

Baptism - 1

INTRODUCTION:

The Bible message at the close of the 1st century is still the same Bible message for today. It includes all that it included and excludes all that it excuses.

- **A.D. 27** – The baptism administered by John was immersion.
- **A.D. 30** – The baptism administered by the authority of Jesus was immersion.

CHANGES IN THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM

1. **221** years later man made the first change to the biblical doctrine of baptism. **A.D. 251** – The historical occurrence of pouring (Affusion) was the “baptism” of Novation as he lay on his deathbed. It was initially viewed as an exception to the rule, being administered to the sick only. However, over time and through conditioning, it became the accepted practice. This change came **221** years after New Testament baptism had been implemented, and about **126 years after the last of the Bible books had been inspiringly penned.**
2. **1,090** years later man made a second change to the biblical doctrine of baptism. **A.D. 1311** – Sprinkling as a form of “baptism” was authorized by the Roman Catholic Church and was legalized by the Council of Ravenna.
3. **189** years after sprinkling was added as baptism, man made a third change to the Biblical doctrine of baptism, the essentiality of baptism was changed. And nobody doubted the essentiality of baptism until around **1500 AD**, when men thought the grace of God excluded baptism because they concluded that baptism was a work. **GOD’S GRACE DOESN’T EXCLUDE BAPTISM; IT WORKS THROUGH BAPTISM.**

FROM THIS I WANT US TO OBSERVE FOUR THINGS.

1. The Gospel was preached to mankind on the birthday of the Lord’s Church in **A.D. 30** as is recorded in Acts 1.

- When convicted of sin, the multitudes asked in **Acts 2:37**, “. . . Men and brethren, what shall we do?”
 - In **Acts 2:38**, Peter inspiringly told them to “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . .”
 - That was Heaven’s answer to man’s question about being saved.
 - The Greek work “**BAPTIZO**” appears in the text here as well as throughout the remainder of the New Testament where baptism is employed and it always means a burial.
 - The Greek word for **POURING (affusion)** is **CHEO** and is never used in the Bible for baptizo.
 - The Greek word for **SPRINKLING** is **RHANTIZO** and is never used in the Bible for baptizo.
 - Both of those Greek words (rhantizo & Cheo) were known in the 1st Century and to the Holy Spirit that guided the New Testament writers to write, a did not have the writers them use them . . . Only **baptizo**.
2. All three of these changes were made by men after the Bible had been completed.
 - **Pouring** as a form of baptism was instituted by men some **221** years after the church began on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.
 - **Sprinkling** as a form of baptism was instituted by men some **1,281** years after the church began on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.
 - The doctrine that teaches that **baptism is a work and therefore is not essential to salvation** began some **1,470** years after the church began on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.
 3. No authorization for any of these three changes are to be found in the Bible.
 4. All three of these doctrines have originated with men and not from God. The have come from the writings of men and not from the writing of God–The Bible!

In this series of studies about baptism we will see, by way of book, chapter, & verse, that the Bible teaches:

- In **DEFINITION**, baptism is a burial with Christ.

- In **FORM**, baptism is by immersion.
- In **PURPOSE**, baptism is for the remission of sins.
- In **FACT**, baptism is **essential** to one becoming a Christian and entering Heaven after a while.

In this series of lessons a variety of at least six different types of listeners may be present at various times.

1. Those who have been baptized, immersed into Christ for the remission of their sins . . . And I am happy to be counted among them. To you these lessons

- Will reinforce the Scriptural obedience you have rendered.
- Will share some thoughts and passages that help to better discuss with others the subject of baptism further aide you in teaching them the truth.
- Will be like those Peter addressed in **2 Peter 1:12-13** – “For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, **though you know and are established in the present truth**. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you.”

2. Those who have been immersed in the waters of baptism but who have unanswered or unresolved questions or doubts about what they did or the age at which they did it. To you these lessons . . .

- May encourage you to study the Bible for answers to your questions.
- May encourage you to ask your questions or discuss you doubts with our elders or with me. We pledge our help to the very best of our abilities.
- Determine if your baptism was in accordance with the Scriptures.

3. Those who have submitted to a form of baptism that is not authorized in the New Testament (Sprinkling or Pouring/Affusion).

To you these lessons

- Will show you what the Bible actually and honestly teaches about this all-important subject.

- Will encourage you to be baptized Scripturally by immersion for the forgiveness of your sins so you can be raised with Christ. Romans 6:4
4. Those who have sincerely submitted to immersion but for the wrong purpose. By wrong purpose I am referring to any purpose that is not authorized on the pages of the New Testament. To you these lessons
 - See that there is no right way to do a wrong thing!
 - With sincerity you can be baptized according to the truth taught in Scriptures and thereby remove all doubt.
 5. Those who have sincerely submitted to baptism in a denominational church, thus having been baptized according to the doctrine of that denomination rather than the teachings of the Bible. To you these lessons
 - May help you see that sometimes people can think right but do wrongly. Bible baptism requires us to think right and do right according to the teachings of the Bible rather than according to the teachings of men.
 - That what God wants you to do today is the same thing the people in the Book of Acts and throughout the New Testament were required to do . . . Nothing more and nothing less.
 6. Those who have never been baptized at all. To you these lessons
 - Will not only show you what the Bible teaches that you should do, but encourage you not to put it off. The angels in Heaven will rejoice in your obedience to Christ, and we will rejoice with them.
 - Will show you the importance of not delaying your obedience to Christ. The apostle Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 6:2** – “. . . Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

- Are not designed to pressure you . . . They are designed to teach you what the Bible says. Once you know what the Bible teaches on this essential subject, it will be our hope that your heart will be tender and responsive to what God wants to do in order to be saved. Never hesitate to ask questions about anything you may not be understanding. Your questions will be answered from what the Bible says.

Some Confusion may reign in the hearts and minds of those who watched the History channel series–The Bible–that aired for two hours each Sunday evening for five weeks culminating on Easter Sunday in 2013. Some things were Biblically accurate and some things were not. To me it seemed that they got many of the hard things right and the easy and simple thing wrong. Take for example, the subject of baptism and how confusing they made it.

- Jesus was immersed by John the Baptizer in the third episode. They got that right and I was excited to see it.
- Saul of Tarsus leaned his head back and had water poured on it in the final episode. They got that wrong. I guess this appeased the Affusion/Pouring theologians that advised the filmmakers.
- Cornelius had his head dipped under water while the remainder of his body was not even in water. They got that wrong, as well.

The world need not be confused on this or any other Bible subject if it will just accept and do what God has authorized and commanded. To that end these lessons are being presented. Bro. Eldon Rogers said, **“In obeying the Gospel I may be required to do more than what a verse says, but I will never be required to do less than what any verse says.”**

Bible Baptism

The Bible never speaks of a believer in Christ who has not been baptized. The apostle Paul said in **Galatians 1:10** - “If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.” And that’s why we ask what God says about every moral and spiritual matter. We’re involved in a search for the truth, for the Lord’s will. We want nothing more and nothing less

Several years ago a man far from God called a fellow gospel preacher on a Friday night to come and study the Bible with him. He said that when he was a young teenager, he was baptized in a denominational church. But years later he learned that what he did as a youth and what the Bible teaches about baptism were different. This left him confused, and he wanted to know what the Word of God said. He desperately wanted to be right with God. You see, he was in poor health; and the doctor told him that if he didn’t change his ways, his heart would give out and he would die. He remembered promises that he had made many years before and he wanted to do what was right.

The preacher met him the next morning, and together they studied from Scripture what the Bible says about Christian baptism, and that is what I want us to do in this series of lessons.

Our lesson text today from God’s Holy Word comes from **Matthew 3:13-17**. “Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?’ But Jesus answering said to him, ‘Permit it at this time; for in this way **it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**’ Then he permitted Him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and lighting on Him; and behold, a voice out of the heavens, said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ ”

For centuries people have debated the subject of baptism. No question about that! And while that may be true, we're going to focus on what the New Testament teaches about Christian baptism. We want to know how baptism fits with our conversion to Jesus Christ, how baptism fits with becoming a Christian. And we're going to study through the New Testament. We are limited in time, so we'll move fast and only endeavor make the most important points. The Bible does not debate baptism as many do today, but rather states it as a matter of fact and directly from God. In Matthew 3, Jesus considered it important to be baptized. He left his home in Nazareth and walked many miles to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. John was surprised at Jesus coming for baptism, since John's baptism was according to Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3 a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." Jesus has never sinned and He didn't need forgiveness. John said that he needed baptism from Jesus. But Jesus said, "Let it be so now, for thus **it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**" Jesus was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, and it is the right thing for us to do. Luke 7:29-30 says that anyone who rejected the baptism of John was rejecting the purpose of God. If this is true of John's baptism, it is even more true of the baptism of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 3:16-17 says, "And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, '**This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.**'" God approved of this baptism. Notice that after baptism, Jesus went up from the river. The water baptism of Jesus took place down into the river. And John 3:23 says that, "John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, (that is there was much water there) and people were coming and being baptized."

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In His last words recorded in Matthew, Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (**Matthew 28:18-20**).

Now, the apostles made disciples by two means: first, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and second, by teaching them all that Jesus commanded them. The idea of a non-baptized disciple or Christian is never contemplated in the New Testament.

The Lord said in **Mark 16:15-16**, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” Now, two things are necessary to respond to the gospel and to be saved: faith **and** baptism. It is not right to say that one is necessary but the other is optional. The Lord included both. In **John 3:3** Jesus told Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘Well, 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 in **verse 5**, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot (cannot) enter the kingdom of God.”

Now, every writer in the early church, all of the early church fathers agreed that this new birth of water and the Spirit in John 3:5 is water baptism. In fact, no one said otherwise until the 1500s. The idea of a person being born again before he is baptized is simply not found in Scripture.

On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, Peter and the apostles preached the first gospel sermon. In the sermon Peter made a charge against the people in **Acts 2:26** - . “Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Although that indeed is a powerful charge and accusation against them, it was a true one. **Acts 2:37-39** says: “Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart; they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ And Peter said to them, ‘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. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off [Gentiles], everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.’ ”

These guilty people asked what they should do because they felt the sting of their sin of crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter said they needed to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus in order to have the forgiveness of their sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **Both repentance and baptism precede God’s forgiveness.** Some say one ought to be baptized because their sins are already forgiven, but this idea ignores the context and must be read into the passage. **They’re not asking what to do after they are forgiven but what to do in order to be forgiven.**

Remember the phrase “for the forgiveness of sins;” . . . It was used of John’s baptism in Mark 1:4 and also in Luke 3:3. But it is also found in **Matthew 26:28**, where the Lord says, “for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” Jesus poured out his blood so that people might have forgiveness. Now, Peter was there when Jesus said this just fifty-two or so days

before. It's not an accident that he uses this very phrase in reference to repentance and baptism.

Some recent translations make **Acts 2:38** even clearer. **God's Word to The Nations** for instance says, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ so that your sins will be forgiven." **The New Revised Standard Version** says, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven." **The International English Bible** says, "Change your hearts and each one of you must be immersed by the authority of Jesus the Messiah, so that your sins may be forgiven."

Now, **Acts 2:40-41** shows this even stronger. It says: "And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this crooked generation.' So **those who received his word were baptized**, and there were added that day about three thousand souls." **Those who were told to save themselves were baptized!** Now, apparently about three thousand people, like you, understood this message and gladly did what Peter told them to do. They understood **what** to do and **why** they needed to do it.

Next let's look at **Acts 8: 12**. The Bible says, "But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." **They baptized men and women, but not infants or small children** . They baptized people who were old enough to believe in the name of Jesus Christ and to repent of their sins. In **Acts 5:14** the Bible tells us that the believers were added to the Lord, both men and women. The words for men and women speak of males and females of full age and stature. They could believe and they could repent. **They could responsibly make decisions for themselves.**

Acts 8 also tells of Philip and the Eunuch, the Ethiopian Eunuch. This eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home. In his chariot he was reading from the book of Isaiah. The Holy Spirit told Philip to join the eunuch in his chariot; and Philip ran to

him and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And the eunuch replied, “Well, how can I, unless someone guides me?” And the place that he was reading is found in **Isaiah 53:7-8**.

Acts 8:34-38 says this: “The eunuch answered Philip and said, ‘Please tell me, of whom does this prophet speak? Of Himself or of someone else?’ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from the Scripture he preached Jesus to him. And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, ‘Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?’ [And Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.’] And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him.”

Now, Philip preached the gospel of Jesus to the Eunuch. And apparently, preaching the gospel meant preaching baptism, because as soon as Philip finished, the Eunuch asked, “What prevents [hinders] me from being baptized?” They both went down into the water. Philip baptized him, and they came up out of the water. Now, whatever baptism is, it happens when people go down into water and before they can come out of it.

Baptism . . . that word, is actually a very specific term; and it means immersion. Some translations no longer use the English word baptism anymore; they translate the Greek word baptizo as “immerse.” Baptism is a dipping, an immersion in water. Baptizo is never used to speak of sprinkling or pouring. Other words in Greek describe those actions. **The word for sprinkle is rhantizo, and the word for pour is cheo.** Philip didn’t do either one; he immersed the Eunuch.

In Acts chapter 9 we find Saul of Tarsus who persecuted the church relentlessly. And on his way to Damascus, he was blinded and encountered the Lord Jesus. **Acts 9:4-6** says that, “he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and

it will be told you what you **must** do.” Listening friends . . . not one word of this account of Saul on the road suggests that he is saved. In fact, we know that he is not saved at this point. He had to go to Damascus and **be told what he must do**.

Verse 9 says that Saul is without sight for three days, and he neither ate nor drank. Saul was in shock. You see, he had been persecuting Jesus who really was the Son of God and risen from the dead. And though blind in sight, he had his spiritual eyes opened to the truth. He was zealous for Judaism and thought he was doing the right thing to persecute the church, but Saul of Tarsus was wrong. In **1 Timothy 1:15** he calls himself “the chief of sinners.” So in verse 11, Paul is in Damascus, and he’s in a house on a street called Straight, and he is praying.

Paul must have prayed more fervently than he had ever prayed in his whole life. He was blind, and he was humble, and he was penitent for all the evil that he had done to the church. This broken man desperately wanted to be healed and to be right with God. But he must wait to do what he will be told. **You see, even fervent prayer didn’t bring about the washing away of his sins.** We will find that out. Now, this might shock you, but stay with me on this. Some people ask people to say a sinner’s prayer with them; you know that’s how they think that they are saved; and they promise them salvation when they pray. But Acts 9 says absolutely nothing about a sinner’s prayer bringing salvation and freedom from sin. In fact, Saul is not yet saved; and we can know this from the Bible.

If you open your Bible with me to **Acts 22:13** Paul tells of Ananias who came, Paul said who “[Ananias] came to me, and standing near said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ (Now, some say the word “brother” means Saul is a Christian, but Ananias is just referring to him as a fellow Jew. You see, Jews called each other “brother.”)

And then **verses 14-16** say: “And at that very time I looked up at him. And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear an utterance from

His mouth. For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.” Now, Ananias told Saul that he must “be baptized and wash away your (his) sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” If Saul was saved on the road or if Saul was saved by prayer, he wouldn’t need to wash away his sins in baptism. **Acts 9:18** tells us – “. . . **And he arose and was baptized.**” Now, at the Barnes household, we wash dirty clothes. We don’t wash the clean ones. The washing of baptism is necessary because our souls need cleansing by the blood of Jesus Christ. Many refer to being baptized as a work. It is indeed a work, but not a work that we do. When I hear people say baptism is a work, I can agree with them to this point . . . **Baptism is a work that saves; but it is not our work but God’s work.** You see, we’re saved by grace through faith according to Ephesians 2:8. **Baptism is not something that we do, but something we choose to have done to us.** The command is to be baptized. **Now, the one baptizing does the work; and the one being baptized is acted upon. And just as the one baptizing does the physical work, so God does the saving in a spiritual work or act.** You see God is the One who washes away your sins . . . God is the One who forgives and causes us to be born again . . . **God is the active One in baptism and we are the passive ones receiving His kindness and grace.**

There are **ten case examples** found in **the Book of Acts**, and each one was baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins.

1. Day of Pentecost **2:41**
2. Samaritans. **8:12**
3. Simon. **8:13**
4. Ethiopian Eunuch. **8:38**
5. Saul (Paul) of Tarsus. **9:18**
6. Cornelius & her Household. **10:48**
7. Lydia & Household. **16:15**
8. Philippian Jailor & his Household. **16:33**
9. Corinthians. **18:8**
10. 12 men at Ephesus. **19:1-5**

Baptism is never something that's done all by itself. Without exception, those who were baptized in the New Testament first heard the gospel preached and believed it. Baptism without faith is useless; this is why we don't baptize people who do not or cannot believe. The Lord also wants us to confess our faith before others. In addition to faith, the Lord also expects us to turn our lives around in repentance. We must leave sin and give our heart in service to the Lord. When people have confessed and repented, then they are ready to be baptized and not before. **This is the time that God washes away their sins by the blood of Jesus.** Have you done that? . . . Are you ready to do that now? Are you ready to "rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord"? We stand ready to assist you.

Sermon Idea: Phil Sanders, In Search of the Lord's Way