

Do I have to get baptized and keep the ten commandments to go to heaven?

Q: I have received new life! I would like to know do I need to get baptize so that I can go to heaven and do I have to keep the ten commandments? Thank you.A: Congratulations!! Welcome to God's family. An exciting life lies ahead of you! And an exciting relationship with the Lord too! The more you get to know Him, the more you will understand His love, His grace, His mercy, His generosity, and His holiness.

Now to your question! The thief on the cross accepted Jesus and was not baptized and Jesus said that the thief would be with Him in paradise (Luke 23:39-43). I believe that this is one example that shows that baptism is not absolutely essential to getting into heaven. There are churches that teach salvation by baptism. I believe this is an great error.

1 Peter 3:21 says "baptism saves you" ? that sounds like salvation by baptism, but then Peter goes on to say " ? not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God." The word "pledge" is a special Greek word. It was used in Roman society for an oath that a soldier took to Caesar. In other words, the important part of baptism is the commitment (the oath, the covenant) that we sincerely make to God when we become a Christian. In modern day Christianity this commitment is often made by praying a sinners prayer or answering an altar call or responding to a presentation of the gospel on the web. The only thing that is essential is trusting your life to Jesus and submitting to Him as Lord (i.e., Boss, Master) ? Romans 10:9. We are not saved by baptism.

We are also not saved by the keeping of the ten commandments. The Bible teaches that we are not saved (and could never be saved) by works of the law, i.e doing what's right ? Galatians 2:16. We are sinners and remain sinners throughout this earthly life. We will fail God over and over in our obedience to Him. We could never be saved by trying to keep even the smallest list of commandments. We are saved by grace (a gift) through faith (trust) in Jesus Christ's work ? Ephesians 2:8-9.

Having said all of that: baptism is important as an expression of our love for Jesus. Baptism is the public announcement and symbol of our personal salvation. And obedience to all of God's commands is important as the outworking of our love for Christ and to find peace and happiness in this life. But to put baptism and the ten commandments as the means of earning salvation is to get the cart before the horse. The cart CANNOT pull the horse. We are saved by faith in Jesus. The result of our salvation (not the cause) will be a desire to work out our salvation (Philippians

2:12-13), to grow (1 Peter 2:2-3), and to be transformed to be like Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18)!