

"Baptism"

Matthew 28:19-20

Introduction: This morning we are going to consider a message on the subject of baptism because of the baptisms we have scheduled in November. Today I want to answer some 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. Is baptism a requirement for salvation?

There are many pastors who teach that you cannot go to heaven if you are not baptized. 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;

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. Let me show you what it was like.

Acts 26:9-11

⁹ I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

¹⁰ Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

¹¹ And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

II. What is baptism all about?

When we are baptized, we are publicly identifying with Jesus Christ. When we are baptized it is a picture of what happened when we were saved.

Let us notice what happened spiritually when we were saved.

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. Why do we practice baptism?

We practice baptism because it is the first step of obedience after we are saved.

Mark 16:15-16

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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. What about infants?

There are churches that practice infant baptism but we do not. Baptism is only for those who are true believers. Infants are not believers. They are under the grace of God until

they are of the age of accountability so if they die as infants they are taken into heaven. How do we know this?

2 Samuel 12:19-22

¹⁹ *But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.*

²⁰ *Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.*

²¹ *Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.*

²² *And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?*

²³ *But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*

Some people believe that baptized infants become part of the "COMMUNITY" of the church. I have heard them teach that baptism replaced circumcision. Let me just explain that baptism was not the same as circumcision. Circumcision was a physical picture of what God desired to do in the heart of the Jew.

Romans 2:28-29

²⁸ *For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:*

²⁹ *But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

Baptism is not what God wants to do but it is a picture of what He has already done in the believer.

V. Was John's baptism the same as what we practice?

The answer to that is no. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance.

Matthew 3:11

¹¹ I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

Acts 17:1-5

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

² He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

³ And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

⁴ Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

John's baptism was to prepare the people for the Savior. They confessed they were sinners and they were repenting, which are both necessary for salvation. To be saved, a sinner must acknowledge their sin and they must be willing to repent which is a change of mind.

2 Peter 3:8-9

⁸ But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Conclusion:

Baptism is very serious because the Lord commands it. It is not to be taken lightly. When you are baptized you need to understand what is taking place.

For you who are parents and your children are signed up make sure it is their idea and not yours. I believe every person who is baptized should understand what it is about. It should

not be done because everyone else is doing it. It should be because it is commanded by the Lord and because we desire to walk in obedience.

I believe it is dangerous to baptize young people who do not understand because if they are not truly saved then it will give them false hope.