

The Necessity Of Bible Baptism



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

The Necessity Of Bible Baptism

Learn how God has used water to accomplish His purposes in the past and how God has used water to save people today

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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The Necessity Of Bible Baptism

Is the one baptism Paul mentions in Ephesians 4:5 and that Jesus commands in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16) necessary for salvation? That is, can you be saved eternally in Heaven without being baptized? The overwhelming majority of religious organizations say that baptism is ***not*** necessary for salvation. However, I trust that you will consider this lesson with an open and honest heart that is ready to receive the truth from God about baptism – and that you will be able to see that baptism ***is*** essential for salvation.

Before we consider some passages that demonstrate the essential nature of Bible baptism, let me ask: What is our standard for answering this question? That is, by what means are we to arrive at the “right” answer to this question about the necessity of Bible baptism? Certainly, our standard **must not** be the doctrines of men, the religious traditions of men, the opinions of men, personal conscience, the “majority view” on the subject, or any other standard derived from within mankind. Instead, the standard which must be used to

determine whether baptism is essential for salvation or not **must be** the teachings of God’s word! After all, it is God’s word that will be the standard by which we will all be judged (John 12:48; Romans 2:16; Revelation 20:11-15) – not human standards of authority! It is God’s word that is fully authoritative and we must look only to it for the right answer about the necessity of Bible baptism. Then, we must bring our thoughts and opinions into subjection to the teachings of God’s word!

Now, as we prepare to go through this study, please recognize that there are other things necessary for salvation (i.e. hearing God’s word, faith, repentance, and confessing Christ). It is not the purpose of this lesson to discuss everything God has required for salvation. The purpose of this study is to examine what God’s word teaches about the necessity of Bible baptism and encourage you to be obedient to its instructions. Through this study, we want to consider how God has used water in the past to accomplish His purposes, to evaluate some passages indicating the essential nature of baptism, and to discover where God has put baptism.

God’s Use Of Water

“Why would God require water baptism for salvation?” Some simply cannot understand why God would require someone to be baptized (immersed in water) in order to be saved. They cannot understand what being immersed in water has to do with the salvation of the soul or the forgiveness of sins. Consider two quick points. (1) When God commands something to be done or left undone, it is not our place to question the reason why! Instead, it is our role to humbly submit to the will of God. Remember, our thoughts are not God’s thoughts – and His ways are much higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9)! (2) As you study the Scriptures, you will discover that God has used water other times to accomplish His purposes. Therefore, as you consider the requirement of water baptism, it should not come as a surprise to see God’s use of water for salvation. Let’s consider some times in the Bible when God used water to accomplish His purposes.

The flood

Genesis chapters 6-8 records God's use of water to deliver Noah and his family from a sin-filled world. Genesis 6:5-7 describes the Lord's hatred of the wickedness that had filled the earth, determining to destroy man from the face of the earth. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8). Genesis 6:13-22 then proceeds to describe the instructions God gave to Noah concerning the construction of an ark that would deliver him and his family from the flood God would use to destroy the wickedness on the earth. Then, in chapters 7-8, the flood is described as covering all of the earth – over even the highest mountain.

Now, please evaluate: Did God use water to accomplish His purpose to destroy wicked man from the face of the earth and deliver Noah and his family? Absolutely! Consider 1 Peter 3:20: "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." Therefore, these eight souls (Noah, his wife, his sons, and his sons' wives) were all "saved through water"!

The exodus

When the king of Egypt was threatened by the size of the nation of Israel, he determined to put them to hard labor (Exodus 1:8-22). It was during this time that Moses was born, was taken by Pharaoh's daughter, and was later called by God to deliver the Israelites out of Egyptian captivity (Exodus 2-3). After this, Moses went to Pharaoh (by the instruction of God) to command that God's people be permitted to go into the wilderness to hold a feast to God. However, Pharaoh would not comply with this demand. As a result, God proceeded to bring the ten plagues upon the Egyptians. Upon the completion of the tenth plague, Pharaoh told the Israelites to go and serve God. However, Pharaoh changed his mind and pursued the Israelites after they had left. Then, as Pharaoh's army was closing in on the nation of Israel (in Exodus 14), God used Moses to cause the Red Sea to be parted so that the Israelites could cross on dry land – and then caused the Sea to cover all of the Egyptians!

Now, please evaluate: Did God use water to accomplish His purpose to deliver His people from Egyptian bondage and destroy His enemies? Absolutely! In fact, Paul identifies the Red Sea crossing as the baptism of Moses (as they were completely surrounded by water). 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 says, "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

Naaman's healing

Naaman was a commander of the army of the King of Syria (2 Kings 5:1). However, he was also a leper (leprosy was a dreaded disease at that time). This news was sent to the king of Israel – and the prophet Elisha was informed about the situation. Word was then sent for Naaman to come to Elisha so that he could be healed and so that it would be known that there was a prophet in Israel. Whenever Naaman came to Elisha's house, he was instructed, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean" (2 Kings 5:10). Initially, Naaman thought that this proposition was absurd and refused to obey the instructions (2 Kings 5:11-12). However, after Naaman's servant convinced him to be obedient to the instructions, Naaman went and dipped seven times in the Jordan River – and he was healed of his leprosy (2 Kings 5:13-14)!

Now, please evaluate: Did God use water to accomplish His purpose of cleansing Naaman and causing people to know that there was a prophet in Israel? Absolutely! And, this was even true – even though it did not make any sense to Naaman. Naaman could not understand how dipping seven times in the Jordan River could possibly result in being cleansed. However, it was Naaman's faith and obedience to the instruction that was given to him (working with the power of God) that resulted in the healing!

Healing a blind man

In John 9:1, Jesus came upon a man who had been born blind. Jesus demonstrated that the man was not blind because of some sin either he or his parents had committed. Instead, Jesus said that he

was blind so that the “works of God should be revealed in him” (John 9:3). Then, Jesus proceeded to spit on the ground, make clay with the saliva, anoint the blind man’s eyes with the clay, and instruct him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (John 9:6-7). Verse 7 says, “So he went and washed, and came back seeing.”

Now, please evaluate: Did God use water to accomplish His purpose of healing a man of his blindness and demonstrating that Jesus Christ was the Son of God? Absolutely! Once again, He accomplished this even though His use of water had no physical healing powers (i.e. not every blind person who washed in this pool would come out seeing). Instead, it was this man’s faith and obedience to Jesus’ instructions (working with the power of God) that resulted in the healing!

God has used water to accomplish His purposes!

Has God used water to accomplish His purposes? Absolutely! These are four examples of God’s use of water. Could God have chosen some other way to accomplish these purposes? I’m sure He could have chosen many other ways to accomplish these same purposes – if He so desired. However, God still chose to use water.

In each one of these four examples, then, it was not the place of these individuals to *question* God’s motives for using water or to question how God could accomplish His purposes by using water. It was simply their responsibility to believe and obey God. Noah needed to build the ark. The Israelites needed to cross the Red Sea. Naaman needed to dip seven times in the Jordan River. The blind man needed to wash in the pool of Siloam. By implication, we can reasonably conclude that if they failed to do these things, they would not have been saved!

Therefore, it should not come as a surprise to you or be a great source of difficulty to know that God uses water to accomplish His purpose of salvation today! He has demonstrated such in the past. Furthermore, we must simply believe and obey

God’s instructions – whether they make sense to us or not!

Passages Indicating The Necessity Of Baptism

Now that we understand that God has used water to accomplish His purposes in the past, let’s focus on whether or not God uses water today to accomplish His purpose of salvation. I simply ask that you lay aside any preconceived ideas that you may have about the role of baptism for salvation – and that you will simply look to these passages of Scripture to see what God says on the subject.

John 3:3-6

“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. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit’” (John 3:3-6).

Jesus clearly indicates that a new birth is necessary in order to be part of the kingdom of God. But, as the text bears out, this cannot be a literal rebirth. Rather, this is a spiritual rebirth. Thus, this spiritual rebirth is necessary in order to have a part of God’s kingdom (His church). The question then becomes, “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 says that there are two elements involved in this new birth: The water and the Spirit.

What water is this? As you consider the other passages that we will be discussing in this part of the lesson, it should be clear that this is a direct reference to the action of baptism! There is no other reference to water in the Scriptures that is joined with the act of becoming part of the kingdom of God! Then, this is also coupled with the work of the Holy Spirit. The

Holy Spirit has a part in salvation because He revealed the will of God to those who wrote the words of the Bible. Therefore, as an individual is obedient to the instructions of God that have been revealed by the Spirit (which includes the instruction to be baptized), an individual is born of the Spirit! You could also consider Titus 3:4-7 and 1 Corinthians 12:13 to see some similar expressions to this one. However, all of these passages involve the same two elements that work in tandem: Baptism and the Holy Spirit. An individual is born of the Spirit when he/she is obedient to the instructions of the Spirit for salvation (including baptism)! This provides entrance into the kingdom of God (the church of Christ)!

Now, ask yourself: Does an individual have to be baptized in order to be saved? Absolutely! Jesus said that being born of the water and the Spirit are necessary to enter the kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, baptism is necessary for salvation.

Matthew 28:18-20

“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).

This is Matthew’s account of the Great Commission (we’ll focus on Mark’s account in a moment). Jesus identifies the fact that He has all authority in Heaven and on earth. Therefore, whatever He commands/instructs must be done. Mankind simply has no authority to go against the instructions of the Lord!

Jesus commanded His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. This task was originally carried out by the apostles and other Christians in the first century (A.D.), see Colossians 1:23. But, how would they make disciples? Jesus said that this included baptism in the name of (by the authority of) the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! Therefore,

an individual could not be a disciple of Jesus Christ (a Christian) without being baptized into Christ.

Now, ask yourself: Does an individual have to be baptized in order to be saved? Absolutely! You cannot be a Christian without being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! Therefore, baptism is necessary for salvation.

Mark 16:15-16

“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).

This is Mark’s account of the Great Commission. Again, notice that Jesus commanded (by the authority He possesses) His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to everyone. Particularly, notice what He said in verse 16 to see what Christ joins together for salvation. Jesus says, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

Notice that both belief and baptism are necessary for the same thing: Salvation! Let me illustrate the passage this way. Suppose I told you that I would give you \$1 million if you gave me a red pen and a book? What would be required to receive the \$1 million? Certainly it would require **both** the red pen and the book. Just a red pen would not be sufficient. Just a book would not be sufficient. A blue pen and a book would not be sufficient. Likewise, God has required both belief **and** baptism for salvation – not one without the other!

Now, ask yourself: Does an individual have to be baptized in order to be saved? Absolutely! Jesus said that it is the person who believes and is baptized who will be saved. If you want to be saved, you must do both. Therefore, baptism is necessary for salvation.

Acts 2:37-38

“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ 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.’”

When Peter (and the other apostles) had been preaching to the Jewish people about Jesus on the Day of Pentecost, some of the people in the audience accepted the truths that were taught and questioned what they could do in order to be saved. Peter, in verse 38, upon hearing the question, gives them the instruction to repent and be baptized.

Now, specifically notice that this passage connects repentance and baptism (using the word “and”). So, both actions are necessary in order to bring about a particular result. Notice carefully that it was “remission of sins” that was promised to those who would be obedient to this instruction. Then, notice that “every one” of them was required to do these two things in order to have their sins remitted (forgiven). Now, understand that the language of the text clearly demonstrates that these actions (repentance and baptism) were necessary in order to have sins forgiven. These actions were *not* taken because of the forgiveness they had already received! Instead, they recognized (as evident by the question in verse 37) that they were sinners who were in need of forgiveness (based on what Peter had said in verse 36). Therefore, Peter pointed them to the necessity of repentance and baptism.

Now, ask yourself: Does an individual have to be baptized in order to be saved? Absolutely! An individual cannot be saved without being forgiven of his/her sins – and an individual cannot have his/her sins forgiven without being baptized! Therefore, baptism is necessary for salvation.

Acts 10:48

“And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days” (Acts 10:48).

Acts chapter 10 records the account of Cornelius’ conversion (and his household). This was a very unique situation because he was the first full Gentile convert to Jesus Christ. In this passage (in the

larger context of the passage), you notice that he and his household were baptized with the Holy Spirit (even prior to their being baptized with water). This demonstrated that God had now accepted Gentiles into His kingdom. Upon seeing this sign from God, Peter asked: “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (Acts 10:47).

Peter, then, proceeded (in verse 48) to command them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Certainly, “command” is a very strong word. It emphasizes that something is required, not optional! This commanding of Cornelius and his household to be baptized, then, emphasizes that baptism was required. This fits perfectly with what we have observed in other passages. Remember that Peter (one of the individuals who received the “Great Commission”) was commanded by the Lord to baptize – and was told that baptism is necessary for salvation (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Remember also that Peter was the one who told individuals they must repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38). Therefore, it is no surprise to see Peter commanding that these individuals be baptized!

Now, ask yourself: Does an individual have to be baptized in order to be saved? Absolutely! Baptism is a commandment of the Lord – a commandment that is always placed *before* an individual is forgiven of his/her sins. Therefore, baptism is necessary for salvation.

Acts 16:31-34

“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. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household” (Acts 16:31-34).

This passage records the conversion of the Philippian jailor. Paul and Silas had been put into

prison for preaching the gospel. While they were there, they were praying and singing hymns to God. After a great earthquake occurred that freed the prisoners, the jailor supposed that they had all escaped – and was about to kill himself. After learning they had not escaped, the jailor asked Paul and Silas, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30).

In response to this question, Paul and Silas responded, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:31). Now, some might like to stop at this point in the reading to suggest that faith in Jesus Christ is the only thing necessary for salvation. However, we must keep looking further at the text. Paul and Silas proceeded to speak the word of the Lord to the jailor and to his household. Notice that this teaching must have included teaching about the necessity of baptism – because the jailor and his household were baptized immediately – in “the same hour of the night” (Acts 16:31)! Now, ask yourself: “Why would they have been baptized so immediately?” Certainly it was not the most convenient thing to do! This was during the night hours. However, when you consider this text along with other Bible passages on baptism, it becomes clear that there was an immediate need because of the necessity of baptism for salvation! To delay baptism would put one’s soul in jeopardy. Then, having been baptized, the jailor is said to have rejoiced because he had believed in God with all his household (verse 34). Notice that this belief included obedience – just as true faith will always respond in faithful obedience to God (it is not just mental acknowledgement of certain facts as being true, see James 2:14-26 and Hebrews 11). Therefore, baptism was necessary to fulfill the command in verse 31!

Now, ask yourself: Does an individual have to be baptized in order to be saved? Absolutely! Baptism is something that is to be accomplished ***immediately*** upon an individual hearing the word of God, believing, repenting of his/her sins, and confessing Jesus Christ! To delay to be baptized is to put one’s own soul in jeopardy. Also, please notice that the rejoicing involved in being saved only happens after an individual is baptized for the

remission of his/her sins (Acts 16:34). Therefore, baptism is necessary for salvation.

Acts 22:16

“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).

This passage records the conversion of Saul (who later became known as the apostle Paul). Actually, Paul’s conversion is recorded in three different places in the New Testament: Acts 9, Acts 22, and Acts 26. In order to get a full picture of his conversion, you need to read each one of these passages. As you do so, you realize that Saul was traveling to Damascus for the purpose of persecuting Christians. While he was traveling, Jesus Christ appeared to him. Saul asked the Lord, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” The Lord responded, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do” (Acts 9:6). Now, please notice that Saul simply could ***not*** have been saved on the road to Damascus (as many affirm) – because Saul was told to go into the city for instructions as to what he was required to do! Therefore, we must follow Saul into the city to hear what he was told.

In the city, Ananias had been sent by God to teach Saul. We initially learn about Saul’s baptism in Acts 9:18 (as the passage says that he was baptized). However, Acts 22:16 tells us the reason why he was baptized. Ananias (the one speaking in the passage) told Saul that he must be baptized in order for his sins to be washed away (compare with Acts 2:38). He also indicated that doing so was necessary to call on the name of the Lord (compare with Romans 10:13).

Now, ask yourself: Does an individual have to be baptized in order to be saved? Absolutely! Baptism is essential to having sins washed away and calling on the name of the Lord – and a person cannot be saved without his/her sins being washed away and without calling on the name of the Lord! Therefore, baptism is necessary for salvation.

Romans 6:3-4

“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).

This passage is an excellent one to demonstrate the mode of baptism. Though this lesson is not focused on the proper mode/method of baptism, it is certainly worth pointing out what this passage says concerning such. This passage clearly equates baptism to a burial. Clearly, a burial is not accomplished through sprinkling/pouring a little dirt over a dead body. Instead, it involves a complete covering of that body – as does Bible baptism!

Then, this passage also identifies where baptism is placed relative to the old man (the man of sin) and the new man (Christian). Therefore, this passage shows us whether baptism comes before the forgiveness of sins and becoming a Christian – or after. The order of the passage is clear: Put the old man to death, bury the old man in baptism, and rise to walk in newness of life. Now, as you compare this text with passages like Acts 2:38, it makes perfect sense. Prior to baptism, you put the old man to death through belief and repentance (a determination to change your sinful ways). Then, you bury that old man in the watery grave of baptism for the forgiveness of your sins (baptized “into Jesus Christ” and “into His death”). Upon rising from that watery grave of baptism, you are a new man who has been cleansed of your sins and determined to live for God! However, those who deny that baptism is essential for salvation would completely twist this figure around. They would have the old man put to death (likely through the same elements of belief and repentance), but, the new man would rise from the dead prior to the burial of the old man! Now, how could you rise to walk in newness of life prior to the burial of the old man? Then, you would bury the new man later! The figure would not make any sense. Remember, this is likened to Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (i.e. He died, was buried, then arose).

Now, ask yourself: Does an individual have to be baptized in order to be saved? Absolutely! A person cannot be raised to walk in newness of life (having the forgiveness of sins) without having the

old man of sin put to death and buried! Therefore, baptism is necessary for salvation.

1 Corinthians 12:13

“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.”

This text is very similar to our previous discussion of John 3:3-6 concerning the water and the Spirit. Once again, we are “by one Spirit...baptized into one body” when we are obedient to the instructions in the Bible (revealed by God’s Holy Spirit) to be baptized.

Now, I want you to notice that this baptism (a baptism in water) is necessary to being in Christ’s body! The larger context of this passage (along with passages like Colossians 1:18) demonstrates that the body is the church. Therefore, to be baptized into Christ’s body is to be baptized into His church (added to His church). This is exactly what we can see demonstrated in Acts chapter 2. Recall how the people were told to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (verse 38). Then, these individuals, upon being baptized were added to the church of Christ (Acts 2:41, 47). The church of Christ is the one church containing the collection of Christ’s saved people. Therefore, recognize that baptism is necessary to being counted among the saved (Christ’s one true church).

Now, ask yourself: Does an individual have to be baptized in order to be saved? Absolutely! A sinner cannot be forgiven of his/her sins and be added to Christ’s church without being “baptized into [the] one body”! Therefore, baptism is necessary for salvation.

Galatians 3:26-27

“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.”

This passage leads you to the same basic understanding as the previous one. To be “in Christ” is to be part of His body (His church). Please understand that all spiritual blessings are available in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3) – including being sons

of God (Ephesians 1:5), the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7), and salvation (2 Timothy 2:10). Now, if all of these spiritual blessings are “in Christ,” how many of them are available outside of Christ? Not a single one!

Therefore, the question is: How do you come into Christ and gain access to all of these spiritual blessings? Look at our text again. First, notice that we are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Some people will, again, want to stop at this verse (verse 26). However, just as in Acts 16:31-34, you must continue reading to see that this is an obedient faith that includes obedience to the command of baptism! Second, verse 27 expounds upon how we become sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. It says that “as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” So, **only** as many as have been baptized are in Christ (where salvation is)! You cannot be in Christ without having been baptized into Christ! You cannot be clothed with Christ until you have “put on Christ” (just as you were not clothed with the clothing you are currently wearing until you put them on)! Therefore, those who promote salvation prior to baptism effectively teach that someone can be “in Christ” prior to being “baptized into Christ” and putting on Christ. This simply cannot be – according to Galatians 3:26-27!

Now, ask yourself: Does an individual have to be baptized in order to be saved? Absolutely! You cannot be in Christ and take part in the spiritual blessings (i.e. forgiveness, salvation) without being baptized into Jesus Christ! Therefore, baptism is necessary for salvation.

1 Peter 3:20-21

“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.”

In verse 20, Peter identifies how God used water in the days of Noah to save Noah and his

family from the ungodly world! We know that God destroyed the wickedness on earth with the flood and saved Noah and his family (8 souls in total). Now, notice the specific language concerning these eight souls – that they were “saved through water.”

Then, Peter very clearly connects the salvation through water in Noah’s time to our being saved through water today (in the phrase, “There is also an antitype”). Just as those eight souls were saved from sin during Noah’s time, those who are baptized today are saved from their own sins! Thus, baptism “now saves us.” This is **not** because the waters of baptism remove the filth of the flesh. Rather, this is because baptism is the proper response of a sincere truth-seeker to God’s word! Certainly, the language that baptism “now saves us” could not be any clearer! Yet, there are many who say, “Baptism does not save us.” Therefore, you must determine whether you will listen to man or to God! You can also see this very clear language coupling baptism with salvation in Mark 16:16 (as we considered earlier).

Now, ask yourself: Does an individual have to be baptized in order to be saved? Absolutely! You cannot be saved without being baptized – since God says that baptism “now saves us” (just as Noah and his family were saved through water)! Therefore, baptism is necessary for salvation.

Where God Puts Baptism

As you reflect on all the passages we have been considering, ask yourself: “Where does God put baptism?” This is an important question for you to consider. The question is **not**: Where does man put baptism? Rather, the question is concerning where God puts baptism. An important principle is established in Matthew 19:6 (specifically addressing the subject of marriage): “what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

There are many things God has joined together that man must not attempt to separate. Certainly, as we have seen throughout our study, baptism has been joined together with some things.

Unfortunately, man has often tried to separate baptism from these. Please consider a few quick points with me (using the passages we have already studied) to understand where God puts baptism.

Between the sinner and salvation

That God puts baptism between the sinner and salvation is clearly seen from Mark 16:16 and 1 Peter 3:20-21. Therefore, a sinner who has not been baptized according to God's instructions has not been saved! Baptism still stands between him/her and salvation!

Between the sinner and the forgiveness of sins

That God puts baptism between the sinner and the forgiveness of sins is clearly seen from Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16. Therefore, a sinner who has not been baptized according to God's instructions has not been forgiven of his/her sins. Baptism still stands between him/her and the forgiveness of sins!

Between the sinner and Christ

That God puts baptism between the sinner and Jesus Christ is clearly seen from Galatians 3:26-27. Therefore, a sinner who has not been baptized according to God's instructions has not been united with Jesus Christ and has not accessed all spiritual blessings in Christ. Baptism still stands between him/her and Jesus Christ!

Between the sinner and the church

That God puts baptism between the sinner and being part of Christ's church is clearly seen from 1 Corinthians 12:13. Therefore, a sinner who has not been baptized according to God's instructions has not been added by God to Jesus' church (His collection of the saved). Baptism still stands between him/her and being part of Jesus' church!

Between the old man and the new man

That God puts baptism between the old man and the new man is clearly seen from John 3:3-6 and Romans 6:3-4. Therefore, a sinner who has not been baptized according to God's instructions has never found forgiveness and has not put on the new man

that is right in God's sight. Baptism still stands between him/her and the new man!

Conclusion

God clearly gives baptism a very prominent and essential place in His plan of salvation. Remember, this is His plan of salvation – not a plan that has been invented by mankind! And, He says that baptism is necessary for salvation!

Jesus Christ is the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9). In order to obey Christ, you must be baptized (Mark 16:16)! Those who fail to obey the instructions contained in the gospel of Christ will be punished with everlasting destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Therefore, you must recognize the seriousness of failing to obey God's commandment to be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins.

Have you been baptized for the forgiveness of your sins? If not, you are not saved. You need to be baptized today!

Study Questions

Is baptism necessary for salvation? Explain your answer prior to studying this lesson.

What is the standard for answering this question?

1. God's Use Of Water

Does God's requirement of baptism seem unreasonable to you? Explain your answer.

How did God use water to accomplish His purpose at the time of the flood (Genesis 6-8)?

Does Acts 2:38 teach the necessity of baptism? Explain.

How did God use water to accomplish His purpose at the time of the Exodus (Exodus 14)?

Does Acts 10:48 teach the necessity of baptism? Explain.

How did God use water to accomplish His purpose at the time of Naaman's healing (2 Kings 5)?

Does Acts 16:31-34 teach the necessity of baptism? Explain.

How did God use water to accomplish His purpose at time of the blind man's healing (John 9)?

Does Acts 22:16 teach the necessity of baptism? Explain.

Has God used water to accomplish His purposes? It is unreasonable for God to use water to accomplish His purpose today?

Does Romans 6:3-4 teach the necessity of baptism? Explain.

2. Passages Indicating The Necessity Of Baptism

Does John 3:3-6 teach the necessity of baptism? Explain.

Does 1 Corinthians 12:13 teach the necessity of baptism? Explain.

Does Matthew 28:18-20 teach the necessity of baptism? Explain.

Does Galatians 3:26-27 teach the necessity of baptism? Explain.

Does Mark 16:15-16 teach the necessity of baptism? Explain.

Does 1 Peter 3:20-21 teach the necessity of baptism? Explain.

3. Where God Puts Baptism

Fill in the blanks to answer the following – and list Biblical support of each.

1. God puts baptism between the _____ and _____.

2. God puts baptism between the _____ and _____.

3. God puts baptism between the _____ and _____.

4. God puts baptism between the _____ and _____.

5. God puts baptism between the _____ and _____.

***Is baptism necessary for salvation?**

***Have you been baptized for the forgiveness of your sins? Why or why not?**