

such as baptism, but by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration and renewing is accomplished by the instrumentality of the Word of God in the hand of God's Holy Spirit. In John 3:16-18 belief is the only requirement for salvation, not baptism or works. John 5:24 says, "*He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him,... hath everlasting life.*" The Gospel is given in I Corinthians 15:3-4, "*Christ died for our sins...was buried,...and rose again....*" Baptism was not included. II Thessalonians 1:8 teaches that when Jesus returns He "*shall take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Again, baptism was not mentioned. Salvation is not of works it is by faith alone in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 3:20, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38). Baptism is not part of one's salvation but it is the first step of obedience for a true believer.

The Bible does not teach that baptism is required for salvation. Let us look at Acts 2:38, "*Repent and be baptized everyone of you in (or resting upon) the name of Jesus Christ for (or because of) the remission (or forgiveness) of sin.*" The Bible teaches that forgiveness of sin is based on one's belief in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 3:38-39; 26:18, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14). Let us look at one more verse that people use to support the need of baptism for salvation. Acts 22:16, "*Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*" The

literal translation of this verse explains it clearly, "*Having arisen, be baptized, because you washed away your sins having called on the name of the Lord.*"

### ***The Bible teaches that:***

1. Baptism is only for believers not infants (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 16:31).
2. Baptism is only the first step of obedience for the new believer. It is something we do after salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9, Matthew 28:20).
3. Baptism (which means immerse or submerge) is by immersion (Acts 8:35-40).
4. Baptism outwardly identifies us with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5).
5. Baptism is not required for salvation, only faith in Christ (John 3:18; 5:24). Christ did the only work for our salvation, and His work was perfect. Christ said Himself, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30, Acts 4:12, I Peter 2:24, I Corinthians 15: 3-4).
6. Baptism does not forgive any sins (Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 10:28).



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# THE BIBLICAL TEACHING OF *WATER BAPTISM*



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## *What is water baptism?*

This question has been asked countless times since the first century church. The lack of Bible understanding of this subject has caused great confusion. The goal of this study is to show what the Bible teaches about water baptism, not merely men's opinions or the traditions of it.

The word *baptize* means to immerse or submerge an object completely in water or a liquid. The word *baptize*, in various forms, appears 100 times in the New Testament. The Jewish people were familiar with baptism to bring about ceremonial cleansing. John the Baptist baptized with *"the baptism of repentance for (or because of) the remission of sins"* (Mark 1:4). We want to focus our study on Christian baptism. The Bible says nothing about infant baptism, nor does it teach that baptism washes away anyone's sins. These are men's opinions and traditions.

What is it that makes a person a Christian? The Bible teaches that all mankind are sinners (Romans 3:23) and sin's wage or payment is death (Romans 6:23). Romans 10:9 states, *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."* When Paul was asked by the Philippian jailer, *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* he said, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"* (Acts 16:30b-31). In

order to become a Christian (or saved) you must first hear God's Word (Romans 10:17), then understand it, and confess and believe in Christ alone (Romans 10:9,10,13). This an infant is not able to do. Christian baptism is just that, baptism for Christians.

Christ commanded baptism for all disciples (believers) in Matthew 28:19-20 and in Acts 2:38. If a person has truly believed on Christ for salvation, then he has God's Spirit within him (Romans 8:9), an inward reality. Water baptism is commanded by God for an outward display or testimony of that inward reality. When a person is placed under the water, it pictures our death and burial with Christ. When we are raised out of the water it pictures our resurrection with Christ. Buried with Him in baptism, raised with Him to newness of life (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12). According to Romans 6:6-8 baptism is also outwardly showing that we are making a break with our past life, we are no longer alive to sin, but dead to sin and alive unto God.

Is baptism necessary for salvation? No! Jesus said to make disciples first, then secondly, baptize those disciples. Baptism is something an already existing disciple does. This is the first step of obedience—an outward symbol of an inward reality. Salvation is in Jesus and belief only in His name (Acts 4:12; 16:31). If baptism brought salvation then why did not Paul say "believe and be baptized and thou shalt

be saved." You say, Mark 16:16 says *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."* But let us use the whole verse. It goes on to say, *"but he that believeth not shall be damned."* The emphasis is on believing, because the lack of personal faith is what condemns us.

To find the true meaning of a passage a person must let the Bible interpret or give its own meaning by comparing Scripture with Scripture. In Luke 23:40-43 the thief on the cross said to Jesus, *"Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."* Then the Lord's reply was, *"Today shalt thou be with me in paradise (heaven)."* The thief went to heaven without baptism. Jesus only requires belief for salvation.

John 3:3 states, *"ye must be born again."* Born again means to be born from above—a spiritual birth. Nicodemus thought Jesus meant a second physical birth, but Jesus meant a spiritual birth. Then Jesus said in John 3:5, *"Except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God."* What did Jesus mean when He said you must be *"born of water, and of the spirit."* Where in the Bible is water used in connection with salvation? Ephesians 5:26 speaks of the *"washing of water by the Word (the Bible)."* Titus 3:5-6 *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit."* Our salvation is not obtained by our works,