

Is Repentance and Baptism Necessary for Personal Salvation? What Should a Person Do After That?

The Bible teaches that repentance and baptism are foundational steps in the process of personal salvation. Repentance involves turning away from sin and turning toward God with a sincere heart. Baptism is the outward act of faith and obedience, symbolizing the washing away of sins and identification with Christ's death and resurrection.

Jesus Himself emphasized the necessity of repentance:

"I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3, LSB)

Repentance is not optional; it is essential for salvation. It signifies a genuine change of mind and heart toward God.

Baptism is also presented as part of the response to the gospel. After Peter's sermon at Pentecost, the people asked what they must do. Peter answered:

"Repent, and each of you be baptized 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, LSB)

Jesus Himself commanded baptism:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19, LSB)

Baptism publicly identifies a believer with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, as Paul explains:

"Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:3–4, LSB)

Thus, both repentance and baptism are commanded responses to the gospel.

After repentance and baptism, a believer is called to continue growing in faith, living a life of holiness, and walking in obedience to Christ. Jesus said:

"If you abide in My word, then you are truly My disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:31–32, LSB)

The Christian life involves continual faithfulness, prayer, study of God's Word, love for others, fellowship with the body of Christ, and perseverance in trials.

Paul encourages believers:

"So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:12–13, LSB)

Repentance and baptism are the beginning. After that, the believer must walk daily with Christ, bearing fruit, enduring to the end, and glorifying God through a life of faithfulness.

Referenced Scriptures (LSB):

- Luke 13:3 — "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."
- Acts 2:38 — "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
- Matthew 28:19 — "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."
- Romans 6:3–4 — "Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."
- John 8:31–32 — "If you abide in My word, then you are truly My disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."
- Philippians 2:12–13 — "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."