

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO THE

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

THE TRINITY

- ▶ JW's think that the Trinity is 3 Gods that are somehow one God, and discount it on the fact that the word "Trinity" isn't in the Bible and that the doctrine wasn't formulated formally until the 4th century.
- ▶ However, as we will see, this argument is fallacious, and doesn't accurately represent what Christians actually believe.
- ▶ Does the *time* in which a precept of God is learned determine the *truthfulness* of it? Of course not, so let's lay aside the time, and ask the crucial question: "*Is the doctrine of the Trinity Biblical?*"

THE TRINITY

- ▶ The Bible teaches that there is only one God.
 - “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” (Deuteronomy 6:4, ESV)
 - “Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’” (Mark 12:29, ESV)
 - “Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.” For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”— yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” (1 Corinthians 8:4-6, ESV)

THE TRINITY

- ▶ Yet the Bible ascribes three Person's as having the divine nature (or calls three Persons "God.")
 - The Father: "Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (Malachi 2:10, ESV)
 - The Son: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1, ESV) "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14, ESV)
 - The Holy Spirit: "But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God."" (Acts 5:3-4, ESV)

THE TRINITY

- ▶ The Bible teaches that these Persons are distinct from one another:
 - “And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”” (Matthew 3:16–17, ESV)
 - “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer;” (John 16:7–10, ESV)

THE TRINITY

- ▶ So what we have is:
 - The Bible teaches that there is only one God.
 - The Bible names three Persons as God.
 - The Bible affirms that all three Persons are distinct from one another.
- ▶ Conclusion: There are three Persons in one God.
- ▶ Realize that the fact that the word "Trinity" not being found in the Bible does nothing to affect the truthfulness of the doctrine the same way the word "inerrant" not being found in the Bible doesn't effect the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy.
- ▶ Also, realize that the doctrine is *not* that there are three God's that are somehow one God (self-contradicting polytheism). Again, the doctrine is *not* that there are three personages that are somehow one person (modalism). The doctrine is "three Persons in one God."

IS “JEHOVAH” HIS NAME?

- ▶ Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that God’s actual name is “Jehovah.” Where does this name come from? Is it God’s *only name*? They refer to this Scripture on the subject: “You, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth.”—Psalm 83:18.
- ▶ But what does the Bible teach about God’s name or *names*?

IS “JEHOVAH” HIS NAME?

- ▶ The verse: “that they may know that you alone, whose name is the **Lord**, are the Most High over all the earth.” (Psalm 83:18, ESV)
 - ▶ The word “Lord” in this passage is the Hebrew word יהוה in Hebrew. This is referred to as the Tetragrammaton, which means that it is only four letters, and all the letters are consonants because early Hebrew was *written* without vowels, yet *spoken* with vowels. The only way the pronunciation was known was when it was passed down *orally*.
 - ▶ Scholars still debate words they are not absolutely sure of the correct pronunciation of.

IS “JEHOVAH” HIS NAME?

- ▶ The pronunciation of the Divine Name יהוה is still unknown. The correct transliteration of the the letters is thought most probably to be “YHWH.”
- ▶ “There was no true *J* sound in ancient Hebrew. Even the Hebrew letter *vav*, which is transliterated as the *W* in *YHWH* is said to have originally had a pronunciation closer to *W* than the *V* of *Jehovah*. *Jehovah* is essentially a Germanic pronunciation of the Latinized transliteration of the Hebrew *YHWH*. It is the letters of the tetragrammaton, Latinized into *JHVH*, with vowels inserted. “Yahweh” or “Yehowah” is far more likely to be the correct pronunciation.” - <http://www.gotquestions.org/Jehovah.html>

IS “JEHOVAH” HIS NAME?

- ▶ Does God give Himself any other names in Scripture?
 - ▶ “(for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),” (Exodus 34:14, ESV)
 - ▶ “When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,” (Genesis 17:1, ESV) (El Shaddai in Hebrew)
 - ▶ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:8, ESV)
 - ▶ “God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I am has sent me to you.’ ” God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.” (Exodus 3:14-15, ESV)

JESUS

- ▶ JW's believe that Jesus is a created being that existed as Michael the Archangel at a previous time. JW's believe that Jesus is not eternal nor almighty. They do not worship Him. JW's also believe that Jesus was murdered on a "torture stake" and not a cross, and that His resurrection and return is spiritual, not bodily.
- ▶ *As we will see, Jesus is eternal, almighty, and will receive worship.* This is one of the beliefs that stand as a barrier between JW's and salvation. Jesus was murdered on a cross, and His resurrection was bodily as will be His return.

JESUS

- ▶ Salvation *is dependent* upon believing that Jesus is God Almighty.
- ▶ “He said to them, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for ***unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.***” (John 8:23–24, ESV)
- ▶ This is one of Jesus’ “I AM” statements. He makes others which will make it clear what He is saying for us.

JESUS

- ▶ “So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”** So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.” (John 8:57-59, ESV)
- ▶ Jesus is claiming that He is the eternal “I AM” of the Old Testament. Else, why would they pick up stones to stone Him?
- ▶ “Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, **“I am who I am.”** And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, **‘I am has sent me to you.’**” (Exodus 3:13-14, ESV)

JESUS

▶ Jesus is all-powerful:

- “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” (Colossians 1:16-20, ESV)
- “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,” (Hebrews 1:1-3, ESV)

JESUS

- ▶ Jesus is superior to the angels, including Michael:
 - “having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.” Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.” But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” And, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.” And to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?” (Hebrews 1:4-14, ESV)“

JESUS

- ▶ JW's believe that Jesus was murdered on a "torture stake."
- ▶ However, this would mean that only one nail was used since the persons hands were both pierced by only one nail.
- ▶ "So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." (John 20:25, ESV)
- ▶ We see here the plural "*nails*" twice in the text, this indicates that Jesus had more than one nail pierced—obviously, one for each hand. This was because they were stretched out on a cross beam.

JESUS

- ▶ Jesus also predicted how Peter was to die, seemingly the same way in which Jesus died.
- ▶ “Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”” (John 21:18-19, ESV)
- ▶ Notice that Peter will “*stretch out your hands.*”

JESUS

- ▶ “Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, **nor did his flesh see corruption**. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.” (Acts 2:30–32, ESV)
- ▶ “Behold, he is coming with the clouds, **and every eye will see him**, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.” (Revelation 1:7, ESV)
- ▶ These texts seem to strongly indicate that Jesus’ return will be a bodily return, just as He rose bodily.

JESUS



HOLY SPIRIT

- ▶ JW's believe the Holy Spirit to be "God's active force."
They do not believe the Holy Spirit is a person or God.
- ▶ We shall see that the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is God and a Person.

HOLY SPIRIT

- ▶ The Holy Spirit is God:
 - ▶ “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16, ESV)
The Bible no doubt teaches that believers are indwelled by the Holy Spirit: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,” (1 Corinthians 6:19, ESV)
 - ▶ This is in addition to the verse used in “The Trinity” section.

HOLY SPIRIT

- ▶ Another very interesting passage is in Acts, as Paul addresses the people, he quotes a prophecy from Isaiah: *"And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: " 'Go to this people, and say, "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive." For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'" (Acts 28:25-27, ESV) Now what is interesting is when we look back in Isaiah we see that he wrote: "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." And he said, "Go, and say to this people: " 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.'" (Isaiah 6:8-10, ESV) So Paul says that the Holy Spirit is speaking, and when we look at Isaiah, we see that it is the Lord (Adonai) speaking.*

HOLY SPIRIT

- ▶ The Holy Spirit is a Person
 - ▶ “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (Ephesians 4:30, ESV)
 - ▶ “But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?” (Acts 5:3, ESV)
 - ▶ You *cannot* grieve or lie to a impersonal being.

HOLY SPIRIT

- ▶ “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”” (Acts 13:2, ESV)
- ▶ “And coming to us, he took Paul’s belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’ ” When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem.” (Acts 21:11-12, ESV)
- ▶ An impersonal force cannot speak as these verses indicate. This is wholly unlike Proverbs 8 where “wisdom speaks” or in Romans 6 where the sin nature is personified (*he explicitly says so in vs. 19*). This is a historical narrative account of what ***actually happened***.

HOLY SPIRIT

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1914

- ▶ Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the destruction of Jerusalem took place in October, 607 B.C.E., however, they simply have their history wrong, and everyone knows it. (Refer to slide 68 for more understanding.)
- ▶ In **January 588 b.c.** (in the 10th month of Zedekiah's ninth year) Nebuchadnezzar again marched against and besieged Jerusalem. The siege was lifted briefly when Egypt attacked Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 37:5) but the Babylonians defeated Judah's ally easily and resumed the siege. The Jerusalemites suffered the consequences of this extended siege: famine and fear.25:4-7. Finally the Babylonians broke through the wall of Jerusalem. This was on **July 16, 586 b.c.**, the fourth month of Zedekiah's 11th year (vv. 2-3). The few remaining soldiers (cf. 24:16) fled by night through a gate in a section of the wall where it was double. They headed east toward the Arabah (the Jordan Valley) but were overtaken and captured near Jericho.
- ▶ Constable, T. L. (1985). 2 Kings. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 586-587). Wheaton, IL: Victor Book

1914

- ▶ This is what their whole line of “prophetic years” is built off of, so if they have the beginning date wrong (607) then the 2520 yrs. ends up on 1934 when its added to 586 B.C. instead of the original 1914.
- ▶ “***Destruction of Jerusalem (25:1-30)***. Zedekiah (597-586 b.c.), in spite of Jeremiah’s warnings (see Jer. 37-39; 52), led a final rebellion against the Babylonians in 588 b.c. After a lengthy siege and resulting famine, the city fell in **July 586 b.c.** Zedekiah fled but was captured and taken to Nebuchadnezzar’s headquarters in Riblah.”
- ▶ Mathews, K. A. (1998). The Historical Books. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman concise Bible commentary* (p. 153). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

HELL

- ▶ JW's reject the doctrine of Hell (eternal conscience torment). Rather, JW's hold a view of annihilationism, which means that once a person dies apart from Christ, they cease to exist. JW's believe that anytime a person dies, until final judgement and the resurrection, they cease to exist.
- ▶ We will see that the Bible teaches that there is a real place called Hell where those who do not accept God's gift of salvation go for eternity.
- ▶ In my own opinion, JW's reject hell *primarily* because of an emotional reaction to the idea of it, *not because of scripture*.

HELL

- ▶ The Bible teaches that Hell is a place, or state, in which persons who do not believe in God spend eternity apart from His manifest presence and are in conscience torment. Demons also go there.
- ▶ “in flaming fire, **inflicting vengeance** on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of **eternal destruction**, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.” (2 Thessalonians 1:8-10, ESV)

HELL

- ▶ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into **eternal punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:41-46, ESV)
- ▶ Notice how “eternal life” is put in opposition to its equal counterpart of “eternal punishment” in Jesus’ teaching.

HELL

- ▶ “And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the **eternal fire**. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the **hell of fire**.” (Matthew 18:8–9, ESV)
- ▶ “I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to **cast into hell**. Yes, I tell you, fear him!” (Luke 12:4–5, ESV)
- ▶ so Hell is a place, and it is eternal.

HELL

- ▶ Hell is also a place of darkness and deep sorrow (conscience).
- ▶ “When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the **outer darkness**. In that place there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.” (Matthew 8:10-12, ESV)
- ▶ “The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and **throw them into the fiery furnace**. In that place there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.” (Matthew 13:41-42, ESV)

HELL

- ▶ “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house— for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’” (Luke 16:19-28, ESV)
- ▶ Some would say is most likely *not a parable* since Jesus uses a name for the poor man (Lazarus).

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

HELL

SALVATION

- ▶ JW's believe that one must exercise faith in Jesus, follow His teachings, be baptized, and acknowledge allegiance to the Watchtower's authority to be saved.
- ▶ We will see that faith in Jesus alone saves, wholly apart from works (including water baptism) saves.
- ▶ We will also see that not only are we declared justified, but Jesus very righteousness is imputed to us.

SALVATION

- ▶ “For **by grace** you have been saved through faith. **And this is not your own doing;** it is the gift of God, **not a result of works**, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:8-10, ESV)
- ▶ “he saved us, **not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that **being justified by his grace** we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:5-7, ESV)
- ▶ Notice that salvation is not of works, but completely according to His own mercy.

SALVATION

- ▶ “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. **But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, ESV)
- ▶ Notice the past tense of these verbs, this was done at the moment of our salvation. We are justified in His name.

SALVATION

- ▶ “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,” (Romans 4:2-5, ESV)
- ▶ “He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,” (Romans 4:11, ESV)
- ▶ “And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us** wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,” (1 Corinthians 1:30, ESV)
- ▶ We are imputed the righteousness of God, at the point of faith.

DOES WATER BAPTISM SAVE?

- ▶ JW's believe that baptism is an *essential* part of being saved. "Does water baptism wash away sin? No. The Bible teaches that we can be cleansed from sin only through Jesus' shed blood. (Romans 5:8, 9; 1 John 1:7) **To benefit from Jesus' sacrifice,** however, a person **must** exercise faith in Jesus, change his course of life to live in harmony with Jesus' teachings, and **get baptized.**—Acts 2:38; 3:19" (emphasis mine.) -[https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/what-is-baptism/#?insight\[search_id\]=3f4a1bb2-268d-401f-a948-9c9452c37d52&insight\[search_result_index\]=1](https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/what-is-baptism/#?insight[search_id]=3f4a1bb2-268d-401f-a948-9c9452c37d52&insight[search_result_index]=1)
- ▶ So what does the Bible teach about this issue sometimes referred to as "Baptismal Regeneration?"

DOES WATER BAPTISM SAVE?

- ▶ [GotQuestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org) is a ministry dedicated to Biblical truth and they have this to say on their question "Is baptism necessary for salvation?"
- ▶ "Yes, there are some verses that seem to indicate baptism as a requirement for salvation. However, since the Bible so clearly tells us that salvation is received by faith alone ([John 3:16](#); [Ephesians 2:8-9](#); [Titus 3:5](#)), there must be a different interpretation of those verses. Scripture does not contradict Scripture. In Bible times, a person who converted from one religion to another was often baptized to identify conversion. **Baptism was the means of making a decision public. Those who refused to be baptized were saying they did not truly believe. So, in the minds of the apostles and early disciples, the idea of an un-baptized believer was unheard of.** When a person claimed to believe in Christ, yet was ashamed to proclaim his faith in public, it indicated that he did not have true faith." (emphasis mine)

DOES WATER BAPTISM SAVE?

- ▶ Continuing their quotation...
- ▶ “If baptism is necessary for salvation, why would Paul have said, “I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius” (1 Corinthians 1:14)? Why would he have said, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power” (1 Corinthians 1:17)? Granted, in this passage Paul is arguing against the divisions that plagued the Corinthian church. However, how could Paul possibly say, “I am thankful that I did not baptize...” or “For Christ did not send me to baptize...” if baptism were necessary for salvation? If baptism is necessary for salvation, Paul would literally be saying, “I am thankful that you were not saved...” and “For Christ did not send me to save...” That would be an unbelievably ridiculous statement for Paul to make. Further, when Paul gives a detailed outline of what he considers the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-8), why does he neglect to mention baptism? If baptism is a requirement for salvation, how could any presentation of the gospel lack a mention of baptism?”

DOES WATER BAPTISM SAVE?

- ▶ Let's look at Acts 2:38 and see if we can understand what is going on.
- ▶ "And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
(Acts 2:38, ESV)

DOES WATER BAPTISM SAVE?

- ▶ “It is unfortunate that the translation of Acts 2:38 in the *King James Version* suggests that people must be baptized in order to be saved, because this is not what the Bible teaches. The Greek word *eis* (which is translated “for” in the phrase “for the remission of sins”) can mean “on account of” or “on the basis of.” In Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist baptized on the basis that people had repented. Acts 2:38 should not be used to teach salvation by baptism. If baptism is essential for salvation, it seems strange that Peter said nothing about baptism in his other sermons (Acts 3:12-26; 5:29-32; 10:34-43). In fact, the people in the home of Cornelius received the Holy Spirit *before they were baptized!* (Acts 10:44-48) Since believers are commanded to be baptized, it is important that we have a clean conscience by obeying (1 Peter 3:21), but we must not think that baptism is a part of salvation. If so, then nobody in Hebrews 11 was saved because none of them was ever baptized.” - Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary*.

DOES WATER BAPTISM SAVE?

- ▶ A problem revolves around the command “be baptized” and its connection with the remainder of 2:38. There are several views:
- ▶ (1) One is that both repentance and baptism result in remission of sins. In this view, baptism is essential for salvation. The problem with this interpretation is that elsewhere in Scripture forgiveness of sins is based on faith alone (John 3:16, 36; Rom. 4:1-17; 11:6; Gal. 3:8-9; Eph. 2:8-9; etc.). Furthermore Peter, the same speaker, later promised forgiveness of sins on the basis of faith alone (Acts 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18).
- ▶ (2) A second interpretation translates 2:38, “Be baptized ... on the basis of the remission of your sins.” The preposition used here is *eis* which, with the accusative case, may mean “on account of, on the basis of.” It is used in this way in Matthew 3:11; 12:41; and Mark 1:4. Though it is possible for this construction to mean “on the basis of,” this is not its normal meaning; *eis* with the accusative case usually describes purpose or direction.
- ▶ (3) A third view takes the clause **and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ** as parenthetical. Several factors support this interpretation: (a) The verb makes a distinction between singular and plural verbs and nouns. The verb “repent” is plural and so is the pronoun “your” in the clause **so that your sins may be forgiven** (lit., “unto the remission of your sins,” *eis apheresin tōn hamartiōn hymōn*). Therefore the verb “repent” must go with the purpose of forgiveness of sins. On the other hand the imperative “be baptized” is singular, setting it off from the rest of the sentence. (b) This concept fits with Peter’s proclamation in Acts 10:43 in which the same expression “sins may be forgiven” (*aphesin hamartiōn*) occurs. There it is granted on the basis of faith alone. (c) In Luke 24:47 and Acts 5:31 the same writer, Luke, indicates that repentance results in remission of sins.

FINAL VERDICT

