



MUST I BE BAPTIZED?

WHAT MAN TEACHES

People who keep count tell us that there are more than 1,600 different denominations just in the United States alone, all claiming to belong to Jesus Christ, all teaching different doctrines than what are found in the Bible and most wearing a name other than that of Christ. Simple logic tells you there is just one of church of Christ since the Bible tells us Christ only established one church with one doctrine, the New Testament. Read Ephesians 4:4-7.

One important way to identify this genuine church of Christ is to study the terms of entrance. How do you become a part of this church, the body of Christ? The great majority of churches agree that you must believe or have faith that Jesus Christ is who says He is, God's Son, and that the New Testament, Christ's law, is the word of God. The majority would also agree that you must repent of your sins and confess your faith in Christ before others. The disagreement comes when you get to baptism. Arguably, a great majority do not believe you have to be baptized to be saved. This is the teaching of most religious people.

Let's see how the Bible answers this question: **Must you be baptized to be saved?** It isn't that belief, repentance and confessing the name of Christ are less important than baptism. It's that there is disagreement on the necessity of baptism. So, let's go to the Bible for the answer. The Bible is our standard of truth. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Acts 17:11.

WHAT JESUS TEACHES ABOUT BAPTISM

Jesus says, in John 3:3 to Nicodemus, ***I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.*** He then says, in John 3:5-7, ***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. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'*** Note the imperative in the last sentence, You ***must*** be born again! You cannot enter the kingdom without being ***born again***. Those are the words of Jesus Himself.

How are we ***born again of water and spirit?*** The water certainly is baptism which symbolizes cleansing. Acts 22:16 states, ***And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*** The sins of the apostle Paul were washed away in baptism.

Jesus commanded His disciples to make other disciples and to teach these disciples to teach others what Jesus had taught them. This certainly included baptism. This is what He said in 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 ages.'***

Jesus also commanded baptism in Mark 16:16: ***He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*** Note the ***and*** between belief and baptism. *And* is a *conjunction* defined as *in addition to, also, as well as*. There is no doubt that Jesus joined belief and baptism as requirements to being saved. Understand it this way: **BELIEF + BAPTISM = SAVED**. Many, many religions teach that you are saved as soon as you believe, then you are baptized into their church. These men have it this way: **BELIEF = SALVATION + BAPTISM**. This is *not* the way our Lord says it! Do you believe our Lord or men?

Jesus set the Example of baptism for us because He was baptized by John the Baptist though Jesus had no sin. When John protested that he should be baptized by Jesus, Jesus said, ***Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.*** The Savior was saying it was the right thing to do. His action certainly prohibits any excuse any of us have not to be baptized as commanded by Him.

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT BAPTISM

The New Testament speaks about baptism more than 75 times! This indicates the importance the Holy Spirit places on it. Let's see what the Bible says about baptism:

The church of Christ was established on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after the crucifixion of Christ. You can read the account in Acts chapter 2 when Peter preached the first gospel sermon. He convicted the hearts of the audience by telling them they had crucified the Messiah. Verse 37 tells us the people were cut to their heart and, in their dismay at what they had done, asked Peter what should they do. Their question showed they believed. Peter responded in Acts 2:38 by saying, ***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.*** This verse is straightforward and clear in its instructions. They were to ***repent and be baptized***. They were to do this in the name or authority of Jesus Christ, and the result would be their sins remitted, forgiven, and they would receive the gift of the Spirit. That is, the Spirit would indwell them (Romans 5:5).. In baptism of water, they were ***born of water and Spirit, born again!***

Continuing to read in Acts chapter 2, Verse 41 tells us that those who accepted Peter's words were baptized. Verse 47 tells us that God added those saved to the church. This shows how you get into the church, through obedience to the word culminating in baptism. God then adds you to His church. Can anything be more clear?

WHAT SOME OTHER VERSES TELL US ABOUT BAPTISM

- ***Galatians 3:27: For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*** Baptism puts us into Christ. We put on Christ in baptism. This means we wear His righteousness.

- We wear His righteousness. That's awfully important because we are not righteous (Romans 3:10). All spiritual blessings are *in Christ* (Ephesians 1:3), and baptism puts us *into Christ where these blessings are*.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17:** . . . *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature . . .* Baptism makes you a new creature because it puts you *into Christ*.
- **1 Peter 3:21:** *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us . . .* Peter compares baptism to Noah and his family being saved in the ark through water. He tells us that baptism saves.
- **1 Corinthians 15:1-4.** *Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.* The apostle Paul defines in these verses the essential facts of the gospel. The gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul says you are saved by the gospel.
- **2 Thessalonians 17-9:** *and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power . . .* Note that those who will receive punishment and banishment are those who do not obey the gospel.
- **HOW DO YOU OBEY THE GOSPEL?** Since the core gospel consists of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and are events, how do you obey this gospel? We find the answer in Romans 6:2-6: *Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection . . .* These verses tell us that we obey the death, burial and resurrection of Christ in baptism! We have obeyed the gospel of Christ! These verses tell us, too, that we contact the cleansing blood of our Savior in baptism through His death. Where was His blood shed . . . In death. See this in John 19:33-34: ***But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.*** Note, too, our *newness* when we rise from the waters of baptism. We have been forgiven of sin, *born again!*

We have seen what baptism does for you. Let's look at what will happen if you are **not baptized**.

1. If you are not baptized, your sins **are not forgiven** (Acts 2:38) Since sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2) and you still have your sin, you remain separated from God. You are in a lost condition.

2. If you have not been baptized, you are **not in Christ** where all blessings are. (Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 1:3).
3. If you have not been baptized, you **do not wear His righteousness**. (Galatians 3:27).
4. If you have not been baptized, you are **not a new man, not born again**. (Romans 6:2-6; 2 Corinthians 5:17).
5. If you have not been baptized, God has **not added you to the church, the saved**. (Acts 2:47). If you have not been baptized, you are **not in the kingdom of God**. (John 3:3, Matthew 7:21-23).
6. If you have not been baptized, baptism has **not saved you**. (1 Peter 3:21) You are in a lost condition.
7. If you have not been baptized, you **do not love Jesus**. He commands baptism in Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:16 and other verses. Jesus says, in John 14:15, **If you love me, you will obey what I command**. You do not love him if you do not obey Him.

Go over the verses listed in this lesson again, and note the blessings in obedience which comes through baptism, and then look at what happens when you are not baptized as Christ commanded. Did you know the Pharisees resisted Jesus Himself when he taught about baptism? Read Luke 7:29-30. ***All the people even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.*** God's purpose today is that you be baptized. It is commanded over and over again in His word, the Bible. And, just as in Jesus' day, religious leaders lead sinners astray by telling them baptism is not necessary. Read John 12:42-43: ***Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue, for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.*** Don't be misled by religious leaders today who tell you it is not necessary to be baptized. You've seen what God tells you in His word, the Bible.

When you study the Bible and see the importance of obedience and see the tremendous blessings involved, you should have an overwhelming desire to be baptized as soon as possible . . . *if you have not already been baptized for the right reasons and by complete immersion.* Faith, repentance, confession of Christ's name as Lord and baptism is the **only** way to reconciliation with God. If you need help in finding someone to answer questions you may have and to baptize you, no matter where you are, contact us at:

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The question in this treatise: **Must you be baptized to be saved? God says YES!** As Ananias said to Paul, Acts 22:16, ***And now, what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.***