

# Baptism

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## **A Summary of Christian Baptism**

Scriptures regarding baptism speak of believers in Jesus Christ being saved by Jesus' death and resurrection, cleansed of sins, united with Him and all other believers, buried and raised with Him to walk in new life. The old life of sin has been replaced with a new life in Christ.

Jesus *spiritually* baptizes all believers by the Holy Spirit into His spiritual body which is the church. Spirit baptism places the believer into spiritual union with Christ instantaneously upon believing.

To signify this spiritual union with Christ, and the associated cleansing of sins, all believers are commanded to be *physically* baptized in water. The New Testament practice was to water baptize believers as soon as possible after they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation and its associated spiritual blessings are received by faith. If spiritual blessings are received by faith, and water baptism occurs sometime after initial faith, then water baptism also follows sometime after the spiritual blessings which have already been received by faith. Water baptism therefore is not what a person *must* do to *become* saved; rather it is what a person *should* do because he *is* saved.

## **A Short Study on Christian Baptism**

- Christian baptism is about salvation by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1Pet 3:21; Col 2:12; Rom 6:3-4).
- Baptism is about sins being washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
- Baptism is about oneness with Jesus and other believers (Eph 4:5; 1Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-28; Jn 17:22).
- Baptism is about identification and participation with Jesus and his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12). There is a dying to the old life of sin and a spiritual resurrection to walk in the new life of Christ (Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12). There is a putting off of the old life and the putting on of Christ (Col 2:11-12; Gal 3:27).

Jesus *spiritually* baptizes all believers by the Holy Spirit into His spiritual body which is the church (Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5; 1Cor 12:13; Eph 1:22-23). Spirit baptism occurs simultaneously to salvation and is automatically experienced by all believers when they believe (Gal 3:2; 3:26-28; Rom 8:9; 1Cor 12:3,7; Jn 7:37-39; Col 2:12; Acts 10:44-48 with Acts 11:1-14), making all believers one in Christ (1Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-28; Rom 6:3; Jn 17:11, 22) and is not repeated thereafter.

To signify this spiritual union with Christ, and the associated cleansing of sins, all believers have the privilege and responsibility to be *physically* baptized in water (Matt 28:19-20; 1Pet 3:21). The New Testament practice was to baptize people as soon as possible after they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; 8:36; 9:18; 10:47; 16:30-33; 19:5). Water baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God who commanded it (Matt 28:19-20; 1Pet 3:21; Acts 2:38).

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God's gracious gift of salvation and associated blessings are received by faith. Through faith/believing, Christians are raised with Christ (Col 2:12), their hearts are purified (Acts 15:9), they have access into His grace (Rom 4:16; 5:2; Eph 2:8), they have His imputed righteousness (Rom 4:4,5,11,24; 10:10; Phil 3:9), they have life through His name (John 20:31), they have eternal life (John 3:15, 16. 36; 5:24; 6:47), Christ indwells their hearts (Eph 3:17), they have received the remission of sins (Acts 10:43), they received the Holy Spirit (John 7:39), they have been saved (Acts 16:31; Rom 10:9-10; Eph 2:8), they have been justified (Acts 13:39; Rom 3:28; 5:1; Gal 2:16), they have become His children (Jn 1:12; Gal 3:26), and have been sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption (Eph 1:13; 4:30). When sinners believe in Jesus Christ, they receive all these spiritual blessings and more.

Water baptism is a separate response which is to follow faith (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:37) and is therefore not normally the occasion of initial saving faith. A testimony of faith in Jesus Christ is the prerequisite for water baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12, 13, 37; 10:47; 18:8; 19:4-5). Faith is a response of the mind and heart that does not require physical effort, water, or a human baptizer. Thus, there is normally a time difference between initial faith and water baptism as recorded in Acts (Acts 8:13; 8:38; 9:18; 10:48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5). This is also evident by the fact that people exhibited faith before the New Covenant began, when water baptism was not commanded. There is no case recorded in scripture where unbelieving sinners are standing in water being baptized the exact moment they hear and initially believe the gospel.

If spiritual blessings are received by faith, and water baptism occurs sometime after initial faith, then water baptism also follows sometime after the spiritual blessings which were received by faith. Water baptism is therefore not what a person *must* do to *become* saved; rather it is what a person *should* do because he *is already* saved.

## **A Detailed Study on Christian Baptism**

1. Baptism generally means immersion but has different applications. The forms of the word *baptism* are transliterations of four basic Greek words and their inflected various forms.

- a. βαπτίζω (*baptizō*) rendered *baptism, baptize, baptized, baptizing, and Baptist.*
- b. βαπτιστής (*baptistēs*) in Greek has been rendered *Baptist* in English.
- c. βάπτισμα (*baptisma*) rendered *baptism, baptized, and baptizing.*
- d. βάπτισμός (*baptismōs*) rendered *baptism and baptisms.*

*Baptizō* is translated *wash* in Mark 7:4. *Baptismōs* is translated *washing* in Mark 7:4 and *washings* in Heb 9:10. *Βάπτω* (*baptō*) is translated as *dip* in Luke 16:24, and *dipped* in Rev 19:13 and twice in Jn 13:26. Being Greek transliterations, these words were used originally only in the New Testament, although *baptizō* is used a few times in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Water baptism has been called a sign, symbol, sacrament, rite, ritual, ceremony, ordinance, tradition, token, and institution, though none of these terms are used specifically in scripture in reference to baptism. Baptism is very often called a *sacrament*, particularly by

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those who believe that grace is mysteriously and automatically communicated through water baptism (unless the one baptized raises some obstacle). To the sacramentalist, the ritual of baptism is the means or instrument of God's grace and is more than symbolic. (*Sacrament* is derived from the Latin Vulgate's *sacramentum* translation of the Greek word *mysterion* in Eph 5:32.) The word *ordinance* is very often used by those who believe water baptism symbolizes, but is not the means of, salvation.

Baptism denotes immersion (Jn 3:23), emersion (Col 2:12), identification/participation (Rom 6:3), union (1Cor 12:13), and cleansing (Acts 22:16). The background of Christian baptism is the Old Testament ceremonial temple washings (Lev16:4, 24-28; Ex 30:18-21) and particularly John the Baptist's baptism (Isa 40:3-4; Matt 3:1-17; Mk 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-22). There does not appear to be enough biblical or extra-biblical evidence to conclude that Jewish proselyte baptism (to whatever extent it was practiced) had a strong influence on John's baptism or subsequent New Covenant Christian baptism. Circumcision, not baptism, remained the predominate rite of conversion administered to proselytes of Judaism.

The different uses of the word baptism in the New Testament are illustrated as follows. As a type of baptism, Noah was saved from the judgment waters of the flood (1Pet 3:20-21). The Israelites were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea when they passed through the Red Sea (1Cor 10:2). John the Baptist and the apostles of Jesus baptized penitent sinners with water (Jn 1:26; 4:2; Acts 8:38; 10:47). Jesus spoke of his death as a baptism (Luke 12:50). Jesus Himself did not baptize with water, but after His ascension He baptized with the Holy Spirit (Jn 4:2; Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5). Jesus commanded His followers to baptize all future believers with water (Mark 16:16; Matt 28:19-20), which they did (Acts 2:38; 19:1-5). In judgment, Jesus will baptize unbelievers with fire (Matt 3:10-12 with Acts 1:5; Rev 20:15).

Christian baptism means salvation by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1Pet 3:21; Col 2:12; Rom 6:3-4), sins being washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16), the believer's oneness with Jesus and other believers (Eph 4:5; 1Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-28; Jn 17:22), and identification and participation with Jesus and his death, burial and resurrection (Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12). For the believer, there is a dying to the old life of sin and a spiritual resurrection to walk in the new life of Christ (Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12). There is a putting off of the old life and the putting on of Christ (Col 2:11-12; Gal 3:27).

2. John the Baptist baptized with water to prepare the way for Christ. John baptized with water in order to manifest the Messiah to Israel (Mark 1:2-3; Jn 1:31). John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4). Jesus was baptized by John to fulfill all righteousness, endorsing John's identification of Him as the Christ (Jn 1:29, 36). John rightly understood that Jesus was not one of the penitent needing his sins taken away but was the sinless Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29-36; Isa 53:7). The Forerunner identified Jesus of Nazareth as the long-awaited Messiah who would bring deliverance and judgment (Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1; Matt 3:10-17).

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3. Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit. A new operation of the Spirit began with the New Covenant era--Spirit Baptism (Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 10:47 with 11:16). This would characterize Jesus' ministry as contrasted to John the Baptist's ministry of water baptism (Mark 1:8). John declared that Jesus would be greater than him, and prophesied Jesus' baptism would be greater than his. He described the distinction between their ministries this way: "*I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*" (Mark 1:8; Jn 4:2). The purpose of Spirit baptism is explained in 1Corinthians 12:13, "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*"

By examining all the scriptures on Spirit baptism, the following conclusion can be made. *Spirit baptism is the spiritual operation whereby Jesus, by or with the Holy Spirit, baptizes the believing sinner into His spiritual body, which is the church* (Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5; 1Cor 12:13; Eph 1:22,23). The Old Testament predicted a new age of the Holy Spirit's ministry (Joel 2:28 with Acts 2:27). John the Baptist foretold of Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8). Just before Jesus' crucifixion, He told His disciples that it was necessary that He depart and send the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:16; 15:26; 16:7). Jesus said if He did not go away the Holy Spirit would not come unto them (Jn 7:39; 16:7). After His resurrection and just before His ascension into heaven, He promised His disciples they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit within a few days (Acts 1:5). In accordance with Joel, John the Baptist, and Jesus, this baptizing with the Holy Spirit began to occur in Jerusalem during the feast of Pentecost a few days after Jesus' ascension as Jesus had promised (Acts 1:5; 2:27). The occasion is documented in Acts chapter 2 as confirmed by comparing Acts 1:5 with 10:47 and 11:16. Although there are three unique circumstances of subsequence (i.e., people receiving the Holy Spirit *subsequent* to believing) recorded in the book of Acts (the apostles in Acts 2, the Samaritans in Acts 8, and the disciples of John the Baptist in Acts 19), the *teachings* of the apostles indicate that the norm for the age is that Spirit baptism occurs simultaneously to salvation and is automatically experienced by all believers when they believe (Gal 3:2; 3:26-28; Rom 8:9; 1Cor 12:3,7; Jn 7:37; Acts 10:44-48 with Acts 11:1-14; Col 2:10-13), making all believers one in Christ (1Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-28; Rom 6:3; 8:9; Jn 17:11, 22; Eph 2:12, 16) and is not repeated afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

4. All believers in Jesus are to be baptized with water. Even before Jesus' Spirit baptism began in Acts 2, he commanded his apostles to baptize penitent believing sinners with water (Jn 3:22; Mark 1:15). Just before Jesus ascended, He commanded His apostles to go into all the world preaching, teaching and baptizing (Mark 16:16; Matt 28:19-20). His apostles did just that (Acts 2:38-41; 8:12-13; 8:38; 9:18; 10:48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 1Cor 1:14-16).

Jesus commanded the apostles to teach their converts to observe all things he had commanded them, which would include them also going into all the world preaching, teaching, and baptizing those who would in turn go and preach, teach, and baptize those who in turn would go ....etc. Jesus was baptized with water, the twelve apostles were baptized with water, the converts of the apostles were baptized with water, Paul was baptized with water (Acts 9:18), Paul's converts were baptized with water, and some by Paul himself (Acts 16:33; 18:8, 1Cor 1:14-16). Jews and Gentiles were baptized with water (Acts 2:41; 10:47; 16:33; 18:8, 1Cor 1:14-16). The

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Corinthian believers who were baptized by the Spirit into one body (1 Cor 12:13) were also baptized with water (Acts 18:8). All believers today are to follow the apostle Paul as he followed Christ and be baptized as Paul was (1Cor 11:1).

Peter and Paul both preached the same gospel of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. If not, Peter would be cursed by Paul (Gal 1:8-9). Peter and Paul both preached salvation by grace through faith/repentance (Acts 3:19; 10:43; Acts 15:11; 20:21, 24; 26:20). Though Paul was called primarily to the Gentiles (Rom 15:16; Gal 2:7), both Peter and Paul preached to Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2:38-41; 10:34-43; 14:1; 17:1,17; 18:4). Both Peter and Paul baptized as well. Paul made clear water baptism's subordinate position to the gospel (1Cor 1:17-18). And due to the contention among the spiritually immature Corinthians, Paul thanked God he had not baptized many converts lest any should say he had baptized in his own name. But Paul *did* baptize (Acts 16:33; 18:8, 1Cor 1:14-16). The book of Acts records Paul being involved with the baptism of converts as late as 20 years after the death of Christ (Acts 19:1-5). An explanation of why Paul never commanded people to be water baptized in his epistles is because he is writing to *Christians* who it could be assumed were already baptized. Paul speaks of baptism as a past-tense reality in the lives of his readers (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:26-28; Col 2:10-13).

The new testament (not the books, but the testament-covenant itself) went into effect upon Christ the Testator's death (Heb 9:16-17). This new testament/covenant is currently in force (Luke 22:20; 2Cor 3:6; Heb 9:15; 12:24). In this new age, Jesus is building his church through the unifying operation of the baptism with the Spirit, which began on the Jewish day of Pentecost not many days after His ascension (Matt 16:18; Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 10:47 with 11:16; 1Cor 12:13). Through the cross of Christ, the apostles and all believers, Jews and Gentiles, are placed into this one body (Eph 2:12-16; Rom 16:7; Jn 17:21-23; 1Cor 12:13, 27) which is the church (Eph 1:22-23; 1Cor 12:27). Peter received a vision and was sent by God to the Gentiles who experienced what the Jews had experienced years earlier during the 33 AD Pentecost Feast recorded in Act 2 (Acts 10). Many years after this one body's existence, the apostle Paul received the dispensation of God's grace by revelation to make known the mystery of how the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel (Eph 3:1-6). Since the great commission was given by Jesus Christ Himself, it *has been* and *continues to be* the privilege and responsibility of every person who has been joined to the body of Christ by faith to be baptized with water as the answer of a good conscience toward God (Matt 28:19-20; 1Pet 3:21; Acts 2:38; 8:36; 9:18; 10:47; 16:30-33; 18:8; 19:5; 1Cor 1:14-16).

5. Spirit baptism saves; Subsequent water baptism is symbolic. Spirit baptism and water baptism are distinct but inseparably connected. Spirit baptism makes believers one with Christ and His body; water baptism is the visual, physical portrayal of this spiritual reality. Jesus *spiritually* baptizes all believers by the Holy Spirit into His spiritual body which is the church (Mark 1:8; 1Cor 12:13; Rom 6:3). To signify this spiritual union with Christ, and the cleansing of sins, believers are commanded to be *physically* baptized in water as the answer of a good conscience toward God (Matt 28:19-20; 1Pet 3:21). God never commands people to be

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baptized with the Spirit (as this is automatic and instantaneous upon believing), but He does command people to be baptized in water (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 2:38).

Note: As periodically partaking of the Lord's Supper signifies the ongoing spiritual nourishment of the believer upon Christ (Jn 6:53-57), water baptism is a one-time initiatory rite signifying the believer's spiritual cleansing and union with Christ. Both water baptism and the Lord's Supper are memorials of Christ's once-and-for-all, never-to-be-repeated sacrificial death (Romans 6:3; 1Cor 11:26).

The one Christian baptism of Eph 4:5 has two distinct aspects: efficacious and emblematic; real and ritual; true and type; substance and shadow. The physical ritual portrays the spiritual reality. This is consistent with how Old Testament rituals functioned. For example, circumcision of the flesh was a token of faith, symbolic of the circumcision of the heart unto which Israel was called (Gen 17:11; Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 4:4; Rom 2:29; 4:11). Physical circumcision was not efficacious; spiritual circumcision was.

As a result of this close connection between type and antitype, verses on Christian baptism provide insight into both dimensions of baptism. Water baptism depicts and represents what Spirit baptism spiritually accomplishes. However, this does not mean that Spirit baptism and water baptism occur simultaneously in time in a believer's life. On two occasions where Spirit baptism is explicitly identified as occurring in scripture (Acts 2 and Acts 10), it was not simultaneous with water baptism (Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 10:44-48 with 11:16). While there are different and unique cases during the transition period recorded in Acts, the epistles convey the norm for the age to be that Spirit baptism places the believer into spiritual union with Christ instantaneously upon believing. Water baptism is not normally simultaneous with initial saving faith but should follow soon afterwards. Spirit baptism secures salvation; water baptism pictures salvation. In spiritual baptism, the instrument used by Christ is the Holy Spirit without physical effort, water, or a human baptizer. In ritualistic water baptism, a human baptizer, water, and a physically capable recipient are necessary.

Note: The term *salvation* has many usages in scripture. In this paper, it refers to salvation from the *penalty* of sin (eternal death). This salvation is received by faith in Christ and results in blessings the Bible describes in past-tense and present-tense terms. Spirit baptism is one of many facets/descriptions of this "so great" salvation (2Cor 1:10; Heb 2:3). The believer in Jesus Christ *has been* (past-tense) saved (2Tim 1:8-9; Titus 3:5; Luke 7:50), made accepted in the beloved (Eph 1:6), redeemed (1Pet 1:18-19), reconciled to God (2Cor 5:18; Col 1:21), quickened (Eph 2:1,5), raised to sit in heavenly places (Eph 2:6), sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption (Eph 1:13; 4:30), delivered from the kingdom of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col 1:13-14), and made a partaker of the inheritance of the saints (Col 1:12). The believer in Jesus Christ *is* (present-tense) a child of God (Jn 1:12; 1Jn 3:2; Gal 3:26), born again (1Pet 1:21-23), saved (1Cor 1:18), forgiven of all trespasses (Eph 4:32; Col 2:13-14; 1Jn 2:12; Rom 4:7); justified from all things (Acts 13:39; Rom 3:24), passed from death unto life (Jn 5:24; 1Jn 3:14), risen with Christ (Col2:12), indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Jn 7:38-39;

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Col 1:27; 1Cor 3:16; 6:19), and baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ (1Cor 12:13; Rom 6:3; Gal 3:26-28; Col 2:10-13).

6. The only scriptural prerequisite for water baptism is belief in Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12, 13, 37; 10:47; 18:8; 19:4-5). Local church membership, lengthy training programs, and denominational commitment are all unscriptural prerequisites for water baptism.

7. Water baptism should always follow belief in Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 13, 37; 10:47; 18:8; 19:4-5). The scriptural order is always belief before baptism--never baptism before belief. Without belief in Jesus Christ, water baptism falsely identifies the unregenerate person as being in union with Jesus Christ when he is not (1Cor 12:13; Rom 6:3; Gal 3:26-28; Col 2:10-13). In Acts 19:1-5, it was necessary for those disciples who had received John's baptism to be baptized in Jesus' name after they heard about Christ and believed on Him. Every person upon trusting the Lord Jesus Christ should be baptized in water as an expression of the new relationship they enjoy, regardless of any previous false baptisms which did not do so.

8. Water baptism should follow soon after belief in Christ. As water baptism is an initiatory rite, the New Testament practice was to water baptize people as soon as possible after they believed on the Lord (Acts 2:38; 8:36; 9:18; 10:47; 16:30-33; 19:5).

9. Proper water baptism is a one-time initiatory rite that needs not be repeated. Since water baptism signifies our union with Christ (not any Christian denomination or sect), water baptism should only be required once after salvation. There are no cases in scripture of anyone being baptized more than once after believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

10. Contextually, water baptism appears to be by immersion. No verses explicitly delineate the mode of baptism. However, the baptismal accounts would suggest immersion versus pouring or sprinkling. John the Baptist baptized "*in the river*" (Mark 1:5; Matt 3:6). John baptized at Aenon near Salim "*because there was much water there*" (Jn 3:23). Jesus "*came up out of the water*" (Mark 1:10; Matt 3:16). Phillip and the Eunuch; "*here is water*" (Acts 8:36); "*they went down into the water*" (8:38); "*came up out of the water*" (8:39). The Philippian jailer took Paul and Silas from his house to wash their stripes and be baptized, after which he brought them into his house (Acts 16:32-32). Water is never said to be brought to the believer, but the believer goes to the water (8:38-39; 22:16; 16:13,15). This seeming need for "much water" would not be necessary for sprinkling or pouring. Also, burial and resurrection (Col 2:12; Rom 6:3-4) is best portrayed by immersion (going into) and emersion (coming out of).

11. Baptism marks the beginning of a new life in Christ. Baptism into Jesus Christ not only means deliverance from the *penalty* of sin but also from the *power* of sin to rule one's life (Rom 6:1-18). Baptism identifies and unites the believer with the Lord Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection (Rom 6:3-4). Not only has Jesus died for believers, but believers have died with Him. There is a putting off of the old life and the putting on of Christ and His righteousness (Col 2:11-12; Gal 3:27). Sin no longer has dominion over the believer who has been buried with Christ in death and raised to walk in newness of life (Rom 6:1-7; Col 3:9-10; Gal 5:24). This new

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life of righteousness is experienced practically as believers know, acknowledge, and yield themselves to Christ and the truth regarding all that baptism into Christ means (Rom 6:3, 11, 13; 2Cor 4:10).

## 12. Infant baptism is not scripturally valid.

- a. The apostolic pattern and teachings clearly established under the New Covenant is the baptism of individuals confessing personal faith in Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12, 13, 37; 18:8; 19:1-5).

To baptize infants, one must propose either

- 1) Someone believes for the infant (surrogate faith), or
- 2) The child has faith in Christ without any understanding, or
- 3) Faith is not required for baptism.

Neither of these options is in harmony with the biblical data.

- 1) Being a Christian is not based on the faith of the nation or parents of one's physical birth (Matt 28:19-20; Rom 9:6-8; Jn 1:13; 3:16). It is a personal relationship based on the faith of the individual. This statement is not predicated on western individualism, but Old and New Testament theology (Jer 31:29; Ezek 18; Matt 10:34-36; 28:19-20; Rom 9:6-8; 1Jn 1:13; 3:16).
  - 2) Faith comes by hearing and involves believing God's word (Rom 10:17; 2Tim 3:15; Heb 4:2; 11:6). Understanding and believing require cognitive maturity that infants do not possess.
  - 3) Scriptures tightly link faith with baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12, 13, 37; 18:8; 19:1-5; Gal 3:26-28; Col 2:9-12). To decouple personal faith from baptism is a serious error which usually involves prioritizing some other presupposing factor (e.g., the Old Testament's practice of circumcision) above the New Testament's teaching on baptism.
- b. In scripture, there is no explicit mention of infants being baptized, nor are they commanded to be baptized. Parents are never told to have their infants baptized.
- c. Baptism is *the answer of a good conscience toward God*, requiring a conscious decision that infants cannot make (1Pet 3:21).
- d. Consistent interpretation of scripture reveals no inferences establishing a doctrine of infant baptism.
- d1. Water baptism is never said to be a sign of the New Covenant equivalent to the sign of circumcision in the Old Covenant. With all the controversy over circumcision in the early church, not once did any of the apostles argue that circumcision had been replaced or fulfilled by water baptism. Spiritual circumcision of the heart was called for and experienced prior to the New

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Covenant (Deut 10:12-16; Jer 4:4). In the New Testament, salvation is referred to as inward heart circumcision (i.e., becoming a new creature in Christ) and is presented as the fulfillment of Old Covenant circumcision (Rom 2:28-29; Col 2:11; Gal 6:15). Noting the similarities between physical circumcision and baptism and yet ignoring the dissimilarities can create a false parallelism of the two rituals, revealing a faulty hermeneutic. This supposed one-to-one correspondence is invalidated by observing the great differences between Old Covenant circumcision and New Covenant baptism. Under the Abrahamic Covenant, *all male descendants of Abraham, as well as servants, both adults and children, whether believing or not, whether from believing parents or not*, were to receive the *bloody ritual of foreskin removal* (Gen 17:1-14, 20, 25-26). *Applying water* to male and female infants of *only believing parents* is not consistent with either the Old or New Covenants. So even if it could be proven that baptism replaced circumcision (which it cannot), it is wrong to assume the two rites have the same meaning and administration. If they were intended to have the same meaning and administration, there would be no need to change the sign at all. Circumcision may as well have continued, and baptism never been introduced.

Based on Abraham's faith, circumcision was prescribed for all his physical male descendants to mark out a *national* and *ethnic* people who *should have* the faith of Abraham. In the New Covenant, baptism is administered to Abraham's spiritual descendants to mark out a *spiritual* people who *already have* the faith of Abraham, whether Jew or Gentile. Unlike the old covenant of circumcision, a person's physical lineage does not automatically make one a member of the new covenant community (Matt 28:19-20; Rom 9:6-8; 1Jn 1:13; 3:16). Personal faith is required.

The abrogation of physical circumcision as a law reflects much more than a mere change in the "sign of the covenant", but the ushering in of a different type of covenant. God's first covenant was with Abraham and his biological descendants. Through Isaac and Jacob (Israel) the covenant promises were relayed, even though Ishmael also received the promised blessing of many descendants who would become a great nation, and was also circumcised (Gen 17:20, 25-26). God gave his covenant people, Israel, His law, made up of numerous ordinances to regulate their lives morally, religiously, and civilly. In time, Israel became a great nation occupying the land that God had promised them. Within this covenant community, individuals who trusted Jehovah became heirs of all the covenant blessings, including personal salvation. But many within the covenant community did not have the faith of Abraham and were not saved (Jer 31:31-34; Matt 8:12; Rom 9:31-10:3). After many years of Israel breaking God's covenant, God promised to make a new covenant with them. This new covenant would not be according to the old covenant made with unbelievers. The people of the New Covenant would not have to teach others "Know the Lord" because all would know Him from the least to the greatest and their sins would be forgiven (Jer

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31:31-34; Heb 8:6-13). The advent of the New Covenant would also usher in a new age of the Holy Spirit's ministry (Joel 2:28 with Acts 2:27; Jn 14:16; 15:26; 16:7; Acts 1:5). This New Covenant was established by Christ at his first coming and is in force today (Luke 22:20; 2Cor 3:6; Heb 9:15; 12:24). With the arrival of the New Covenant, God has made the first covenant old (Heb 8:13).<sup>2</sup>

The New Testament scriptures place great emphasis on the newness, fulfillment, and superiority of the New Covenant as compared with the Old. There is a progression and advancement in redemptive history. The New Covenant is a new, better, and fulfilling covenant that cannot be equated with the Abrahamic covenant of circumcision or the related Mosaic covenant of Law. The New Covenant is a better covenant (Heb 7:22; 8:6) because it has a better office (Heb 3:1-2), a better ministry (Heb 3:3-6), a better rest (Heb 3:7-19), a better priesthood (Heb 12:7-21), a better high priest (Heb 7:17; 8:1-2), a better location (Heb 8:3-5), better promises (Heb 8:6-13), a better sacrifice (Heb 9:9-10:14), a better hope (Heb 7:19), and a greater glory (2Cor 3:6-18).

In the Old Testament, God worked through an ethnic *nation* composed of believers and unbelievers. In the New Testament, God works through a spiritual organism composed of believers from *all nations*.<sup>3</sup> While it is true that unbelievers and false baptized professors are associated with local or "visible" assemblies, the church as the body of Christ is made up exclusively of true believers (Acts 2:47; 1Cor 1:2; 1Thes 1:1; Heb 12:23; Col 1:24). The unregenerate, including infants, can enjoy temporal blessings by association with the church, but are not members of the church until they believe. Without faith baptism does not place a person in the church or in the New Covenant. Scriptures never state that "visible" church members are partakers in the New Covenant. Nor do scriptures ever state that infants of believing parents are members of the New Covenant, the invisible church (i.e., the body of Christ), or the visible church.

d2. New covenant household baptisms do not prove infant baptism.

d2a. Infants are never mentioned in any household baptisms

d2b. Three of the five cases of household baptisms show that the baptized were capable of understanding. (Infants cannot hear the word, believe, repent, speak in tongues, or rejoice.) The other two accounts where understanding is not indicated are brief mentions with very little data given.

i. Cornelius' household (Acts 10:2, 24, 44-48; 11:14). The "them" who were baptized *heard* the word (10:44), *received* the Spirit (10:44-47; 11:15-17), and *spoke* in tongues (10:46) as at Pentecost 33AD (11:18) as *believers* (11:17) who *repented* (11:18).

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ii. Lydia's household (Acts 16:15a). Little data is given.

iii. Philippian jailor's household (16:32-33). The word was spoken to the household (v 32) and *they all rejoiced* (16:34).

iv. Crispus' household *heard* and *believed* (Acts 18:8)

v. Stephanus' household (1Cor 1:16a). Little data is given.

All the evidence from these household passages shows that those baptized were believers. Household baptisms are another way of showing household *belief* as with the house of the nobleman whose son was healed by Jesus (Jn 4:53).

d2e. Jesus' reception and special care for little children have no relevance to infant baptism (Matt 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16). Baptism is never mentioned. There is no proof that these little ones are the children of believers only. Jesus points to these little ones as examples of the humility and faith required of adults (Matt 18:1-6).

d2f. 1Cor 7:14 "*else were your children unclean; but now are they holy*" does not say anything about infant baptism or even infants. Nor does the verse infer that children of believers are automatically members of the new covenant. The point being made is that a Christian should not leave an unbelieving spouse who is pleased to stay in the marriage. By staying in the marriage, the believing spouse sanctifies both the unbelieving spouse as well as the children, most probably referring to the believer's saving influence (vs. 16; 1Pet 3:1; Eph 6:4). Whatever the exact meaning of this sanctification, the unbelieving adult spouse is sanctified also. And yet nobody is arguing for the baptism of a sanctified spouse who is not a believer.

d2g. Peter's application of "the promise" to the children in Acts 2:39 does not teach that infants of believing parents are included in the covenant. When Peter said the promise was unto them and to their children, he was not preaching to *believing* parents, but largely *unbelieving* parents who needed salvation (Acts 2:38, 40, 41). Peter was saying the promise is given to all generations, near and far, as many as God calls. What is the promise? "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" (Acts 2:38) The promise of God is to save and give the Holy Spirit to all who repent and are baptized. Peter is simply following Jesus' great commission to preach the gospel (Acts 2:14-36) and baptize those who believe (Mark 16:16; Matt 28:19-20; Acts 2:41).

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- d2h. Baptizing infants is inconsistent with forbidding infants from receiving the Lord's Supper. If infants are members of the New Covenant, how can they be rightly denied the Lord's Supper? Yet infants are not able to obey the commandment of self-examination associated with partaking of the Lord's Supper (1Cor 11:28). If the requirement of faith for baptism is not applied to infants, why not omit the requirement of self-examination to infants for the Lord's Supper? No, the solution is to be biblically consistent. Infants are not exempt from the biblically prescribed prerequisites for either baptism or the Lord's Supper. Infants should not participate in either.
- d2i. The Bible does not present any category of individuals who are members in the New Covenant while at the same time in Adam, dead in trespasses and sins. Yet this deadness in sins is the status of the unsaved before being justified by faith (1Cor 15:22; Eph 2:1-13). Furthermore, through Spirit baptism recipients are united and clothed with Christ (1Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27; Col 2:9-12). Infants are not united and clothed with Christ before understanding and believing. Nor are they regenerate since regeneration follows faith.<sup>4</sup> The leaping of John the Baptist in his mother's womb at the salutation of Mary makes no statement about regeneration (Luke 1:41-44). The warning passages in Hebrews refer to Hebrew Christians tempted to reject Christ and go back to Judaism. There is no indication that those being warned had become members of the New Covenant as infants. Those warned had "received the knowledge of the truth", and "after being illuminated" had "endured a great fight of afflictions" (Heb 10:26, 32).
- d2j. Absent in scripture is a separate baptismal theology for infants that dismisses verses on baptism as for adults only. Some have proposed that the apostolic practice and doctrine of baptizing only believers apply to adults only. It is proposed that many baptismal texts that speak of faith do not apply to infants who can legitimately be baptized without a confession of faith. If there is a different baptismal theology for infants, it must be established by clear scriptural evidence, not by silence and speculation. Else the biblical data on most any subject can be disregarded as irrelevant for certain categories of people, allowing most anything to be taught as a different truth for those categories. The apostles are writing the epistles over several decades, giving them ample time to record and elaborate on the baptism of second-generation Christians (i.e., those born to the first-generation adult believers of the apostolic proclamation).
- e. Infant baptism does more harm than good, since it distorts the meaning of baptism. Proponents of infant baptism often appeal to the long-standing Old Covenant tradition of including infants in the covenant community. Without explicit abrogation of this practice in the New Testament, it is said that not baptizing infants of Christian parents

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is depriving the children of their entitled privileges. This argument not only falls short due to hermeneutical reasons (if Old Covenant practices continue unless explicitly rescinded in the New Testament)<sup>2</sup> but also for the familial reasons inferred. Far from being excluded from blessing, generally, children being brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord in the New Covenant era are far more privileged than were the circumcised Jewish children who were members of the mixed (saved and unsaved) Old Covenant community. The New Covenant revelation of Jesus Christ fulfills and far surpasses the Old Covenant. Children of faithful parents benefit from this greater covenant in manifold ways. Infant baptism however is not one of those benefits. Far too much is compromised and endangered by baptizing infants. Infant baptism simply cannot carry the full meaning of baptism as described in scripture, which is salvation, forgiveness of sins, and union with Christ, the body of Christ, and the Holy Spirit (1Pet 3:21; 1Cor 12:13; Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12). These salvation blessings are associated with personal faith and baptism, all of which are together presented as past tense realities of the redeemed (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12, 13, 37; 18:8; 19:1-5; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:26-28; Col 2:9-12; 1Cor 12:13). Unlike baptism, Old Covenant circumcision was generally prospective (looking forward to the faith and salvation of the individual), not retrospective. Imposing these prospective elements of circumcision onto New Testament baptism robs baptism of its personal retrospective significance. This error opens the door for indiscriminate baptism unless an arbitrary discriminator other than personal faith is applied. Often this arbitrary discriminator is the "children of Christian parents", which is inconsistent with both Old Covenant circumcision and New Testament baptism. Scripture presents the salvation blessings represented by baptism as *realized possessions* received by *spiritual birth* and confessed in the *conscious, voluntary* baptism of *one who has believed*. In covenantal infant baptism, the salvation blessings represented by baptism can only be *uncertain promises* (i.e., promises which may never be realized by the individual) received by *physical birth* and displayed by the *unconscious, involuntary* baptism of *one who cannot believe*.

As a result of infant baptism being practiced over the centuries, multitudes of people have been baptized as infants who never come to faith in Jesus Christ. Many who were baptized as infants see no need of being baptized after they receive Christ by faith, missing out on the blessing of obeying Christ in baptism as a committed disciple. And worse, how many souls has infant baptism misled to falsely believe they were Christians and thus fail to understand their desperate need to repent and believe the gospel for themselves?

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13. Water baptism is not required for salvation; nor is it the occasion of salvation. There are several verses in the Bible that, by themselves, could lead one to think water baptism is essential to salvation. Often those who hold this position give too little consideration to the doctrine of Jesus' Spirit baptism. Thus, all verses in the epistles on baptism are assumed to be referring to water baptism. They most always see baptism as water baptism and see water associated with cleansing as baptism. To them, water equals baptism and baptism equals water. It is also important to recognize the scriptures' emphasis on faith as being the pivotal point of receiving spiritual blessings and the historical relevance of this fact. Insisting that faith is only effectual during the physical act of water baptism creates a new soteriology (i.e., way of salvation) for New Covenant believers: a salvation of "faith plus ritual" or "faith which only exists in ritual". A new soteriology such as this undermines the apostle Paul's references to the Old Testament patriarchs' salvation by faith as a basis for New Testament salvation.

Listed below are the five major verses used to teach baptism is required for salvation. There have been many interpretations of these verses over the years. This study will present one plausible alternative interpretation for each of the five verses.

- **Mark 16:15-16.** *And he said to them, go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.*

This is one of five places the great commission is found in the Bible (at the end of each Gospel and in Acts 1). It is a true statement that if a person believes and is baptized, he will be saved. This verse could be interpreted to mean A) that baptism is essential to salvation or B) that both the internal response of faith and the external response of baptism are included in the great commission, the two being so closely related in meaning and time. Nowhere in scripture does the negative appear however (i.e., that those who are not baptized will not be saved).

- **Acts 2:37-38.** *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Jesus had commissioned his apostles to preach and baptize. Here Peter preaches and baptizes as Jesus had commanded. This is a clear command to be baptized from the apostle Peter. After preaching the gospel (Acts 2:14-36), the convicted Jews asked what they should do (v. 37). Peter tells them to repent and be baptized (v. 38). This is obviously a salvation message aimed at unsaved Jews who had crucified Christ and the promise is for forgiveness of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit. If Peter's instruction to repent and be baptized was for Jews who had just been saved, they would have already repented and would have already been forgiven of their sins and his instructions would not have been needed. Repentance has always been God's command to sinners. The Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles all called for repentance. While faith and repentance are spiritual

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disciplines continued throughout the Christian life, in regard to salvation, both words are used in scripture to describe the sinner's responsibility toward God (Luke 13:3; 18:9-14; Jn 3:16; Mark 16:16; Acts 15:11; 17:30; 20:21, 24; 26:20).

It is a true statement that if a person repents and is baptized, he will receive the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the New Covenant answer of a good conscience toward God, signifying the penitent's inward change of mind. This verse could be interpreted to mean that A) both repentance and baptism are essential to receiving the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit, or B) both the internal response of repentance and the external response of baptism is included in Peter's carrying out of the great commission, the two being so closely related in meaning and time.

- **Acts 22:16.** *And now why do you tarry? arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

Acts 9 records Saul's baptism after his experience on the road to Damascus. In Acts 22, Saul (now Paul) is recounting the events surrounding his conversion. Paul recalls Ananias telling him the words in verse 16. Paul describes Ananias associating water baptism with the washing away of sins. The apostle's endorsement of these words shows another aspect of baptism other than union with Jesus Christ: cleansing. The ritual washings in the Old Testament laid the foundation for the ritual of Christian water baptism, portraying the cleansing of the believer's sins. This verse could be interpreted to mean that A) baptism is when Paul's sins were forgiven or B) baptism in water dramatizes the truth of sins being forgiven in the analogous way water washes away physical pollution.

- **Romans 6:3-4.** *Do you not know, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

In expounding the grace of God that is greater than all sin, the apostle Paul combats the argument that continuing in sin would cause the grace of God to abound even more. Paul refutes this false logic by reminding his readers that baptism identifies the believer with the Lord Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection. Not only has Jesus died for believers, but believers have died with Christ. Sin no longer has dominion over the believer who has been buried with Christ in death and raised to walk in newness of life. This baptism into Christ is most probably referring primarily to Spirit baptism (Acts 1:5; 1Cor 12:13) versus water baptism. See number 5 above. (Other verses like Romans 6:3-4 are Gal 3:27-28 and Col 2:11-12). As stated before, these verses do have meaning for water baptism by virtue of water baptism's identifying of the believer with Jesus and His church.

- **1Peter 3:20-21.** *Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism does also now save us*

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*(not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:*

Peter here encourages believers to suffer for well doing as Christ suffered for them and has risen and ascended to sit at God's right hand with all authority. The flood during Noah's day is a type of baptism which saves believers by the resurrection of Christ. As Noah and family went through the flood waters of death and came out alive, so believers in Jesus are buried and raised from the water of baptism. The purpose of baptism is not physical cleansing but is "*the answer of a good conscience toward God*" (συνειδησεως αγαθης επερωτημα εις θεου). Taking συνειδησεως as a subjective genitive, baptism is the answer which proceeds from a good conscience—the answer in response to God who commands baptism. This verse could be interpreted to mean that A) water baptism saves in an absolute sense and is the means and occurrence of salvation or B) water baptism saves in the sense that it portrays the believer's salvation.

Other references are also cited such as Jn 3:5 (...*born of water and of the Spirit...*), 1Cor 6:11 (...*but you are washed...*), Eph 5:26 (...*sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word...*), and Titus 3:5 (...*he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit...*). It is possible that these verses which associate washing or water with spiritual renewal are referring to water baptism. However this interpretation is not necessary, and should not be assumed, since water is often *metaphorically* used to describe the cleansing, life-giving, renewal of God in a believer without referring to the ritual of baptism (Eze 36:24-27; Jn 4:14; 7:38-39; Rev 22:17).

From a review of these verses only, it is understandable how one could conclude that water baptism saves from sin and unifies believers with Christ. This conclusion might be scripturally justified if all the other numerous references to salvation, regeneration, imputation, sanctification, justification, adoption, forgiveness, etc. agreed with this interpretation. However, this turns out *not* to be the case. The overwhelming emphasis of the New Testament is that the blessings of salvation are received by faith without any mention of water baptism. If baptism pictures this salvation by faith, it is not surprising that salvation and water baptism are inseparably intertwined. The inward response of faith is to be soon followed by the outward response of water baptism. In view of this, sometimes the follow-up outward response of water baptism is commanded of sinners along with the saving inward response. Both responses are required as the initiation into the new life (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom 10:16; 2Thes 1:8; 1Pet 4:17).

The sense in which baptism saves is that Spirit baptism joins believing sinners with Christ in his death and resurrection (1Cor 12:13). Water baptism signifies this baptismal union with Christ and is thus inextricably connected with the operation of Spirit baptism and salvation. Water baptism is not a prerequisite for salvation, but it is a necessary post-conversion part of the initiation of the new believer into the Christian life.

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Also, water baptism is referred to as saving because it symbolizes salvation. In the Old Testament, animal sacrifices were spoken of as atoning for sins (Ex 30:10) yet these sacrifices could not take away sins (Heb 10:4; 10:11). They were only the shadow and figure of the true sacrifice of Christ which *could* take away sins (Heb 9:24; 10:1; Jn 1:29; 1Jn 3:5). Jesus also ascribed to the symbol the substance that it represented when describing the bread as his body and the cup as his blood during the last supper (Matt 26:27-28; Luke 22:19-20). Yet Jesus earlier had made it clear to his disciples that the flesh profited nothing--eating his flesh and drinking his blood referred to a spiritual subsistence. "*As I live by the Father: so he that eats me, even he shall live by me*" (Jn 6:57, 63). It is certain that Jesus did not live by the Father via physical ingestion, but in spiritual relationship (Jn 4:24). This is how believers are to live by Jesus. So, water baptism could be said to save in the same figurative sense as partaking of Christ's flesh and blood metaphorically saves (Jn 6:53-54). The reflection is spoken of as the reality just as a person is said to see "himself" in a mirror, although he actually sees only a reflection of himself. Putting a ring on a bride's finger is often used as a cryptic description of marriage. Although the ring is not essential to the marriage, the symbol is used to describe the thing symbolized.

The three major reasons for believing that water baptism does not save (except in a figurative sense) are as follows.

- a. Salvation is by grace--not by works. While scripture never specifies water baptism as a work, it is true that many who hold that water baptism is essential to salvation have taught that water baptism is a work, albeit not a meritorious work of the law. The problem with this position is that any work of righteousness is excluded from saving grace (Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Rom 4:1-6; 11:6). Salvation cannot be by grace and works because the two are mutually exclusive (Eph 2:8-9; Rom 4:4-5; 11:6). Good works are the *result* or *fruit* or *evidence* of salvation--not the *root* or *grounds* or *means* of salvation (James 2:17-20; Matt 7:14-20; Eph 2:8-10; Titus 3:5-8). Good works do not positionally justify the believer before God (Romans 4:2). Sinners are not co-redeemers with Christ. No person in eternity will ever boast of saving himself (Gal 6:14; Eph 2:2-10; Rom 4:4-5; 1Cor 1:26-31). All glory belongs to the Lord (Gal 6:14; Eph 2:2-10; Rom 4:4-5; 1Cor 1:26-31). He is the only Creator and Savior of mankind.<sup>5</sup>

Paul and James cannot be harmonized by simply colliding Romans 4:4-5 and James 2:24 together and concluding that justification is by both faith and works. This supposed solution makes Paul a liar because Paul clearly taught that imputed righteousness is given to the *ungodly* who *do not work* (Rom 4:1-8). James and Paul are obviously speaking of two different types of justification, or two different aspects of justification. As the word *salvation* and *sanctification* are used to describe different aspects of God's work in redemption, so does the term *justification*. Paul referenced Abraham's experience from Genesis 15 when Abraham believed God would make his seed as the stars of heaven (15:4). James cited Abraham's experience many years later from Genesis 22 when Abraham took Isaac to offer him at Moriah (22:1-19). God imputes (i.e., counts, charges to one's account) His perfect righteousness to those who come to him as ungodly and believe in Christ without depending on any works they've done. Based on Christ's work

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on behalf of sinners, sinners upon receiving Christ by faith enter a new relationship with God. The outgrowth of this faith relationship is good works (James 2, Hebrews 11). A Christian is to abound in the work of the Lord, having been ordained to walk in good works from the beginning (Eph 2:10; James 2; 1Cor 15:58; Mat 5:16; Titus 3:8; Phil 2:13; Col 1:29). When Christ returns, He will reward every man according to his works (Matt 16:27; Rev 22:12). Every believer will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (1Cor 3:11-15; 2Cor 5:10; Rom 14:10-12). At this judgment, the Christian will not give an account of his *sins*. His *sins* were paid for by Jesus. His *soul* will not be judged for *salvation or damnation*. Rather, his *works* will be judged for *reward or loss of reward* (Matt 10:41,42; 16:27; 1Cor 3:11-15; 2Cor 5:10; Rom 14:10-12; 2John 1:8; Rev 11:15-18; 22:12).<sup>6</sup>

- b. Water baptism is not part of the gospel. Water baptism is not part of the gospel (1Cor 1:14, 17; 5:1-5); yet, the gospel is the means of salvation (1Cor 4:15; Rom 1:16). Baptism is not the gospel but is a command that is closely associated with the gospel in that it pictures the salvation of the gospel. Paul clearly subordinated the status of water baptism to the gospel by his words "*For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel*" (1Cor 1:17). A person is saved when he believes the gospel (Rom 1:16). The gospel is the message that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again (1Cor 15:3-4; Rom 10:9-10). "*Repent and be baptized*" (Acts 2:38) is not the gospel. It is instructions of what sinners were and are to do in light of the gospel (Acts 2:14-37). Sinners are commanded to repent and believe the gospel and be baptized (Mark 1:15; 16:16; Acts 2:38; 15:7; 2Cor 4:4; 2Thes 1:8; 1Pet 4:17). To obey the gospel is to obey God's commandment to believe it (Rom 10:16; 2Thes 1:8; 1Pet 4:17). Water baptism is to then follow this belief in the gospel.
- c. The scriptures state repeatedly that the requirement to receive salvation is faith (or to believe) (**Faith:** Acts 15:9; Rom 3:22, 25, 28; 3:30; 4:5, 9, 11, 13, 16; 5:1, 2; 9:30 10:6; 11:20; Gal 2:16; 3:2, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14; 22, 24, 26; Eph 2:8; Phil 3:9; 2Tim 3:15; 1Pet 1:9; **Believe:** Luke 8:12; John 1:7, 12; 3:15, 16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:35, 40, 47; 4:39, 41; 7:31, 38, 39; 8:24, 30; 10:42; 11:25, 26, 45; 12:37, 46; 20:31; Acts 8:37; 9:42; 10:43; 11:17; 13:39; 14:1; 16:31; 18:8; Rom 1:16; 3:22, 26; 4:3, 5, 11, 24; 10:9, 10; 1Cor 15:1-4; Gal 2:16; 3:6, 22; Eph 1:13; 2Thes 1:10; 2:12; 1Tim 1:16; Heb 10:39; 1Pet 2:6; 1John 5:1, 5, 10, 13; 20:31).

Faith equals belief. Faith and belief are equated in scripture. To believe is to have faith (Matt 17:20; Mk 11:22; Jn 20:27; Acts 14:22; Rom 4:5, 11; 9:30-10:4; 2Cor 4:13; Heb 11:6). To not believe is to lack faith (Matt 17:20; Jn 20:27; Rom 9:30-10:4).

Faith is not works. Faith in Christ, by definition, is not a work; rather faith in Christ makes saving grace operative. Salvation is of faith, that it might be by grace (Rom 4:16; 11:6; Gen. 6:8; Ex 33:13). Faith is not the *ground* or *basis* of salvation; the grace of God exhibited in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ is the ground and basis of salvation. But faith receives what grace gives. Repentant faith is the

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acknowledgment that Jesus alone saves, and that man *cannot* save himself (Luke 18:9-14; Rom 4:1-5; 9:30-10:4; Eph 2:8-9). Saving faith is *trusting* in Jesus for salvation (Jn 3:16; Acts 8:37; Rom 4:4-5; 10:9-10; Eph 1:12-13). In scripture, grace and faith are together placed in contradistinction with works (Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Rom 4:1-6, 16; 9:32; 11:6).

Salvation is received through faith. Through faith/believing, Christians are raised with Christ (Col 2:12), their hearts are purified (Acts 15:9), they have access into His grace (Rom 4:16; 5:2; Eph 2:8), they have His imputed righteousness (Rom 4:4,5,11,24; 10:10; Phil 3:9), they have life through His name (John 20:31), they have eternal life (John 3:15, 16. 36; 5:24; 6:47), Christ indwells their hearts (Eph 3:17), they have received the remission of sins (Acts 10:43), they received the Holy Spirit (John 7:39), they have been saved (Acts 16:31; Rom 10:9-10; Eph 2:8), they have been justified (Acts 13:39; Rom 3:28; 5:1; Gal 2:16), they have become His children (Jn 1:12; Gal 3:26), and have been sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption (Eph 1:13; 4:30). Believers receive the assuring inner witness of the Holy Spirit before water baptism (1Jn 5:10-13; Rom 8:9, 15-16; Gal 3:2; 26; 4:6; 1Cor 12:3,7; Jn 7:37; Acts 10:44-48 with Acts 11:1-14). When sinners believe in Jesus Christ, they receive all these spiritual blessings and more.<sup>7</sup>

Faith is *the* pivotal response required for salvation. God hasn't communicated the message for receiving salvation in piece-meal fashion throughout scripture to be added together to formulate all the requirements. Instead, He has repeated the simple requirement over and over: "believe". For instance, Paul did not omit critical conditions for salvation when preaching to the Philippian jailer that to be saved he must believe (Acts 16). Nor does the Apostle John omit the essential terms of pardon in his writings when he emphasizes that through belief in Jesus a person receives eternal life. The condition for salvation is sometimes worded differently throughout scripture to give a fuller understanding of what it means to believe--for example, receive, repent, trust, obey the gospel (*Receive Christ*: Jn 1:12; *Repent*: Luke 13:3; 18:9-14; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:21; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20; *Trust Christ*: Eph 1:12; Rom 15:12; Psalm 32:10; *Obey the gospel*: Rom 10:16; 2Thes 1:8; 1Pet 4:17). These words are not necessarily synonymous but are also not exclusive of each other. It would not be necessary or helpful to say that to be saved a person must receive + repent + believe + trust + submit + turn + come to + drink of + eat of + humble one's self + obey the gospel. Sometimes these words are used by themselves and sometimes they are used together. Repent and believe are the most common. A sinner is saved when he has a change of mind toward God and believes in Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19; 10:43; Acts 15:11; 20:21, 24; 26:20). A person being saved cannot repent without believing; nor can he believe without repenting. These words describe the heart attitude sinners must have to be saved. This repentant believing attitude is a gift from God as well as a choice of man.<sup>8</sup>

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Initial saving faith normally occurs prior to water baptism. Salvation has always been appropriated by faith, even before water baptism was practiced. The required response to receive salvation is the same for those under the New Covenant as it was for those before and during the Mosaic Law. Abraham (before the law) and David (during the law) are presented as examples of being justified by faith (Rom 4:1-7; 9:32; Heb 4:2). Salvation has never been by works (Rom 4:1-6; 9:32; Gal 2:16; 3:21) or by ritual (Rom 2:28-29; Gal 6:15). Water baptism was not essential for salvation before or during Christ's earthly ministry either (Mark 2:5; Luke 7:48; 18:9-14, 42; 23:39-43); nor did Jesus, the Savior, ever baptized anyone with water (John 4:2). Water baptism was not essential for salvation after Christ's ascension. Many conversions are recorded in the book of Acts with no mention of water baptism (4:4; 5:14; 11:21; 13:12; 13:48; 14:1; 16:1; 17:1-4; 17:10-12; 17:34; 19:17, 18). Very plainly, Cornelius and company received the Holy Spirit by faith *before* water baptism (Acts 10:43-48; 15:17-9; Gal 3:14).

Water baptism is to be an expression of the faith *one already possesses*, as are all activities done by Christians in the name of Christ (Col 3:17). Water baptism is a separate response which follows *initial* faith (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:37) and is therefore not normally the occasion of initial saving faith. Faith is a response of the mind and heart that does not require physical effort, water, or a human baptizer. This is evident by the fact that people exhibited faith before baptism was practiced. The fact that baptism is a separate response from initial faith is also obvious by the time difference between initial faith and water baptism as recorded in Acts (Acts 8:13; 8:38; 9:18; 10:48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5) and in most believers' personal experiences. There is no case recorded in scripture in which people are standing in water being baptized by someone the exact moment they hear and initially believe the gospel. Normally, a person who is an alienated unbelieving enemy of God has no desire to enter the baptismal waters. In proper baptism, those who go into the baptismal waters have a desire to obey the Lord because they are *believers already*, whose hearts have already been purified (Acts 15:9), and whose consciences have already been purged of dead works to serve the living God (Heb 4:19). Water baptism is thus described as the answer of a *good* conscience toward God (1Pet 3:21).

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<sup>1</sup> **Spirit Baptism.** Spirit baptism is the spiritual operation whereby the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 3:11) baptizes the sinner who trusts in Him into his spiritual body (1Cor 12:13) which is the Church (Eph 1:22-23). Jesus does this *with* (Matt 3:11; Acts 1:5) or *by* (1Cor 12:13) the Holy Spirit. Spirit baptism began in the New Covenant era (Matt 3:11; Acts 1:5; 11:15-16). It is experienced by all believers in the New Covenant (1Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-28; Rom 6:3). Spirit baptism is not to be confused with water baptism (Matt 3:11; Acts 1:5). Water baptism, sometimes referred to as believer's baptism, identifies a person with Christ subsequent to saving faith (Acts 8:36-37; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:44-48). Spirit baptism occurs at salvation and is not repeated thereafter, since it joins the believer to the body of Christ (1Cor 12:13; Acts 2:47; Col 2:12; Gal 3:26-28; 1Peter 2:2-5).

## The Epistles Explain Spirit Baptism

There are those who teach that Spirit baptism is an experience which takes place subsequent to (that is, after) one's salvation and therefore should be sought by those who are already saved. This position is based on assumptions made from reading about the events recorded in the book of Acts. Although the book of Acts gives insights into the subject of Spirit baptism, it is crucial that one's study of Spirit baptism not be limited to the book of Acts. (Note: Doctrinal errors are commonly the result of adding to the scriptures, taking away from the scriptures, interpreting scriptures out of context, or failing to bring into consideration ALL the verses that deal with a subject. Sound doctrine will always consider ALL the verses that speak to the subject in question--not just a few.)

Spirit baptism can easily be misunderstood if Acts is one's only reference. The book of Acts is exactly what its well-known title suggests--a narrative of the *acts* of the apostles. Some of the apostles' acts are their teaching and preaching; but much of the apostles' teachings are recorded in their epistles. As a matter of fact, the Lord explains many of the events in Acts in the epistles.

The subject of Spirit baptism is a good example of this. We read of people being baptized with the Spirit in the book of Acts, but there is no doctrinal explanation of its purpose. However, in the epistles, we find a clear statement describing the exact purpose of Spirit baptism.

*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (1Corinthians 12:13)*

From this verse we understand that *all* believers are baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ. This explains why the believer is never commanded anywhere in scripture to seek or pray for Spirit baptism--because the believer has already been baptized by the Spirit--when he was saved by faith (1Cor 12:13; Acts 2:47; Col 2:12; Gal 3:26-28; 1Peter 2:2-5).

## The Book of Acts Documents a Unique Period of Transition

In Acts, some of the timing of events is unique to the early church. The uniqueness of some of the events in Acts is obvious just by the historical significance of the period of transition which it describes--from law to grace, from Israel to the Church, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, from Judaism to Christianity.

Only in the first century did people witness with their very eyes the forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist. Only in the first century did people witness the Lord's ministry, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. Only in the first century did believers see the New Testament Church begin, and witness God begin to change his dealings with mankind from an earthly nation (Israel) to a spiritual organism comprised of Jews and Gentiles (the Church). This unique period in history in which these enormous changes were taking place would naturally result in unique events surrounding those involved in the transition. During this transitional period recorded in Acts, Jesus was 1) empowering His followers to preach the gospel (i.e., the message of His death, burial and resurrection) (Acts 1:8; 4:31; 8:17; 13:52), 2) showing mighty signs and wonders to confirm the word (Mark 16:20; Acts 2:43; 5:12), and 3) breaking down the wall that divided Jews and Gentiles to build His church (Eph 2:14).

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Different groups found themselves in the midst of this transition:

- Believers in Christ who had not yet received the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:20; Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4 11:14-16; 8:4-17);
- Devout Jews who had not yet heard the gospel (Acts 2:5),
- Devout Gentile proselytes to Judaism who had not yet heard the gospel (Acts 2:10; 10:1-2; 22; 11:14-18)
- Jewish disciples of John the Baptist who had an incomplete knowledge of the gospel (Acts 18:24-26; 19:1-7), and
- Apostles who had not yet fully grasped the mystery of the Jew-Gentile Church (Acts 10:9-15, 10:25-11:18; 15:1-29; Gal 2:11; Eph 3:2-10).

The apostles were baptized by the Holy Spirit subsequent to their salvation because they were saved during Jesus' ministry (Luke 10:20), yet the Lord didn't send the Holy Spirit until the Jewish feast day of Pentecost a few days after his ascension (Jn 14:16; 15:26; 16:7; Matt 16:18; Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 10:47 with 11:16; 1Cor 12:13). Another example of uniqueness is the Samaritan believers in Act 8:14-17 who had not even RECEIVED the Holy Spirit until the apostles were there to recognize and witness it. In Acts 19:1-7, the twelve men were disciples of John the Baptist who had not come to a full understanding of the gospel until they met the Apostle Paul. By comparing all the verses in Acts and the epistles, it is obvious that these three cases are not the norm for the age but were unique due to historical circumstances.

Today, a person is placed in the church SIMULTANEOUS (not subsequent) to his conversion (1Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-27) and receives the Spirit SIMULTANEOUS (not subsequent) to his conversion (Gal 3:2; 26-28; Col 2:12; Rom 8:9; 1Cor 12:3,7; Jn 7:37; Acts 10:44-48 with Acts 11:1-14).

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**<sup>2</sup>The New Covenant supersedes the Old Covenant.** The New Covenant is a better covenant (Heb 7:22; 8:6) established upon a better office (Heb 3:1-2), a better ministry (Heb 3:3-6), a better rest (Heb 3:7-19), a better priesthood (Heb 12:7-21), a better high priest (Heb 7:17; 8:1-2), a better location (Heb 8:3-5), better promises (Heb 8:6-13), a better sacrifice (Heb 9:9-10:14), a better hope (Heb 7:19), and a greater glory (2Cor 3:6-18). The Old covenant has been fulfilled with the advent of the New Covenant in Christ (Heb 7:18 Disannulled; Gal 3:19-26 No longer needed; Heb 8:13 Decaying and ready to vanish; Heb 7:11-12 Changed law necessitated by changed priesthood (Levi to Melchizedek); Eph 2:15 Abolished; Col 2:14 Blotted out; Matt 5:17 Fulfilled; Rom 6:14; 7:4 Not under law, but grace instead; Rom 10:14 Christ the end of the law; 2Cor 3:7-13; Done away, abolished, even that on tables of stone; Acts 15:5,19, 24, 28; 21:24-25 Gentile believers not to keep it; Gal 3:2-3 Neither justified nor sanctified by it; Rom 14:5-6; Gal 4:9-11; Col 2:13-17). Refer to *The Continuing Relevance of Divine Law* <http://www.biblicalstudies.com/bstudy/hermenutics/ibri-1.htm>. For a fuller treatment, read the book *New Covenant Theology* by Tom Walls and Fred Zaspel.

If Old Testament practices are to be continued unless they are explicitly repealed in the New Testament, a small sample of the many commandments that would still be binding are given below.

- 1.To put fringes with blue threads on the borders of clothing (Num. 15:38)
- 2.To bind God's Word on your head (Deut. 6:8)
- 3.To bind God's Word on your hand (Deut. 6:8)
- 4.To write God's words on the door posts and gates of your house (Deut. 6:9)
- 5.To bless God after meals (Deut. 8:10)
6. Not to reap the entire field (Lev. 19:9; Lev. 23:22)
7. To leave the unreaped corners of the field or orchard for the poor (Lev. 19:9)
8. That a eunuch shall not enter the congregation of the Lord (Deut. 23:2)
9. That an illegitimate son shall not enter the congregation of the Lord (Deut.23:3)
10. That the newly married husband shall be free from war and business for one year to stay home and bring cheer to his wife (Deut. 24:5)
11. That one who defames his wife's honor (by falsely accusing her of not being a virgin before

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- marriage) must live with her all his lifetime. Divorce is not permissible (Deut. 22:19)
12. That a widow whose husband died childless must not be married to anyone but her deceased husband's brother if he will do it (Deut. 25:5)
  13. To marry the widow of a brother who has died childless. If he refuses his duty to raise up seed of his brother, the widow must loosen his shoe and spit in his face in the presence of the elders (Deut 25:5-10)
  14. Not to travel on the Sabbath outside the limits of one's place of residence (Ex. 16:29)
  15. Not to do work on Sabbath (Ex. 20:10)
  16. Not to sow the field or prune the vineyard in the seventh year (Ex. 23:11; Lev.25:2)
  17. To make a parapet for your roof if you build a new house (Deut. 22:8)
  18. Not to shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard (Lev. 19:27)
  19. Not to tattoo the body (Lev. 19:28)
  20. Not to crossbreed cattle of different species (Lev. 19:19)
  21. Not to sow different kinds of seed together in one field (Lev.19:19)
  22. Not to eat the fruit of a tree for three years from the time it was planted (Lev. 19:23)
  23. Not to work with beasts of different species, yoked together (Deut. 22:10)
  24. Not to wear garments made of different threads such as wool and linen mixed (Deut. 22:11)

It is obvious that there are many Old Covenant practices and laws that have never been explicitly rescinded, yet they do not necessarily have a continuing binding force in the New Covenant. There is no good reason to assume the principles of circumcision must continue in the New Testament.

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<sup>3</sup>**Israel and the church.** Israel is a nation and the Church is a spiritual organism. The nation of Israel was made up of believers and unbelievers (1Kings 19:13-15,18, Mal 3:13-18; Matt 23:29-33; 26:27-28; Rom 11:1-5) whereas the Church is composed of believing Jews and Gentiles from all nations (Acts 7:38; Heb 2:12; 9:15; 11:39-40; 12:23). The current Church period is a progressive fulfillment in God's prophetic timeline. God's redemptive plan started with Abraham and progressed from a man and his children to an entire nation (Israel) under the Old Testament Mosaic Law. Under the New Covenant, believers in Christ from all nations are God's redeemed in the Church. In the future, Jewish and Gentile believers will reign with Christ. In the eternal state, there will be no more sin, all unbelievers will have been consigned to the lake of fire, and the nations, which consist of the redeemed only, will reign with Christ forever.

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<sup>4</sup>**Regeneration follows faith.** Summary. Before faith we were not joined to Christ. Before faith we were dead in sins, without spiritual life, unforgiven of sins, a child of the Devil, and without the Spirit of God. Upon believing, we were forgiven of sins, quickened from deadness in sins, given spiritual life, raised with Christ, spiritually baptized into Christ, born of God (i.e., made a child of God), and received the Holy Spirit. When we believed, we were dead in sins. Therefore "dead in sins" does not speak of inability to believe but lack of spiritual life and relational separation from God due to unforgiven sins. "Dead in sins" does not mean inability to do anything which is a characteristic of physical deadness. If this were true spiritually dead people would have no *sinful* actions either, yet sinfulness is their problem. God draws, calls, invites, persuades, beseeches, and convinces sinners prior to faith (see footnote <sup>5</sup>E and <sup>5</sup>J below). God must enable those who are dead in sins to believe. Spiritually dead people cannot please God without His enablement. But God does not give life to (i.e., regenerate) sinners prior to faith. Spiritual life is a result of faith, not the means of faith. Spiritually dead people are enabled to believe while dead in sins and receive life upon believing.

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Short Study. While the temporal order is not the primary concern (for example, faith and salvation may occur simultaneously in time), the logical order of events is critical (as in Romans 8:30). For example, salvation does not come before faith. We are not saved in order to believe. We believe in order to be saved. One must first believe to be saved. This order is important. So is the order of faith and regeneration important.

Through faith/believing, we are risen with Christ (Col 2:12), our hearts are purified (Acts 15:9), we have access into His grace (Rom 4:16; 5:2; Eph 2:8), we have His imputed righteousness (Rom 4:4,5,11,24; 10:10; Phil 3:9), we have life through His name (John 20:31), we have eternal life (John 3:15, 16. 36; 5:24; 6:47), Christ indwells our hearts (Eph 3:17), we received the remission of sins (Acts 10:43), we received the Holy Spirit (John 7:39), we were saved (Acts 16:31; Rom 10:9-10; Eph 2:8), justified (Acts 13:39; Rom 3:28; 5:1; Gal 2:16), became His children (Jn 1:12; Gal 3:26), and were sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption (Eph 1:13; 4:30). And that's not an exhaustive list. When we believed, we received all these spiritual blessings and more—blessings that God had ordained for us before the foundation of the world.

1. We receive life by believing (Jn 20:31; 1Tim 1:16).

*John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

*1Ti 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*

2. We were risen with Christ through faith (Col 2:12)

*Col 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

3. We receive the Holy Spirit by believing (John 7:39; Eph 1:13)

*John 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

*Eph 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*

A person cannot have spiritual life without receiving the Holy Spirit. Yet receiving the Spirit is by faith (Gal 3:2; 26-28; Col 2:12; Rom 8:9; 1Cor 12:3,7; Jn 7:37; Acts 10:44-48 with Acts 11:1-14).

4. We become a child of God by faith (Jn 1:12; Gal 3:26)

*John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

*Gal 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

A person cannot have spiritual life while still a child of the Devil.

5. Our being quickened from deadness *in sins* is associated with our being saved from, and forgiven of, *our sins* (Eph 2:5; Col 2:13).

*Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

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*Col 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;*

You cannot be quickened from deadness in sins while still unforgiven of sins. Quickening does not occur without faith.

It is NOT *dead in sins --> quickened from deadness (still unforgiven of sins)--> faith--> forgiveness of sins*

It is *dead in sins --> faith--> forgiveness of sins (i.e., quickening from deadness in sins)*

6. We were born again by the word of God (1Pet 1:23)

*1Pet 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever.*

Yet the word does not profit us if not mixed with faith (Heb 4:2)

*Heb 4:2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

We can therefore conclude that we are born again by faith in the word. We are not born again apart from faith. We are not born again to believe. We believe to be born again. John 3:16 is Jesus explaining to Nicodemus *how* to be born again.

Conclusions on regeneration and faith. If we receive life by believing, we do not have life before believing. That means we are dead before we believe, not regenerate. We don't receive life to believe. We believe to receive life. Therefore, we believed when we were dead in sins, not when we were regenerate.

Since we receive forgiveness of sins by faith, we were still dead in sins before being forgiven of our sins by faith. Again, we believed while still dead in sins.

We were also raised with Christ through faith. Only dead people need to be raised. We were dead before being raised. Again, we believed while still dead.

We were born again by faith in the word (the word only profits those who believe it). Only those who are not yet God's children need to be born of God. We were made children of God by faith. Only those who are not yet God's children need to be made children of God. Again, we believed while still dead (unregenerate--not born of God, still children of the Devil).

We were quickened (made alive) from deadness in sins by faith. Since this quickening involves the forgiveness of sins and faith is required for forgiveness of sins, faith is required for quickening. A person cannot be quickened from deadness in sins while still unforgiven of sins. Again, we believed while still dead.

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## <sup>5</sup>God is Savior.

A. Man needs God's salvation

1. God created man for His glory (Isa 43:7; Rev 4:11; Rom 1:21; 8:30; 2Thes 1:10-12)

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2. God has revealed Himself to all mankind
  - a. Through creation (Psalm 19:1-4; Rom 1:20-21)
  - b. Through His law
    - b1. In the conscience of man (Rom 2:14-15)
    - b2. In the Old Testament law of Moses (Gal 3:19-24)
    - b3. In the New Testament law of Christ (Gal 6:2; James 2:8)
  - c. Through the person of Christ (John 1:17-18; 14:9; Col 1:15; Heb 1:1-3)
  - d. God does not give equal knowledge of Himself to all people (Matt 11:20-22; 25:14-30; Luke 12:35-48; Rom 1:19-21; 2:6-16; 3:1-2 with 9:1-4). God *withholds* more knowledge from those who are *unfaithful* with what they've been given (Matt 13:11-13; 25:28-29; Luke 16:30-31; Rom 1:21-24, 28; 2Thes 2:8-12) and *gives* more knowledge to those who *are faithful* with what they've been given (Matt 13:11-15; 25:28-29; John 7:17; James 1:22; Acts 10:4 with 11:14).
  
3. Man has sinned and come short of God's glory (Isa 53:6; 64:6; Job 15:14-16; Luke 18:9-14; Rom 1:20-21; 2:15; 3:10-23; Gal 3:22). Natural man, outside of Christ is described as follows: shaped in iniquity, conceived in sin, he's altogether vanity at his best state, dead in trespasses and sins, children of disobedience, children of wrath, having no hope, without God, sinners, enemies of God, ungodly, servants of sin, evil, children of the wicked one (Psalm 51:5; 39:5; Eph 2:1-12; 2Cor 5:14; Rom 5:6-10; 6:17; Matt 7:11; 13:38). Some descriptions of sin:
  - a. Transgression of God's law is sin (1John 3:4)
  - b. Unbelief in God's word is sin (Heb 3:12; 4:2)
  - c. Unholy desire and anger is sin (Matt 5:22-30)
  - d. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Rom 14:23)
  - e. To knowingly offend a weaker brother is sin (1Cor 8:12)
  - f. To show respect of persons is sin (James 2:9)
  - g. To know to do good and do it not is sin (James 4:17)
  - h. All unrighteousness is sin (1John 5:17)
  - i. Not believing in Jesus is sin (John 16:9)
  
4. God, being holy, hates sin and condemns it (Hab 1:12-13; Heb 1:9; Gen 2:17; Num 32:23; Ezek 18:20; Rom 6:23; 8:3)
  - a. Eternal death is the penalty that God's holiness requires for unsaved sinners (Gen 3:19; Ezek 18:4,20; Rom 6:23; Rev 20:14,15; 21:8).
    - a1. The wrath of God abides on unsaved sinners (Psalm 7:11; John 3:18,36)
    - a2. At death, the souls of unsaved sinners go immediately to hell to remain in torment until the final judgment at the great white throne (Luke 16:10-26; Rev 20:11-15)
    - a3. At the final judgment, God will punish unsaved sinners with everlasting destruction, contempt, and damnation (1Cor 11:32; 1Pet 4:18; Rom 11:22; Heb 10:28; 2Pet 2:6; Dan 12:1-4; John 5:28-29; Matt 13:24-42; 18:8; 25:41-46; Mark 3:29; 2Thes 1:7-9; Rev 14:9-11; 20:11-15; 21:8)
    - a4. God will judge people with justice and equity (Gen 18:25; Isa 59:14-15; Psalm 98:9; Eze 18:18-29). God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Rom 2:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25; 1Peter 1:17). He recompenses both good and evil (Luke 14:14;

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Heb 10:30; 2Tim 4:8). God's judgment considers the amount of knowledge people have (Num 15:24-31; Isa 5:1-7; Matt 11:20-22; 25:14-30; Luke 12:10, 35-48; Rom 1:19-32; 3:20 with 4:15, 5:13, and 7:9; Heb 6:4-8; 10:26-31; 12:15-17) or could have had (2Pet 3:5-7; Heb 5:12-6:6), the sinful works they have done (Matt 23:14; Jn 19:11; Rev 2:23; 20:11-15), and their motives (Ex 21:13-14; Deut 19:4-13; Jer 17:10; Rom 2:16; 14:14; Heb 4:12 with Jn 12:48).

5. God considers the knowledge of sinners in His extension of mercy to them (Num 15:24-31; Matt 11:20-22; 25:14-30; Luke 12:10, 35-48; 23:34; Acts 17:30; 1Tim 1:12-13; Heb 6:4-8; 10:26-31; 12:15-17). God does not overlook ignorance today as He did before the coming of Christ; today God commands all men everywhere to repent and believe the gospel (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 14:15-16; 17:22-23, 30).

## B. God purposed to save sinners before the world began

1. Jesus, God's precious, chosen, elect One, was foreordained to be a lamb slain before the world began (1Pet 1:18-2:6; Rev 13:8)
2. God chose the elect in Christ before the world began (Eph 1:4; 2Tim 1:9; Matt 25:34)
3. Election is in accordance with God's foreknowledge of the elect/believers (Rom 8:29-33; 1Pet 1:2)

## C. God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten son, Jesus (John 3:16; Gal 4:4; 1Tim 1:15)

D. Jesus came to the world to save sinners by living a sinless life, dying for the sins of the world, and rising again from the dead (1Tim 1:15; Matt 18:11; Heb 4:15; Isa 53:4-6, 10-12; 1John 2:2; Heb 2:9; 2Pet 2:1; 1Tim 4:10; Rom 5:8; 2Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; 1Pet 2:24; 1Cor 15:3-4; Rom 4:25)

E. God calls (1Pet 5:10), reproves (John 16:8), invites (Rev 22:17), draws (John 6:44; 12:32-33), leads (Rom 2:4), guides (Acts 8:31), reasons with (Isa 1:18), preaches to (Rom 10:13-15; 1Cor 1:21), exhorts (Acts 2:40), testifies (1John 4:14), teaches (Col 1:28), persuades (Acts 28:23; 2Cor 5:11), beseeches (2Cor 5:20), convinces (Titus 1:9), and warns (Ezek 3:18-19; 33:7-8; Col 1:28) sinners. God thus gives repentance and faith through His goodness, His word, His Spirit and His children, revealing who Jesus is, opening the sinner's heart to Christ (2Tim 2:25; Rev 2:21; Heb 12:2; Acts 14:27; 16:14; Matt 16:16-17; Acts 16:14)

## F. God does not save all sinners

1. Few sinners find eternal life--most will be punished with everlasting destruction (Matt 7:13-14; 22:13-14; Dan 7:10 with Rev 20:15; 2Thes 1:8-9)
2. Sinners are eternally condemned because they sin and will not receive God's forgiveness. They love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil, do not receive the love of the truth, do not glorify or thank God, change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, change the truth of God into a lie, worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, do not like to retain God in their knowledge, commit vile and shameful acts worthy of death, and turn away from the Lord and His truth (John 3:19; 2Thes 2:10; Rom 1:18-32; Heb 12:25; 2Tim 4:4).

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3. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek 18:30-32; Matt 22:37; 2Pet 3:9; 1Tim 2:1-6; Isa 5:3-4; Matt 23:37) but is righteous in His judgment of sinners who sin and will not receive His salvation (John 16:9; Rom 1:18-2:8; 3:3-18; 1Pet 4:17-18; 2Thes 1:4-9; 2:9-12; Heb 2:1-4; 3:7-13; 10:25-31)

G. God is the only Savior (1Chron 16:23; Psalm 3:8; Jude 1:25; Isa 45:21; Hos 13:4; Titus 2:13)

H. Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation (Matt 26:39-42; Mark 16:16; John 3:16, 18, 36; 10:1; 14:6; Eph 1:7; Gal 2:21; Acts 4:12; 1Jn 5:10-12; 1Tim 2:5).

I. Man is incapable of saving himself

1. Salvation is by Christ's death--eliminating all glorying of man except in the cross (Gal 6:14; Rom 4:2; 1Cor 1:23-29; 4:7)

2. Spiritual birth is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:13)

3. Man cannot be saved by works

a. Salvation is God's free gift received by faith--not by works lest any man should boast (Rom 3:26-28; 5:18; 6:23; Eph 2:8-9)

b. Salvation is by God's grace--not of God's indebtedness to man's works (Rom 4:2-5)

c. Salvation is by God's mercy--not by works of righteousness (Titus 3:5)

Good works are the result, not the means, of salvation (Eph 2:8-10; Titus 3:5-8; 1Cor 15:58)

J. God uses means to save sinners

1. God's goodness leads sinners to repentance (Rom 2:4)

2. God's word produces faith in sinners (Rom 10:13-17; 2Tim 3:15)

3. God's people, laboring and striving according to His working, can pray for (Col 1:29; Luke 23:34; Rom 10:1; 1Tim 2:1-6), guide (Acts 8:31), preach to (Rom 10:13-15; 1Cor 1:21), exhort (Acts 2:40), testify (1John 4:14), teach (Col 1:28), persuade (Acts 28:23; 2Cor 5:11), beseech (2Cor 5:20), convince (Titus 1:9), warn (Ezek 3:18-19; 33:7-8; Col 1:28), open the eyes of (Acts 26:18), turn (Acts 26:18), beget (1Cor 4:15), and save (Eze 3:18; Rom 11:14; 1Cor 9:22; Jude 1:23) sinners.

K. Man must do something to be saved (Acts 16:31)

1. Man must receive Jesus by repentance and faith (John 1:12; Acts 20:21)

a. Man must hear the gospel to believe it (Rom 10:17; Acts 15:7; Gal 3:2; Eph 1:13)

b. Man must repent (Luke 13:3; 18:9-14; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:21; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20; 1Thes 1:9)

c. Man must believe in Jesus, believing that He died for our sins according to the scripture, and that He rose from the dead according to the scripture (Faith: Acts 15:9; Rom 3:22, 25, 28;

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3:30; 4:5, 9, 11, 13, 16; 5:1, 2; 9:30 10:6; 11:20; Gal 2:16; 3:2, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14; 22, 24, 26; Eph 2:8; Phil 3:9; 2Tim 3:15; 1Pet 1:9; Believe: Luke 8:12; John 1:7, 12; 3:15, 16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:35, 40, 47; 4:39, 41; 7:31, 38, 39; 8:24, 30; 10:42; 11:25, 26, 45; 12:37, 46; 20:31; Acts 8:37; 9:42; 10:43; 11:17; 13:39; 14:1; 16:31; 18:8; Rom 1:16; 3:22, 26; 4:3, 5, 11, 24; 10:9, 10; 1Cor 15:1-4; Gal 2:16; 3:6, 22; Eph 1:13; 2Thes 1:10; 2:12; 1Tim 1:16; Heb 10:39; 1Pet 2:6; 1John 5:1, 5, 10, 13; 20:31)

d. Confessing Jesus Christ as Lord will of necessity follow saving faith (Luke 12:8-9; Rom 10:9-11; 1Cor 12:3)

e. Water baptism is not essential to salvation (Acts 10:43-48 with 11:17-9; 1Cor 1:17) but typifies salvation (Acts 22:16) and is commanded of all believers (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 8:37) and should soon follow after one's conversion (Acts 2:38; 8:36; 9:18; 10:47; 16:30-33; 19:5).

2. Those who believe in Jesus receive eternal life (John 3:15-18, 36; 5:24; 6:40, 47; 1John 5:11-20)

3. Those who do not believe in Jesus receive eternal condemnation (Mark 16:16; John 3:18-20, 36; 8:24; 15:22; 1Cor 16:22; 2Thes 1:4-9; 2:9-12; 1Pet 4:17-18; Heb 2:1-4; 3:7-13; 10:25-31; Rev 20:11-15)

Believing on Jesus Christ is to believe that he died for your sins and that He rose from the dead (1Cor 15:3-5). Believing on Jesus Christ is trusting in Him with all your heart (Eph 1:12; Rom 10:9,10; Acts 8:37; Luke 24:25; Rom 6:17; Rom 15:12; 2Cor 3:4; Psalm 32:10). It is to rely on Him alone to save you from your sins. True belief in Christ involves repentance--a change of mind about sin and Christ (Luke 13:3; 18:9-14; Acts 17:30). This type belief requires a humbling of one's self, approaching God as a child who utterly depends on his father's provision (Matt 18:3-4; 23:12).

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**<sup>6</sup>The judgment of the believer.** A Christian's *sins* were judged *at Calvary*. Jesus died for the sins of the world, bearing them in His own body on the cross (2Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; 1Cor 15:3; 1Pet 2:24; Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-12; John 1:29; 1John 2:2). *As a sinner*, having trusted in Christ, the believer is now a child of God (Jn 1:12; Gal 3:26) and has eternal life (John 3:16-18, 36; 6:47; 11:26; 20:31; Rom 4:5; Acts 16:31; 1John 5:5). As a child of God who names the name of Christ, he is to depart from iniquity (2Tim 2:19; 1Jn 2:1).

As a *son*, a Christian's *self* is to be judged *regularly* (1Cor 11:31-32). When a Christian yields to temptation, he is to confess his sins to restore his fellowship with his heavenly Father (1Jn 1:3,6,7,9). If he does not, his Father's chastening is certain (Heb 12:6-7; 1Cor 11:32-33). This chastening is a mark of sonship (Heb 12:8).

As a *servant*, a Christian's *works* will be judged *at the judgment seat of Christ* (1Cor 3:11-15; 2Cor 5:10; Rom 14:10-12). A Christian is to abound in the work of the Lord, having been ordained to walk in good works from the beginning (Eph 2:10; James 2; 1Cor 15:58; Mat 5:16; Titus 3:8; Phil 2:13; Col 1:29). When Christ returns, He will reward every man according to his works (Matt 16:27; Rev 22:12). Every believer will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Rom 14:10). At this judgment, the believer will not give an account of his sins. His sins were paid for by Jesus. His *soul* will not be judged for *salvation or damnation*. Rather, his *works* will be judged for *reward or loss of reward* (Matt 10:41.42; 16:27; 1Cor 3:11-15; 2Cor 5:10; Rom 14:10-12; 2John 1:8; Rev 11:15-18; 22:12).

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**<sup>7</sup>Blessings received by faith (by believing).** The overwhelming number of verses presented below highlight the important and pivotal role of faith in the operation of God's grace.

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## Faith

1. God purifies our hearts by faith (Acts 15:9)
2. God has manifested his righteousness which is by faith (Rom 3:21-22, 4:13; 9:30; 10:6)
3. God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith (Rom 3:25)
4. A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (Rom 3:28)
5. God justifies the circumcision and the uncircumcision by faith (Rom 3:30)
6. To him who works not, his faith is counted for righteousness (Rom 4:5, 11)
7. It is of faith that it might be by grace, the promise is sure to all the seed of Abraham (Rom 4:16)
8. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1; Gal 2:16)
9. We have access by faith into God's grace (Rom 5:2)
10. We stand by faith (Rom 11:20)
11. By the hearing of faith, we received the Spirit (Gal 3:2)
12. Those of faith are the children of Abraham (Gal 3:7)
13. God justifies the heathen through faith (Gal 3:8)
14. They who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham (Gal 3:9)
15. The just shall live by faith (Gal 3:11)
16. We Gentiles received the promise of the Spirit through faith, the blessing of Abraham (Gal 3:14)
17. The promise by faith of Jesus Christ is given to us who believe (Gal 3:22)
18. After faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster (Gal 3:25)
19. We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:26)
20. By grace we are saved, through faith (Eph 2:8)
21. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph 3:17)
22. We have the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil 3:9)
23. The holy scriptures can make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus (2Tim 3:15)
24. We are risen with Christ through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised him (Col 2:12)
25. The end of our faith is the salvation of our souls (1Pet 1:9)

## Believe

26. By believing the word, we are saved (Luke 8:12)
27. John the Baptist bore witness of the light that all men might believe (John 1:7)
28. To them who believe on his name, God gave the power to become the sons of God (John 1:12)
29. They who believe on Jesus receive the Holy Spirit (John 7:39)
30. By believing that Jesus is the Christ, we will not die in our sins (John 8:24)
31. Jesus acknowledged His Father hearing Him, so those standing by may believe that God sent Him (John 11:42)
32. Jesus prayed that believers would be one, that the world may believe God sent Him (John 17:21)
33. The record of Jesus' death is true, that we might believe (John 19:35)
34. Scriptures were written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:31)
35. Scriptures were written that believing we might have life through His name (John 20:31)
36. If we believe with all our hearts, we may be baptized (Acts 8:37)
37. By him, all who believe are justified from all things (Acts 13:39)
38. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved (Acts 16:31)
39. John the Baptist preached that they should believe on Jesus Christ (Acts 19:4)
40. The righteousness of God is unto and upon all them who believe (Rom 3:22)
41. Abraham is the father of all them who believe (Rom 4:11)
42. God imputes righteousness to us, if we believe on Him who raised up Jesus (Rom 4:24)
43. If we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and will be saved (Rom 10:9-10)
44. The promise of faith of Jesus Christ is given to us who believe (Gal 3:22)
45. Christ will be admired by us who believe when He comes to be glorified in His saints (2Thes 1:10)
46. We believe on Him to life everlasting (1Tim 1:16)
47. We believe to the saving of the soul (Heb 10:39)
48. Scriptures were written to those who believe that we may know that we have eternal life (1John 5:13)

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49. Whoever believes in the Son of God, we will not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:15)
50. Whoever believes in the Son of God, we will not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)
51. He who believes on the Son of God, we are not condemned (John 3:18)
52. He who believes on the Son has everlasting life (John 3:36; 6:47)
53. He who hears and believes on Him who sent Jesus, has everlasting life, and will not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24)
54. He that believes on Jesus, we will never thirst (John 6:35)
55. Everyone who believes on Jesus, he will raise up at the last day (John 6:40)
56. He who believes on Jesus, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water (John 7:38)
57. He who believes in Jesus, though he were dead, yet shall he live (John 11:25)
58. Whoever lives and believes in Jesus, will never die (John 11:26)
59. Whoever believes on Jesus, should not abide in darkness (John 12:46)
60. He who believes on Jesus, greater works than Jesus' he will do (John 14:12)
61. Whoever believes in Jesus, will receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43)
62. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes (Rom 1:16)
63. God is just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus (Rom 3:26)
64. To him who believes on Him, his faith is counted for righteousness (Rom 4:5)
65. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom 10:4)
66. With the heart, we believe unto righteousness (Rom 10:10)
67. He who believes on Jesus will not be confounded (1Pet 2:6)
68. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God (1John 5:1)
69. He who overcomes the world is he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (1John 5:5)
70. He who believes on the Son of God, has the witness in himself (1John 5:10)
71. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness (Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6)
72. Scriptures were written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:31)
73. Scriptures were written that believing we might have life through His name (John 20:31)
74. Many of the Samaritans of the city believed on Him for the saying of the woman (John 4:39)
75. Many more believed because of His own word (John 4:41)
76. And many of the people believed on Him (John 7:31)
77. As He spoke these words, many believed on Him (John 8:30)
78. And many believed on Him there (John 10:42)
79. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him (John 11:45)
80. By reason of Lazarus, many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus (John 12:11)
81. Among the chief rulers, many believed on Him (John 12:42)
82. In Joppa many believed in the Lord (Acts 9:42)
83. God gave the gift of the Spirit to those who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 11:17)
84. A great multitude of the Jews and Greeks believed (Acts 14:1)
85. Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house (Acts 18:8)
86. Apollos helped them much who had believed through grace (Acts 18:27)
87. After we believed, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph 1:13)
88. God has from the beginning chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth (2Thes 2:13)

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## <sup>8</sup> Faith is a gift of God and a choice of man.

Faith is a gift of God. God purposed to save sinners before the world began. Jesus, God's precious, chosen, elect One, was foreordained to be a lamb slain before the world began (1Pet 1:18-2:6; Rev 13:8). God chose the elect *in Christ* before the world began (Eph 1:4; 2Tim 1:9; Matt 25:34). Election is in accordance with God's foreknowledge of the elect believers (Rom 8:29-33; 1Pet 1:2). In the fullness of time, God's Son came to the

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world and lived a sinless life, died for the sins of the world, and rose again from the dead. After Jesus' ascension, God sent the Holy Spirit to testify of Christ and build His church (Jn 15:26; Matt 16:18). God calls (1Pet 5:10), reproves (John 16:8), invites (Rev 22:17), draws (John 6:44; 12:32-33), leads (Rom 2:4), guides (Acts 8:31), reasons with (Isa 1:18), preaches to (Rom 10:13-15; 1Cor 1:21), exhorts (Acts 2:40), testifies (1Jn 4:14), teaches (Col 1:28), persuades (Acts 28:23; 2Cor 5:11), beseeches (2Cor 5:20), convinces (Titus 1:9), and warns (Ezek 3:18-19; 33:7-8; Col 1:28) sinners. God hereby gives repentance and faith through His goodness, His word, His Spirit and His children, revealing who Jesus is, opening sinners' hearts to Christ (2Tim 2:25; Rev 2:21; Heb 12:2; Acts 14:27; 16:14; Matt 16:16-17; Acts 16:14). No sinner can have faith in God without God. God is the source of faith (Rom 10:17; Acts 14:27; Heb 12:2; 2Pet 1:1).

Faith is a choice of man. God ordained spiritual blessings to be in Christ and through Christ (Eph 1:4-7). God also ordained that the eternal benefits of Christ's gracious work be received *by faith* in Christ (2Thes 2:13). In accordance with this divine plan, God *gave* spiritual blessings to the believing elect in Christ *before the world began* (Eph 1:1-4; 2Tim 1:9). They *receive* these benefits and are saved *in time after* hearing and believing the gospel (Jn 5:24; Eph 1:13; 2:11-13; Col 1:21; Gal 3:26-28; Eph 1:13). Before faith, they are described as being in Adam, enemies of God, dead in trespasses and sins, by nature the children of wrath, without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, without God in the world, and afar off (Rom 5:10; 1Cor 15:22; Eph 2:1-13; Col 1:21). God holds sinners responsible for having faith in Christ, since faith is the only acceptable response to His grace (Rom 4:16). God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (Jn 3:16; 1Jn 2:2). God offers salvation to all people, commanding them to repent toward God and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 28:19-20; Mk 16:16; Acts 17:30; 20:21). God does not believe for sinners. God does not force faith or the desire for faith upon sinners against their wills (Gen 4:6,7; Joshua 24:15; 1Kings 18:21; Eze 18:20-32; Matt 11:20; 23:37; Luke 7:30; 12:48; Acts 7:51; 17:30; Rev 22:17). God calls sinners to believe and is angry with them and condemns them for their lack of repentance and faith (Matt 11:20-22; Mk 11:22; 16:16; Jn 3:16, 18, 36; Jn 4:4-29; 16:9; Rom 1:18-2:8; 3:3-18; 9:30-33; 1Pet 4:17-18; 2Thes 1:4-9; 2:9-12; Heb 2:1-4; 3:7-13; 10:22-31).