

"Baptism: What is it all about?"

Matthew 28:19-20

Introduction: This evening following this short message we will make our way into the fellowship hall and there you will witness several people being baptized. But this evening and the events bring up several questions. "What is baptism all about? Why do we practice baptism? Is baptism required for salvation?"

These are several questions that I want to answer before we get to the actual baptismal service.

I. Baptism is NOT a requirement for salvation!

I listened to a few pastors over the past couple of weeks to see what they said concerning baptism and I was very shocked at how many preach that if you are not baptized you cannot go to heaven. They use passages such as:

Mark 16:15-16

¹⁵ *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

¹⁶ *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

Acts 2:37-39

³⁷ *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

³⁸ *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

³⁹ *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.*

These are the two passages used by those who teach that baptism is required for salvation. But if those who teach this are correct then there are many other verses that would be incorrect.

In the next chapter of Acts Peter is preaching again and he says nothing about baptism.

Acts 3:14-19

¹⁴ But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

¹⁵ And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

¹⁶ And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

¹⁷ And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.

¹⁸ But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

¹⁹ Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

John 3:16-18, 36

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

³⁶ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Titus 3:5

⁵ 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 Ghost;

Isaiah 64:6

⁶ *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

These verses are very clear that salvation is by grace through faith plus NOTHING. The thief on the cross proves baptism is not required.

Luke 23:42-43

⁴² *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*

⁴³ *And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

So, what was Peter saying in Acts 2? He was calling on the people to prove they were saved by stepping up to be baptized. This was a costly move in the early church. To be baptized proved a person was serious about salvation.

II. Baptism is identifying with Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:3-6

³ *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*

⁴ *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

⁵ *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

⁶ *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

When we were saved, we were baptized into the body of Jesus Christ. We were crucified with Him, buried, and resurrected to a new life. Water baptism is a picture of what took place when we were saved. When we are baptized, we are identifying with Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:1-2

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

² *And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea:*

Israel was baptized unto Moses which means they identified with him. They went into the Red Sea, and they came up out of the Red Sea just as we do in baptism and when this happened, they identified with him just as we identify with Jesus Christ.

III. Baptism is the first step of obedience.

Mark 16:15-16

¹⁵ *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

¹⁶ *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

Acts 2:37-38

³⁷ *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

³⁸ *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

In both of these passages we see that baptism follows immediately after believing. Therefore baptism is the very first step of obedience.

IV. Extra thoughts on baptism.

Baptism will exist in the tribulation but only as a ritual. The religious people who miss the rapture will continue to attend church and will still practice baptism. But it will have no meaning in the tribulation. Today it is a picture of how we are crucified with Jesus, buried, and resurrected in Him. It is a picture of how all of this happened because we were baptized into His body. But after the church is raptured away the people who get saved in the tribulation will not be part of the body of Christ. They will be saved but they will not be members of His body. They will be like the Old Testament saints. They will not be indwelt with the Holy Spirit as we are and will not be a part of the church. Therefore, baptism will be practiced in the tribulation, but it will not have any meaning as it does today. You find no mention of baptism in the book of Revelation.

One more thought. The baptism of John the Baptist was not the same as we practice today.

Acts 18:24-25

²⁴ *And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.*

²⁵ *This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.*

Mark 1:4

⁴ *John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." John's baptism had to do with repentance—it was a symbolic representation of changing one's mind and going a new direction. "Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River" (Matthew 3:6). Being baptized by John demonstrated a recognition of one's sin, a desire for spiritual cleansing, and a commitment to follow God's law in anticipation of the Messiah's arrival.

Conclusion:

Baptism is very serious because the Lord commands it. It is not to be taken lightly.