

# What Does The Bible Say About Baptism?

## **Introduction:**

- A. After his resurrection, Jesus commanded his apostles to teach and baptize people of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20).
  - 1. Baptism is obviously important if Christ specifically commanded it.
  - 2. But there is a great deal of confusion and division over the subject of baptism among religious people today.
- B. Some important questions about baptism need to be answered.
  - 1. What exactly is “baptism?” In other words, what action did Jesus expect his followers to take when he told them to “baptize” people?
  - 2. What is the purpose of baptism? We know he told his disciples to baptize people, but for what purpose?
  - 3. Who should be baptized? Jesus said to baptize people of all nations, but does the Bible say whether those people should be adults or infants?
- C. Fortunately, the Bible answers all of these important questions about baptism.

## **Body:**

### **I. What Is Baptism?**

- A. First of all, we need to understand that there is only one baptism commanded by Christ (Eph. 4:5).
  - 1. The Bible talks about different kinds of baptisms.
  - 2. But Christ only commanded one kind, and that is water baptism.
  - 3. The apostles and early Christians always practiced water baptism in response to the command of Christ.
    - a. Acts 8:38.
    - b. Acts 10:47-48.
  - 4. Some have the idea that everyone is supposed to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.
  - 5. But Holy Spirit baptism was never commanded. Instead, it was only promised to certain ones (Acts 1:5-8).
  - 6. Water baptism is the one baptism that is commanded by Christ.
- B. What is the meaning of the word, “baptize?”
  - 1. The New Testament was originally written in Greek.
  - 2. The word “baptize” comes from a Greek word that was carried over (transliterated) into English.
  - 3. The original Greek word for baptize is *baptizo*
  - 4. But what does *baptizo* mean?
  - 5. The experts have given us the exact meaning of the word as it was originally used in Greek.
    - a. “To dip...to immerse, to submerge” (*Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*).
    - b. “To dip, immerse” (*Bauer, Arndt, & Gingrich, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*).

- c. “To dip in, or underneath water” (*Liddell & Scott, An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*).
- 6. It is obvious that the common meaning of the word “baptize” is immersion in water.
- C. What about sprinkling or pouring for baptism?
  - 1. Many religious groups will “baptize” a person by sprinkling or pouring a small amount of water on him.
  - 2. But as we have already seen, *baptizo* means “immerse,” not “sprinkle” or “pour.”
  - 3. In fact, The Greek word used in the Bible for “sprinkle” is *rhantizo*, and that is not the word the Bible uses for “baptize.”
  - 4. The Greek word used in the Bible for “pour” is *cheo*, and that is not the word the Bible uses for “baptize.”
  - 5. The inspired writers of the New Testament use the word *baptizo* because when you baptize somebody you immerse him in water.
  - 6. Baptism is immersion in water!
- D. Baptism is described as a burial in water.
  - 1. The New Testament refers to baptism as a “burial.”
    - a. Rom. 6:3-5.
    - b. Col. 2:12.
  - 2. Only immersion in water can fit the description of a burial in water.
  - 3. Overhead Slide: Picture of burial in water.
  - 4. Sprinkling does not represent a burial.
  - 5. Pouring does not represent a burial.
  - 6. Sprinkling and pouring are not baptism!
  - 7. Baptism is immersion in water!

## II. What Is The Purpose Of Baptism?

- A. Among those who claim to be Christians, people generally hold one of two opposing views concerning the purpose of baptism.
  - 1. The first view is that baptism is simply an outward symbol that shows that a person has *already* been saved. So, according to this view, baptism is NOT necessary in order to be saved.
  - 2. The second view is that baptism is the point at which a penitent believer in Christ is forgiven of his sins through the blood of Christ. Therefore, according to this view, baptism IS necessary in order to be saved.
  - 3. Nearly everyone who claims to believe the Bible will hold one of these two positions.
  - 4. But both views cannot be right.
  - 5. Which view of baptism does the Bible support?
  - 6. That is the question that must be answered.
- B. Is baptism necessary for salvation?
  - 1. Baptism puts one into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27).
  - 2. Baptism puts one into God’s kingdom (Jn. 3:3-5).
  - 3. Baptism brings one into Christ’s church (Acts 2:41, 47).

4. Baptism brings one into contact with the benefits of Christ's death (Rom. 6:3-4).
5. Baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
6. Baptism is the point at which one's sins are washed away (Acts 22:16).
7. Baptism is the point at which one is saved (1 Pet. 3:21).

C. Does the Bible take the view that baptism is *not* necessary for salvation, or the view that baptism *is* necessary for salvation?

1. Does the Bible say, "baptism does not save you," or "baptism now saves you" (1 Pet. 3:21)?
2. Does the Bible say baptism doesn't wash away sin or does wash away sin (Acts 22:16)?
3. Does the Bible say baptism has nothing to do with the remission of sins, or baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38)?
4. Does the Bible say a sinner is saved *before* baptism, or does it say he is saved *after* he believes and is baptized (Mk. 16:16)?
5. Does the Bible say a sinner can be saved by faith alone before he is baptized, or does it say that salvation is *not* by faith alone (James 2:24)?
6. Does the Bible say that baptism is just an outward symbol of salvation, or does it teach that baptism is a burial into the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4)?
7. Does the Bible teach that we should wait until we have a lot of people who want to be baptized and have a "baptismal service" once every three months, or does it teach that baptism is urgent and should be done immediately when a person desires to have their sins forgiven (Acts 16:25, 33)?
8. It isn't difficult to see which view of baptism the Bible takes.

### **III. Who Should Be Baptized?**

A. Those who hear and believe the gospel of Christ.

1. Mk. 16:15-16.
2. Acts 18:8.
3. A person must hear and believe the gospel message before he is baptized!

B. Those who need forgiveness of sins.

1. Rom. 3:23.
2. Acts 2:38.
3. There is no other plan for forgiveness of sins for those who are outside of Christ!

C. Those who want a relationship with Jesus.

1. Gal. 3:26-27.
2. The only way a person can get "into Christ" is through being baptized into Christ!

D. Those who want to be saved.

1. Rom. 6:23.
2. Acts 2:40-41.
3. 1 Pet. 3:21.

- 4. There is no other way for sinners to be saved!
- E. Those who want to follow Jesus.
  - 1. Matt. 28:18-20.
  - 2. It is impossible to become a Christian without being baptized!
- F. Those who have never been properly baptized.
  - 1. Acts 19:3-5.
  - 2. Some in the New Testament had been baptized improperly and needed to be baptized again for the right reasons.
  - 3. Those who have been “sprinkled” or “poured” have not been properly baptized (Rom. 6:3-4).
  - 4. Those who were baptized as infants, before they could believe the gospel and repent of their sins, have not been properly baptized (Acts 2:38).
  - 5. Those who were taught that they were saved before they were baptized have not been baptized properly (Mark 16:16).
  - 6. Many people have been baptized in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons.
  - 7. They need to be baptized the right way for the right reasons!

#### **IV. The Doctrines Of Men Vs. The Doctrine Of Christ.**

- A. The only way we can please God, when it comes to baptism or any other subject, is to remain within the teachings of Christ.
  - 1. We must abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 Jn. 9).
  - 2. If we teach or practice something different than what is prescribed in the New Testament, then we do not have a relationship with God.
- B. The religious denominations of our day have clearly departed from the doctrine of Christ on the subject of baptism.
  - 1. Does the Bible teach that man is saved by faith in Christ alone, before he is baptized?
    - a. Notice the doctrine of Christ on the subject.
      - 1) Mk. 16:16.
      - 2) James 2:24.
    - b. Now notice the doctrines of men on the same subject.
      - 1) “Wherefore, that we are justified by *faith only* is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort” (Methodist “Discipline”).
      - 2) “We are justified by *faith alone*, or faith apart from works” (Christian Reformed “Confession of Faith”)
      - 3) “Justification is a judicial act of God by which the sinner is declared righteous *solely* on the basis of his acceptance of Christ” (Pentecostal “Essential Truths”).
      - 4) “We believe that justification is obtained upon the condition of faith” (Nazarene “Manual”).
      - 5) Baptists believe that eternal life is found through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and that *nothing else is needed* for that purpose (Baptist “Handbook”).

- 6) “We believe that forgiveness of sins and redemption are obtained through *faith alone*” (Bible Chapel Brethren).
- c. The doctrines of men are in conflict with the doctrine of Christ.
2. Does the Bible teach that baptism is necessary in order for one to be saved?
  - a. Notice the doctrine of Christ on the subject.
    - 1) Mk. 16:16.
    - 2) 1 Pet. 3:21.
  - b. Now notice the doctrines of men on the same subject.
    - 1) “It is not a saving ordinance” (Pentecostal “Essential Truths”).
    - 2) “We do not believe that baptism is necessary for salvation (Baptist “Handbook”).
    - 3) Baptism is not regarded as a means of salvation (Evangelical “Articles of Faith”).
  - c. Again, the doctrines of men are in direct conflict with the doctrine of Christ.

**Conclusion:**

- A. The Bible clearly answers our questions about baptism.
  1. It makes it clear that baptism is immersion in water.
  2. It plainly states the purpose of baptism and its connection with salvation.
  3. And, it tells us who should be baptized.
- B. If there is confusion on the subject of baptism it is only because men are not content to remain within the doctrine of Christ.
- C. The Bible has settled our questions about baptism.
- D. The only question remaining is the question of whether or not you need to be baptized.