

THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM

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INTRODUCTION:

- A. Before Jesus left this earth to return to Heaven and serve as our High Priest, He gave His apostles a mission that continues to be the focus of Christ's disciples today! (**Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16**)
- B. Baptism is a subject which the NT spends a great deal of time discussing, but it's also one of the most confused subjects! It's also one of the things that sets us apart from most of our religious community!
 - 1. The difference between what I believe the Bible says about how to be saved and the concept taught by most denominational churches is just one step – Baptism! Why leave this off?
 - 2. Let's take the sword God has given us, His word, to cut through the jungle of misunderstanding & doctrines made by men to answer the question: What does God's word say about baptism?

I. WHAT IS THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM? IS IT NECESSARY FOR SALVATION OR NOT?

- A. First, let's see The Great Commission in action by looking at examples in the book of Acts:
 - 1. The first time we see it is when 3,000 were saved on Pentecost (**Acts 2:21, 36-38, 40-41, 47**)
 - a. Verse 21 is the message of salvation we often hear but is misunderstood! How do you really do this? Confess Christ? The Sinner's Prayer? Follow the account & it tells you!
 - b. When they what they should do, what are they asking? They'd just got told they crucified their Savior! They saw their sin! They want salvation & Peter's response shows that!
 - c. Peter tells them to repent & be baptized FOR the remission of sin → People have tried to explain this away saying it means, "Because you've already been saved" but notice this is a response to their question: "What must we do?" Which makes more sense?
 - d. Follow this: Vs 21 (not saved); Vs 37 (not saved); Vs. 38 (not saved); Vs 40 (not saved); Vs 41 (were baptized); Vs 47 (saved) → What changed? Note: They already believed!
 - 2. Another good example is that of the Ethiopian Eunuch (**Acts 8:34-39**)
 - a. Summary: The Eunuch reads a prophecy about Jesus and is confused. God sends Philip to explain it to the Eunuch and Philip preaches Christ to him. The man wants to be baptized! What does this tell us? Preaching Christ means preaching baptism!
 - b. If baptism is just an outward sign of the inward man, why such an urgency to stop the chariot? Those who teach baptism is not essential would find this inconvenient!
 - c. If baptism is just a religious act, after one is saved, that makes you a part of a certain denomination what denomination, or even church, did this man join when baptized?
 - 3. Was it just a Jewish thing? Cornelius shows baptism for salvation was for all men! (**Acts 10:44-48**)
 - a. See the order – Peter preaches Christ, they believe, Holy Spirit descends, he baptizes them
 - b. Some might think they were saved before since because the Holy Spirit descended upon them & they spoke in tongues first, but notice Peter's recount of this story (**Acts 11:12-14**)
 - 1) He was to preach words by which they'd be saved – What did he tell them to do?
 - 2) In context these Jews aren't upset that the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles but that Peter baptized them! The H.S. was sent as proof that he could baptize them!
 - 3) Which baptism was most important to Cornelius & his house? Water baptism!
 - 4. Finally, let's consider the example of Saul of Tarsus (**Acts 9:5-6, 17-19; 22:10, 16**)
 - a. At the point Jesus finishes speaking to Saul, does Saul believe? OF COURSE! However, Jesus tells him to go on into Damascus and someone will tell him what he must do!

- b. According to this account why was Saul baptized? It was to wash away his sins!
- c. According to this account, how does one call upon the name of the Lord? Through baptism!
- 5. Examples like this fill the book of Acts confirming that baptism is a necessary step to salvation!
 - a. These examples are The Great Commission in action! (**Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:12-13; 18:8**)
 - b. **Chart** → Isn't it surprising the one step emphasized the most is the one rejected by men!

B. Now, let's look at the epistles to see what they teach about baptism:

1. **Romans 6:1-6** → One of the most foundational passages showing what baptism is all about:
2. **Galatians 3:26-27** → Shows the connections of baptism to faith and our relationship with Christ:
 - a. According to this how does one get into Christ? How does one put on Christ? How does one become a son of God? Faith and baptism – Sound like the great commission?
 - b. Paul draws some direct connections here → They were in Christ and sons of God because of their faith... but then says how this took place – Through their baptism
 - c. This makes sense because as we know from other places, the type of faith that actually saves is a faith that is active! Here baptism is the action that completes our faith!
3. **Colossians 2:11-13** → Connects baptism to the removal of our sins, faith, and God's working:
 - a. Baptism is a spiritual circumcision –Paul shows it is at this point that our sins are removed
 - b. Notice too that baptism is given as the point at which we become ONE with Christ!
 - c. Again we see the great commission – It's through faith and baptism our sins are forgiven!
 - d. Some get hung up on baptism because they view it as a work where we attempt to earn our salvation → When one is baptized who's doing the work? It's God not us!
4. **1 Peter 3:21** → Very plainly teaches that baptism does saves us & gives us a clean conscience!
 - a. **Illustration:** Someone once told me, "If baptism really saves you, why wouldn't God have just said so!" Well, God did say so! In fact, how much plainer could He have put it?
 - b. Peter had talked previously about the salvation of Noah – How God used water to save Noah from a wicked world → So God uses water now to save us from our sins!
 - c. Some think, "But that means the power is in the water" – No, Peter says the power is in the resurrection of Jesus Christ! Baptism is just the method God chose to use!
5. As we put several verses together, we see that baptism is necessary for salvation because it is the method God chose for us to die with Christ! (**2 Tim 2:11; Col 2:20; Gal 2:20**)
 - a. The goal of every person who wants to be a Christian is to be in Christ and to put on Christ, but the question is how do we do that? We do that by dying with Christ!
 - b. But the question that needs to be asked is how and when do we die with Christ? We aren't left to wonder since the Bible answers that question on its own! (**Rom 6:3-4**)