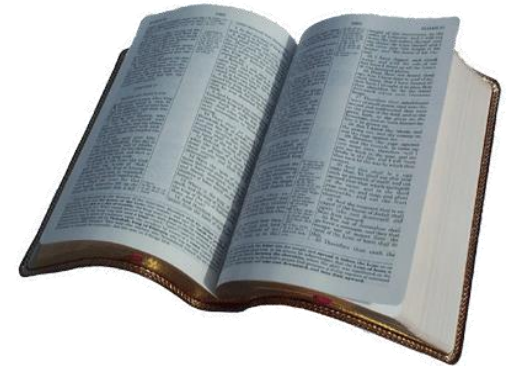


However, here is something that is not understood by many: baptism is NOT described as a work. How is baptism NOT a work of men? Consider our language in how we express this: “I hear”, “I believe”, “I confess”, “I repent”, “I *am* baptized”. I do not “baptize”, I “am” baptized. In this case, who does the work? It is NOT the one being baptized, nor is it the one baptizing (although some think as much, according to the clergy system of belief). If neither of the people in the process are ”*doing*” the work, who is?

The answer is found in Titus 3:5: *He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.* Consider what this passage says. It says we are saved by God; so the question becomes where are we saved? Remember 1 Peter 3:21? It says we are washed; where are we washed? Remember Acts 22:16? It says we are renewed by the Holy Spirit; where do we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? Remember Acts 2:38? The answer to these questions has already been covered; these things happen in baptism. So then GOD saves us in baptism; we are being told that this work is not done on our part, but by God. The point? GOD works in Baptism!

We can clearly see from Scripture what happens at baptism. We also know that we are not saved because of meriting works, although we also see that works are necessary for salvation. We must do works like believing, confessing and repenting. But it has been revealed that baptism is NOT the work of men, but instead it is the work of God.

## Baptism: A Work of Men or God?



**In** the Bible, there have been many baptisms (the word “baptism” is a translation of the Greek word meaning “immersion”). There is the baptism of Moses mentioned in I Corinthians 10:2; there is the baptism of John found in Matthew 3, Mark 1, Luke 3, and John 1. There is a baptism of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Matthew 3:11 (and seen in Acts 2:1-4) and in the same place a mentioned a baptism of Fire (the same as the previous, although possible a baptism of trial as mentioned Mark 10:38). Today there is only one baptism, the immersion in water for the believer commanded in Mark 16:16 and afterwards (Ephesians 4:5 - *one Lord, one faith, one baptism*).

Understanding this simple statement (that there is *one baptism* today) is important. Many claim that they are baptized by the Holy Spirit; yet that promise was only made to the Apostles (Mark 1:8, John 1:33). This promise was the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26; John 15:26; John 16:7-9). We are told that this was fulfilled in Acts 1:5 and Acts 2:1-4. The baptism that is found after this in the New Testament is the one baptism: the baptism into water, which is a baptism into Christ.

There are many things that happen when someone receives the one

baptism. This is why when it is mentioned in Hebrews 6:2, it is pluralized; it has multiple purposes. The purpose of the one baptism is: to add a person to the church (Acts 2:47); to remove the sins of the flesh (Acts 2:38, 22:16); to contact the blood and death of Christ at the cross (Romans 6:3-5); to "*put on Christ*" and receive the adoption by Grace (Galatians 3:26-27); to be justified and sanctified (1 Corinthians 6:11); to be born again into the kingdom (John 3:5). We sum it up with Peter's statement in I Peter 3:21: "***baptism now saves you***", indicating that baptism is the moment, according to God's plan, we are saved.

It seems clear from Scripture how important baptism is for the believer. However, many still do not believe, saying that "*baptism is a work, and works do not save*" (by works many mean anything you could do for God). Some consider Paul's statement in Ephesians 2:8: "*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast*".

Before we try to reconcile this passage and others, it is important to point out that **USUALLY** when Scriptures state we are not saved by

works, it is a reference to the Law of Moses, and of that the reference of works is usually one particular work, circumcision (as seen in Ephesians 2:11). We know that this was a major issue of contention among Christians in the early church, and we can understand that Paul would repeatedly tell us that works of the Law of Moses are pointless in Christ.

That being said, we must acknowledge that works **CANNOT** purchase our salvation (Ephesians 1:14, Acts 20:28) or merit our salvation (Daniel 9:18). We cannot earn our eternal reward, as it is a gift of God. He has paid the price for it, it is free. This does **NOT** mean that it is unconditional. The Bible clearly and repeatedly tells us that our works are necessary to be saved. We need to understand that the Bible says that there are things we must do to be saved; even those who deny baptism's part in this accept that something must happen. What many do not know is that they in fact seek a works based salvation, since we are told that faith (belief) is a work (John 6:29, Romans 10:17), confessing our faith is a work (Romans 10:9-10), and repentance is a work (Acts 26:20).