

BAPTISM

Baptism - what is it? Who should get baptized? Does it wash sins away? There are two ordinances Jesus left the church - THE LORD'S SUPPER and BAPTISM. The devil has destroyed both, trying to confuse and hurt the cause of Christ. Let us notice the following facts about baptism:

IT IS COMMANDED Matt. 28:19-20 says: *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen”* This is the Great Commission Jesus gave to his disciples before He ascended back into heaven. Baptism is a command for all Christians, not a choice.

CHRIST WAS OUR EXAMPLE IN BAPTISM

Jesus never sinned and did not need to be saved. He was, however, baptized by John the Baptist as our example. Baptism pictures Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. Matt. 3:13-17 says: *“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

IN WHAT MANNER ARE WE TO BE BAPTIZED?

Some religions pour, sprinkle or submerge. How is a Christian to be baptized today? The original word for baptize is “baptizo” which means to bury or submerge. Everyone baptized in the Bible was submerged all the way under the water. When someone dies and is buried, a handful of dirt is not sprinkled on the casket. They are totally buried. The same is true with baptism.

In Acts 8:38 Philip went down into the water to baptize the Ethiopian man. If he was just going to sprinkle the man, he could have stopped by the water just to get some water in his hand. He would not have had to go all the way down into the water. Sprinkling and pouring are not Scriptural methods of baptism.

WHEN SHOULD SOMEONE GET BAPTIZED?

The Scripture is clear - it is always after someone is saved:

Acts 2:41 says: *“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”*

Acts 8:36-37 says: *“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”*

If you were sprinkled, christened or submerged before you were saved, all you got was wet. It was not Scriptural baptism.

A fine lady and her husband walked down to the front at the conclusion of one of our church services, both telling me they had been saved and wanted to be baptized. They were both baptized. About three weeks later during the invitation the wife, who had never truly been saved, accepted Christ as Saviour. Guess who got baptized again? Yes, the wife did. Why? Three weeks before all she did was get wet. That evening she got saved AND baptized. It was then a Scriptural baptism. Again, true baptism is always **after** salvation. Notice Luke 7:29-30 in which depicts the heart attitude of humility that is needed in baptism.

THE EARLY CHURCH

Take your Bible and read the following accounts of baptism in the early church: Acts 2:41, 8:12; 8:38; 9:18; 10:48; 16:33; 19:5; 1 Cor. 1:14-15; Col. 2:12.

WHAT EXACTLY DOES BAPTISM MEAN?

Rom. 6:4-5 says: *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:”*

I Pet. 2:21-22 says: *“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:”*

It is a symbol of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection. When you are baptized you are identifying with Christ publicly and are testifying that your new life will be lived in Christ.

Baptism does not have any part in saving you, but does give you a good conscience because you have been obedient to the Lord. It is a symbol much like a wedding ring is a symbol. A wedding ring does not make anyone married; it only shows they are proud and unashamed that they are married. A person who gets saved, but refuses to be Scripturally baptized afterwards, reveals a problem in his love toward his Lord.

The comparison has been made that when you get saved, it is like you were drafted into a major league baseball team. You immediately are up to bat and the ball of opportunity is thrown. Before you can ever score a run for the Lord, you first must get on first base. Baptism is first base in the Christian life.

IS BAPTISM PART OF SALVATION?

No! No! No! Baptism does not help in the least in getting saved. Salvation is nothing in what we do and all in what the Lord has done. As we stated earlier, the devil has used baptism and confusion in false churches. They try to make baptism have some saving merit. Some think babies need to be baptized or they will go to Hell. There is no such teaching in the Word of God. Babies have no understanding of willful sin, therefore are not accountable. Besides, water has never been associated with washing sins away in Scripture. **The only thing in the universe that has ever washed sins away is the blood of Christ.** If baptism were essential to salvation, people who get saved in the desert would not have a chance of heaven. The thief Jesus saved on the cross could not have been saved, if that were the case. He could not be baptized; he was nailed to a cross!

False teachers take a couple of verses and distort them to back up their wicked teachings. **A Christian always needs to compare Scripture with Scripture.** One verse those wicked people use is Acts 2:38 which says: *“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.”* They choose the phrase “for the remission of sins”. The word “FOR” is an article which is also translated, “because of”. The verse teaches we are to be baptized “because” we have had our sins forgiven. Baptism is WORKS - It is something we do. (Read Eph. 2:8-9 again.) Another verse that is commonly distorted is Mark 16:16, which says: *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* To fully understand it, you must realize the following:

The Jews did not believe Jesus was God's Son. When a Jew did get saved, he had well thought it through. Baptism soon, if not immediately, followed. Many times when a Jew got baptized his family disowned him. Sometimes, they even went so far as to bury an empty coffin, telling everyone that their loved one was dead as far as they were concerned. There were not many "secret disciples". You will have to search hard in Scripture to find someone who got saved and refused to be baptized. So, salvation and baptism were closely linked "in time". If someone got saved, it was automatically assumed that they would get baptized. The early church baptized daily, if not on the spot (See Acts 2:47). This is the reason the words "believeth" and "baptized" are so closely linked in Mark 16:16. IF baptism were essential to salvation, the last part of the verse would read, "...but he that believeth not or is not baptized shall be damned." But that is not the way it reads.

John 3:16 emphasizes believe (trust) and does not one time mention baptism. False teaching always has loopholes in it.

Again, baptism is the first obedient step after you get saved. It has no part in getting you to heaven. If you get saved and are never baptized, you will still go to heaven just as the Bible promises. But, the Christian who does not get baptized will never have the blessings in their life because of their disobedience.

WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO BAPTIZE?

Can any Christian baptize someone who has just received Christ? John 4:1-2 says: "*When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)*" Jesus commissioned His disciples to do the baptizing. Since the Lord's Supper and Baptism are ordinances entrusted to the church, only the church can authorize someone to baptize. Whether it is the Pastor or Assistant Pastor, it is up to the church. Without the church's authorization there can be no Scriptural baptism.

One "Christian" was reportedly baptized in a swimming pool with no affiliation with or authority from a church. Another man sprinkled people with a water hose and called it baptism. God is for the authority of the Local Church.

Just another word on which baptisms are Scriptural and which are not. A Preacher who teaches false doctrine or believes in a "works" salvation cannot administer Scriptural baptism. He has no authority. A church is a "called out assembly" of believers. If the "church" he is pastoring is full of unsaved people, his baptism has no authority.

A preacher friend of mine recently was baptized because his baptism from years ago was administered in a "church" which believes you can work your way to heaven and lose your salvation. It was not a biblical church. Therefore the preacher had no authority to baptize him. Years ago he got wet, recently he got baptized.

NAME _____

REVIEW BAPTISM - STEP 2

1. Is baptism a choice or a command? _____ Give the reference: _____
2. Who is our example of baptism? _____
3. Who baptized Him? _____
4. In what manner should a Christian be baptized? _____
5. Who baptized the Ethiopian man? _____
6. When should a Christian be baptized? Before or after alvation? _____
7. If a person was baptized at age six and not saved until age 16, what does that person need to do?

8. What does baptism mean? _____
9. What is one symbol of baptism? _____
10. Is baptism part of salvation? _____
11. Does a baby need to be baptized? _____
12. Why or why not? _____
13. Who did Jesus say was going to heaven even though he had never been baptized? _____
14. What does the word "for" in Acts 2:38 mean? _____
15. Explain in your own words Mark 16:16: _____
16. Who did Jesus commission to baptize? _____
17. Who has the authority to baptize? _____
18. When did you get baptized? _____
19. Who baptized you? _____
Were you Scripturally baptized? _____
20. If you have not been baptized Scripturally yet, and you have been saved, would you get baptized this week? _____