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# HAVE YOU CALLED ON THE NAME OF THE LORD FOR SALVATION?

*And it shall come to pass  
that whosoever shall  
call on the name  
of the LORD  
shall be saved.*

~Joel 2:32~

## HOW DO YOU CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD?

[Find Out Inside](#)

While it is true that there are many scriptures on many different subjects and that not every scripture mentions or even deals with baptism, well, those who say that baptism is not necessary for salvation like to make my job very easy by choosing scriptures that are directly linked to water baptism in order to try and argue that baptism is not required. They'll say, "Baptism is not necessary for salvation. We only need to call on the name of the Lord." Let's look at a few passages in the Bible which talk about "calling on the name of the Lord."

### I. Acts 2:21 (a.k.a. Romans 10:13 and Joel 2:32)

This is, of course, referring to an actual "calling on the NAME of the Lord" and not just an, "OK, I'm calling on the name of the Lord here." Let me just say first that every conversion experience, every 'plan of salvation,' will be reconciled back to the original: **ACTS 2:38**, just as that reconciles back to all four accounts of the 'Great Commission' (**Matthew 28:19-20**; **Mark 16:15-18**; **Luke 24:46-49**; **John 20:21-23**).

Now back to Acts 2:21, "Whoever calls on the NAME of the Lord will be saved" (emphasis added). This is accomplished through baptism. Acts 2:38 tells potential converts to, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the NAME of Jesus Christ." This is the one and only "NAME of the Lord" on which anyone can call for salvation (see Acts 4:12). The name of the Lord is called upon when a new convert is baptized in water in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, every time that men and women were baptized in the early church it was always in the name of the Lord Jesus (**Acts 2:38**; **Acts 8:16**; **Acts 10:48**; **Acts 19:5**).

There are two other places in the book of Acts where it simply says that they were baptized, but there is still another passage we need to look at, **Acts 22:16**. This is the Apostle Paul's account of the details of his own conversion. When did Paul 'call on the NAME of the Lord?' Read it and find out.

## II. Acts 3:19

This is perhaps one of the best texts in support of the view which says that baptism is a required part of the conversion process. If you have a basic understanding of the book of Acts, then you know that Acts is like the Joshua of the New Testament. It records the unstoppable spiritual conquest of God's Spirit working through the apostles. In the four Gospels, Jesus is creating his church from scratch, teaching them all to be "born again" (**John 3:3-5**). Then he proceeds to 'lay down the law,' so to speak in his teachings and new commandments. In Acts, we see many spiritual walls crumble and fall, as well as many "Rehabs" (see Joshua 2) convert to the Christian faith.

The first 'wall' falls in Acts chapter 2 when, at last, the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh (**Acts 2:1-4, 16-18, 33**). Acts 2:4 records, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Consequently, the first "Rehabs," 3,000 of them, were converted later on in the same chapter after hearing Peter preach about the Christ and then command them to "repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," and he promises them that if they obey this command, they "shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (**Acts 2:38**) which the apostles had just received in Acts 2:4.

The second group of "Rehabs" are converted in Acts chapter 3. This time it was after witnessing a lame man healed by Peter "in

the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth" (vv. 1-8). Then Peter, once again having the attention of the multitude, preaches Jesus to them (vv. 12-18). Then in **Acts 3:19-20**, at the conclusion of his sermon, Peter again commands the people to obey the gospel in order to be saved. His prescription for this group is exactly the same as it was for the group in Acts 2 (esp. v. 38). Only, he rephrases his instructions, which is very helpful for our understanding the meaning and importance of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. This time Peter commands the crowd to, "Repent, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before."

So once again we see that Peter tells the people to "repent." Then, in the place of "be baptized" which previously followed the command to repent back in the previous chapter's sermon, he tells them to "be converted" (v. 19), and instead of the phrase "for the remission of sins," which he used the first time, the apostle Peter words it this way, "that your sins may be blotted out" (v. 19). Finally, rather than simply saying, "and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," as he had previously done, Peter puts it this way, "So that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus Christ who was preached to you before" (v. 20).

The apostle Peter is presenting the same message, the exact same "plan of salvation," in both Acts 2:38 and Acts 3:19-20. Notice particularly how, for Peter, the chief apostle, baptism and conversion are synonymous. What's up with that? Well, we think the answer is obvious!

## III. Acts 10:43-47 (and don't forget verse 48)

A prime example of conversion in the New Testament, **Acts chapter 10** is an account of the very first Gentiles that received salvation through the name of Jesus Christ. Let us begin by looking at verse **43**. “To Him (Jesus Christ) all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.” Here we have the distinction between the Old Covenant of Israel and the New Covenant in Christ. Under the first covenant, Israel was the people of God. If you desired to be saved, you were required to be circumcised in your flesh and keep the law, basically living the rest of your life as a Jew. Salvation was by grace through faith as long as you did the will of God in heaven, namely be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses.

In the New Testament, as we have seen, salvation is through none other than the name of Jesus Christ. Romans 10:13 and Acts 2:21 say that “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” This a quote from a prophesy in the Old Testament book of Joel in which God through the prophet says, “And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Joel 2:32). This “it shall come to pass” is a reference to a future time or event, namely “the last days” (v. 17).

Here we have the dividing wall between the Old Testament and New Testament eras, that is, the coming of Christ in human form and the establishing of a salvation through his name. Furthermore, the book of Hebrews, along with many other passages in the New Testament, refers to a blood covenant in which we find salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, this New Testament salvation through the NAME of Jesus Christ and through his blood could not have been established until the fulfillment of Christ’s sufferings, in which his blood was poured out for the forgiveness of sins (**Hebrews 9:16-22; Matthew 26:27-28**). And then

he himself ascended back up into heaven, having his name exalted above every name (**Philippians 2:9-11**).

This is why the Holy Spirit was not poured out until the day of Pentecost, because all had been fulfilled. If this were not the case, Jesus could have easily given his disciples, who had been with him for those 3 years, the gift of the Holy Spirit after he had risen from the dead, or even before his suffering and death, or at any point he chose to do so. Actually, Jesus did give his disciples this gift before his ascension. After he had risen from death and appeared to them “he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit,’” (**John 20:22**). However, Jesus follows this up by ordering them to “tarry in... Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (**Luke 24:49**), and we know that it is then, as they are tarrying in Jerusalem only after Jesus was received up into glory (v. 51), that the Holy Spirit is first poured out on the disciples of Jesus and then on any and all who would call on the name of Jesus Christ thereafter, by being baptized in his name (**Acts 2:4, 21, 38-39**).

So we have a New Testament salvation that is by grace through faith as long as you do the will of God by calling on his name for the remission of sins—also called “circumcision of the heart” and “the circumcision of Christ” by Paul (**Romans 2:28-29; Colossians 2:11-12**)—which is accomplished by being baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ (**Acts 2:30; Acts 22:16; Colossians 2:11-12; Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21**) and by receiving the presence of his Holy Spirit inside you to put his laws in your heart and write them on your mind (**Hebrews 10:16-17; Hebrews 8:10-12; Jeremiah 31:33-34**).

### **But the Thief on the Cross was Not Baptized**

On which side of this ‘wall’ or ‘dividing line’ between the old and new covenants does the “thief on the cross” fall, prior to Jesus’

death, resurrection, and ascension or after, before the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit or after? OK, that should clear up the debate on this issue.

### **But Cornelius Received the Spirit before Baptism**

Now, let's go back and look at [Acts 10:43](#). This passage is the only place in the New Testament where the Holy Spirit is received before water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. Read chapter 11, and you will understand why. But notice what happened both before and after these Gentiles were filled with the Holy Spirit. (For after read [verses 47-48](#).) Notice that the Spirit was not poured out until after Peter had uttered [verse 43](#). Take a minute to read [verse 43](#) again. Then compare it to [Acts 2:38](#). This message that Peter preached to Cornelius and his household is exactly the same as every other time the gospel was preached. The apostle says that, "Through his name, whoever believes in him will receive remission of sins" (v. 43). So we see that the "remissions of sins" was preached to them right before they received the Holy Spirit.

Question: According to [Acts 2:38](#); [Acts 22:16](#); and [Mark 1:4](#), what is the purpose of New Testament water baptism? Just read those three verses and you will have your answer! A second question: according to [Acts 2:38](#); [Acts 8:16](#); [Acts 19:5](#); [Luke 24:47](#); [Acts 10:43](#); and don't forget [Acts 10:48](#), as well as the other Scriptures we have looked at, in what name is Christian baptism to be administered? The answer to this question is of vital importance because the Scriptures say that it is "whoever calls on the NAME of the Lord" who will be saved ([Acts 2:21](#); [Romans 10:13](#); [Joel 2:32](#)). When reading [Acts 10:43-47](#), it would be entirely negligent to exclude [verse 48](#) from the preceding verses, for they belong together. In fact, [verse 48](#) itself provides the answer to the second question posed above, as well as implies the urgent and necessary

nature of water baptism. After this first group of Gentiles to become Christians "received the Holy Spirit" just as the disciples on the day of Pentecost had, Peter asks if any one of his fellow Christians could object to baptizing these Gentiles in water ([verse 47](#)). [Verse 48](#) clears up all controversy over this passage. It says that Peter "commanded them to be baptized in the NAME of the Lord" ([Acts 10:48](#)). Is baptism optional? Is it not to be administered in the name of Jesus Christ? What do you honestly think?

Just as vital to salvation as baptism is what will be the topic of our next study, finishing up our complete look at conversion and salvation in and through Christ Jesus. Water and Spirit is the key to understanding New Testament salvation. Together they are the two keys that unlock salvation—the keys to conversion.

For now, you can get a head start by doing the following. Notice in [Acts 10:47](#) that Peter says, "Can anyone forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" Then look back at [verses 45-46](#) to see just how the Holy Spirit fell upon them. Compare this to how Peter and the rest of the apostles received the Holy Spirit in [Acts 2:4](#). Did the Gentiles in Acts 10 indeed receive the Holy Spirit just as Peter and the rest of the apostles had in Acts chapter 2? Have you received the Holy Spirit in this same way? Finally, check out [Acts chapter 19 verses 1-7](#) in which Paul poses this same question to a group of twelve men that he met in the Greek city of Ephesus who claimed to be disciples of Jesus. Notice their response, then Paul's response, then theirs again. We should endeavor to follow these scriptural examples and formulas.

