

Does The Fact That John 3:16 Doesn't Mean Baptism Prove Baptism Is Not Necessary?

A recent caller to this program used John 3:16 to try to prove a sinner doesn't have to be baptized to be saved. He reasoned that the verse talks about what a sinner has to do to be saved and it doesn't mention baptism, therefore baptism must not be necessary. But the caller himself must have realized his inconsistency when I asked him if a sinner has to repent in order to be saved. He answered yes. But John 3:16 doesn't mention repentance either. Why does it rule out baptism but not rule out repentance by the same logic, since neither repentance nor baptism are mentioned in the verse? We all ought to be able to see that our caller's argument was unsound. If the argument were sound, it would also rule out repentance as being necessary.

And by the same logic, Acts 2:28 would rule out faith as being necessary because it talks about what a person has to do to be saved from his sins and doesn't mention faith as being necessary. Here is how that verse reads "[Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.](#)" Surely know one believes a sinner can be saved without belief just because Acts 2:38 talks about what a person has to do to be saved and doesn't belief!

Since the Bible never tells us everything a sinner has to do to be saved all in one verse, how should we approach all the passages that talk about what a sinner has to do to be saved? Should we just pick out one verse we like, and run with that. Or should we take all the verses, everything God has said we must do to be saved? Let's first use the account of the rich young ruler as a test case:

- Mark 10:17-22 says the man was "rich"
- Matt 19:22 says he was "rich" and "young"
- Luke 18:18,23 says he was "rich" and a "ruler"

If we just take the intersection of the adjectives describing the man (what they all have in common), we could only conclude he was rich. But if we take the union (everything said), we conclude he was a rich young ruler, correct?

Now let's apply the same reasoning to the Salvation passages:

- John 3:16 only mentions **belief** as being required for salvation
- Acts 11:18 only says **repentance** is required
- Acts 22:16 and I Pet 3:21 only show **baptism** is necessary to salvation
- Mark 16:16 makes our salvation contingent upon **belief and baptism**
- Rom 10:10 requires **belief and confession**
- Acts 2:38 conditions forgiveness upon our **repentance and baptism**

So in answering the question, "[what must I do to be saved?](#)" (Acts 16:30), should we take the intersection (what they all have in common) or should we take the union of the conditions stated in the verses listed in the salvation passages (that is, everything said)?

- What did we do in the case of the rich young ruler?
- If we did take the intersection of the conditions stated, what would it be? Nothing, right?
- But if we take the union (everything said) of the conditions in the salvation passages, what do we come up with? Belief, repentance, confession, and baptism, right?

Taking the intersection of all such passages won't work, because their intersection (what they all have in common) is equal to nothing. Instead what we should do is take their union, that is, all of what God's word says on the subject of salvation. This would be analogous to a man saying he caught a bass with a Zebco 202 fishing reel. The next day he might say he caught that same fish with a 5 pound test line. And the third day he might say he caught it with an artificial worm. You see one way of putting it doesn't rule out the truth of the other sentences. In this case, we would all understand the man used a Zebco 202, a 5 pound line, and an artificial worm (all three) to catch that bass.

There isn't just one passage that tells us everything about Jesus' death. We learn the whole story from taking all of what the Bible says on the matter. It is the same with what a sinner must do to be saved. We must take all God says on the topic. A sinner has to believe in Jesus (John 8:24), repent of his sins (Acts 2:38), and be baptized (Mark 16:16) in order to be saved. There is no inconsistency whatsoever.

Matthew 4:4 [Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.](#)