

Title: Peter's Simple Answer
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The truth must have hit them like a ton of bricks. They had rejected the very Son of God and clamored for the release of a known murderer rather than see Jesus freed. As the apostles affirmed that this Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Christ and had been raised from the dead, the gathered crowd became agitated. "What shall we do?" was the question that they asked.

The answer given was simple. "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized 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 question of what to do to be saved has been asked countless times over the intervening centuries. What answer would you give?

Relatively few people today would respond to that question exactly as the apostle Peter did on the Day of Pentecost. Why not? Despite Peter's comment that the purpose of baptism is the remission of sins, most people today feel the need to "explain away" baptism. Water baptism cannot be necessary for salvation, we are told, or salvation would be a matter of works. It is never good Bible study to deny what the Bible plainly says!

Salvation is by the life of Christ (Romans 5:10). It is through faith (Ephesians 2:8). We are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:5); it is according to the divine mercy that we are saved (Titus 3:5). The "implanted word" (NKJV) is able to save us. We could continue this train of thought by noting the critical part that the blood of Jesus plays in the forgiveness of sins and thus our salvation (Ephesians 1:7). Most people would agree that faith, grace, mercy, the word of God and the blood of Jesus are critical elements of our salvation. The apostle Peter wrote, "There is also an antitype which now saves us; baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ," (1 Peter 3:21; NKJV). While Peter affirms that the real significance of baptism is that it represents the "answer of a good conscience," he clearly states that "baptism saves us." No one would argue that man can be saved by his faith apart from the mercy of God or divine grace. Why, then, do folks resist the idea that water baptism is necessary for salvation?

We cannot be saved in our sins. Yet water baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Does that not say that water baptism is necessary for salvation? No one can be saved outside of Christ, i.e., without a spiritual relationship with Christ. Yet we are baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27). Does that not say that water baptism is necessary for salvation? Rather than deny what one part of God's word says in preference to another, we should try to understand how all these parts work together.