

What Is Baptism?

The best way to really understand baptism is to search the Scriptures to see what they say. The Scriptures explain what baptism is, what baptism accomplishes, and why we should want to be baptized.

“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’” (Acts 2:38). In his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Peter declared to them that everyone needs to be baptized for the remission of sins. Remission can be described as being released from bondage, being delivered, being pardoned, or being forgiven.

“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). Paul, in retelling his own conversion, quoted Ananias as saying baptism is how one washes away their sins. By doing this, we then become pure and clean in God’s sight.

“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” (Romans 6: 3 & 4). Paul tells us in Romans that we are baptized into Christ’s death and in so doing are buried with Him. In the same manner, we rise to a new life and way of living upon coming up out of the water.

“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 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” (Colossians 2: 11 & 12). To give us an illustration of what is achieved through baptism, Paul points us to circumcision. Baptism is how we cut off and put away the body of sins. He goes on to say, we are buried with Christ and raised with Him in baptism.

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3: 26 & 27). When we are baptized into Christ, we also clothe ourselves with Him.

“...who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 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 Peter 3: 20 – 21). In this Scripture, Peter declares that baptism now saves us. It saves us because our good conscience is answering God’s call to do His will and not our own.

The Commands Of Jesus

“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” (Matthew 28: 18 – 20). In the Great Commission, Jesus tells the disciples to go and make disciples. He describes how to make disciples when He says to baptize them and to teach them to obey (observe) all of His commandments.

“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” (Mark 16: 15 – 16). Jesus says here in Mark that a person who believes and is baptized will be saved. A person who does not believe will be condemned.

“Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3: 3 – 5). While talking to Nicodemus, Jesus states that one must be born again. Jesus answers the question of how to be born again by saying that we must be born of the water and the Spirit. He also continues by saying that one cannot enter into the kingdom without being born of the water and the Spirit.

The Example Of Jesus

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?’ But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he allowed Him” (Matthew 3: 13 – 15). Jesus gave us an example of being baptized and said it was a fulfillment of all righteousness.

“Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John” (John 4:1 NKJV). Furthermore, as Jesus ministered, He and His disciples baptized people.

Bible Examples

“But 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” (Acts 8: 12). Philip’s

preaching of the things concerning the kingdom led these Samaritans to be baptized.

“And he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized” (Acts 16:30-33 NKJV). When Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord to the Philippian jailor, he and his household were baptized immediately.

“And he said to them, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’ So they said, ‘Into John's baptism.’ Then Paul said, ‘John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:3-5 NKJV). When these men heard that they must believe on Jesus, they were baptized into His name.

“Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?’ Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him” (Acts 8:36-38 NKJV). When the Ethiopian eunuch asked what might hinder him from being baptized, Philip replied that if he believed he could be baptized. Therefore, Philip reminds us that one thing which would keep a person from being baptized is not believing Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

What About You?

In these Scriptures, we are told baptism brings us remission and washing away of sins. Through baptism, we put off and bury the old body of sin and put on Christ in answer to God's call. We read the examples of Jesus, our Lord and of first century believers. Furthermore, whenever anyone asked what they needed to do, they were not told to pray a prayer or that they were not saved by works. They were told what to do to be saved. They were told the word of God; that they were to believe in Jesus, repent of ungodly living, confess Jesus as Lord and be baptized. So, what hinders you from being baptized?

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That You May Know



ABOUT BAPTISM

by
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