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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. So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him" (Acts 8:36–38).

I know Philip was not a Baptist preacher, for he was preaching about baptism to an alien sinner. Every Baptist preacher I have ever met would have first asked if the Ethiopian had "prayed through" or had the "experience of grace," before ever mentioning water baptism. What could hinder the Ethiopian from being baptized? Nothing, if he believed (Acts 8:37).

### Children Of God By Faith

Galatians 3:26 is a favorite passage among those who teach salvation by faith alone. It says, "For you are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." I believe this verse with all of my heart, and I preach on it often. However, this verse simply affirms that we are saved by faith, it does not tell us *how* we are saved by faith! Men often stop reading at this verse and insert their own opinion as to how we are saved by faith.

But, the next verse does tell us how, "for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). The little word "for" in this verse is the Greek word *gar*. Thayer defines the word and says "it adduces the cause or gives the reason of a preceding statement" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 109). The word *gar* is sometimes translated as "because" or "since." So Paul in Galatians 3:27 is saying we are the children of God by faith *because* we have been baptized into Christ.

### What Saves Us?

In the New Testament, salvation is ascribed to many things, including:

- ☞ Confession (1 John 4:2)
- ☞ Grace (Ephesians 2:8–9)
- ☞ Hope (Romans 8:24)
- ☞ Blood (Romans 5:9)
- ☞ Works (James 2:24)
- ☞ Jesus (Matthew 1:21)
- ☞ Repentance (Acts 11:18)
- ☞ The Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)
- ☞ God (2 Timothy 1:8,9)
- ☞ The Gospel (Romans 1:16)
- ☞ Belief (Acts 16:31)
- ☞ Baptism (1 Peter 3:21)

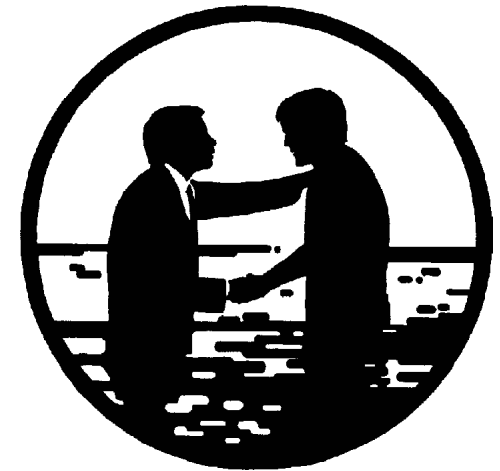
Proving that faith is essential to salvation does not prove that baptism is not necessary. No more than saying we are saved by hope rules out faith. Baptism is the act which faith obeys. In baptism we see how men can render "obedience to the faith." □

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"For you are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26–27)

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# Salvation By Faith



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Many New Testament scriptures declare that we are saved by faith, and I believe every one of them. John 3:16 states “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” While this verse affirms salvation by faith, it does not answer the question, “*How* are we saved by faith?”

## Believers Have Rights

In John 1:11-12 we read how Christ “came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the *right* to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” This passage says that all believers have the *right* to become the children of God, but does not tell us *how*.

The word “right” in John 1:12 is from the Greek word *exousia* which means “authority, right, liberty: ability, capability” (Newman, *Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*, p. 65). The word is found in such passages as John 19:10 where Pilate asked Christ, “Do You not know that I have *power* to crucify You, and *power* to release You?” Pilate had the “authority, right (and) liberty” to either crucify Christ or set Him free. The fate of Christ was in the hands of Pilate. This same word can also be found in Luke 7:8 where it is translated “authority” and in Acts 5:4 where it is translated “control.”

## Two Types Of Believers

Let’s go back to John 1:12 for a moment. It says that believers have the authority, right or liberty to become the children of God. It affirms that not all believers are automatically the children of God, but rather they have the right to become His children.

In the New Testament we find several examples of believers who rejected their right to become God’s children. In John 12:42–43 we read, “Nevertheless even among the rulers many *believed* in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” John credits the Pharisees with believing in Christ, but since they would not confess Him they were lost (Cf. Matthew 10:32,33). The Apostle Paul called King Agrippa a believer, but even Agrippa himself realized he was not a Christian (Acts 26:27–28). Agrippa was a believer who did not use his liberty to become a child of God.

We read of believers in the New Testament who exercised their right to become children of God. In Acts 6:7 we read, “the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Here are believers who were “obedient to the faith.” Christ is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:8–9). We read in Romans 16:27 that

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the gospel was made known to all nations “for obedience to the faith.”

## Mark 16:16

Since men are saved by obedient faith, we need to learn when (or at what point) faith saves. Mark 16:16 provides the answer, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” Two conditions for salvation are mentioned here: faith and baptism. The condition for damnation is also found: unbelief. A lack of faith is all that it takes to be lost (John 3:18). Salvation is dependent upon a believer being baptized into Christ.

As far as I can find, there are only five views that men have of Mark 16:16...

*The Catholic:* “He who believes **not** and is baptized shall be saved.”

*The Atheist:* “He who believes and is baptized shall **not** be saved.”

*The Universalist:* “He who believes **not** and is **not** baptized shall be saved.”

*The Baptist:* “He who believes and is **not** baptized shall be saved.”

*The Bible:* “He who believes and is baptized will be saved.”

I am willing to take the Bible as it reads. Baptism is the act which faith obeys!

## The Ethiopian Eunuch

The Ethiopian Eunuch provides us with another example of a believer exercising his right to become a child of God (Acts 8:26–40). Here we find Philip preaching to a very humble man who was returning from Jerusalem where he had gone to worship God. “Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, See, here

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