

Acts 22:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Analysis

Ananias commands Paul: 'Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' This verse requires careful interpretation to avoid baptismal regeneration. The grammar indicates 'calling on the name of the Lord' governs both 'be baptized' and 'wash away thy sins.' Sin's washing happens through faith-filled calling on Christ, baptism testifying to that inward reality. The middle voice 'wash away' (apolousai) suggests self-action enabled by grace—responding to God's work. Baptism symbolizes but doesn't effect regeneration; it's obedience following conversion (Acts 2:38-39). Paul's conversion occurred on the Damascus road (9:3-6); baptism followed as public confession. Reformed theology sees baptism as covenant sign and seal, confirming but not causing salvation.

Historical Context

Paul recounts his conversion to the hostile Jerusalem crowd (22:1-21). Ananias, a 'devout man according to the law' (22:12), shows God used Torah-observant Jewish believers to evangelize Saul. The three-day gap between conversion (9:9) and baptism (9:18) demonstrates baptism didn't save Paul—he was already converted, fasting and praying. First-century baptismal practice included immersion and occurred soon after profession of faith. The association between baptism and sin's washing (1 Corinthians 6:11, Titus 3:5) is symbolic, not causal. Baptism's significance—identifying with Christ's death, burial, resurrection (Romans 6:3-4)—makes it important without being salvific.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How do you understand baptism's relationship to salvation—symbol or cause?
2. If baptism doesn't save, why is it important to obey Christ's command to be baptized?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	νῦν	τί	μέλλεις	ἀναστὰς	βάπτισαι	καὶ
And	now	why	tarriest thou	arise	and be baptized	And
G2532	G3568	G5101	G3195	G450	G907	G2532
ἀπόλουσαι	τὰς	ἀμαρτίας	σου	ἐπικαλεσάμενος	τὸ	ὄνομα
wash away	G3588	sins	thy	calling on	G3588	the name
G628		G266	G4675	G1941		G3686
τοῦ	Κυρίου					
G3588	of the Lord					
	G2962					

Additional Cross-References

Acts 2:38 (Sin): 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.

Acts 2:21 (References Lord): And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

1 Corinthians 6:11 (References Lord): And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Titus 3:5 (Parallel theme): Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Hebrews 10:22 (Parallel theme): Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

1 Peter 3:21 (Resurrection): The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Psalms 119:60 (Parallel theme): I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

1 Corinthians 12:13 (Baptism): For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Galatians 3:27 (Baptism): For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Acts 9:14 (Parallel theme): And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.