

Is Baptism Essential For Salvation? (No. 6)

By Casey Head

Last week, we began to analyze one by one the many New Testament verses which teach the necessity of baptism. Mark 16:16, which says “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” served as the springboard for this second cluster of articles (In the first cluster, we considered the common objections to the necessity of baptism). Today, let’s look at Acts 2:38.

On the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter preached the gospel to thousands of Jews in Jerusalem. He cited many prophecies and evidences to prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah of Israel, and that He had been raised up from the dead to reign as king at the right hand of God (vv. 33). The apostle concluded his sermon in vv. 36 by saying, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” These Jews had sinned, and they desperately needed the salvation offered through Christ (Jn. 14:6).

Acts 2:37 says, “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Apparently, they had to do something to obtain salvation. The question is, what exactly did they have to do?

The answer is found in the very next verse. Acts 2:38 says, “Then Peter said unto them, 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.” Peter didn’t tell them to believe only or to pray the “sinner’s prayer” (which is plastered all over every denominational tract). Nor did he tell them to get down on their knees and simply receive Christ into their heart. He told them to repent and be baptized! Why? So that they could obtain the remission of sins!

In Acts 2:40, Peter “with many other words did...testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation, and in verses 41 and 47 we see that the “Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” What does all of this say about baptism? Baptism leads to the remission of sins (vv. 38), the gift of the Holy Ghost (vv. 38) and salvation (vv. 40, 47). It also transplants us from the world to the church which is the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 1:22-23). Based on these simple points in Acts 2, we can see that baptism is a necessary part of the plan of salvation. One cannot obtain the “remission of sins” without water baptism.

If you have any questions, or if you would like to meet for a private or public Bible study, please contact me. I want to hear from you. My phone number is (828)467-1463. My email address is NCBibleQuestions@yahoo.com, and my mailing address is P.O. Box 401, Spruce Pine, NC 28777.