

Objections to Baptism for The Forgiveness of Sins

Aaron Gallagher

This document originally was put together as a part of a course Study at Southaven church of Christ on the 1946 "Woods/Nunnery Debate Book". This debate covered the topics of Baptism and Once Saved Always Saved.

Part 1 of The Debate Book dealt with whether a person must be baptized for the remission of their sins (Wood's position) or whether a person is saved at the point of belief before baptism (Nunnery's position). This document sets forth to attempt to help members of the church to answer some of these arguments which are commonly used to object to baptism.

Section 1. Defining Terms

In discussions such as these, it is important to realize many of the disagreements people have is because they do not discuss the definitions of words they use. For instance, one may say faith and mean only belief while another may say faith and mean the system of faith, The Gospel which includes obedience to God's Commands. For this reason, it is important to set some basic understandings of Faith, Works, and Law. For a 3 part video series on "Law, Grace, and Faith" by Roy Deaver follow this link. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec55Gz3Toig>

Faith

The word faith is used in many ways in Scripture and it is important to the context of each passage to determine how the word is being used. The Greek words for faith and believe are pistis (noun form, Romans 5:1) and pisteuó (verb form, John 3:16). They mean to believe, entrust, trust in something. Sometimes faith is a condition among conditions (Mark 16:16). Sometimes faith represents the system of faith (Gal. 3:24-27). Sometimes faith means our personal beliefs on matters of conscience (Rom. 14:23).

Works

There are different types of works in Scripture. We can prove this by comparing Romans 4:1-4 and James 2:21. Romans 4:1-4 teachings that Abraham was justified by belief, not works and the text cites Genesis 15:6. However, James 2:21 says "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?" So which is it? Was Abraham justified by works (James 2:21) or was he not (Romans 4:1-4).

To reconcile these two passages, one must admit that these are discussing two different types of works. Romans 4:1-4 in context is discussing how Abraham was not justified by the works of the Law of Moses, specifically circumcision. Circumcision was given in Genesis 17 whereas Romans 4:1-4 cites Genesis 15:6 as the time Abraham was justified. It should also be noted, this was not Abraham's initial relationship with God. That initial relationship with God began in Genesis 12:1-4 when Abraham obeyed God's call to go into a land which God would show Abraham.

James 2:21 is a completely different context. James 2 is discussing the difference between a faith that is a living, saving faith (James 2:12-15) and a faith that is dead (James 2:17). A faith that lacks works of obedience is dead and will not save (James 2:17,24). A faith that has works of obedience is a living and a saving faith (James 2:22-24).

Notice Abraham was not justified by works of the Law of Moses (Romans 4:1-4), but by works of obedience that made his faith perfect (James 2:21-24). That is how Genesis 15:6 can be references in both contexts and yet one says Abraham was not justified by works (Romans 4:1-4) and another say Abraham was justified by works which completed his obedient faith (James 2:21-24).

Also note that while Ephesians 2:8-10 is normally quoted to prove we are saved by “grace through faith not of works” this passage cannot mean works of obedience because John 6:28-29 and 1 Thessalonians 1:3 say that belief and faith are works. Thus we know Ephesians 2:8-10 is stating we are saved not by works of our own merit, or works of the Law of Moses, but that we are saved by God’s grace (which instructs Titus 2:11-12) through faith (which must have works of obedience to be a complete, saving faith, James 2:21-24).

FAITH AND WORKS TOGETHER

Many discussions that center around baptism will have an exchange similar to this one.

“You do not have to be baptized to be saved, because baptism is a work and we are saved by grace through faith no of works.”

This statement assumes that no works are required to be saved. However, John 6:28-29 and 1 Thess. 1:3 say that faith and belief are both works. Thus, we know belief is necessary. Baptism also is a work of God (Col. 2:12). I like to take people to Galatians chapter 2-3 to show them what Paul thought about baptism. Did Paul think baptism was a part of the system of faith which justifies (Romans 5:1) or works of the Law which cannot justify (Romans 4:1-4). Romans 4 and Galatians 2 are parallel passages dealing with the same issue. The Judaizing teachers saying one must be circumcised according to the Law of Moses to be saved (Acts 15). Both Romans and Galatians deal with the same problems. Let’s look together and let Paul guide our thoughts between the Law of Moses and The Gospel.

Paul says this comparing and contrasting the Law of Moses with The Gospel (The Faith) “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. Gal. 2:16

Paul continues and later says “But before faith (*the system of faith*) came, we were kept under guard by the law (*of Moses*), kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore, the law (*of Moses, emp. Add*) was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith (*The Faith, The Gospel*).²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

In Galatians chapters 2 and 3, Paul makes a clear distinction that baptism is not a work of The Law of Moses which cannot justify, but is in fact a part of the Gospel, the faith, the system of faith which does justify. He says in Galatians 3:26-27 that they became sons of God by faith when? When they were baptized into Christ just as Romans 6:1-6 teach parallel.

Law

Some teach that a Christian is under no law whatsoever and will sometimes use passages out of context such as Romans 6:14 which states “for sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” If one were to back up and look at the context of the end of Romans 5:20-21 which leads into chapter 6, one would see that the law entered that the offense (sin) might abound and where that sin abounded (under the Law of Moses) now grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (under the Gospel). Notice just 2 chapters later the description of the Gospel.

Romans 8:2 – “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”

Romans 3:27- “No, but by the law of faith.”

Gal. 6:2 – “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

1 Cor. 9:21 – “to those *who are* without law (of Moses), as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law”

I John 3:4 states that sin is a transgression of law. If a christian is under not law, then he would not be able to sin, but we know that is not the case.

Section 2. New Testament Passages That Deal with Baptism

One should become familiar also with the many New Testament passages which discuss baptism. I have compiled a list of the ones that I use the most in discussions with others.

Baptism and Salvation are Mentioned Together in 6 New Testament Passages and Baptism always precedes remission of sins/salvation.

Mark 1:4- John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

- (Genitive of Repentance signifies John’s teaching was leading people to be baptized for the remission of their sins and that baptism would lead them into a life full of repentance)

Luke 3:3- And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

- (Genitive of Repentance signifies John’s teaching was leading people to be baptized for the remission of their sins and that baptism would lead them into a life full of repentance)

Mark 16:16- He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned

Acts 2:38- Then Peter said to them, “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 22:16- And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’ (Could add Acts 2:21, Rom. 10:13 since baptism is calling on name of The Lord, to be saved, would make 8)

1 Peter 3:21- 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

Before The New Covenant came into Effect on the Day of Pentecost (Hebrews 9:16-17, Acts 2)

Matthew 28:18-20 “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples (imperative) of all the nations, baptizing (participle) them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching (participle) them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.”

- It is also interesting in this passage that “make disciples” is in the imperative mood. The command is to make disciples. Teaching and Baptizing are both participles. This is important because when participles follow an imperative command, they have the force of a command and they also tell you how you carry out that command. Therefore, Jesus said “Go make disciples and the way you do that is by baptizing and teaching.” Thus according to Jesus one cannot make a disciple without baptizing and teaching a person.

Mark 16:16 Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

- Belief and baptism are both aorist participles, shall be saved is a future verb. Aorist participles have to take place before the leading verb (Machen & Summers). A.T. Robertson, in his book “New Testament in the Light of Historical Research”, stated that “Subsequent action is not expressed by the aorist participle, some writers have held this as possible, though no satisfactory examples have been adduced.”
- NASB Actually translates Greek the best showing both belief and baptism have to occur before salvation.
 - “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”
- Does MARK 16:16 Belong in The Bible? Some people say it does not.
 - **External Evidence** says Yes it should be included. 620 Manuscripts have it, 2 Omit it. The two that omit it are dated 300-350AD.
 - Vaticanus- 300 AD Leaves an open space as if author was going to write it later
 - Siniaticus- 350 AD Mark 16:8 ends at bottom of page as if next page had been torn off
 - What about sources earlier than 300 AD? Do any contain it? YES!
 - Papias 130 AD, J. Martyr 160 AD, Tatian’s Diatesseron 172 AD, Tertullian 220 AD, 2nd Century Syriac Peshitta, Coptic Versions, Sahidic versions, Curetonian versions, Old Italic versions, all before 300AD All have it!
 - **Internal Evidence?** Some say the internal evidence shows doesn’t belong because it has 17 new words in Mark 16:9-20 that Mark had not used anywhere

previously in the book of Mark. However, A. Broaddus studied preceding 12 verses of Mark and found 17 new words used. Argument holds no weight.

Luke 24:47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

- This passage is beneficial to make note of because it follows Luke 23 where the thief on the cross objection comes from. This passage shows that following the thief on the cross, Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection, that the New Covenant has not come into effect yet, but that it was to come beginning in Jerusalem. That happened in Acts 2. In Luke 24:49, Jesus tells the apostles to wait in Jerusalem from the Promise of The Father and they will be endued with power from on high. This occurs in Acts chapter 2

John 3:3-5

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

- Born of the water is referring to baptism. All of the early Christians interpreted it this way. It was not until John Calvin came along 1500 years after the New Testament was written that people began to attribute "born of water" to something other than baptism. I have included some early Christian quotes to show you early Christians were unanimous that born of the water was referring to baptism.
- SCRIPTURE IS THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY. Quotes from non-inspired men are just that. Quotes. They are not authoritative, but many denominational people do not understand that these exist. They think baptism for salvation was something that is only from the 1800's. Showing them these quotes will sometimes help them see this was the original view.
- **If a person rejects baptism for salvation they have to say that all of the early Christians were heretics.** Most denominational people do not feel comfortable saying that.
- For additional quotes follow this link <http://www.bible.ca/H-baptism.htm>
- **110-165 AD Justin Martyr** "Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Justin Martyr "First Apology, Ante-Nicene Fathers)
- **110-165 AD Justin Martyr** "The "Constitutions of the Holy Apostles" also refer to John 3:5. There, the one who refuses to be baptized is to be condemned as an unbeliever, partially on the basis of what Jesus told Nicodemus.... "He that, out of contempt, will not be baptized, shall be condemned as an unbeliever, and shall be reproached as ungrateful and foolish. For the Lord says: 'Except a man be baptized of water and of the Spirit, he shall by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven.' And again: 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be damned.'"

(Justin Martyr "Constitutions of the Holy Apostles," Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 7, pg. 456-457.)

- **115-188 AD THEOPHILUS** "Moreover, the things proceeding from the waters were blessed by God, that this also might be a sign of men's being destined to receive repentance and remission of sins, through the water and laver of regeneration, as many as come to the truth, and are born again, and receive blessing from God." (Theophilus, "To Autolytus," Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 2, pg. 101)
- **120-205 AD IRENAEUS** "As we are lepers in sin, we are made clean from our old transgressions by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord. We are thus spiritually regenerated as newborn infants, even as the Lord has declared: 'Except a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'" Irenaeus, "Fragments From Lost Writings", no. 34, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1, pg. 574)
- **140-230 AD TERTULLIAN** "The prescript is laid down that 'without baptism, salvation is attainable by none' chiefly on the ground of that declaration of the Lord, who says, 'Unless one be born of water, he hath not life.'" (On Baptism, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 3, pg. 674-675)
- 1500 years later, John Calvin's Commentary Statements show how far the religious man had departed from the New Testament pattern. This is one of his statements on John 3:5 from his commentary.
 - o Chrysostom, with whom the greater part of expounders agree, makes the word Water refer to baptism. The meaning would then be, that by baptism we enter into the kingdom of God, because in baptism we are regenerated by the Spirit of God. Hence arose the belief of the absolute necessity of baptism, in order to the hope of eternal life. But though we were to admit that Christ here speaks of baptism, yet we ought not to press his words so closely as to imagine that he confines salvation to the outward sign; but, on the contrary, he connects the Water with the Spirit, because under that visible symbol he attests and seals that newness of life which God alone produces in us by his Spirit. It is true that, by neglecting baptism, we are excluded from salvation; and in this sense I acknowledge that it is necessary; but it is absurd to speak of the hope of salvation as confined to the sign. So far as relates to this passage, I cannot bring myself to believe that Christ speaks of baptism; for it would have been inappropriate.

NEW COVENANT COMES INTO EFFECT DAY OF PENTECOST (Mt. 16:18, Mk. 9:1, Lk 24:47, Acts 2)

Acts 2:21 *And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.'*

- This verse is very important because there are New Testament passages such as Romans 10:13 which say the very same thing. Notice Acts 2:21 is a quotation from the Old Testament Minor Prophet Joel. Acts 2:21 is a quotation of Joel 2:32. Romans 10:13 is also a quotation of Joel 2:32.
- Thus, whatever Acts 2:21 means is important when someone takes you to Romans 10:9-10. You can show them repentance is not mentioned in Romans 10 but baptism is.
- What does it mean to call on the name of The Lord?

- Notice Acts 2:21 whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- Acts 2:37 the people ask “What shall we do?”
- Acts 2:38 Peter tells them “Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”
- Call on the Name of the Lord to be saved - How do we do that? - Repent and Be baptized
- Acts 22:16 also helps with this because in Acts 22:16 Paul, after fasting for three days (Acts 9:9) and praying (Acts 9:11), is told by Ananias to “Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of The Lord.”
- Thus we know calling on the name of the Lord is not a prayer because Paul had been praying for 3 days and had not called on the name of the Lord.
- Calling on the Name of The Lord = Baptism
- This parallels 1 Peter 3:21 which says “Baptism now saves you, not the removal of the filth of the flesh (it’s not a bath) but it is your appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus.”
- Baptism is your appeal to God, it is you calling on His Name, it is your faith in Him Colossians 2:12

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, “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.

- This passage is clear that repentance is a pre-requisite to baptism and baptism is needed to have the remission of sins.
- Some will try to say this phrase means “because your sins have been forgiven.”
- The Greek phrase for remission of sins is “Eis aphasin harmarton.” It is the exact same phrase used in Matthew 26:28.
- For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Matthew 26:28
- I will ask someone, 1. Did Jesus shed his blood because his sins were already forgiven? Or 2. Did Jesus shed His Blood in order to have sins forgiven?
- Some if they are very clever will try to say the Greek word “Eis” (pronounced Ace like the paying card) means “because of” sometimes. The name for this is the “Causal use”. You can remember this as the “Be-Causal” use.
- Eis is used in the New Testament 1773 times and always means directionally forward, into, unto. It never means because of.
- Sam Green, Greek expert and Baptist Union President gives 8 meanings in his Greek Grammar Book. The Causal use of eis is not one of them. No Greek Lexicons at all give a causal use of eis.
- Only one Greek Grammar book does and it is the book by J.R. Mantey. It is written by the man who claims the Causal use of eis is real thing.
- Ralph Marcus has refuted Mantey and Daniel B. Wallace has also confirmed Marcus’s position. Daniel B. Wallace said “Marcus ably demonstrated that the linguistic evidence for eis used “Casually” fell short of proof. The Greek preposition eis always points forward.

- Greek Scholar JW McGarvey on Matthew 12:31 “If the writer would have wanted to say because of the writer would have used *Dia* in the accusative case instead of *eis*. This is the exact way the Greek would have derived the original. Preaching is put for the cause of life required by the preaching. Repentance brought their lives into course with preaching.

Acts 8:5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.

- Just as you will see in Acts 8:35-38, preaching Christ includes preaching baptism.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.

- Preaching like Philip did includes preaching about Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God (the church Matthew 16:18, Col. 1:13, Rev. 1:9) and about baptism.

Acts 8:35-38 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. ³⁶ Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?” ³⁷ Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” ³⁸ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him

- This passage shows that preaching Jesus included baptism.
- This passage also shows the baptism is immersion, because the man was baptized. The action was performed on the man. You cannot put a man in a jar and pour him out. You cannot put a man in a jar and sprinkle the man out. Phillip baptized the eunuch. Phillip did not pour the eunuch. Phillip did not sprinkle the eunuch.

Acts 10-11 Household of Cornelious- This section is extremely important to understand because this is one story that many go to and try to make this argument. Chapters 10 and 11 will be dealt with in specific depth during **Section 3. Answering The Common Objections.**

Acts 16:30-34 And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed *their* stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. ³⁴ Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

- This passage is frequently quoted but only verses 30-31 are used. The rest of the story is not told.
- Notice after being told to believe, in verse 32 He had to be taught. He did not know what to believe yet. Then after being taught he showed repentance by washing the stripes of Paul and Silas and was baptized in the middle of the night.

- This is something important because many modern churches have “Baptism Sundays”. They didn’t wait in the Bible, they went immediately because they knew their sins were not forgiven until they were baptized.

Acts 22:16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’

- This passage shows that baptism is the time when a person’s sins are washed away.
- Paul had already
 - o met Jesus and called him Lord (Acts 9:6, Acts 22:10)
 - o Fasted for 3 days (Acts 9:9)
 - o Prayed during that time (Acts 9:11)
 - o Obeyed Jesus and went to Damascus
- Yet after doing all this, his sins were not forgiven yet.
- Sins separate us from God (Is. 59:1-2) and cause spiritual death (Rom. 6:23)
- Paul was told to “Arise and be baptized to have his sins washed away”
- Rev. 1:5 says the blood of Christ washes away our sins.
- This shows baptism is the point in which our sins are washed away.

Romans 6:3-4 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

- This shows that baptism is when we die to sin and rise to walk in newness of life.
- Some will say this is “spirit baptism” but Romans 6:17-18 shows that is incorrect.
- Spirit baptism was a promise Mark 1:8, not a command.
- Water baptism was the baptism of the great commission (Mat. 28:20, Mark 16:16) which was commanded and thus can be obeyed.

Romans 6:17-18 But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. ¹⁸ And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

- This shows the baptism that sets free from sin is the baptism that can be obeyed. Water baptism is the only baptism that fits this criteria.

Romans 10:13 For “*whoever calls* on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

- Romans 10:9-10 is frequently brought up to avoid baptism. It says this.
- “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
- They will say “There is no baptism there?”
- You can ask “Is repentance necessary? It is not mentioned in Romans chapter 10?”
- Acts 17:30 says God commands all men everywhere to repent.”

- This should show Romans 10:9-10 is not the only passage to find out how to be saved.
- Then you can use the information above under Acts 2:21 and Acts 22:16 to show them calling on the name of the Lord is referring to baptism.

1 Cor 1:10-17 “CHRIST SENT ME NOT TO BAPTIZE?” See Long Explanation Below in Section 3. Objections Answered Section

Galatians 2:16 “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

- This passage is a need to know passage because many will say we are saved by faith not works. Paul here shows that the context is that we are not saved by works of the Law of Moses, but by faith in Christ. Then in chapter 3:26-27 will show baptism is a part of faith, not a work of Law of Moses

Galatians 3:26-27 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

- These notes below are from section beginning on page 2 titled “Faith and Works”
- I like to take people to Galatians chapter 2-3 to show them what Paul thought about baptism. Did Paul think baptism was a part of the system of faith which justifies (Romans 5:1) or works of the Law which cannot justify (Romans 4:1-4). Romans 4 and Galatians 2 are parallel passages dealing with the same issue. The Judaizing teachers saying one must be circumcised according to the Law of Moses to be saved (Acts 15). Both Romans and Galatians deal with the same problems. Let’s look together and let Paul guide our thoughts between the Law of Moses and The Gospel.
- Paul says this comparing and contrasting the Law of Moses with The Gospel (The Faith) “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. Gal. 2:16
- Paul continues and later says “But before faith (*the system of faith*) came, we were kept under guard by the law (*of Moses*), kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law (*of Moses, emp. Add*) was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith (*The Faith, The Gospel*). ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
- In Galatians chapters 2 and 3, Paul makes a clear distinction that baptism is not a work of The Law of Moses which cannot justify, but is in fact a part of the Gospel, the faith, the system of faith which does justify. He says in Galatians 3:26-27 that they became sons of God by faith when? When they were baptized into Christ just as Romans 6:1-6 teach parallel.

Ephesians 4:4

- "One Baptism"
- Ephesians written around AD 60-64 thus Holy Spirit baptism of Acts 2 and Acts 10 had been fulfilled and was no longer needed.
- The only baptism left was the one baptism of the great commission to all nations and all creation until the end of the age, water baptism (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:16)

Colossians 2:11-12 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

- This shows sins are cut off at baptism.
- This does not show that baptism is a covenant sign and seal like circumcision was. The two are not equivalent.
- Baby girls were not circumcised in the old Testament, so do we not baptize baby girls? Of course not.
- Baptism is for believing, repenting, confessing people in the New Covenant.

1 Timothy 1:16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

- Paul told Timothy that Paul's conversion would be a pattern for those who would believe on Christ for everlasting life.
- Paul had his sins washed away in baptism. He is our pattern.

Titus 3:4-5 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit

- This verse is worded differently in different translation. The ESV words it differently to say God didn't save us by work, but by washing of regeneration.
- Notice it says the Love of God our Savior appeared not because of works which we have done, but because of God's mercy and thus He saved us, but how? Through the washing of Regeneration and renewal of Holy Spirit.
- Parallel Passages
 - John 3:5 Born of Water and Spirit
 - Ephesians 5:26 "that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word"
- How did early Christians see Titus 3:5? Washing of Regeneration?
- 115-188 THEOPHILUS "On the fifth day the living creatures which proceed from the waters were produced, through which also is revealed the manifold wisdom of God in these things; for who could count their multitude and various kinds? Moreover, the things proceeding from the waters were blessed by God, that this also might be a sign of men's being destined to receive repentance and remission of sins, **through the water and laver of regeneration**, as many as come to the truth, and are born again, and

receive blessing from God." (Theophilus, "To Autolytus," Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 2, pg. 101)

- 120-205 AD IRENAEUS "This class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that **baptism which is regeneration to God**, and thus to a renunciation of the whole faith." (Against Heresies, bk. 1, chap. 21, sec. 1, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1, pg. 345.)
- 181 AD Theophilus of Antioch "Moreover, those things which were created from the waters were blessed by God, so that this might also be a sign that men would at a future time receive **repentance and remission of sins through water and the bath of regeneration** all who proceed to the truth and are born again and receive a blessing from God" (To Autolytus 12:16).
- 200 AD CYPRIAN "But what a thing it is, to assert and contend that they who are not born in the Church can be the sons of God! For the blessed apostle sets forth and proves that baptism is that wherein the old man dies and the new man is born, saying, '**He saved us by the washing of regeneration.**' But if **regeneration is in the washing, that is, in baptism**, how can heresy, which is not the spouse of Christ, generate sons to God by Christ?" (Cyprian, "The Epistles of Cyprian," Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 388)
- 215 AD Hippolytus "And the bishop shall lay his hand upon them [the newly baptized], invoking and saying: 'O Lord God, who did count these worthy of deserving the forgiveness of sins by the **laver of regeneration**, make them worthy to be filled with your Holy Spirit and send upon them thy grace [in confirmation], that they may serve you according to your will" (The Apostolic Tradition 22:1).

1 Peter 3:21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer (APPEAL) of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

- Eperotema is Greek word for Answer/Appeal, It occurs 1 time in New Testament. Baptism is our Appeal to God as ESV, NASB says.
- Acts 22:16 says that in being baptized we are "Calling on the name of The Lord". That Greek word for "calling upon" is Epikaleo. Epi=upon kaleo= to call.
- This word is also used in Acts 25:11 when Paul appealed (epikaleo) to Caesar.
- Baptism is how one appeals to God for a good conscience and calls on God to wash away His sins.

Revelation 1:5 "and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood"

- This verse should be remembered to connected with how baptism washes away the sins of a person in Acts 22:16, but also the blood washes Revelation 1:5. This by deductive reasoning a person can see how when one is baptized physically in water, one contacts the blood of Christ spiritually.

Now we will look at some common arguments that are made against baptism. Many of these arguments fall into similar categories.

1. **Not telling the full story.** Acts 16:30-31, John 3:16, no baptism, see John 3:3-5 earlier.
2. **Using a verse that speaks of faith** and saying baptism isn't a part of faith.
3. **Using an example from a different covenant.** Ex. Abraham of Thief wasn't baptized.
4. **Baptism is a work, not of works.** This type of argument pulls a passage discussing works of the law of Moses out of context and then tries to apply it to baptism which was not a part of the law of Moses.

5. "Christ Sent Me Not To Baptize"

We started off the class by showing that most arguments we hear are not new. They have been being used for thousands of years. We showed the example of those who use 1 Cor. 1:17 to make the argument that Paul was not sent to baptize, but to preach the Gospel. The argument will go like this normally.

"Paul said in 1 Cor. 1:17 "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect." Since Paul made baptism and the Gospel two different things, then baptism is not a part of the Gospel and the Gospel is what is the power to save (Rom. 1:16, 1 Cor. 15:1-4). Why would Paul say this is baptism had anything to do with salvation?"

First, it is important to consider that this is not a new argument. An early Christian named Tertullian who lived from 140-230 AD, 100 years after Jesus, was dealing with those trying to say baptism was not necessary and this is a quote from him.

CHAP. XIV.—OF PAUL'S ASSERTION, THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN SENT TO BAPTIZE

But they roll back *an objection* from *that* apostle himself, in that he said, "For Christ sent me not to baptize;" as if by this argument baptism were done away! For *if so*, why did he baptize Gaius, and Crispus, and the house of Stephanas? However, even if Christ had not sent *him* to baptize, yet He had given *other* apostles the precept to baptize. But these words were written to the Corinthians in regard of the circumstances of that particular time; seeing that schisms and dissensions were agitated among them, while one attributes *everything* to Paul, another to Apollos. For which reason the "peace-making"¹⁰ apostle, for fear he should seem to claim all *gifts* for himself, says that he had been sent "not to baptize, but to preach." For preaching is the prior thing, baptizing the posterior. Therefore the preaching came *first*: but I think baptizing withal was *lawful* to him to whom preaching was.¹

¹ Tertullian. (1885). [On Baptism](#). In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), S. Thelwall (Trans.), *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian* (Vol. 3, p. 676). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

It is also important to remember that 1 Cor. 1:17 is an elliptical clause which is a common in Scripture. An elliptical clause is a figure of speech in which some words are not present in the text but are understood. Using logic, the missing words can be understood. For instance, maybe taking a look at some examples of elliptical clauses used in the Bible will help us understand 1 Corinthians 1:17 better.

In John 6:27, Jesus said "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life". Did Jesus mean that we should not labor for physical food which perishes? Let's bring another passage in to help us out. In 2 Thessalonians 3:10, Paul wrote "For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat." Paul here is obviously discussing how a person has to work for their physical food. Did Paul contradict Jesus? Of course not, Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 14:37 "the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord." Using logic, we can put these two statements to recognize that Jesus was not saying a person should not work for their physical food, but that a person must not only work for food that perishes, but also more importantly, work for spiritual food which does not perish. Thus, with the understanding of what an elliptical statement is, we can now understand John 6:27 more accurately.

"Do not labor **(only)** for the food which perishes, but **(also, more importantly)** for the food which endures to everlasting life," John 6:27 (my emp. added)

Compare John 12:44 and see if you can work through this on your own.

- ◇ John 12:44 - Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.
- ◇ 1 John 2:23 - Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.
- ◇ John 12:44 explained - Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not **(ONLY)** in Me but **(ALSO)** in Him who sent Me. (Emp. Added)

Someone may object and say, "Aaron, you added two words there though." That is true, but translators frequently add words not present with elliptical clauses. Take 1 Timothy 5:23 for instance.

- ◇ 1 Tim. 5:23 KJV - Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.
- ◇ 1 Tim. 5:23 ASV 1901 - Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.
- ◇ Does this mean a Christian can no longer drink water? Of course not. The translators of the NKJV help explain this elliptical clause.
- ◇ 1 Tim. 5:23 NKJV - No longer drink *only* water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

Here is another example

- ◇ 1 Peter 3:3-4 KJV and Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; ⁴ But let it be the hidden man of

the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

- ◆ 1 Peter 3:3-4 NKJV “Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— ⁴ rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”

With this understanding of elliptical clauses, we can now understand 1 Cor. 1:17 more clearly. “For Christ sent me not (ONLY) to baptize, but (ALSO, more importantly) to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”

We also must compare the teaching of Paul here with Paul’s teaching elsewhere.

- In Acts 16:30-34 Paul preached Baptism to Philippian Jailor and his entire household.
- In Acts 18:1-8 Paul preached and baptized in Corinth. Did Paul sin?
- 1 Cor. 1:14-16 - ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; ¹⁵ Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. ¹⁶ And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.
- John 4:1-2 - Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John ² (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples).

6. **We are saved by faith, not baptism,**

- a. With this argument the person may quote John 3:16, John 3:18, Romans 5:1, Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 John 5:1, etc. or any other passage that says simply faith and then say, “This verse says we are saved by faith and not baptism.”
- b. Most of the time, the verse they quote will also not mention repentance. Ask them “Does a person have to repent?” They will likely say “Yes”. Then say “but it’s not in this verse?” They will normally reply, “Yeah but repentance is stated in other verses though.” To which you can respond “So is baptism.”
- c. Show them Joshua was given Jericho as a gift in Joshua 6:2, Hebrews 11:30 even says the walls of Jericho fell by faith. Did that mean Joshua didn’t have anything to do? No, he had instructions from God, still by faith, still a gift.
- d. Baptism is a part of obedient faith. You can also show them Galatians 3:26-27 that Paul said baptism was a part of being justified by faith.

7. **What about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the patriarchs? What became of them before this doctrine of baptismal salvation?”**

- a. This argument is common as it is normally made by those who do not understand that baptism for the remission of sins is a command given by Jesus Christ while He was on earth. This is not something that had been commanded for all people since creation.
- b. This argument was also dealt with by early Christians such as Tertullian who dealt with this argument as early 200 AD. Here is a quote from his writing “On Baptism”. In chapter 13 of his work “On Baptism”, Tertullian wrote this.

- i. CHAP. XIII.—ANOTHER OBJECTION: ABRAHAM PLEASSED GOD WITHOUT BEING BAPTIZED. ANSWER THERETO. OLD THINGS MUST GIVE PLACE TO NEW, AND BAPTISM IS NOW A LAW.
 - 1. Here, then, those miscreants provoke questions. And so they say, “Baptism is not necessary for them to whom faith is sufficient; for withal, Abraham pleased God by a sacrament of no water, but of faith.”²
- ii. However, this argument is invalid because Abraham was never commanded to be baptized. Hebrews 11 makes it clear that Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and all people have always been justified by faith. Faith has always included obedience to God’s commands and baptism is a command that is to be required of all since the time of Acts 2 when the Great Commission was put into effect.

8. The Thief on The Cross was not baptized

- a. Thief on the Cross lived under the Old Covenant
- b. New Covenant was not in effect even after the Resurrection yet as Luke 24:47 Jesus told them that repentance and remission of sins would begin in Jerusalem, which implied it had not already began. Still future.
- c. This shows the thief lived under the Old Covenant and is not an example to us.

9. The blood of Christ is what saves, not baptism

- a. Correct. Blood washes away sins, but God can use whatever instruments he pleases.
- b. No Power in Water. It is not the water that saves, but when a person is baptized, that is when they have faith in the operation of God (Col. 2:11-12) and God cuts away their sins. God can use whatever means He chooses to forgive sins through His Sons blood and obedience to His Commands.
 - i. Parallels of How God Has Saved In OT Examples
 - 1. Red Sea instrument used by God to save (Ex. 14:13)
 - 2. Brazen Serpent used by God (Numbers 21:5-9)
 - 3. Naaman dipping in Jordan (2 Kings 5:8-14)

10. Baptism is a work, We are saved by Grace through Faith, Not Works

- a. This argument will also use passages frequently such as Romans 4 and Galatians 2:16. These passages are discussing the binding of Old Testament works of the law of Moses on New Testament Christians. The person making the argument will use them and then say baptism is a work. This does a few things.
 - i. It forgets Jesus said faith and belief were works in John 6:28-29 and 1 Thess. 1:3. Now one must understand belief is still necessary even though

² Tertullian. (1885). [On Baptism](#). In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), S. Thelwall (Trans.), *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian* (Vol. 3, pp. 675–676). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

it is a work, but that it is a work of obedience because God commanded it to be done. This is the same situation the New Testament describes baptism as Co. 2:12)

- ii. There are different types of works. This was dealt with in the first section of the current publication under the section on “Works”
- b. Galatians 3:23-27 shows clearly that baptism is a part of the system of faith. Galatians 2:16-3:28 is a discussion comparing and contrasting the Law of Moses with the Faith (the Gospel of Christ). Thus Paul includes baptism as a part of the Faith, the Gospel of Christ.

11. "The Household of Cornelius was Had Holy Spirit Baptism before water baptism"

This argument will typically be made in a similar fashion to this

"Cornelius and his household had the baptism of the Holy Spirit before baptism in water, thus baptism in water is not necessary to be saved."

The syllogism would be

This is a false statement. Let's break this down. The argument they are making goes like this.

1. Cornelius and his family had baptism of the Holy Spirit. **TRUE**
 - o Did Cornelius and his household have the baptism of the Holy Spirit before water baptism? Yes, they spoke in miraculous tongues (10:44-46, 11:15-17). There were also an additional 3 other miracles. **1.** Cornelius had miraculous vision, divine instruction by angel (Acts 10:1-8,22,30-33) **2.** Peter had a miraculous vision (Acts 10:10-15) **3.** The Holy Spirit spoke to Peter (Acts 10:19-20)
2. Having baptism of the Holy Spirit means you are saved? **FALSE**, Cornelius's household spoke in a tongue which was miraculous knowledge of a language previously unknown. Are there any occurrences in Scripture where God used people not saved to perform a miracle through His Power to send a message? Yes.
 - a. Caiaphas in John 11:49-51 - The high priest prophesied, not of his authority, that Jesus should die for the nation. – Lost man prophesying for God
 - b. Saul in 1 Samuel – In 1 Samuel 16:14 the Spirit departed from Saul, yet in 1 Samuel 19:23 Saul prophesied
 - c. Balaam's Donkey – Balaam's donkey spoke by power of God in Numbers 22:21-39. Was Balaam's donkey saved? No, was used by God to send a message to Balaam.
 - d. The Corinthians- Paul in the letter to the 1 Corinthians told them they were acting Carnal because of their behavior (1 Cor. 3:1-4), yet they had miraculous gifts in 1 Cor. 12-14. Love is also one of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:21). Therefore, according to Paul via Inspiration, one could have a miraculous gift and still not be exhibiting a fruit of the Spirit such as love.
3. Thus (they argue) water baptism was not for salvation. However, we have proved their argument number 2 is False. Further, if the "Holy Spirit Baptism" saved them, then consider some contradictions.
 - a. Acts 10:6 "Cornelius was told there was going to be something he must do." This is ironically the same language given to the Apostle Paul during his conversion one chapter earlier. Paul was told "You will be told what you must do." (Acts 9:6, Acts 22:10) What was Paul told to do? To Arise and be Baptized and Wash Away His sins, calling on the name of The Lord (Acts 22:16).
 - b. Acts 10:43 says "through His name whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

- i. Does this mean belief only? Or belief as a representation of believing and obeying God's commands? Let's read on to find out. We need more information.
- ii. Question: Are there multiple ways to be saved? If no, then this passage must line up with previously revealed situations such as Acts 2:38 when Peter (same preacher) told those people who believed on Jesus Christ to "Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins."
- iii. Following this Statement Cornelius and his household begin to speak in tongues (vs. 44) and notice the response of the Jews (vs. 45) as they were astonished because the gift of The Holy Spirit (vs. 46 miraculous speaking in tongues)
- iv. This was a sign to the Jews that the salvation in Christ and The Gospel was now open to the Gentiles, and thus Peter says Acts 10:47-48 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we (Jews) *have*?" (When? On Pentecost, Acts 11:15 "as on us at the beginning")⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. (Exactly how Peter did in Acts chapter 2:38). This water baptism was the baptism that was done in order to have their sins forgiven just like Peter preached in Acts 2:38.

Different Positions on the State of Cornelius before Peter preached the Gospel to Him

Although not commonly known, there are different positions taken on the state of Cornelius before Acts 10-11. We must remember the gospel has not been taken to Gentiles yet. These different positions will be laid out at the end of this section after dealing with the argument. Depending on which position you hold will potentially influence how you address the arguments made that Cornelius was saved UNDER THE GOSPEL SYSTEM before water baptism which I deny emphatically. NO ONE under The Gospel System of Faith, The Law of Faith (Romans 3:27, The Law of Christ (Gal. 6:2), The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ (Romans 8:2) has EVER been saved in Scripture prior to water baptism. With that stated, some have been saved under a different system, before the Gospel was offered to them.

***I will do my best to represent accurately the different positions that brethren hold. If I do not represent a position accurately, please contact me and let me know. If you have additional information you would like to add to this section to more accurately represent a position you hold please contact me and I can add it.

1. Cornelius was a lost man before Peter came to him.

- a. This position is held by many good brethren and based off the words in Acts 11:13-14 where Cornelius was told "'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, ¹⁴ who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.'

- b. This would understand Cornelius has not been offered the Gospel yet, thus was not saved. One would then have to determine what law Cornelius was under before the Gospel was taken to him. He was described as devout and godly (Acts 10:2,22)
 - c. This is the position of brethren such as H. Leo Boles in Gospel Advocate Commentary Series.
- 2. **Cornelius was a saved man under the Law of Moses as a “God-fearer” (Acts 10:2).**
 - a. This position is held by many good brethren who believe when the Law of Moses was given that it was given to the nation of Israel (Deut. 5:1-5, 4:13), but that Israel was supposed to be a light to the nations and those gentiles who wanted to become a proselyte or “God-fearer” (Acts 10:2) could do so. When the Law of Moses was given, Patriarchy ended completely.
 - b. This was the position of David Lipscomb in his commentary on the Book of Acts.
- 3. **Cornelius was a saved man under Patriarchy.**
 - a. The Gospel had not been offered to Cornelius prior to Acts 10, thus he couldn't not have obeyed the Gospel prior to Acts chapter 10.
 - b. If Cornelius was saved under patriarchy, this would be why The Bible calls him a devout (Acts 10:2) and just (Acts 10:22) man and also why God heard his prayers (Acts 10:2,4,31).
 - i. Acts 10:2 devout – eusebés, used 3 times, Acts 10:2,7 and @ Peter 2:9 in reference to “rescue the godly”
 - ii. Acts 10:22 just – dikaios , righteous, correct, innocent, the elect
 - 1. Used in 1 Peter 3:12
 - iii. John 9:31 Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.
 - 1. Is this a true statement, even though spoke by the healed man who was born blind? Compare with 1 Peter 3:12 (quoting Ps. 34:12-16), Prov. 28:9, Is. 59:1-2, Ps. 66:18, Micah 3:4, Prov. 15:29
 - 2. God is omnipresent (Ps. 139:7-10, Jer. 23:23-24, Mt. 6:6)
 - 3. God is omniscient (Is. 46:9-10, Ps. 139:4, 15-16, Ps. 147:4-5, Heb. 4:13, Luke 12:7)
 - 4. Therefore, since we know that God is aware of all things all people do, we know He is aware of a sinner praying, but He does not hear it in the same sense as He would a child of His own.
 - 5. It is true that while a man cannot pray for salvation, the New Testament does teach God can providentially guide a person genuinely seeking to the means to be taught and come to a knowledge of The Truth. Matthew 7:7-8, Acts 8:34ff, John 7:17, Acts 17:27

- c. This position would also recognize Cornelius was in a unique time in which covenants were changing during his life. This was unique to the time of the New Testament. Consider.
 - i. Was a faithful Jew saved before John Baptist came preaching? What about John the Baptist followers before Jesus came? What about the apostles before the Day of Pentecost (Lk. 24:47)?
 - 1. Same exact situation Cornelius is in.
 - 2. Word by which He would be saved? Gospel preached, he could accept it and become saved under the Gospel, or reject it and be lost for rejecting the Gospel.
- d. This Position was held by brethren such as Guy N. Woods in his book Questions and Answers Volume 1, A.G. Freed, and Roy Deaver (Sermon Audio Clip).