

Water Baptism, Conditional Promises and Religious Cults
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Introduction: Religious controversy will often expose the contents of one's heart.

- A. Paul had the rare opportunity to answer the false charges of the Jews.
 - 1. Festus because of Roman law heard both sides! **(Acts 25:16)**
 - 2. The Jewish orator and his cheering squad made a compelling presentation. **(Acts 24:1, 5-6)**
 - 3. The truth was clear when Paul was able to answer! Assertions are not facts! **(Acts 24:12-13, 18-19)**
 - 4. This exchange gave Festus a clear picture! **(Acts 25:17-19)**
- B. One of the great controversies today is the purpose of water baptism.
 - 1. Today men will go to great lengths to draw attention away from the scriptures.
 - 2. Some will follow religious orators who use labels to create prejudice.
 - 3. Rather than have your mind shut down by prejudice, why not hear both sides of this question and test what you hear by the scriptures? **(Acts 17:11)**
 - 4. We will answer *three common positions* held by our religious neighbors.

I. "Those who connect water baptism to salvation are attempting to be saved by works."

- A. There are two important passages to consider. **(Eph 2:8-9; Rom 4:2-8)**
 - 1. One who approaches God to be saved by "works" will not be saved.
 - 2. How would one be guilty of approaching God by "works?" He would do it by his own merit ("not of yourselves), he could boast about it, God would owe him salvation as one would owe a "debt" thus it would be earned!
 - 3. Salvation comes by grace through faith.
 - 4. Faith describes the way that one responds towards God's conditional promise of salvation.
- B. Some conclude that "if you subject to yourselves to any commands, as part of your salvation" then you are seeking to be justified by "works."
 - 1. Churches of Christ have been *labeled as a cult* because they teach "you must do something for salvation."
 - 2. This position would make all of God's conditional promises as contrary to grace and teaching that we "earn" God's blessings as "debt." Look at the context!
 - 3. All of God's promises have three elements: His grace, His power, and His word.
 - 4. God gives us freely *that which we could not do*. This is *always a gift of God's grace*. Nothing is earned!
 - 5. Consider the gift of God to Joshua and Israel. **(Joshua 6:2-4; Heb 11:30)**
 - 6. God's grace is received on the basis of that obedient faith!
 - 7. Faith is also a condition that can be described as a "work!" **(Jn 6:28-29)**
- C. The preaching of the apostles taught men to "call upon the name of the Lord" by responding with an obedient faith to God's conditional promise. **(Lk 24:46-47)**
 - 1. Peter urged his hearers to "call upon the name of the Lord" so that they might be saved. **(Acts 2:21)**

2. Paul in the book of Romans showed that the preaching of the gospel would lead men to “call upon the name of the Lord” resulting in salvation! (**Rom 10:12-13**)
3. The promise Peter preached would be good for all men at all times! (**Acts 2:39**)
4. How does one “call upon the name of the Lord?” When a man does this he will be responding by faith! (**Acts 2:38-39; 22:16; Mk 16:15-16**)

II. “Holy Spirit baptism in the one baptism connected to salvation.”

- A. “There are passages that plainly connect salvation and Baptism. This is “spirit baptism” and not water baptism.” (**Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:11-13; Gal 3:26-27**)
 1. Since God does the “baptism” then it is not a “work” of man. Are there any conditions to receive Holy Spirit baptism?
 2. How do you know you have received it? No one today has received “Spirit Baptism.”
- B. Truths about Holy Spirit baptism.
 1. Only Jesus can administer it. (**Jn 1:33-34**)
 2. It was administered to the apostles, *not for their salvation* but *as a sign* to point men to hear the apostles. (**Acts 2:14-16; Mark 16:17-20; Heb 2:2-4**)
 3. It was administered to Cornelius and his household as a sign to the Jewish Christians to teach and baptize the Gentiles! (**Acts 11:12; 10:47-48; 11:2-3**)
 4. It only occurred two times in all of scripture! (**Acts 1:4-5; 2:3-4; 11:16-17**)
 5. It was not given to Cornelius for his salvation. It was given before he was saved. (**Acts 10:44; 11:4, 14-16**)
 6. It always involves speaking in tongues! (**Acts 2:3-4; 10:44-46**)
- C. What is the one baptism that is for every generation till the end of the earth?
 1. The scriptures demand that we only have *one baptism today!* Which will it be - Holy Spirit baptism or water baptism? (**Eph 4:4-6**)
 2. Which baptism is found in the great commission? How long will it last? (**Mt 28:19-20**)
 3. Which baptism is promised to future generations? (**Acts 2:38-39**)

III. “The Bible teaches we are saved by faith alone.”

- A. What do you mean by “faith alone?”
 1. The bible says that we are not saved by “faith alone.” (**Jas 2:21-24**)
 2. The bible does teach that we are saved by faith. (**Eph 2:8-9**)
 3. **The question to be answered is this: “When does faith save?”**
- B. Some passages that are commonly used to “prove” baptism is not part of salvation.
 1. Does **John 3:16** exclude baptism? No, because it would also by the same reasoning exclude *repentance*. (**Acts 3:19; Lk 24:47**)
 2. Did the jailer just believe? He had to be taught what to believe! (**Acts 16:30-31**)
 - a. What did he do immediately? (**Acts 16:32-33**)
 - b. How was the entire account described? (**Acts 16:34**)

Conclusion: What do you see from your study? We welcome those who wish to teach us!