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that is supported in the ancient Greek in which it was originally written. The command to repent is worded in the second person, active voice, meaning the subject is an implied “you” and is being told to perform the action, whereas the command to be baptized is in the third person, passive voice, meaning the subject is to be acted upon, rather than performing the action.

When Peter told his Pentecost audience to “*hear these words*” (Acts 2:22), consistent with the fact that “*faith comes by hearing*” (Romans 10:17), the verb translated “*hear*” is in the second person, active voice, imperative mood. That is a command his hearers were expected to perform, themselves.

When he told them, “*Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ*” (Acts 2:36), consistent with commands to believe (Acts 16:31), the imperative is presented in the third person because he referred to “*all the house of Israel*,” more people than were present to hear him at the time. Yet, the verb remains in the active voice, not passive. It is an action needing to be carried out by those under the command.

Hearing, knowing, and repenting were all commanded by Peter in his Pentecost sermon using active verbs wherein the subject of the verb must perform the action. Baptism is different. Commanded in the passive voice, the subject is the receiver of the action, not the doer.

The third person nature of baptism is fully displayed in example. “*Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him*” (Acts 8:38). That is how baptism happens. It is a work, but the work is done by another person, not the one obeying the command unto salvation.

Arguing against any inspired command on the basis that salvation is not by works is frivolous because that argument attempts to pit certain Scriptures (Ephesians 2:8-9) against other Scriptures (James 2:14-26). Instead, they ought to be harmonized – understanding each without undermining the other, as “*rightly dividing the word of truth*” necessitates (2nd Timothy 2:15). The works Paul admonished the church in Ephesus about were works whereby the doer might brag he somehow deserves salvation: “*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast*” (Ephesians 2:8-9). Humble acts of obedience are not at all under consideration. Jesus taught, “*When you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We*

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are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10). It is possible to obey every command and still know it hasn’t earned the doer the right to enter heaven. It is possible to be obedient while recognizing absolute dependence on grace and mercy. Jesus said so.

Regardless, baptism is not even a work for the would-be convert to perform, but is a work done by another that the would-be convert must submit to.

Faith is a work, though. Not only is that indicated by the active voice of the Greek verb (Acts 16:31), but both Christ Jesus and the apostle Paul used the word “*work*” to describe believing.

“*What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?*” Jesus answered and said to them, “*This is the **work** of God, that you **believe** in Him whom He sent*” (John 6:28-29). Jesus called faith work!

Paul addressed the church in Thessalonica, “*We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your **work of faith**, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God*” (1st Thessalonians 1:2-4). In a subsequent letter, he commended the progress of the same saints, “*Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the **work of faith** with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ*” (2nd Thessalonians 1:11-12). Paul twice called faith work!

Despite the protestations of the faith-only crowd that baptism cannot be required for salvation because it is a work, it is faith that is, decidedly, a work to be performed by those who would be saved while baptism is not a work the would-be convert does, but submits to under the hands of another.

Both are required for salvation: “*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned*” (Mark 16:16). Neither should be omitted.

"WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?"

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER"

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.

"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN ANY TRESPASS... RESTORE SUCH A ONE"

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN"

PROVERBS 25:11

"Self-love is king in unregenerate hearts."

— Thomas Goodwin

GIVE ME THE BIBLE

KDNF 840AM

Sunday @ 9:00 a.m.

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 26

JUNE 29TH, 2025

WHOSE WORK IS BAPTISM?

Bryan Matthew Dockens

When teaching the necessity of baptism for salvation (1st Peter 3:21), a common objection is that baptism is a work, but salvation is not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9). Besides the obvious problem of simply dismissing multiple direct statements in Scripture requiring baptism for salvation (Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-6; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12), a drastic flaw with this reasoning is the notion that baptism is a work done by the sinner who would be saved.

When Peter preached on Pentecost, his audience asked, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" (Acts 2:37). There is **doing** involved in pleasing God (James 2:14-26), which Peter implicitly acknowledged when he did not tell them to do nothing! Rather, he answered, "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*" (Acts 2:38).

Notice how those two commands are worded. Both "*repent*" and "*be baptized*" are verbs in the imperative mood, meaning they are actions which are being commanded. That is obvious, but consider the wording in closer detail.

First, "*Repent.*" Second, "*Be baptized.*" The apostle did not tell them to "Be repented and be baptized," nor to "repent and baptize," but to "*Repent and be baptized.*" There is an observable difference in English – Continued on page 2 –

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