



An undenominational publication
devoted to the teachings of Jesus
and His apostles, and dedicated to
those who seek the truth.

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Theme: *What You Need To Know About Baptism*

Baptism Is Important



There is no greater decision that can be made than to decide to be baptized. There are many teachings and traditions that deal with the subject of baptism. They can be misunderstood and misapplied so we need to go to the Scriptures to be sure that we understand correctly.

The Scriptures teach that baptism is important for the following reasons:

1. We are baptized into Christ according to Romans 6:3-5. “Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” If one is not baptized, he is not in Christ.

2. All spiritual blessings are “in Christ.” “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). Since that is where spiritual blessings are, that is where we need to be. To be in Christ, one must be baptized (Romans 6:3-4).

3. It is a requirement for salvation according to Mark 16:15. “He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.’” If

More About Baptism

BAPTISM IS IMPORTANT continued next page.



Baptism Is Important

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ever there was any doubt about the importance of baptism, Jesus states the truth in a very plain manner. “He who believes and is baptized will be saved.”

4. Baptism is for the forgiveness of sins. Peter said, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

The Apostle Paul was given the message we need to hear today: “Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16).

— Don Rorabaugh, *Greater Torrington Church of Christ*, Torrington, Connecticut



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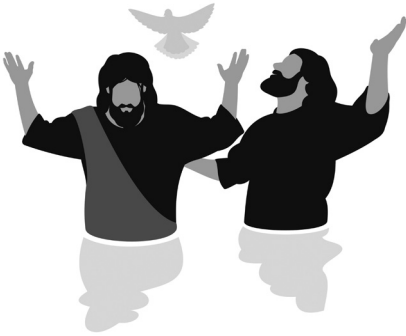


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Sprinkling, Pouring or Immersion?



Ever since the apostles first preached the Good News of Jesus, believers have been baptized. It is generally agreed that water is involved in baptism. However, should baptism be performed by sprinkling, pouring or immersion? What does the Scripture say?

In the New Testament book of Acts, chapter 8, Philip and a man from Ethiopia were talking about Jesus. As they passed a body of water, the man said to Philip: “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?” The passage recounts their going “down into the water” and coming “up out of the water.” If baptism was by pouring or sprinkling, Philip and the Ethiopian would not have needed to go “down into the water.”

In the New Testament book of Acts, chapter 8, Philip and a man from Ethiopia were talking about Jesus. As they passed a body of water, the man said to

In John chapter 3, we discover that John the Baptist “was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water...” If John the Baptist was sprinkling water on the people, he would not have needed a place where there was “plenty of water.”

In Romans chapter 6, the Apostle Paul said that through baptism one is “buried with Christ.” How could pouring or sprinkling be considered a “burial”?

Another consideration when attempting to discover what constitutes Biblical baptism is the meaning of the word “baptize”. The New Testament Scriptures were written in Greek and the Greek word translated into English as “baptize” means to “dip, plunge, submerge” which would exclude sprinkling or pouring.

Based on what the Scriptures teach, it is reasonable to conclude that the proper mode for baptism today is immersion. Have you been scripturally baptized?

— **Danny Campbell**, Church of Christ, Augusta, Maine

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The Purposes of Baptism

You would want to be baptized if you want to engage or involve yourself wholly and deeply with your Savior and Lord.

That's why the Apostle Paul spoke of being "clothed with Christ" in baptism (Galatians 3:27). Being in Christ was how he saw himself related to Jesus. Paul described himself as "a man in Christ" (2 Corinthians 12:2), and said, "God raised us up and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" and "we are God's workmanship. Created in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6 and 10).

How can people be "raised up" by God? The Apostle explained when writing to the church in Rome: "Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:3, 4).

Even more clearly, he wrote to another church, "In baptism you were buried with Him (Jesus) and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God who raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12).

When a person comes into this baptismal relationship with Jesus, a number of glad things accompany it:

One becomes a disciple. Jesus told His first disciples, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 18:19).

One receives forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit as a gift. The Apostle Peter once told inquirers, "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

One becomes a member of Christ's body, the church. "We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body. . ." (1 Corinthians 12:13).

To summarize, one is saved. Jesus said, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). His apostle Peter well understood this when he wrote, "this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you . . . It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).

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Who Should Be Baptized?

The New Testament teaches that one must believe that Jesus risen from the dead is the Lord in order to find salvation (Romans 10:9-10). A sinner must come to a personal faith in Christ.

A sinner must recognize that he needs to be forgiven of his sins. Scripture teaches that everyone must repent of his sins (Acts 3:17-21). Those who are too young to have a personal faith in Jesus and to repent of their sins do not need to be baptized. This is why there is no reference to the baptism of infants in the Scriptures. On the other hand, we read: “When they believed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).

Infants are not born with the guilt of Adam’s sin; they are born innocent. “The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son” (Ezekiel 18:20). Jesus said the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are like little children (Matthew 19:14).



Those who believe that Jesus is the Christ understand they have sinned and are led by their faith to repent of their sins. They are the proper candidates for baptism.

— Gary Babcock, Kent County Church of Christ, Coventry, Rhode Island

Theologians On Baptism

Baptism (in Scripture) was not by sprinkling, but by immersion, and the symbolism of baptism is peculiarly fitted to signify the cleansing of forgiveness.

— WILLIAM BARCLAY

Baptism is a Greek word, and may be translated ‘immerse’. I would have those who are to be baptized to be altogether dipped.

— MARTIN LUTHER, Reformer

It is generally acknowledged that the early church immersed the people coming for baptism. A lexical study of *baptizo* (the Greek word translated *baptise* in the Scripture) indicates it means to “dip, immerse” (Arndt and Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon*). This basic meaning accords with the emphasis of scripture: Jesus was baptized by John “in the Jordan” and He came up “out of the water” (Mark 1:9-10). On the other hand, the Greek has words for *sprinkle* and *pour* that are not used for baptism.

— PAUL ENNS

There is no express mention of the baptizing of infants in the New Testament.

— (Catholic) QUESTION BOX

What Follows Baptism?

When the 3,000 people responded to the preaching of the Gospel in Acts chapter 2, they received forgiveness of sins and the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Then Acts 2:42 states that those who had been baptized:

“Devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

These new Christians clearly recognized the importance of learning God’s truth. They intentionally spent time listening to the **teaching of the apostles**. In short, those new believers were involved in Bible study so they could grow spiritually.

The second activity referred to was their devotion to **‘fellowship.’** Such fellowship would have involved spending time together and sharing with one another. Some of that was done in worship together, but much of it was occurring on a daily basis. As those disciples met, they were encouraging one another and growing in their mutual love in God’s family, the church.

The third activity they chose to participate in was the **‘breaking of bread.’** In the New Testament the Lord’s Supper is referred to as the ‘breaking of bread’ (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16). Because of the close company that the phrase ‘breaking of bread’ keeps with the other three activities referenced in that verse, it appears that Acts 2:42 is underscoring those believers’ devotion and regularity in eating the Lord’s Supper each Lord’s Day (Sunday).

The fourth activity was their devotion to **‘prayer.’** They knew that not only did God communicate with them through the teaching of the apostles, but they also needed to speak with God and be devoted to Him in daily prayer.

Only by giving careful attention to the important things that came after baptism would they continue to be in tune with God and grow in their Christian lives.

Baptism is not the end but *the beginning*. It opens the door to a whole new world of Christian privileges and responsibilities which grow increasingly meaningful and enriching to life. Scripture says: “Be faithful even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).



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