

Five Common Objections to Water Baptism:

People say: "Water cannot have anything to do with salvation."

The Bible says: Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.... Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." — **John 3:3-5**

"...in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely 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 3:20-21**

Also consider the example of Naaman, in 2 Kings 5, especially verses 13-14.

People say: "Our works cannot have anything to do with salvation."

The Bible says: Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.... You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?... You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.... — **James 2:17-26**

Note that works cannot be the *basis* for our justification, but they must accompany our faith in order for our faith to be alive. This brings us to a discussion of the Bible books of Romans and James.

People say: "Water baptism is necessary, but it does not wash away sins. Only the blood of Christ does that."

The Bible says: (Clearly, Jesus' blood was shed "*for the remission of sins.*" Notice what He said when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on the night He was betrayed.)

Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." — **Matthew 26:26-28**

The exact same phrase (in Greek or English) is used in **Acts 2:38**: "Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...."

Ananias preached, "...Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." — **Acts 22:16**

People say: "The thief on the cross was not baptized."

The Bible says: Yes, the thief was saved without being baptized. We know this because Jesus said, while they were both on crosses being crucified, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise." — **Luke 23:43**

But notice *when* Jesus said this: **Before He died**, was buried, or was resurrected. His blood had not yet been shed for the remission of sins, the Old Covenant had not yet been nailed to the cross, and Jesus had not yet told His apostles to make disciples by baptizing them. (See **Matthew 28:18-20**; **Mark 16:16**)

This is not an exception or a special case. The gospel simply could not be preached until Jesus died. Both Jesus and the thief lived before the New Covenant was in place, and before the gospel was preached for the first time on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2)

People say: "What if someone's in the desert when he hears the gospel? He couldn't be baptized."

The Bible says: There is a Bible example of a man being converted on a desert road: "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?' 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.'" — **Acts 8:26-38**

(By the way, "*What if*" questions are fine, if they are simply intended to test an idea by seeing if it holds up under various *circumstances*. But remember, God sets the terms for salvation, and He controls circumstances, too.)