recognize they are guilty of putting to death the Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36) and want to know what they need to do to be saved. Peter's response is clear, "Repent, and let every 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. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call ... Be saved from this perverse generation" (Acts 2:38-40). These individuals already believe Jesus is Lord and Christ and so they are taught they need to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Can a person be saved prior to receiving the remission of sins? If not and one must be baptized for the remission of sins, how can one be saved prior to baptism? If one can be saved prior to baptism, then why can one not be saved prior to repentance since repentance and baptism are equally stated to be for the remission of sins. Some attempt to argue "for" means because of and not in order to obtain. If that is

true, a person repents because their sins have already been forgiven. If that is true, Jesus shed His blood because people's sins had already been forgiven (Matthew 26:28). Jesus shed His blood in order to obtain the remission of sins. The Bible teaches a person is baptized in order to obtain the remission of sins.

In Colossians 2:11-14 we read the following, "In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." These individuals once were dead in trespasses and sins but were forgiven all trespasses when they were made alive with Christ. When were these individuals made alive with Christ - before or after baptism? Colossians 2:12 says they were buried with Christ in baptism. Was Christ made alive prior to or after His burial? Christ was made alive after His burial so they would be made alive and forgiven after their baptism. After they were buried with Christ in baptism, they "were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." They were made alive with Christ after their baptism. Therefore, they were forgiven all their trespasses after their baptism. Can a person be saved before they are forgiven all their trespasses? If a person cannot be saved before they are forgiven all trespasses, they cannot be saved prior to baptism.

We could look at other verses but I believe these passages make it clear a person is not save prior to baptism today.