

Baptism

A Special Study



A Study On Various Aspects Of Baptism

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Baptism

In The Preaching Of The Apostles

INTRODUCTION

1. Shortly before He ascended into heaven, Jesus gave His apostles The Great Commission:

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. (Mt 28:18-20)

2. In the gospel of Mark, The Great Commission is worded in this way:

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” (Mk 16:15-16)

3. In both places we notice the mention of baptism...
 - a. In Matthew, it is related to the process of making disciples
 - b. In Mark, it is mentioned in connection with salvation-- **Whatever the purpose of baptism, it must be important to Jesus, for He commanded it!**
4. But one might ask...
 - a. **What is baptism?**
 - 1) Is it pouring, sprinkling, or immersion?
 - 2) Is one baptized in water, or in the Spirit?
 - b. **What is the purpose of baptism?**
 - 1) Is it for the remission of sins, or because our sins have already been forgiven?
 - 2) Is it to be saved, or a public confession of faith having already been saved?
 - c. **Who should be baptized?**
 - 1) Should infants be baptized?
 - 2) Should just anyone be baptized?
 - d. **Is there ever a need to be “re-baptized”?**
 - 1) What if I was baptized as an infant?
 - 2) What if I was baptized for the wrong reason?
 - 3) What if I have sinned greatly after being baptized?-- **These and many other questions are often asked when the subject of baptism is raised**
5. This series is devoted to answering these and other questions related to baptism...
 - a. Since it was commanded by Christ, it is certainly worthy of careful consideration
 - b. It is my intention to glean from the Bible what is actually taught on this subject
 - c. It is my prayer that you will have the attitude of those in Berea - cf. **Ac 17:11**

- 1) To receive the word with all readiness (i.e., listen carefully with a desire to at least understand, if at first you do not agree)
- 2) To search the Scriptures (i.e., to read the Bible carefully to see if what I am saying is true)

[In this lesson, we will simply consider how the apostles carried out The Commission Jesus gave them; i.e., to see what they said about baptism in their preaching. We begin with...]

I. BAPTISM IN THE PREACHING OF PETER

A. ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST...

1. In the first gospel sermon, Peter commanded people to be baptized *“for the remission of sins”* - **Ac 2:38**
2. Upon exhorting his audience to be saved, the response was for many to be baptized - **Ac 2:41-41**
3. Does **“for”** mean **“in order to”** or **“because of”**?
 - a. Note: we find the same grammatical construction in **Mt 26:28**
 - 1) Where Jesus said His blood would be shed for many **“for the remission sins”**
 - 2) Clearly Jesus meant **“in order to”** provide remission of sins, and not **“because”** remission of sins had already occurred
 - 3) With rare exception, the Greek word (**eis**) means **“into, to, unto, for, toward”**
 - b. **Note also:** **“be baptized”** is joined by the conjunction **“and”** to the command **“repent”** - **Ac 2:38**
 - 1) Both are commanded **“for the remission of sins”**
 - 2) Just as people were commanded to repent **“for”** (in order to) the remission of sins...
 - 3) ...so they were commanded to be baptized **“for”** (in order to) the remission of sins

B. AT THE HOUSE OF CORNELIUS...

1. In the first gospel sermon to the Gentiles, Peter followed up by commanding his audience to be baptized - cf. **Ac 10:44-48**
2. It is evident that what Peter commanded involved a baptism in water - **Ac 10:47-48**
3. A future study will examine whether the people were saved when the Spirit fell upon them, or when they were baptized as commanded by Peter

[At the very least, we can say that Peter’s preaching was in harmony with the statements of Jesus in the Great Commission: Preach the gospel, command people to be baptized. So far the indication appears that it was a baptism in water, and done for the remission of sins. Let’s consider now one who was not actually an apostle, but certainly filled with the Spirit...]

II. BAPTISM IN THE PREACHING OF PHILIP

A. TO THE SAMARITANS...

1. Though not an apostle, Philip went to Samaria and *“preached Christ”* - **Ac 8:5**
2. The response to such preaching: *“...when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.”* - **Ac 8:12**

B. TO THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH...

1. To this very religious man, Philip “*preached Jesus*” - **Ac 8:35**
2. Though we are not told the content of Philip’s sermon, from the eunuch’s question we can deduce that it included baptism - **Ac 8:36-38**

[Like Peter, Philip “*preached Jesus*” not only by telling people about Jesus, but also what Jesus commanded. Baptism was an immediate result of such preaching. Is this surprising in light of Jesus’ statements in **Mt 28:19** and **Mk 16:15-16**? Let’s now consider...]

III. BAPTISM IN THE PREACHING OF PAUL**A. IN THE CONVERSION OF LYDIA...**

1. We note that again baptism followed apostolic preaching - **Ac 16:13-15**
2. As evidence that she “gave heed” to the things spoken by Paul, she and her household were baptized!
3. Notice also her comment in **Ac 16:15**
 - a. How could Paul have judged her to be faithful to the Lord?
 - b. By her response to the command of the Lord concerning baptism!

B. IN THE CONVERSION OF THE PHILIPPIAN JAILOR...

1. Paul tells the jailor that he must believe on the Lord to be saved - **Ac 16:30-31**
2. Paul went on to speak concerning the Word of the Lord to him and his family - **Ac 16:32**
3. In response, they were immediately baptized! - **Ac 16:33-34**
 - 1) Evidently the word of the Lord stressed the need to be baptized quickly
 - 2) In fact, in **every** detailed example of conversion found in the Book of Acts, people were baptized after only one lesson! (see chart below)

C. IN THE CONVERSION OF PAUL HIMSELF...

1. Paul recounts his own conversion to the Lord - **Ac 22:10-16**
 - a. He describes how he was told to go to Damascus, for there he would be told “*all things appointed for you to do*” (“*what you must do*” - cf. **Ac 9:6**)
 - b. One of the things he was told was to be baptized without delay - **Ac 22:16**
2. He was told to be baptized in order to “*wash away your sins*”
 - a. **Note well:** Despite seeing the Lord on the road to Damascus, having spent three days fasting and praying (**Ac 9:9-11**), **he was still in his sins!**
 - 1) Seeing the Lord had not saved him
 - 2) Accepting Jesus as Lord (cf. **Ac 22:10**) had not saved him
 - 3) Praying and fasting for three days had not saved him
 - b. Not until he was baptized were his sins “*washed away*”! (exactly how we will examine later)

CONCLUSION

1. That baptism played a prominent role in apostolic preaching becomes evident when we compare what is revealed in the examples of conversion...

	Mt 28:18-20 EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION Mk 16:15-16		
	BELIEVED	REPENTED	CONFESSED
PENTECOST		Repented	Baptized
Ac 2:14-41		37-38	38-41
SAMARIA	Believed		Baptized
Ac 8:5-13	12		12,13
ETHIOPIAN	Believed		Baptized
Ac 8:35-39	36-37		38
SAUL			Baptized
Ac 9,22,26			22:16
CORNELIUS	Believed		Baptized
Ac 10:34-38	43		48
LYDIA	Heeded		Baptized
Ac 16:13-15	14		15
JAILOR	Believed		Baptized
Ac 16:30-34	31		33

2. In every case of conversion described in detail in the book of Acts, baptism is mentioned...
 - a. Clearly it is was an important theme of apostolic preaching
 - b. G. R. Beasley-Murray, a Baptist scholar, has observed:

“Baptism is...a part of the proclamation of Christ. In an Apostolic sermon it comes as its logical conclusion.” - G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism In The New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962, p. 393)

3. And what should be proclaimed regarding baptism? In this lesson we have seen...
 - a. That it was commanded **“for the remission of sins”** - **Ac 2:38**
 - b. That it was done to **“wash away sins”**- **Ac 22:16**
 - c. That it involved **“water”** - **Ac 8:36-38; 10:48**
 - d. That it was done **“immediately”**, with no delay even if after midnight - **Ac 16:25-33**
4. This would certainly suggest that baptism is necessary for salvation...
 - a. But is this a fair conclusion drawn from the **preaching** of the apostles?
 - b. Is this conclusion consistent with the **teaching** of the apostles, as found in their epistles?

Our next lesson will examine what the apostles taught in their epistles regarding baptism, as we continue to seek Bible answers to such questions...

Baptism

In The Teaching Of Paul

INTRODUCTION

1. In our first lesson we saw where baptism played a prominent role in apostolic preaching...
 - a. In every case of conversion described in the book of Acts, baptism is mentioned
 - b. As G. R. Beasley-Murray, a Baptist scholar, observed: **“Baptism is...a part of the proclamation of Christ. In an Apostolic sermon it comes as its logical conclusion.”**
- G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism In The New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962, p. 393)
2. And what did the apostles proclaim regarding baptism? We noticed that...
 - a. It was commanded “for the remission of sins” - **Ac 2:38**
 - b. It was done to “wash away sins”- **Ac 22:16**
 - c. It involved “water” - **Ac 8:36-38; 10:48**
 - d. It was done “immediately”, with no delay even if after midnight - **Ac 16:25-33**
3. This would certainly suggest that baptism is necessary for salvation...
 - a. But is this a fair conclusion drawn from the **preaching** of the apostles?
 - b. Is this conclusion consistent with the **teaching** of the apostles, as found in their epistles?

[In this lesson, we will examine what Paul taught in his epistles regarding baptism. Let’s start with by noticing what he said about baptism...]

I. IN HIS EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

A. BAPTISM IS A BURIAL AND RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST...

1. It is a baptism into the death of Christ - **Ro 6:3**
2. It is a burial with Christ into death (His death, we are crucified with Him!) - **Ro 6:4**
3. It is done in order that we might walk in newness of life - **Ro 6:4-5**
4. It involves crucifying the old man, that the body of sin may be destroyed - **Ro 6:6**
6. It thereby frees us from sin as we die to sin, that we might live Christ - **Ro 6:7-11**

B. NOTE CAREFULLY...

1. Paul does not say that baptism “symbolizes things which had already occurred”
 - a. Many say this is the purpose or design of baptism, often quoting this passage
 - b. But read the passage carefully; Paul says no such thing!
2. But rather, Paul describes baptism into Christ as **when** such things occur
 - a. We were buried with Him **“through baptism into death”** - **Ro 6:4**
 - b. It is in baptism we are buried with Christ into death (His death); we thereby die to sin in baptism
 - c. We were buried with Him, why? **“That just as Christ was raised...even so we also should walk in newness of life”** - **Ro 6:4**

- d. We are baptized in order to rise to walk in newness of life just as Christ did!
3. Note also Paul's preface to these remarks: "*as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were...*"
 - a. What blessings he describes pertain only to those who had been baptized!
 - b. What of those not baptized? The blessings described would not apply!

[In his commentary on Romans, Martin Luther wrote: "**Baptism has been instituted that it should lead us to the blessings (of this death) and through such death to eternal life. Therefore IT IS NECESSARY that we should be baptized into Jesus Christ and His death.**" (Commentary On Romans, Kregel Publications, p.101).

Though believing that we are justified by grace through faith (and he would say "by faith alone"), Luther understood that salvation by faith did not preclude the necessity of baptism! Why, we shall see shortly; but let's go on to consider what Paul wrote of baptism...]

II. IN HIS EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

A. BAPTISM IS HOW WE PUT ON CHRIST...

1. From **Ga 3:26-27** we learn that baptism is involved in the process of becoming sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus
2. The "for" beginning verse **27** begins an explanation as to **how** we become sons of God through faith
3. Baptism is therefore the means by which we "*put on Christ*", and become sons of God!

B. NOTE CAREFULLY...

1. Paul wrote: "*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on...*"
 - a. "*For as many*" means no more or no less
 - b. Only those who have been baptized into Christ have really received Christ into their lives!
2. Many teach "receive Jesus Christ by saying the sinner's prayer..."
 - a. But the Bible nowhere teaches that this is how one "receives Christ"
 - b. Rather, one "puts on" (or receives) Christ when they are baptized into Christ!

[In his commentary on this verse, Luther concluded: "**Wherefore baptism is a thing of great force and efficacy.**" (Commentary On Galatians, Kregel Publications, p.222). How true, if in baptism we "put on Christ"!

How this is possible without being a form of works-salvation becomes clearer as we consider what Paul taught concerning baptism...]

III. IN HIS EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

A. BAPTISM IS A WORK OF GOD...

1. A "spiritual circumcision" in which sins are "cut away" - **Co 2:11**
2. A burial with Christ, and also a resurrection with Him - **Co 2:12**
3. Made effective "*through faith in the working of God*" - **Co 2:12**

4. In which **God** makes us *“alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses”* - **Co 2:13**

B. NOTE CAREFULLY...

1. Here we learn that baptism is a work of God, not man
 - a. Just as it was God who raised Jesus, so it is He who makes us alive, having forgiven our sins! - **Co 2:13**
 - b. Our part is “faith in the working of God” as we are buried with Christ in baptism - **Co 2:12**
2. God is the “Great Physician”, who is cutting away our sins (through the blood of Christ)
 - a. We are simply the patient, who humbly submits in faith to the surgeon’s scalpel
 - b. He is the One who makes us alive, that we might rise to walk in newness of life

[Again, this is something Martin Luther clearly recognized, when he responded to those who would call this a kind of works-salvation: **“Yes, it is true that our works are of no use for salvation. Baptism, however, is not our work but God’s.”** (as quoted by Jack W. Cottrell in *Baptism And The Remission of Sins*, College Press, 1990, p. 32-34)

Finally, let’s consider what Paul taught concerning baptism...]

IV. IN HIS EPISTLE TO TITUS

A. BAPTISM IS A “WASHING” AND “REGENERATION”...

1. Is Paul talking about baptism in **Ti 3:5**?
 - a. The figure “washing” certainly alludes to the baptismal waters
 - b. We have already seen where in baptism we are:
 - 1) Raised to walk in newness of life - **Ro 6:4**
 - 2) Made alive by God - **Co 2:12-13**
 -- Does this not suggest a *“washing of regeneration...”*?
 - c. Martin Luther and many others understood this verse to refer to baptism
2. Thus God saves us in baptism:
 - a. It is a *“washing of regeneration”* - a washing in we are reborn
 - b. It is a *“renewing of the Holy Spirit”* - a renewal in which the Spirit is at work
 - Just as Jesus said: *“...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”* - **Jn 3:5**

B. NOTE CAREFULLY...

1. This “washing” and “regeneration” does not occur because we have earned it!
 - a. Baptism is not a work of righteousness by virtue of which we merit salvation!
 - b. We are saved by the kindness, love, and mercy of God! - **Ti 3:4-5**
2. It is by **God’s** mercy that **He** (not we) saves us!
 - a. Which **He** does through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit!
 - b. Which **He** does when we are baptized into Christ!
3. Through such mercy in Christ Jesus, we are truly *“justified by His grace”* - **Ti 3:6-7**

CONCLUSION

1. Paul taught that baptism is...
 - a. A burial into the death of Christ
 - b. How we die to sin as we are crucified with Him
 - c. A resurrection with Christ so we can rise to walk in newness of life
 - d. A putting on Christ, thereby becoming a child of God
 - e. A spiritual circumcision in which sins are cut away
 - f. The working of God, whereby we are buried with Christ, made alive as our sins are forgiven, and then raised with Him
 - g. An act of God's grace and mercy, in which we experience a washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit

-- **If all these things when one is baptized, how can anyone say that it is not necessary?**

2. Sadly, many who say it is **not** necessary...
 - a. **Misunderstand those who say it is necessary**
 - 1) Thinking that they believe in salvation by works
 - 2) When they truly believe in salvation by grace through faith!
 - b. **Misunderstand Martin Luther**
 - 1) Whose coined phrased "saved by faith only" they themselves use so often
 - 2) When he differs with them on the necessity of baptism
 - c. **Misunderstand the apostle Paul**
 - 1) Having him say things about the purpose of baptism he does not say
 - 2) Failing to appreciate what he clearly teaches about

-- **All this, in their zeal to oppose what they mistakenly view as works-salvation!**

In his commentary on **Ga 3:27**, Luther wrote:

“This is diligently to be noted, because of the fond and fantastical spirits, who go about to deface the majesty of baptism, and speak wickedly of it. Paul, contrariwise, commendeth it, and setteth it forth with honorable titles, calling it, *‘the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost’*. And here also he saith, that *‘all ye that are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.’* Wherefore baptism is a thing of great force and efficacy.” (Commentary On Galatians, Kregel Publications, p. 222)

Do we deface the majesty of baptism, in our mistaken zeal to oppose what we perceive to be a form of works-salvation?

Or do we, like Paul, commend it by noting his own teaching regarding baptism, and like Luther, appreciate how that by the working of God it can be a thing of great force and efficacy?

Baptism

In The Teaching Of Peter

INTRODUCTION

1. In our first lesson we saw where Peter included baptism as part of his apostolic preaching...
 - a. He commanded the people at Pentecost to be baptized - **Ac 2:36-38**
 - b. He commanded the household of Cornelius to be baptized - **Ac 10:47-48**
2. From the accounts in Acts, we saw that for Peter baptism was...
 - a. For the remission of sins - **Ac 2:38**
 - b. An act that involved water - **Ac 10:47**
3. But one might properly ask: was Peter teaching...
 - a. That baptism was for the forgiveness of sins, and therefore necessary for salvation?
 - b. That one is saved by baptism in water?
4. Fortunately, we do not have wonder, for in his first epistle Peter wrote...

“There is also an antitype which now saves us; baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” (1 Pe 3:21)

[As stated in the KJV, “...baptism doth also now save us”! But while teaching that baptism saves us, Peter is careful to explain in what way. Let’s take a closer look at the text to see what Peter is saying about baptism...]

I. BAPTISM IS AN “ANTITYPE”

A. DEFINING “ANTITYPE”...

1. The Greek word is **antitupon** {an-teet’-oo-pon}, which means **“a thing formed after some pattern; that which corresponds to a type”**
2. So you have two things that some how relate or correspond to each other; one is a type, the other is the antitype

B. HOW BAPTISM IS AN ANTITYPE...

1. In the text, the waters of the flood are the “type”, and the waters of baptism are the “antitype” - **1 Pe 3:20-21**
2. In his commentary, Albert Barnes says...
 - a. **“The meaning here is, that baptism corresponded to, or had a resemblance to, the water by which Noah was saved; or that there was a use of water in the one case which corresponded in some respects to the water that was used in the other; to wit, in effecting salvation.”** (Commentary on 1st Peter)
 - b. **“The apostle does not say that it corresponded in all respects; in respect, e.g.,**

to quantity, or to the manner of the application, or to the efficacy; but there is a sense in which water performs an important part in our salvation, as it did in his.” (ibid.)

3. Thus Peter was comparing Noah’s salvation with our own...
 - a. Remember that Noah was saved by:
 - 1) Grace - **Gen 6:8**
 - 2) Faith - **He 11:7**
 - 3) Water - **1 Pe 3:20**-- Grace was God’s part, faith was Noah’s part; water was simply an element by which God carried out His plan to save Noah
 - b. So we are saved by:
 - 1) Grace - **Ep 2:5**
 - 2) Faith - **Ep 2:8**
 - 3) Water - **1 Pe 3:21**-- Grace is God’s part, faith is our part; baptism is simply an element by which God carries out His plan to save us through the blood of Christ

[Because baptism in water is somehow related to our salvation, Peter could speak of it as an antitype that saves us, just as Noah and his family were “*saved through water*”!]

How can this be? Aren’t we saved by the blood of Jesus? Of course! The answer can be seen as we continue to note what Peter taught concerning baptism...]

II. BAPTISM SAVES THROUGH THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

A. SALVATION IN BAPTISM IS NOT FOUND IN THE “WATER”...

1. As Peter makes clear when he says “*not the removal of the filth of the flesh*”
2. For indeed it is only through the blood of Jesus Christ one can be saved
 - a. We are justified through His blood - **Ro 5:9**
 - b. We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins - **Ep 1:7**
3. To this Peter would definitely agree - **1 Pe 1:18-19**

B. SALVATION IN BAPTISM IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST...

1. If He had not been raised, we would still be in our sins
 - a. As Paul declares in **1 Co 15:17**
 - b. Without His resurrection, His death would have been meaningless
2. But because Jesus was raised from the dead...
 - a. Those baptized into His death can rise to walk in newness of life - **Ro 6:4**
 - b. Those united together in the likeness of His death (i.e., baptism) can share in the power of His resurrection - **Ro 6:5**
3. In other words, the same power of God that raised Jesus from the dead is what saves us in baptism so we can be “made alive” - cf. **Co 2:12-13**

[By God’s saving grace and resurrecting power, then, baptism can indeed save us! Not because of any cleansing power in the water, but because of what **God** is doing at that moment through the blood of

Jesus and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (cf. **Ti 3:4-5**).

But notice finally, how Peter teaches that baptism saves because...]

III. BAPTISM IS AN APPEAL FOR A GOOD CONSCIENCE

A. “THE ANSWER OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE” (NKJV)...

1. A difficult phrase, but it most likely means “an appeal to God for a clear conscience”
2. This is supported by the following translations:
 - a. “...the craving for a conscience right with God” (Goodspeed)
 - b. “...the prayer for a clean conscience before God” (Moffat)
 - c. “...the request unto God for a good conscience” (Rotherham)
 - d. “...an appeal to God for a clear conscience” (RSV)
 - e. “...an appeal to God for a good conscience” (NASV)
- Thus one is baptized because they desire a clear conscience (i.e., to have their sins forgiven)

B. THIS COINCIDES WITH THE EVIDENT PURPOSE OF BAPTISM...

1. In apostolic preaching, baptized was commanded:
 - a. “*For the remission of sins*” - **Ac 2:38**
 - b. To have one’s sins “*washed away*”- cf. **Ac 22:16**
2. In N.T. times people who realized they were sinners were anxious to be baptized as soon as possible - cf. **Ac 8:35-38**
3. Therefore one is baptized...
 - a. To have a good conscience before God; indeed, to have their conscience “purged” by the blood of Christ - cf. **He 9:14**
 - b. To have their sins washed away by blood of Jesus and so they can rise to a new life through the same power of God that raised Jesus from the dead!

CONCLUSION

1. Does baptism save us?
 - a. Many say “Baptism does NOT save us!”
 - b. But Peter clearly taught “*...baptism doth also NOW save us*” (KJV)
2. How does baptism save us? According to Peter...
 - a. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ!
 - b. As an appeal for a good conscience!
3. This helps us to understand...
 - a. Why he commanded it for the remission of sins - **Ac 2:38**
 - b. Why he commanded it even for those who had in some sense received the Spirit - **Ac 10:47-48**

Yes, through the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead, working in conjunction with our faith in the blood of Jesus, baptism does indeed save those who are making an appeal for a clear conscience!

Is baptism essential to salvation? Let the preaching and teaching of Christ’s apostles provide the

answer! I believe that when we do, we can see why one should take Jesus' own words with no equivocation:

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. (Mark 16:16)

It is my prayer that if you have not yet properly responded to the Word of the Lord, you will heed the same words given to Paul:

“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” - Ac 22:16

Have you made an appeal to God for a good conscience by being baptized into Christ?

Baptism

What About The Thief On The Cross?

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series we have already examined baptism...
 - a. In the preaching of the apostles
 - b. In the teaching of Paul
 - c. In the teaching of Peter
2. The conclusion drawn from such sources was that baptism is...
 - a. For the remissions of sins - cf. **Ac 2:38**
 - b. Therefore necessary for salvation - cf. **Ac 22:16; 1 Pe 3:21**
 - Which certainly seems consistent with Jesus' own words in **Mk 16:15-16**
3. But invariably someone will say: **“What about the thief on the cross?” - Lk 23:39-43**
 - a. This is most popular objection to the necessity of baptism
 - b. Despite all that is revealed about the purpose of baptism in the Bible!
4. The objection can be summarized like this:
 - a. The thief on the cross was not baptized
 - b. The thief was saved
 - c. Therefore, baptism is not essential to salvation!
5. Is such reasoning valid?
 - a. Might there be something the objector is failing to take into consideration?
 - b. A significant fact that renders the salvation of the thief irrelevant to the issue?

[As we take a closer look at the objection, **“What About The Thief On The Cross?”**, let's me first emphasize that...]

I. THE THIEF WAS SAVED

A. JESUS CERTAINLY HAD THE POWER TO SAVE HIM...

1. While on earth, Jesus had the authority to forgive sins
2. He exercised this authority on several occasions
 - a. For the paralytic - **Lk 5:18-26**
 - b. For the sinful woman - **Lk 7:36-50**

B. JESUS CLEARLY OFFERED HIM SALVATION...

1. The thief asked: “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” - **Lk 23:42**
2. Jesus replied: “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.” - **Lk 23:43**
- **None can doubt that Jesus promised him salvation!**

[Yet the question remains: Is the salvation of the thief relevant to the issue? Consider that...]

II. THE THIEF WAS SAVED BEFORE BAPTISM WAS COMMANDED

A. THE BAPTISM UNDER DISCUSSION...

1. Was commanded **after** Jesus died and arose - **Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16**
2. Was a baptism into Jesus' death - **Ro 6:3-4**
- **How could the thief been baptized into Jesus' death, when Jesus had not yet died?**

B. THE THIEF WAS NEVER SUBJECT TO THIS BAPTISM...

1. It was commanded **after** he died!
2. Just like Adam, Noah, Moses, etc.
 - a. None of these were baptized
 - b. But they all lived before the death of Jesus
 - c. And like the thief, were never commanded to be baptized!
3. Yes, there was the baptism of John - **Mk 1:4-5**
 - a. But that was preparing people for the coming of Christ
 - b. It was designed to be replaced by baptism into Christ and His death - cf. **Ac 19: 4-5**
- **One might use the thief on the cross to say John's baptism was not necessary, but the argument can't be made regarding the baptism which Christ later commanded!**

[The thief on the cross died **before** Jesus gave His commandment in **Mt 28** and **Mk 16**. Since we live **after** Jesus commanded baptism, how can we use the example of the thief to say it is not necessary? In a similar vein...]

III. THE THIEF WAS SAVED BEFORE THE NEW COVENANT BEGAN

A. THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT COVENANTS...

1. There was a covenant between God and Israel - **Deu 5:2-3**
 - a. It governed all Israelites, such as Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, the thief on the cross, etc.
 - b. It never commanded people to be baptized!
 - c. It came to an end when Jesus died on the cross - cf. **Ep 2:14-16; Co 2:14**
2. There is the new covenant that is now in force - cf. **He 8:6-7**
 - a. Of which Jesus spoke when He instituted the Lord's Supper - **Mt 26:28**
 - b. Which came into force when Jesus died - **He 9:15-17**

B. WE NOW LIVE UNDER THE NEW COVENANT...

1. We must submit to Christ's authority as expressed after His death
 - a. An authority delegated to His apostles - cf. **Mt 28:18-20; Jn 13:20**
 - b. Who clearly commanded baptism! - cf. **Ac 2:38; 10:48; 22:16**
2. How can we appeal to the example of one who lived under the old covenant?
 - a. Can we appeal to the example of David? (of course not)
 - b. Can we appeal to the example of Isaiah? (of course not)
 - **Nor should we appeal to the example of the thief, who lived and died before the new covenant became of force!**

3. We must heed what Jesus and His apostles taught **AFTER** the new covenant began!

CONCLUSION

1. Yes, the thief was saved on the cross without baptism
 - a. For which we should be thankful
 - b. For which we should give God praise for His wonderful grace
2. But the thief's example is irrelevant to the issue of baptism...
 - a. He died before Christ ever issued the command to be baptized into His death!
 - b. He lived under the old covenant, which did not require baptism into Christ!
3. The thief on the cross would be relevant **IF**...
 - a. You lived **before** the command to be baptized into Christ was given
 - b. You lived under the **Old** covenant
 - c. You were in the presence of Christ and he told **you** "*Assuredly, I SAY TO YOU, today YOU will be with Me in Paradise.*"
4. But here are the facts...
 - a. You live **after** the command to be baptized has been given
 - b. You live under the **New** covenant, in which baptism has a crucial role
 - c. Christ has commanded **you** (and **all**) through His apostles to be baptized - **Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38; 10:48; 22:16**

Rather than depending upon an example of salvation that is nothing similar to our situation today, base your faith and assurance of salvation on the many examples of salvation that were recorded in the book of Acts for our benefit.

Heed the preaching and teaching of Christ and His apostles directed toward **you!**

Baptism

What About Cornelius And His Household?

INTRODUCTION

1. At this point we are considering objections to the idea that baptism is...
 - a. For the remission of sins
 - b. Therefore necessary for salvation
2. In the previous study we examined the salvation of **the thief on the cross**, noting that...
 - a. He was saved before the command to be baptized into Christ's death was given
 - b. He was saved before the new covenant became of force-- **Which makes his example of salvation irrelevant to the issue of baptism**
3. Another objection concerns **Cornelius and his household**, which be summarized like this:
 - a. The Spirit came upon Cornelius and his family before they were baptized
 - b. The Spirit falling upon them was evidence that they were saved
 - c. Therefore they were saved before baptism, making it not essential to salvation
4. Is this a proper conclusion to reach?
 - a. Does the evidence in Acts support such a conclusion?
 - b. Did Peter and the others conclude that the Spirit falling upon the Gentiles was for the purpose of saving them, and therefore they were saved before baptism?
5. There are important questions that must be answered as we consider the events of this conversion:
 - a. Exactly when did the Spirit fall upon Cornelius and his household?
 - b. What was the purpose of the Spirit falling upon them?

[As we consider the objection, "**What About Cornelius And His Household?**", let's first take a close look at...]

I. THE ACTUAL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN THIS CONVERSION

A. THE ANGEL APPEARS TO CORNELIUS...

1. Cornelius, a centurion, is a very religious man - **Ac 10:1-2**
2. The angel appears to him - **Ac 10:3-6**
 - a. With an announcement that his prayers and alms have been noticed by God
 - b. With instructions to send for Peter; please note:
 - 1) The angel said, "He will tell you what you must do." - **Ac 10:6**
 - 2) As Peter later recounted, "...who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved." - **Ac 11:14**-- **Note Well:** Cornelius would not be saved until he heard words telling him what to do!
3. Cornelius then sends two servants and a devout soldier to Peter - **Ac 10:7-8**

B. PETER HAS A VISION...

1. While the three men are traveling toward Peter, he has a vision - **Ac 10:9-16; 11:4-10**
 - a. It involves a sheet descending from heaven, containing all sorts of creatures
 - b. A voice tells Peter to “kill and eat”
 - c. Peter objects, for he has never eaten anything common or unclean
 - d. The voice tells him, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.”
2. Three times the vision is repeated

C. THE SPIRIT TELLS PETER TO GO WITH THE MESSENGERS...

1. The men from Cornelius arrive as Peter contemplates the vision - **Ac 10:17-18; 11:11**
2. The Spirit tells Peter to go, “doubting nothing, for I have sent them” - **Ac 10:19-20; 11:12**
3. Peter receives the men and takes six with him as they go to Cornelius - **Ac 10:21-23; 11:12**

D. PETER ARRIVES AT CORNELIUS’ HOUSE...

1. Cornelius has gathered his family and close friends - **Ac 10:24**
2. Peter deflects an attempt by Cornelius to worship him - **Ac 10:25-26**
3. Peter explains his presence is a violation of Jewish custom, but now understands “I should not call any man common or unclean” - **Ac 10:27-28**
4. Asked by Peter to explain why he was called, Cornelius recounts the appearance and instructions of the angel - **Ac 10:29-32; 11:13-14**
5. Cornelius and his household were ready “to hear all things commanded you by God” - **Ac 10:33**

E. AS PETER BEGINS TO SPEAK, THE SPIRIT FALLS UPON THE LISTENERS...

1. At this point, carefully note the actual sequence of events
2. Luke’s record gives attention to the sermon first, and then the Spirit coming upon the Gentiles - cf. **Ac 10:34-44**
 - a. But Luke also says that “**While** Peter was still speaking...the Holy Spirit fell”
 - b. From this we do not exactly when the Spirit fell
 - c. It could have been at the beginning, in the middle, toward the end, of his sermon
3. Peter, however, explained what happened “in order from the beginning” - **Ac 11:4**
 - a. He describes the events as they happened
 - b. He says “**As I began to speak**, the Holy Spirit fell upon them” - **Ac 11:15**
 - **Note Well:** We learn from Peter that the Spirit actually came upon the Gentiles at the **beginning** of the sermon!
4. With the Spirit falling upon the Gentiles, they began speaking with tongues, which amazed Peter and his Jewish companions - **Ac 10:45-46; cf. Ac 2:4,6,8,11**

F. PETER’S SERMON TO THE HOUSEHOLD OF CORNELIUS...

1. He begins with a full perception that God shows no partiality - **Ac 10:34-35**
 - a. A perception started with the vision of the sheet and unclean beasts
 - b. A perception continued with the Spirit’s instruction to go with the messengers
 - c. A perception made clear with the Spirit falling upon the Gentiles - **Ac 11:15-17**
2. Peter then proceeds to proclaim Jesus Christ - **Ac 10:36-43**
 - a. As Lord who was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power - **Ac 10:36-38**

- b. Who was killed, but then raised from the dead and seen by eyewitnesses who knew Him well - **Ac 10:39-41**
- c. Who has commanded the apostles to proclaim Him as ordained by God to be the Judge of the living and dead - **Ac 10:42**
- d. Through Whom remission of sins is offered to those who believe - **Ac 10:43**

G. PETER COMMANDS THEM TO BE BAPTIZED...

1. How could anyone forbid water to those who had received the Spirit just as the apostles did? - **Ac 10:47**; cf. **11:17-18**
2. So Cornelius and his household were commanded to be baptized in the name of the Lord - **Ac 10:48**

[The events surrounding this conversion are certainly remarkable. They evidently were intended to convey important truths. But our purpose in this study is to answer these questions:

- ♦ **At what point** were Cornelius and his household saved?
- ♦ If not to save them, **what was the purpose** of the Spirit falling upon Cornelius and his household?

Let's now answer the first question...]

II. THE POINT AT WHICH CORNELIUS WAS SAVED

A. REMEMBER WHAT CORNELIUS WAS TOLD...

1. Peter would tell him "what you must do." - **Ac 10:6**
2. Peter would tell him "words by which you...shall be saved." - **Ac 11:14**

B. YET THE SPIRIT FELL UPON HIM BEFORE HE HEARD...

1. As Peter said, the Spirit fell upon them "as I began to speak"
2. It wasn't until the end of his sermon and afterward that Peter told them the "words by which you...shall be saved."

C. CORNELIUS WAS SAVED AFTER HE HEARD...

1. The "words" by which he would be saved (i.e., the sermon)
 2. What he was told to do
 - a. Such as to believe - cf. **Ac 10:43**
 - b. Such as to be baptized, as commanded in **Ac 10:48**
- **Until he heard the words, and obeyed what he was told, he was not saved!**

[Since Cornelius and his family were not saved until they heard the "**words**" by which they would be saved, and told what they "**must do**", the Spirit falling upon them did not save them, for it came upon them **before** they heard the "words" and were told what to do!

But why did the Spirit come upon them, if not to save them? Consider what actually was...]

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE SPIRIT FALLING UPON CORNELIUS

A. THE PURPOSE CAN BE GLEANED FROM THE FOLLOWING...

1. The effect it had on the Jewish brethren who were present, and Peter's response - **Ac 10:45-47**
2. The reaction of the Jewish brethren in Jerusalem when Peter told them what happened - **Ac 11:17-18**
3. Peter's explanation at the council held later in Jerusalem - **Ac 15:7-11**

B. THE PURPOSE WAS TO SHOW JEWISH BRETHERN...

1. That God was no respecter of persons - **Ac 10:34-35**
2. That God was willing to grant them opportunity to repent and have life - **Ac 11:18**
3. That Gentiles could be saved in the same way as Jews...
 - a. By faith, repentance, and baptism - **Ac 15:9,11; cf. 2:38 with 10:48**
 - b. Which faith comes through hearing the word of God - **Ro 10:17**

CONCLUSION

1. While miraculous events surrounded the conversion of Cornelius and his family, their salvation was no different from what we see in other cases of conversion...
 - a. They heard the gospel of Jesus Christ
 - b. They were taught to believe and be baptized
 - **Thus they were saved "in the same manner" as all those previously - cf. Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38; 8:12**
2. The purpose of the Spirit falling upon them...
 - a. Was not to show one could be saved without baptism
 - b. But to show that Gentiles were no longer to be considered "common" or "unclean", and could be granted the same opportunities to hear the gospel and be saved by it!
3. One might also ask...
 - a. When the Spirit came upon Balaam to prophesy concerning Israel, did it save him? - **Num 24:2**
 - b. When the Spirit came upon Saul to prophesy, did it save him? - **1 Sam 19:20-24**
 - c. When Caiaphas prophesied, was he saved? - **Jn 11:49-52**
 - **The purpose of the Spirit coming upon a person may vary, and one should not assume that one filled with the Spirit at any given time is thereby being saved by the Spirit!**

Those of us not descended from Israel can rejoice in what God revealed with the conversion of Cornelius and his household. As properly concluded by the Jewish brethren in Jerusalem:

"...God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." (Ac 11:16)

And when carefully noted, they were saved *"in the same manner"* (cf. **Ac 15:9-11**) as all others, having their hearts purified through faith when they heard and obeyed the word of God!

Baptism

Wasn't Paul Sent To Preach, Not Baptize?

INTRODUCTION

1. Another objection commonly raised concerning the necessity of baptism is based upon Paul's statement to the church at Corinth - cf. **1 Co 1:14-17**
 - a. Special note is made of Paul's statement: *"For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel..."* - **1 Co 1:17**
 - b. From which some conclude baptism must not be essential to salvation
2. However, when one takes into account...
 - a. The context of **verses 10-13**
 - b. The context of Paul's preaching in Corinth as recorded in **Ac 18:1-8**
...it becomes apparent that Paul preached baptism, and his comments should not be taken as suggesting it was not essential

[In this study, let's take a closer look at the context in which Paul's statement is found. Note that...]

I. PAUL WAS ADDRESSING A PROBLEM AT CORINTH

A. WITH THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD PREACHERS...

1. They were divided - **1 Co 1:10-11**
2. Their division was a result of "preacher-itis" - **1 Co 1:12**
 - a. They were claiming, "I am of Paul", "I am of Apollos", etc.
 - b. As Paul expounded later, they were thinking too highly of the different preachers
 - 1) Their attitude was a mark of carnality - **1 Co 3:3-4**
 - 2) Preachers were simply fellow servants - **1 Co 3:5-9**
 - 3) Thus they were not to boast in men - **1 Co 3:21-23**

B. IT APPEARS RELATED TO WHO BAPTIZED THEM...

1. As indicated by Paul's rhetorical questions - **1 Co 1:13**
2. E.g., "Were you baptized in the name of Paul?"
3. The implication is that those who were baptized were claiming to be disciples of those who personally baptized them

C. WHICH IS WHY PAUL WAS GLAD HE PERSONALLY BAPTIZED FEW...

1. Thankful that he baptized only Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas
2. Lest any should say that he was baptizing in his own name - **1 Co 1:14-15**

[So Paul was addressing a problem at Corinth. Are we to construe from this that Paul didn't preach baptism, or didn't think it necessary? To the contrary...]

II. PAUL'S PREACHING HAD RESULTED IN MANY BAPTISMS

A. LUKE RECORDS PAUL'S WORK AT CORINTH...

1. How he worked with Aquila and Priscilla - **Ac 18:1-3**
2. How he reasoned in the synagogues, testified that Jesus is the Christ, and persisted despite rejection by unbelieving Jews - **Ac 18:4-7**

B. LUKE RECORDS THE SUCCESS OF PAUL'S PREACHING...

1. Crispus, ruler of the synagogue, and his household believed on the Lord (and whom Paul personally baptized) - **Ac 18:8**; cf. **1 Co 1:14**
2. But also "many" of the Corinthians believed and were baptized - **Ac 18:8**

[Though Paul personally baptized few, his preaching resulted in many baptisms! Baptism must have played a significant role in his preaching. That is one reason why we must not twist Paul's words to the church at Corinth as implying that it was not necessary. As we return to **1 Co 1:13**, we should also note that...]

III. PAUL'S WORDS DEMONSTRATE THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM

A. NOTE CAREFULLY PAUL'S REASONING...

1. For one to call himself after Paul (or any other man) required two things:
 - a. Paul would have to be crucified for the person - **1 Co 1:13**
 - b. One would have to be baptized in the name of Paul - **1 Co 1:13**
2. Neither had happened, of course, which is why they should not be calling themselves after men

[But consider what Paul's argument means positively...]

B. TO BE CALLED AFTER CHRIST, TWO THINGS ARE REQUIRED...

1. Christ would have to die for the person (which of course He did)
2. The person would have to be baptized in the name of Christ!
 - a. Have you been baptized in the name of Christ?
 - b. If not, then you cannot rightfully be called a Christian!

[In the very context of a passage which many use to claim that baptism is not essential, Paul implies one cannot be called a Christian unless they have been baptized in the name of Christ! How then are we to understand Paul's statement: "*For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel...*"? The answer is easy...]

IV. PAUL WAS EMPHASIZING HIS ROLE AS AN APOSTLE

A. PAUL WAS SENT TO PREACH, NOT BAPTIZE...

1. As an apostle (which means "one sent"), Paul's role was to proclaim the gospel
 - a. As explained to the Ephesians, he was given the task to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ" - **Ep 3:8**
 - b. Which he did by inspiration - cf. **Ga 1:11-12**
2. Though his preaching resulted in baptism (cf. **Ac 18:8**), it was not imperative that he do it

- a. Others could easily do the baptizing (such as his traveling companions)
- b. Which evidently happened at Corinth, for while many were baptized, he personally baptized only a few

B. PAUL USED A COMMON STYLE OF SPEAKING...

1. Notice the words of Jesus in **Jn 6:27**...
 - a. "Do not labor for the food which perishes"
 - b. "but for the food which endures to everlasting life"
-- Jesus was not saying one should not work, but rather was emphasizing the importance of seeking after spiritual food over physical food
2. In a similar way Paul says **1 Co 1:17**...
 - a. "For Christ did not send me to baptize"
 - b. "but to preach the gospel"
-- Paul was not saying he was not to baptize, but that his role as an apostle to preach the gospel was more important!

C. HOW OTHERS HAVE UNDERSTOOD PAUL...

1. **"That is, not to baptize as my main business. Baptism was not his principle employment, though he had a commission in common with others to administer the ordinance, and occasionally did it."** - Barnes (Notes, on 1 Co 1:17)
2. **"According to Semitic idiom, 'not so much to baptize, as...'. The word 'sent' involves the meaning 'made me an apostle'. The primary function of an apostle was 'to bear witness'."** - Farrar (Commentary on 1 Co 1:17)
3. **"Baptism was not his principal work, not the main business for which Paul was sent, it was part of his work, otherwise he would not have baptized Crispus, or Gaius, or 'the household of Stephanas,' but preaching was his principle work."** - Poole (Annotations, 1 Co 1:17)
4. **"...bearing mind Paul's other utterances about baptism, v.17 is to be interpreted in the light of the Semitic manner of laying stress on an issue: Christ sent Paul to preach the gospel rather than to baptize. But this is no depreciation of the value of baptism."** - Beasley-Murray (Baptism In The New Testament, p.181)

CONCLUSION

1. When one considers all the evidence we have about the situation at Corinth, we learn...
 - a. That many were baptized as a result of Paul's preaching - **Ac 18:8**
 - b. Paul was glad that he did not personally baptize many of them, because of the problem that later arose in Corinth - **1 Co 1:14-15**
2. In the passage so many use to say that baptism is not important...
 - a. Paul was simply emphasizing his role as an apostle - **1 Co 1:17**
 - b. Paul used reasoning which implies the necessity of baptism (to be called after Christ, one must be baptized into the name of Christ) - **1 Co 1:13**

Can you rightfully be called a Christian? Yes, Christ was crucified for you; but have you been baptized in the name of Christ?

Baptism

Baptism Is A Work, We Are Not Saved By Works!

INTRODUCTION

1. A popular objection to the necessity of baptism involves salvation and works...
 - a. People often say, **“Baptism is a work, and we are not saved by works!”**
 - b. Support for this objection is made by appealing to passages like **Ep 2:8-9**
2. Certainly baptism is a thing done, and as such is a “work”...
 - a. But is it **a work of merit**, by which one **earns** salvation?
 - b. Or is it **a work of faith**, by which one **receives** salvation?
3. In considering the work involved in baptism, **who is truly the one “at work”?**
 - a. **Is it the man or woman** who submits to being immersed?
 - b. **Or is it God** who forgives and regenerates through the blood of Jesus and working of the Holy Spirit?

[When one carefully considers what the Bible teaches, there is no contradiction between the idea that we are saved by faith and not works, and at the same time saved by baptism. In this study I hope to make that clear. Let me begin by pointing out that...]

I. BAPTISM IS A WORK OF FAITH, NOT MERIT

A. THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF “WORKS”...

1. There are **works of “merit”**
 - a. These are works done to **“earn”** something
 - b. Those who have done such works believe they **“deserve”** something; e.g., those who believe they will be saved:
 - 1) Because they kept the Ten Commandments
 - 2) Because they went to church, did good deeds, etc.
 - c. It is these kinds of works that Paul has under consideration in **Ro 3:27-28; Ep 2:8-9; Ti 3:4-5a**
 - 1) There is no way we can “earn” or merit” salvation!
 - 2) All the good we might do cannot outweigh even one sin! - cf. **Ja 2:10**
2. There are also **works of “faith”**
 - a. These are things done to **“receive”** something
 - b. Those who have done such works believe they **“deserve” nothing!**
 - 1) They understand their obedience did not earn or merit their salvation
 - 2) They understand their salvation rests upon God’s mercy and grace, not because God owes it to them!
 - c. Such works can rightly be called **“works of God”**
 - 1) Of which faith itself is called by Jesus - **Jn 6:28-29**
 - 2) Other works of faith commanded by God include repentance and confession - cf.

Ac 17:30; Ro 10:9-10

- d. Though such works as faith, repentance and confession are commanded...
 - 1) They are not meritorious works, we do not earn salvation through them
 - 2) They are works God has ordained we do to receive His salvation
- **When all is said and done, salvation is still by God's grace and mercy!**

[What is said of faith, repentance, and confession may also be said of baptism...]

B. BAPTISM IS A WORK OF FAITH, NOT MERIT...

- 1. Baptism requires faith
 - a. The necessity of faith was emphasized by Jesus - **Mk 16:16**
 - b. Philip made it a prerequisite to baptism - **Ac 8:36-37**
- 2. Baptism is an act of faith by which one receives (not earns)...
 - a. The forgiveness of sins and gift of the Holy Spirit - **Ac 2:38**
 - b. Union with Christ in His death, raised with Him to new life - **Ro 6:3-4; Ga 3:27**
- 3. That baptism is not a work of merit is emphasized in **Ti 3:4-5**
 - a. While God saves us "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (an allusion to baptism)...
 - b. He does not save us by "works of righteousness" (i.e., works of merit)
- **Thus baptism is clearly is not some work of righteousness done to earn or merit salvation!**

[No where does the Bible suggest that baptism is a work of merit, by which God owes us salvation upon the basis of our baptism. Like faith, repentance, and confession, baptism is simply an act of faith by which we receive salvation. And why is this so? Because...]

II. BAPTISM INVOLVES THE WORKING OF GOD

A. GOD IS AT WORK IN BAPTISM...

- 1. We are buried and raised with Christ "*through faith IN THE WORKING OF GOD*" - **Co 2:12**
- 2. It is **God** who does the work, not man! - **Co 2:13**
 - a. Man is dead in his sins
 - b. But God makes him alive, forgiving him of sins
- **Thus it is God who saves us, not we ourselves, which He does through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit - Ti 3:5**

B. THINK OF BAPTISM AS A "SPIRITUAL OPERATION"...

- 1. An operation in which the "Great Physician" does His work
- 2. When one needs physical surgery, it requires faith in the skills of a physician to submit to the operating table
 - a. When the surgery is over, have I "earned" or "merited" my healing? No!
 - b. It required both faith in the doctor and a willingness to submit to him!
- 3. So my faith in God and in the death of His Son for my sins prompted me to submit to the "spiritual operation" of baptism, in which God did His wonderful work of cleansing by the blood of Jesus and regeneration by the Holy Spirit!

CONCLUSION

1. When we understand that **baptism**..
 - a. **Is a work of faith**, not a work of merit
 - b. **Is a working of God** at which time we receive salvation, not earn salvation
 - We will not reject the necessity of baptism under the mistaken idea that it is some work by which we try to earn salvation

2. Sadly, many people reject baptism because they see it as something you **do**..
 - a. In reality, baptism is **the most passive act of faith** required to receive Christ and the blessings He provides
 - b. I.e., “believe”, “repent”, “confess Christ”, are all things **we must do**
 - c. On the other hand, “baptism” is something **done to us**

3. Consider this..
 - a. Faith, repentance, and confession are all **active** acts of faith on our part
 - b. Baptism is but a **passive** act of faith in which we submit to the working of God in our lives (cf. **Co 2:12**).
 - **To object to baptism because it requires man to “do” something would require one to object to faith, repentance, and confession, for they also require man to “do” something!**

4. Even Martin Luther, who coined the phrase “salvation by faith only”, understood that salvation by grace through faith did not preclude the necessity of baptism:
 - a. In answer to the question, “**What gifts or benefits does Baptism bestow?**”, Luther replied in his Small Catechism, “**It effects forgiveness of sins.**”
 - b. He also wrote concerning the sinner: “**Through Baptism he is bathed in the blood of Christ and is cleansed from sins.**”
 - c. Again, he wrote: “**To put it most simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save.**”
 - d. In response to those who would call this a kind of works-salvation, he said “**Yes, it is true that our works are of no use for salvation. Baptism, however, is not our work but God’s.**” -- (as quoted by Jack W. Cottrell in *Baptism And The Remission of Sins*, College Press, 1990, p. 32-34)

So to those who say, “Baptism is a work, and we are not saved by works”, I would reply:

Baptism is a work of God, and we are saved by faith in the working of God!

Have you submitted to the working of God in baptism? If you believe that Jesus died for your sins on the cross, have repented of your sins and are willing to confess your faith in Him as the Son of God, you can receive the working of God in your life today!

“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16)

Baptism

Spirit Baptism Saves Us, Not Water Baptism!

INTRODUCTION

1. Another objection to the necessity of baptism involves making a distinction between baptism in the Spirit and baptism in water; this view proclaims...
 - a. **“The baptism which saves is a baptism in the Spirit at the point of faith.”**
 - b. **“Passages like Ro 6:3-7, Ga 3:27, etc., refer to Spirit baptism, not water baptism.”**
2. Those upholding this view point out...
 - a. There are many different types of baptisms in the Bible
 - b. We should not assume that water baptism is always the subject under consideration
3. As expressed by one proponent of this view...
 - a. **“There is a way to distinguish between water baptism and Spirit Baptism in those scriptures which do not specifically tell which type is being discussed.”**
 - b. **“That way is this: if the passage is talking about being placed into Christ, then it is talking about Spirit Baptism, not Water Baptism, for Spirit Baptism is how we are placed into Christ.”**
 - c. **“...in Romans 6, for example, it is obvious that the context is being placed into Christ and the passage dwells on the believer's identification with Christ, with His death, and with His resurrection. In this passage, the believer is not baptized into WATER, but into the death of Christ.”** - Baptism and Salvation, Charles T. Buntin

-- Of course, this argument presumes the very point to be proven

[There are several problems that I have with this effort to explain away the necessity of baptism in water for the remission of sins. To begin with, the Bible teaches...]

I. THERE IS ONE BAPTISM

A. THE BIBLE DOES DESCRIBE MANY BAPTISMS...

1. At the very least there are six...
 - a. The baptism of Moses (Israel) - **1 Co 10:1-2**
 - b. The baptism of John, a baptism in water - **Mk 1:4-5**
 - c. The baptism of the Holy Spirit - **Mt 3:11; Lk 3:16; Ac 1:5; 2:1-4; 10:44,45; 11:15-16**
 - f. The baptism of fire (judgment) - **Mt 3:11; Lk 3:16,17**
 - d. The baptism of suffering (persecution) - **Mt 20:20-33; Lk 12:50**
 - e. The baptism of the Great Commission, which was a baptism in water - **Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38; 8:12-13,35-38; 10:47-48; 22:16**
2. Some include two more...
 - a. The baptism of Noah, metaphorically speaking, which involved water - **1 Pe 3:20**
 - b. The baptism of Jesus, which involved water and the Spirit - **Mt 3:16-17**

B. THERE IS NOW JUST ONE BAPTISM...

1. In describing the unity of the Spirit...
 - a. Paul proclaims there is one baptism - **Ep 4:3-7**
 - b. Just as there is only one Lord, one faith, one hope, etc.
2. To which of the six (or eight) baptisms was Paul referring?
 - a. I believe we can safely rule out all but two
 - b. The issue boils down to this: Is the one baptism of **Ep 4:5**...
 - 1) The baptism of the Holy Spirit?
 - 2) The baptism of the Great Commission?

-- Or might there actually be a connection between these two, with the end result there being one baptism with two elements: water and the Spirit?

[Whichever, we cannot have two or more baptisms; **there is only one baptism!** Now let me explain why regarding the one baptism...]

II. IT IS THE BAPTISM OF THE GREAT COMMISSION

A. WHY THE BAPTISM OF THE GREAT COMMISSION...?

1. This is the baptism...
 - a. Commanded by Jesus
 - 1) For people of all nations - **Mk 28:19**
 - 2) For every person in the world - **Mk 16:15-16**
 - b. Commanded by the apostles in response to the gospel
 - 1) As proclaimed to the Jews at Pentecost - **Ac 2:38**
 - 2) As commanded by Peter to the Gentiles - **Ac 10:48**

-- Indeed, every example of conversion described in detail in the book of Acts involves this baptism!
2. If there is only one baptism...
 - a. It must involve this one, for it is commanded of all who would come to Christ!
 - b. Otherwise we must throw it out (as some have done)

B. WHAT ABOUT THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT...?

1. This is a difficult subject, about which the Bible actually says very little...
 - a. John promised that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit - **Mt 3:11**
 - b. Jesus promised that He would baptize with the Holy Spirit - **Ac 1:5**
 - c. But the baptism of the Holy Spirit is then explicitly mentioned in just three places
 - 1) At the conversion of Cornelius - **Ac 10:44-45; 11:15-16**
 - 2) Which reminded Peter of Pentecost - **Ac 11:15-16; 2:1-4**
2. This has led to much confusion about what the baptism of the Spirit is...
 - a. Some say that it was **an event that occurred only twice**
 - 1) On the day of Pentecost, and only upon the apostles - **Ac 2**
 - 2) At the conversion of Cornelius and his household, the first Gentiles - **Ac 10,11**
 - b. Some say it is **an event that occurs at every conversion**
 - 1) When a person is saved, they are that moment “baptized” with the Holy Spirit
 - 2) Occurs to all who become Christians, and no miraculous manifestations need be

present

- c. Others say it is **an event that occurs after conversion**
 - 1) A “second work of grace” that must be sought diligently
 - 2) Many people understand “speaking in tongues” to be a sign of this “baptism of the Holy Spirit”
 - 3) Some even say that it is necessary to be truly saved
- 3. I am persuaded the baptism of the Holy Spirit...
 - a. Refers to the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost - **Ac 2:1-21**
 - b. Was a **one-time event, but with ramifications lasting throughout the gospel age**
 - 1) In which the Holy Spirit is now available in some way to all whom God calls through the gospel - **2 Th 2:13-14; Tit 3:7**
 - 2) For those who receive the Spirit, the Spirit then empowers whom He wills to the degree He wills - **1 Co 12:4-13**
 - a) For the servants of God used in the revelation and confirmation of His Word, the Spirit imparted “spiritual gifts” (this work of the Spirit was temporary, and ended once God's revelation was completed)
 - b) For all of the servants of God, the Spirit serves as the “instrumental agent” by which God strengthens and blesses them (this work of the Spirit continues today, and will until Christ returns)
 - This view presumes that one receives the Spirit at baptism (see below) - **Ac 2:38-39; 1 Co 12:13; Ti 3:5-7**
- 4. So while at first there may have been two baptisms spoken of by Jesus...
 - a. The baptism of the Great Commission - **Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15-16**
 - b. The baptism of the Spirit - **Ac 1:5**
 ...once the Spirit was poured out, only “one baptism” remained, which was that baptism commanded of people in every nation!

[Having declared the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” a promise that was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, let me emphasize concerning the “baptism of the Great Commission”...]

III. IT INVOLVES BOTH WATER AND THE SPIRIT

A. THAT IT INVOLVES WATER...

- 1. Is evidenced by conversion of the Ethiopian - **Ac 8:35-38**
- 2. Is made clearer by the command of Peter - **Ac 10:47-48**
- 3. Is alluded to by Paul and Peter in their epistles - **Ep 5:26; 1 Pe 3:20-21**

B. THAT IT INVOLVES THE SPIRIT...

- 1. Is indicated when Jesus declared that one must be “born again” - **Jn 3:3-5**
 - a. To be born “of water and the Spirit”
 - b. Not two births, but one birth with two elements (water and Spirit)
- 2. Is made clearer when Paul wrote to Titus - **Ti 3:5-6**
 - a. God saved us “through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”
 - b. That washing (a clear allusion to baptism) involved a regeneration and renewing of the Spirit!
- 3. Is seen in Paul's remarks to the Corinthians - **1 Co 12:13**

- a. By the Spirit were we baptized into the one body
- b. In baptism, the Spirit not only regenerates, but incorporates us into the body of Christ!

[The baptism of the Great Commission is more than just an immersion in water. At the moment the penitent believer is lowered into the water, the Spirit is very much at work in renewing, regenerating, and incorporating us into the Body of Christ. In other words...]

IV. IT HAS SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

A. IT INVOLVES A BURIAL INTO THE DEATH OF CHRIST...

1. As Paul explains in **Ro 6:3-7**
 - a. Baptism into Christ is a burial into His death
 - b. In baptism we are crucified with Christ
 - c. In baptism we thus die to sin, and rise to walk in newness of life
2. Some contend Paul is teaching what water baptism symbolizes...
 - a. That it pictures what took place when we were saved before baptism
 - b. That it depicts the Spirit baptism which occurred at the moment of faith
 - But if so, then we have two baptisms, and Paul taught there was only one!
3. Others say Paul is describing Spirit baptism...
 - a. That water baptism (i.e., the baptism of the Great Commission) is not even under consideration
 - b. That this passage is depicting what happens before water baptism
 - Again, we would have two baptisms, not one!
4. This passage describes what happens when a person is baptized into Christ...
 - a. Since there is only one baptism, it must be referring to that baptism
 - b. Since the one baptism is the baptism of the Great Commission, Paul is describing the spiritual significance of what takes place when one is baptized in water!

B. THERE ARE OTHER THINGS OF SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE...

1. The one baptism (of the Great Commission) involves...
 - a. A cutting away of sin - **Co 2:11-13**
 - b. A putting on of Christ - **Ga 3:27**
2. Again, some contend these passages are describing...
 - a. "Spirit baptism" at the point of faith
 - b. Not the baptism of the Great Commission
 - But this makes two baptisms, when there is only one!
3. Since the baptism of the Great Commission involves both water and the Spirit...
 - a. There is no reason God (i.e., the Spirit) could not be at work when a person is immersed in water
 - b. God has chosen to use baptism in water to be the point in time in which His Spirit does His work of regeneration and renewal! - **Ti 3:5; Ac 22:16**

CONCLUSION

1. Some people want to "have their cake and eat it too"...
 - a. They want to say passages like **Ro 6:3-7; Ga 3:27; Co 2:11-13** are describing "Spirit

- baptism”, not “water baptism”
- b. But then appeal to these passages when they seek to describe “water baptism” as symbolic of “Spirit baptism” which has already occurred
2. **Note well:** If these passages are not discussing “water baptism” (i.e., the baptism of the Great Commission)...
 - a. We have no Scripture that tells us what is the true significance and meaning of the baptism commanded by Christ and His apostles!
 - b. The Lord has commanded water baptism, with no explanation as to what it means!
-- Any explanation as to the meaning and purpose of the baptism of the Great Commission is pure conjecture and without any scriptural basis!
 3. The “unity of the Spirit” proclaims there is only one baptism...
 - a. Not two baptisms, one of the Spirit at the time of salvation, and one later for some unexplained reason
 - b. But one baptism, involving both water and the Spirit, in response to the preaching of Christ and His apostles
 4. This one baptism...
 - a. Is a rebirth involving both water and the Spirit - **Jn 3:5**
 - b. Is for the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - c. Is a baptism in water - **Ac 8:35-38; 10:47-48**
 - d. Involves the Spirit incorporating us into the body of Christ - **1 Co 12:13**
 - e. Is a burial into the death of Christ in which we are crucified with Him - **Ro 6:3-7**
 - f. Clothes us with Christ - **Ga 3:27**
 - e. Is a spiritual circumcision, in which our sins are cut away - **Co 2:11-13**
 - f. Is a washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, who was poured out as promised by Jesus - **Ti 3:5-7; Ac 1:5; 2:1-4**
 - g. Saves us, not through some physical cleansing, but by the resurrection of Jesus! - **1 Pe 3:21**

Should we be surprised that the Great Commission of our Lord contains a great command having great significance?

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. (Mt 28:19-20)

And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.’ (Mk 16:15-16)

“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Ac 22:16)

Baptism

Conclusion To This Section On Arguments Against The Necessity Of Baptism

When all men's arguments fall, the Bible's teaching on this subject is still the same.

Ac 2:38 still teaches baptism is for the remission of sins:

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Ac 22:16 still teaches baptism washes away sins:

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Mk 16:16 still teaches:

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

1 Co 12:13 still teaches that baptism puts us into the body of Christ:

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

Ga 3:27 still teaches baptism puts us into Christ:

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Ro 6:3-4 still teaches baptism puts us into the death of Christ:

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Co 2:12-13 still teaches that through baptism we obtain the newness of life:

"buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with [Him] through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you,

being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,”

1 Pe 3:21 still teaches that baptism saves us:

“There is also an antitype which now saves us——baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,”

The first time the gospel was preached, *“They then that received his word were baptized,”* (Ac 2:41). People today who receive the gospel do the same thing.

Friend, if you believe in Jesus Christ, and have repented, i.e., determined that you will live according to His teaching, won't you confess His name before men and be baptized for the reasons **He** said while you have opportunity?

Baptism

Sprinkling, Pouring, Or Immersion?

INTRODUCTION

1. In the preaching and teaching of the apostles, we saw that baptism is essential to:
 - a. Salvation - **Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - b. Becoming disciples of Christ - **Mt 28:19-20; Ga 3:27**
2. But even when the essentiality of baptism has been established, questions often remain:
 - a. Is baptism to be immersion, pouring, or sprinkling?
 - b. Should infants be baptized?
 - c. Is there every any reason to be “re-baptized?”

[This lesson examines the first of these questions: **“Is baptism to be sprinkling, pouring or immersion?”** Let’s begin this study by examining...]

I. THE GREEK WORDS FOR “BAPTIZE” AND “BAPTISM”

A. THE WORDS ARE “BAPTIZO” AND “BAPTISMA”...

1. Note that the words “baptize” and “baptism” are not actually **translations** of the Greek
2. They are **transliterations** (where Greek letters are simply given their English equivalents)
3. To confirm the actual meaning, we must go to authorities on the Greek language

B. THE FOLLOWING GREEK LEXICONS DEFINE “BAPTIZE” AS “TO IMMERSE, TO PLUNGE, TO DIP”...

1. Greek-English Lexicon Of The N.T. (**Thayer**)
2. Greek-English Lexicon, 7th Edition (**Liddel & Scott**)
3. Greek Lexicon Of The Roman And Byzantine Periods (**Sophocles**)
4. Biblio-Theological Lexicon Of N.T. Words (**Cremer**)
5. To quote **Vine’s** Expository Dictionary Of N. T. Words: **“baptism, consisting of the processes of immersion, submersion and emergence”**

C. NOT ONE STANDARD GREEK LEXICON DEFINES “BAPTIZO” AS “SPRINKLE” OR “POUR”...

1. In fact, there are completely different words in Greek for “pouring” (**cheno**) and “sprinkling” (**raino**)
2. It is important to keep in mind concerning “baptize” and “baptism”:
 - a. They are simply transliterations
 - b. They were transliterated instead of translated in our Bibles to avoid offending those who practice pouring or sprinkling
 - c. When translated into English, they can only mean “to immerse” and “immersion”!

D. WHAT ABOUT MODERN ENGLISH DICTIONARIES...?

1. It is true that they define baptism as sprinkling, pouring, or immersion
2. But their definitions reflect common usage of words by people **today**
3. To know exactly what was meant by Jesus and His apostles, we must consult authorities who define how words were used **in Biblical times!**

[That of course is where Greek lexicons like those referenced to above are helpful. They define words according to their meaning at the time used by the New Testament writers. Now let's consider...]

II. FIGURES OF SPEECH USED TO DESCRIBE BAPTISM

A. BY PAUL IN ROMANS...

1. In baptism, we are "buried with Him...into death" - cf. **Ro 6:3-4**
2. Baptism is a "likeness of his death" - **Ro 6:5**

B. BY PAUL IN COLOSSIANS...

1. In baptism, we are "buried with Him"
2. "in which, you were also raised with Him" - **Co 2:12**

C. WHICH ACTION (IMMERSION, POURING, SPRINKLING) IS:

1. A "burial?"
 2. A "likeness of His death?"
 3. A "likeness of His resurrection?"
- **Only immersion (followed by an emersion) fits Paul's description of baptism**

[Paul's use of such figures of speech would make no sense if baptism were either pouring or sprinkling. It is also interesting to note...]

III. THE TESTIMONY OF VARIOUS SCHOLARS

A. WHOSE DENOMINATIONS PRACTICE POURING OR SPRINKLING...

1. Episcopalian
 - a. **"This passage (Ro 6:4) cannot be understood unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion"** - Conybeare & Howson (Life And Epistles Of St. Paul)
 - b. **"Baptism means immersion; and it was immersion...Unless it had been so, Paul's analogical argument about our being buried with Christ in baptism would have had no meaning. Nothing could have been simpler than baptism in its first form. When a convert declared his faith in Christ, he was taken at once to the nearest pool or stream of water and plunged into it, and henceforward he was recognized as one of the Christian community."** - Cunningham (The Growth Of The Church)
 - c. **"Baptism is the grave of the old man and the birth of the new. As he sinks beneath the baptismal waters, the believer buries there all his corrupt affections and past sins; as he emerges thence he rises regenerate, quickened to new hopes and a new life. This baptism is an image of his participation both in the death and resurrection of Christ."** - Bishop Lightfoot (Commentary)

2. Methodist
 - a. **“Alluding to the ‘immersion’ practiced in the case of ‘adults,’ wherein the person appeared to be buried under the water, as Christ was buried in the heart of the earth; His rising again the third day, and their emerging from the water, was an emblem of the resurrection of the body.”** - Adam Clarke (Commentary on Co 2:12)
 - b. **“‘We are buried with him.’ Alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion.”** - John Wesley (Notes)
3. Lutheran
 - a. **“The sacrament of baptism was administered in this century (the first) without the public assemblies, in places appointed and prepared for that purpose, and was performed by an immersion of the whole body in the baptismal font.”**
- Mosheim (Mosheim’s Church History)
 - b. **“For the explanation of this figurative description of the baptismal rite, it is necessary to call attention to the well-known circumstance that in the early days of the church, persons, when baptized, were first plunged below and then raised above the water.”** - Tholuck (Commentary on Romans)
4. Catholic - **“For thirteen hundred years was baptism an immersion of the person under water.”** - Brenner

B. HOW DO THEY RECONCILE THEIR DENOMINATIONS’ PRACTICE...?

1. Since these scholars (and many others) admit and affirm that immersion is the only “form” of baptism taught in the Bible, are they to be charged with dishonesty and insincerity because they practiced “sprinkling” or “pouring”?
2. Not necessarily; rather, they fell into the fallacy of assuming:
 - a. Apostolic commands and examples are not binding
 - b. Human wisdom may alter specific Bible teaching in what they call “rites” or “customs”
3. But Jesus condemned the religious leaders of His day for making the same mistake! - **Mt 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-13**
 - a. Laying aside the commandments of God, they were keeping traditions of men
 - b. By keeping certain traditions, they were not keeping the commandments of God!
4. When one practices pouring or sprinkling...
 - a. They are keeping traditions of men, not the commandments of God
 - b. They render the commandment of God to be immersed (baptized) of no effect!
5. Though sincere, one is not necessarily right; we are right only when we do the Father’s will! - **Mt 7:21-23**
 - a. Love for Jesus will be manifested by keeping His commandments - **Jn 14:15; 15:10,14**
 - b. Love for God is manifested the same way - **1 Jn 5:3**

CONCLUSION

1. What have we learned?
 - a. That the Greek words mean “immersion”
 - b. That “sprinkling” or “pouring” is inconsistent with the **figures of speech** used in the Bible to describe baptism
 - c. That there is no question “immersion” was the mode of baptism in the Bible and the early church

2. As a final confirmation, consider the account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch - **Ac 8:35-39**
 - a. “both Philip and the eunuch went **down into** the water”
 - b. “he **baptized** (immersed) him”
 - c. “they came **up out of** the water”

3. What of yourself?
 - a. Was your baptism like that described in **Ac 8:38-39**?
 - b. If you were **sprinkled** or had water **poured** upon you...
 - 1) You were keeping a tradition of man
 - 2) You have not yet kept the commandment of God!

4. If you have not been baptized (immersed) as commanded by Jesus and His apostles...
 - a. You are still in your sins! - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - b. You have not yet put on Christ and become His disciple! - **Ga 3:27; Mt 28:18-20**

‘And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’ (Acts 22:16)

Baptism

What About Infant Baptism?

INTRODUCTION

1. In the previous studies we have seen that baptism...
 - a. Is essential to:
 - 1) Salvation - **Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - 2) Becoming disciples of Christ - **Mt 28:19-20; Ga 3:27**
 - b. Is immersion, for:
 - 1) The Greek words can only mean immersion
 - 2) Pouring and sprinkling do not fit with figures used to describe baptism in the N.T.
 - 3) Scholars are unanimous in pointing out that immersion was the practice in the Bible and early church
2. Two more questions remain which are often in the minds of people:
 - a. Should infants be baptized?
 - b. Is there ever a need to be “re-baptized?”

[This study shall consider the question “**What About Infant Baptism?**” My first point is to suggest that...]

I. “INFANT BAPTISM” IS NOT BIBLE BAPTISM

A. BIBLE BAPTISM REQUIRES IMMERSION...

1. We have seen that pouring or sprinkling is not baptism
2. Therefore “infant baptism” as commonly practiced is really a misnomer
 - a. “Infant pouring” or “infant sprinkling” would be more accurate
 - b. Only if the infant is immersed could it be called “infant baptism”
- Of course, immersion is not the only thing which constitutes Bible baptism...

B. BIBLE BAPTISM REQUIRES CERTAIN PREREQUISITES...

1. Bible baptism requires **faith** - **Ac 8:35-38**
 - a. Notice the eunuch’s question, and Philip’s response
 - 1) “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”
 - 2) “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”
 - If one believes, they may be baptized - cf. **Mk 16:16**
 - b. Infants, however, are incapable of belief!
2. Bible baptism requires **repentance** - **Ac 2:38**
 - a. If one is a penitent believer, they may be baptized
 - b. But infants are incapable of repentance!

[The first thing to realize about “infant baptism” is that it is not baptism in the strict sense of the word; nor is it the baptism spoken of in the N.T., which was only for those who possessed faith and a penitent

heart. Another point to consider is...]

II. “INFANT BAPTISM” IS NOT NECESSARY

A. THE RISE OF INFANT BAPTISM IN CHURCH HISTORY...

1. Even those who later approved of infant baptism admit that one could not prove it from the Scriptures...
 - a. **“It cannot be proved by the sacred Scriptures that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians after the apostles.”** - Martin Luther (On Rebaptism)
 - b. **“Infant baptism was established neither by Christ nor the apostles. In all places where we find the necessity of baptism notified, either in a dogmatic or historical point of view, it is evident that it was only meant for those who were capable of comprehending the word preached, and of being converted to Christ by an act of their own will.”** - Jacobi (Article on Baptism in Kitto’s Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature, Vol. I, p. 287)
2. If this is true, when did the practice of “infant baptism” begin?
 - a. The earliest mention of infant baptism is around 200 A.D.
 - b. The practice began only after the doctrine of “original sin” had been developed
 - 1) **“The early theological development of the doctrine of original sin contributed to the importance of infant baptism.”** (Christianity Through The Centuries, p. 160)
 - 2) The whole basis of “infant baptism”, therefore, lies in the assumption that infants are born in sin

B. ARE BABIES BORN IN SIN...?

1. Of course, the doctrine of “original sin” means different things to different people
 - a. Some understand it to refer only to inheriting the “fallen nature” of Adam, and not any personal guilt of his
 - b. But the common conception includes the idea of inheriting the guilt of Adam’s sin as well, meaning that babies are born in sin and guilty of sin
 - c. It is this latter understanding that led to the practice of infant baptism
2. People are not held accountable for the guilt of their forbears!
 - a. God has clearly said that He does not hold the child guilty for the sins of the father - **Ezek 18:20**
 - b. Paul described a time in his life when we was alive before he became a sinner - **Ro 7: 7-11**
 - 1) According to the common idea of original sin, this would have been impossible!
 - 2) But not if children are born free from the guilt of sin and remain such until they reach an age of accountability
3. Consider also the nature of the New Covenant - **He 8:6-13**
 - a. One of the notable features about the New Covenant is:
 - 1) **“None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying ‘Know the Lord’...”**
 - 2) **“For all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.”**
 - In other words, no one enters into this new covenant without already knowing the

Lord!

- b. Unlike the Old Covenant...
 - 1) Where people entered the covenant by virtue of birth into the family (Israel)
 - 2) Where males entered the covenant by virtue of circumcision when eight days old
 - 3) Where as they grew older they had to be taught to know the Lord!
- c. When “infant baptism” is practiced, this distinctive feature of the new covenant is no longer present!
 - 1) Children, who have supposedly entered a covenant relationship with the Lord, still need to be taught as they get older
 - 2) They have to be taught to know the Lord!
- d. This distinctive feature of the new covenant is true only when:
 - 1) Baptism (the means by which we enter a covenant relationship with the Lord today) is administered to penitent believers
 - 2) Those who enter the covenant have already been taught about the Lord (via the gospel of Christ)

CONCLUSION

- 1. Should infants be baptized? The answer is “yes” if we can show...:
 - a. One example in the N.T. where infants were baptized
 - b. They meet the prerequisites of faith and repentance required of all those baptized in the N.T.
 - c. They can know the Lord somehow before they enter into the relationship baptism places them, and so do not need to be taught to know the Lord
- 2. But the Biblical facts are...
 - a. There is not one case of “infant baptism” in the N.T.!
 - b. Only those who believe and have repented may be baptized!
 - c. To baptize infants would make the point of **He 8:11** without meaning!
- 3. The logical conclusion from the Biblical evidence is that babies...
 - a. Are born into this world without the personal guilt of their ancestors
 - b. Are not lost and in need of salvation
 - c. Are “safe” (not “saved,” for they were never “lost”)
 - d. Remain safe until they reach an accountable age where they become guilty of their sins, and in need of salvation
- 4. What if you were “baptized” as an infant?
 - a. Most likely you were not actually baptized (immersed), simply “sprinkled”
 - b. Even if immersed, it was not “Bible baptism”, which requires faith and repentance
 - Thus you are still in need of obeying the Word of the Lord!

Don't place your faith in the traditions of men, or in the doctrines of some church; place your faith in the Word of God, and obey it accordingly!

Baptism

What About Re-Baptism?

INTRODUCTION

1. In our study of baptism we have seen that it is...
 - a. **Essential**
 - 1) To salvation - **Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - 2) To becoming disciples of Christ - **Mt 28:19-20; Ga 3:27**
 - b. **Immersion, not pouring or sprinkling**
 - 1) The Greek words can only mean immersion
 - 2) Pouring and sprinkling do not fit the figures used to describe baptism in the NT.
 - 3) Scholars are unanimous that immersion was the practice in the NT.
 - c. **For penitent believers**
 - 1) For sinners with faith in the Lord Jesus and who have repented of their sins
 - 2) Not infants, who are incapable of faith and repentance
2. Another question that is often raised: **“Is there ever a need to be re-baptized?”**
 - a. What about those who were sprinkled?
 - b. What about those who were baptized as infants?
 - c. What about those who were baptized believing they were already saved?

[This study examines the question of re-baptism, first by noticing...]

I. A CASE OF “RE-BAPTISM” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. RECORDED IN ACTS 19:1-5...

1. Background information is found in **Ac 18:24-28**
 - a. Apollos had been teaching the baptism of John
 - b. But he himself was taught more accurately by Aquila and Priscilla
2. Paul finds some “disciples” at Ephesus - **Ac 19:1-3**
3. Upon further examination he has them “re-baptized” - **Ac 19:4-5**

B. SOME OBSERVATIONS...

1. They had been previously “baptized”
2. But their baptism was lacking in some way
 - a. Even though it was immersion
 - b. Even though it was “for the remission of sins” - **Mk 1:4**
3. But their baptism was not in the name of Jesus, i.e., by His authority - **Ac 2:38; 10:48; 19:5**
 - a. Which would have been a baptism into the name of the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Son - **Mt 28:19**
 - b. Which would have been a baptism into the death of Christ, by which they would have been clothed with Christ - **Ro 6:3-7; Ga 3:27**

- **Because their first “baptism” lacked an essential element, “re-baptism” was necessary!**

[May we not conclude that if an earlier “baptism” lacks some essential element, then “re-baptism” is necessary? To determine whether “re-baptism” is required of us, consider...]

II. WHEN “RE-BAPTISM” IS APPROPRIATE

A. FOUR “ELEMENTS” CONSTITUTE BIBLE BAPTISM...

1. The proper **mode**: a burial (immersion) - **Ro 6:3; Co 2:12**
2. The proper **authority**: in the name of Christ - **Ac 19:5**
3. The proper **purpose**: for the remission of sins - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
4. The proper **subject**: a penitent believer - **Ac 2:38; 8:37; Mk 16:16**

B. WHEN ONE ELEMENT WAS LACKING, “RE-BAPTISM” WAS COMMANDED...

1. In **Ac 19:1-5**, the proper **authority** was lacking
2. Even though their previous baptism had the right **mode, purpose, and subject**, “re-baptism” was commanded!

C. APPLYING WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED...

1. If we were baptized **by sprinkling or pouring**:
 - a. As practiced by Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists and others
 - b. Our baptism lacked the proper **mode** (immersion)
 - “Re-baptism” would be therefore be necessary
2. If we were baptized **by the authority of anyone other than Jesus**:
 - a. Such as Ellen G. White (Seventh Day Adventists), The Watch Tower Society (Jehovah Witnesses), Joseph Smith (Mormons), and others
 - b. Our baptism was not by the right **authority** (Jesus Christ)
 - “Re-baptism” would be therefore be necessary
3. If we were baptized **as a public confession of faith** (thinking we were already saved):
 - a. As practiced by most Baptists, Assemblies Of God, and others
 - b. Our baptism was not for the right **purpose** (remission of sins)
 - “Re-baptism” would be required to ensure we have been scripturally baptized
4. Finally, if we were baptized **but were not penitent believers**:
 - a. As is the case when people are baptized...
 - 1) When all their friends are doing it
 - 2) Because their spouse, fiancé, or parents are pressuring them to do it (and they do it to please them, not God)
 - 3) As infants incapable of faith or repentance
 - b. Our baptism was lacking the right **subjects** (penitent believers)
 - Our need for “re-baptism” would be just as great as any other!

CONCLUSION

1. In summarizing what has been said in this study:

- a. If our baptism lack any of the four essential elements of Bible baptism...
 - 1) The proper **mode** - immersion
 - 2) The proper **authority** - Jesus Christ
 - 3) The proper **purpose** - for remission of sins
 - 4) The proper **subject** - a penitent believer
 - b. Then “re-baptism” is both appropriate and necessary to ensure that our sins have been washed away by the blood of Jesus!
2. But perhaps I should clarify:
- a. When one is baptized because their “first” baptism lacked an essential element...
 - 1) It is not really “re-baptism”
 - 2) Technically speaking, the person is being baptized scripturally for the first time
 - b. When one has been scripturally baptized once...
 - 1) There is never a need to be baptized again!
 - 2) For once we have clothed ourselves with Christ in baptism:
 - a) The blood of Christ continually cleanses us of our sins
 - b) As we repent and confess our sins to God in prayer - **Ac 8:22; 1 Jn 1:9**

Have you been scripturally baptized? If you desire assistance, please feel free to let me know! May God bless you in your efforts to do His Will!

Baptism

For Your Further Study

For a much more in-depth study on the subject of “baptism,” I recommend the following books:

- ♦ **Baptism In The New Testament** (G. R. Beasley-Murray, Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1962, 442 pages)

This is an excellent treatment of the subject from a scholarly point of view, by one of the foremost scholars among the Baptist denomination. He readily admits that his conclusions run counter to the views held by those in his own denomination.

- ♦ **Baptism And The Remission Of Sins** (Edited by David W. Fletcher, College Press Publishing Co., Joplin, Missouri, 1990, 432 pages)

This is a collection of articles surveying throughout church history the view that baptism is for the remission of sins. It also discusses controversies surrounding “re-baptism.”