

A READY DEFENSE: BAPTISM

INTRODUCTION

- A. Last Sunday's exhortation considered the question "*What must I do to be saved?*" ([Acts 16:30](#)) and the scriptural answer to that question, which is, of course, that one must learn the gospel, believe on Christ, confess His name, repent of sin, and be baptized in water in the name of Christ for sins to be washed away.
- B. Not surprisingly, that last part of the answer, baptism, is upsetting to some and various reasons are offered to disprove it.
- C. **1st Peter 3:15**
We have a command to offer a ready defense to those who ask. The purpose of this lesson is to examine some of the arguments against baptism and answer them from the word of God.

I. THE THIEF ON THE CROSS WAS NOT BAPTIZED.

- A. **Luke 23:39-43**
Without doubt, Jesus assured this man that he was saved.
- B. **Matthew 3:1-6**
 1. First of all, the claim that this thief was not baptized is totally unsubstantiated. What proof text is offered to suggest that he was not?
 2. In fact, there is considerable likelihood that he was baptized! There is more evidence in favor of his having been baptized than otherwise.
- C. **Matthew 3:11; Acts 18:24-26; 19:1-5**
Of course, if he was baptized of John, we know that baptism is no longer valid and has been replaced, which is really the point which must be made: the thief lived and died under a different period of religious history than we are presently in.
- D. **Romans 6:3-6; Hebrews 9:16-17**

1. The baptism we are commanded to submit to is a baptism into the death of Christ. Had Christ died when He told the thief, *“Today you will be with Me in Paradise”*? Of course, not. Therefore, baptism into His death was not possible!
2. The New Testament was not inaugurated, nor could it have been, until the death of Christ. The thief was assured of Paradise prior to the establishment of the Covenant we are presently accountable to.

II. THE BAPTISM THAT IS COMMANDED OF US IS BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

A. **Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8**

The first and most glaring problem with this argument is that Holy Spirit baptism was never commanded. It was **promised**.

B. **Acts 1:1-8; 2:1-4**

Specifically, it was promised to the apostles; no one else.

C. **Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17**

Holy Spirit baptism occurred on only one other occasion, when Gentiles first obeyed the gospel.

1. This was an exceptional case as is evident by the fact that those who witnessed it *“were astonished”* (10:45), and that the only instance Peter could compare it to was *“at the beginning”* (11:15), i.e. on the day of Pentecost when the apostles received that baptism.
2. Those who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit were still required to submit to water baptism (10:47-48).

D. **John 3:5**

Water is an element necessary to salvation.

III. “FOR” IN ACTS 2:38 MEANS “BECAUSE OF”.

A. **Acts 2:38**

The argument here is that baptism is not done in order to receive the remission of sins, but because sins have already been remitted. If that is true of baptism, it must also be true of repentance. Does one repent of sins that have already been remitted?

B. Matthew 26:28

Jesus used the exact same wording, *“for the remission of sins”*, when He explained the reason His blood would be shed. Did Jesus shed His blood because sins were already remitted or in order to make that possible?

IV. WHY DIDN'T JESUS SAY, “HE THAT IS NOT BAPTIZED WILL BE CONDEMNED”?

A. Mark 16:16

Here, Jesus taught two things necessary for salvation: belief and baptism, but in order to be condemned, unbelief is all that is necessary.

B. John 3:18

Those who lack faith are *“condemned already”*. Thus, the other requirements for salvation do not even enter the picture. If the first step is disregarded, all subsequent steps are irrelevant.

C. To illustrate, consider the following: *“He who eats and digests will live; but he who does not eat will die”*. Is it necessary to say that he who does not digest will die? Of course, not. The one who does not eat, does not digest!

V. WE ARE SAVED BY FAITH ONLY.

A. Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:8

These verses do teach that salvation is by faith, but where does the word *“only”* appear?

B. Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-4

God told Adam that when he ate of the forbidden fruit, he would *“surely die”*. Satan said, *“You will not surely die”*. The devil added one word and completely changed the meaning of what God had said. And so it is when

anyone teaches salvation by faith only. Salvation is by faith, but not by faith only.

C. James 2:24

The only instance in all of scripture that records the phrase “*faith only*” actually teaches the opposite of what those who believe in “faith only” say.

D. Acts 16:30-33

Some “faith only” advocates take comfort in the fact that the jailor in Philippi was told to believe when he asked what to do to be saved, but they are overlooking something important. It was after they told him to believe that “*they spoke the word of the Lord to him*”. Telling him to believe was just an introduction to the answer, not the whole answer itself. After speaking the word to him, the man was baptized immediately.

CONCLUSION

A. 1st Peter 3:21

There’s just no way around it: baptism saves us.

B. Galatians 3:27

Wouldn’t you like to be “*in Christ*”? Be baptized!