

Level 1 Lesson 8

WATER BAPTISM

By Don Krow

Question: “I need to know if you have to be baptized to go to heaven. I love God and was baptized when I was seven years old. I am now eighteen years old, and someone from a non-denominational church told me that no one can be saved and baptized at such a young age. They also said that you have to be baptized to go to heaven, but my Baptist family said that you don’t. I just want to go to heaven. I am living for God in every way that I can, but I need to know if I must be baptized again now that I am supposedly of age to be baptized. Please help me ASAP. God bless and thanks.”

Response: Salvation and the forgiveness of sins come freely as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ. Acts 10:43 states: “*All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His Name*” (*New International Version*). Salvation comes through faith; that is, trust and reliance upon Jesus and His shed blood to give you a right standing before God. In Acts 10:44-48, the Holy Ghost was given to the believers (confirming their salvation) before they were baptized.

Even though this is true, at other times it seems that the forgiveness of sins happened at the time of baptism (Acts 2:38). This is because baptism is an expression, or act, of faith that was carried out at the time that a person turned to Jesus in repentance and faith (Mark 16:16 says, “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*”). It was also a way of calling on the Lord for a clear conscience (Acts 22:16 and 1 Pet. 3:21).

If you truly turned to Jesus from your heart at the age of seven and were baptized, God accepts your childlike faith. Baptism does have requirements. One requirement is repentance. Did you have a change of heart and a change of mind that resulted in turning from sin to Jesus and His forgiveness (Acts 2:38, 20:21, and 17:30)? Did you exercise faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior (Mark 16:16, John 3:16, and Rom. 10:9-10)? If not, then turn to Jesus now, repent from your sins, turn to His grace to forgive you, and seal that decision to follow Him through water baptism.

Baptism is an act that expresses one’s faith in Jesus. Without that faith, the act means nothing. People who turned to Jesus as Lord and Savior were willing to express that faith and openly confess Jesus in this public way. People who say “no” to Jesus’ command are showing, to some extent, a dead faith. **Faith is dead when people are unwilling to express it** (James 2:18-19). Faith alone saves, but saving faith is never alone. It is always willing to express itself. Baptism was a way of expressing that faith. **Baptism is not what saves; it is Jesus. Water doesn’t wash away sins; it is the blood of Jesus.** But faith applies His blood to you, and sometimes that faith was expressed at the time a person was baptized (Acts 22:16). The question is, have you repented? Do you believe in Him (Jesus)? If so, why do you delay—arise and be baptized!

Discipleship Questions

1. What is the question that this young man is asking? _____
2. According to Acts 10:43, salvation comes to us how? _____
3. Baptism is an expression of faith that usually takes place at the time of salvation. How does Acts 2:38 express this truth? _____
4. How does Mark 16:16 express this truth? _____
5. Baptism is a way of calling upon the Lord. How does Acts 22:16 express this truth?

6. Baptism is a way to call upon the Lord for a clear conscience. Does 1 Peter 3:21 confirm this truth? _____
7. What are the requirements for baptism, according to Acts 2:38? _____
8. What are the requirements for baptism, according to Mark 16:16? _____
9. Can an infant repent? _____
10. Can an infant believe? _____
11. Read Acts 10:43-48. What is the next step, after faith in Christ, that a believer should take? _____

Scriptures to Use with Questions

Acts 10:43 – *“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”*

Acts 2:38 – *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”*

Mark 16:16 – *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*

Acts 22:16 – *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”*

1 Peter 3:21 – *“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (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.”*

Acts 10:44-48 – “[44] While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. [45] And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. [46] For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, [47] Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? [48] And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.”

Answer Key

1. What is the question that this young man is asking? **If he needs to be baptized to go to heaven.**
2. According to Acts 10:43, salvation comes to us how? **Freely, as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ.**
3. Baptism is an expression of faith that usually takes place at the time of salvation. How does Acts 2:38 express this truth? **Peter said to “repent and be baptized.”**
4. How does Mark 16:16 express this truth? **Jesus said, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” implying that it can happen at the same time.**
5. Baptism is a way of calling upon the Lord. How does Acts 22:16 express this truth? **This scripture says that as a person calls upon the name of the Lord, their sins will be washed away. It appears that calling on the name of the Lord can be vocal (Luke 18:13) or through the act of baptism, as it appears to be in this scripture.**
6. Baptism is a way to call upon the Lord for a clear conscience. Does 1 Peter 3:21 confirm this truth? **Yes.**
7. What are the requirements for baptism, according to Acts 2:38? **Repentance.**
8. What are the requirements for baptism, according to Mark 16:16? **A person must believe.**
9. Can an infant repent? **No.**
10. Can an infant believe? **No.**
11. Read Acts 10:43-48. What is the next step, after faith in Christ, that a believer should take? **Water baptism.**

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Discipleship Evangelism
P.O. Box 17007
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80935-7007 U.S.A.
www.delessons.org