

Is Baptism Required for Salvation?

While we should preach that all people are commanded to repent and be baptized ([Acts 2:38](#)), adding any other requirement to salvation by grace becomes “works” in disguise.

Even though numerous Scriptures speak of the importance of water baptism, adding anything to the work of the cross demeans the sacrifice of the Savior. It implies that His finished work wasn't enough. But the Bible makes clear that we are saved by grace, and grace alone,

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

—[Ephesians 2:8-9](#)

Baptism is simply a step of obedience to the Lord following our repentance and confession of sin. Our obedience--water baptism, prayer, good works, fellowship, witnessing, etc.--issues from our faith in Christ. Salvation is not what we do, but Who we have.

He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

—[1 John 5:12](#)

Author: [Ray Comfort](#) of Living Waters Publications. Excerpted from *The Evidence Bible*. © 2002, Living Waters Publications

But what about Mark 16:16?

Mark 16:16 quotes Jesus as saying: “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (NKJV). Does this mean that salvation is by baptism?

"In no way does this verse establish baptism as a condition for salvation; it is merely the declaration that those who believe and are baptized are saved. Any act of obedience to the Lord could be added after the expression 'whoever believes' and it would remain a true statement, because salvation is the result of faith in Christ.

It should be noted that when the Lord added, 'but whoever does not believe will be condemned,' there is no mention of baptism. In identifying what would bring about condemnation, Jesus did not say that 'whoever believes but is not baptized shall not be save.' If baptism were necessary for salvation, there are many significant verses which should be amended to read 'you are saved through faith

and baptism.' It is clear that faith in Jesus Christ is what saves a person (Acts 16:30-31; Eph. 2:8-9).

Baptism is a distinct act of obedience, apart from salvation. This is clarified by the order in which the words 'believe' and 'baptize' occur in the text (cf. Acts 2:38; 10:44-48). Baptism with the Spirit places believers into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), while water baptism merely signifies to others that a person has professed Christ.

The word 'saved' is translated from the Greek word *sesosmenoi*, which is a perfect passive participle. It means that this salvation took place at some point in the past, being accomplished by Jesus Christ Himself, and is continuing on in the present." [Spiros Zodhiates, editor, *The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible* (Chattanooga, Tennessee: AMG Publishers, 1996), note for Mark 16:16.]