

Over 40 Questions About Baptism

ANSWERED

(by George Battey)

1) ***Who will be saved?*** "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

2) ***Shouldn't we just preach Jesus?*** "Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:35-36).

3) ***Isn't it legalistic or pharisaical to teach baptism is necessary for salvation?*** "And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him" (Luke 7:29-30). "The baptism of John — where was it from? From heaven or from men? And they reasoned among themselves, saying, If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" (Matthew 21:25). **NOTE:** If baptism is "from heaven," then Jesus expects men to obey it. Therefore, because baptism is "from heaven," it is essential for salvation and sinners are not saved by simply "praying the sinner's prayer" – as commonly taught by many churches.

4) ***Is there anything God requires before a person can be baptized? If so, would this eliminate the baptism of babies?*** "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). "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" (Acts 2:38). Babies cannot believe in Jesus nor can they repent. Babies are not subjects of baptism. Furthermore, they do not need baptism because they are innocent and guilty of no sin (Matthew 18:3; 19:14; Romans 7:9).

5) ***What is baptism for – according to the scriptures?*** "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" (Acts 2:38). "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). "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

6) *If baptism was essential for salvation, wouldn't the Bible just say so in plain words?*

"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," (1 Peter 3:20-21). "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:25-26). "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

7) *Isn't the death of Christ what actually saves us? So, why teach baptism is necessary?*

"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).

8) *What gives Jesus the right to command baptism?*

"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).

9) *What is the only thing in the Bible that is to be done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?*

"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" (Matthew 28:19).

10) *Who is a "Christian" according to the scriptures?*

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

11) *If a "Christian" is a "disciple" (Acts 11:26), how does one become a disciple?*

"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 28:19-20).

12) *How does a person get into a relationship with Christ?*

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

13) *If one is baptized "into Christ," what blessings will he receive?*

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). "To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:6-7).

14) *How does a person "put on Christ"?* "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. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26-28).

15) *How can I be completely sure I am saved?* "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22).

16) *Aren't sinners saved by faith only?* "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (James 2:24).

17) *John 3:16 says, "Whoever believes in [Jesus] should not perish, but have everlasting life." Doesn't this teach salvation by faith only? Why, then, do you teach baptism is essential?* "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). John 3:16 does not mention repentance or confession, yet everyone understands these are necessary for salvation (see Luke 13:3 and Romans 10:10) even though they are not mentioned in John 3:16. All passages pertaining to salvation must be consulted before drawing a conclusion. It is improper to read only one verse and conclude salvation is by faith only. To illustrate: Matthew 27:44 says, "Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing." If someone read this verse and closed their Bible, they would conclude both robbers died lost. By reading Luke 23:43 we learn that one robber repented before he died and was saved. Matthew 27:44 illustrates the need to consult all relevant passages before drawing a conclusion. (For more about the "thief on the cross" see question #19.)

18) *Acts 16:31 says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved." Nothing is said about baptism. So why do you teach baptism is essential?* "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" (Acts 16:32-33). The complete story of salvation does not end with verse 31. (See question #17 for more information.)

19) *What about the "thief on the cross"? Why didn't he have to be baptized?* The baptism Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16) is a New Testament command. The New Testament began after Jesus died. "For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives" (Hebrews 9:16-17). The thief on the cross was saved under the Old Testament (that is, he lived, was saved, and died under a different system). To illustrate: The United States first collected an income tax in 1862 to finance the Civil War. George Washington never paid income tax to the federal government because this law did not exist in his day. Would it be legal or logical for a citizen today to refuse payment of income taxes simply because George Washington did not have to pay? Of course not. We recognize a new law was passed since the days of George Washington. Likewise, a "New Testament" has come into force since the

death of the thief. The New Testament requires baptism "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

20) *Ephesians 2:8-9 says we are "saved by grace through faith ... not of works lest any man should boast." Why do you insist on baptism? Isn't that teaching salvation by works?* "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). The Ephesians (to whom Ephesians 2:8-9 was written) were baptized (Acts 19:1-5). Therefore, salvation "by grace through faith" includes baptism.

21) *How did people in the first century respond to the command to be baptized?* "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:41).

22) *If we teach baptism for the forgiveness of sins, isn't that teaching salvation by works of men?* "Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12).

23) *Aren't men saved by the grace of God? If so, why teach baptism?* "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

24) *Aren't men saved by faith? So, why teach baptism?* "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" (Galatians 3:26-27).

25) *If baptism was so essential, why didn't Jesus Himself teach this?* "The Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples)" (John 4:1-2). "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). "Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

26) *If "born of water" means baptism, what scripture clearly indicates a "born again" or "new life" follows baptism?* "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. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin" (Romans 6:3-7).

27) *Is the baptism that saves really "water baptism"?* Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you

may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him" (Acts 8:36-38).

28) Romans 10:13 says, "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Why, then, do you teach baptism is necessary? "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16).

29) Is baptism a direct command of God? "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48).

30) Is it necessary to obey commands of God (like baptism) in order to be saved? "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:50). "But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart" (1 Peter 1:22).

31) How does a person become a member of the Lord's church? "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:41). "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). "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" (1 Corinthians 12:13). "He is the head of the body, the church" (Colossians 1:18).

32) What is so special about the church? "The church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). "For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23).

33) Shouldn't we just preach the gospel? "Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). "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. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death,

certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin" (Romans 6:3-7).

34) *Is there danger in not "obeying the gospel"?* "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17). "When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8).

35) *Can't the "gospel" be preached without teaching baptism? In other words, isn't there a different gospel besides the one requiring baptism?* "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-9).

36) *Did the apostles teach the same thing (including baptism) everywhere they went?* "For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Corinthians 4:17).

37) *So many good people and good churches do not teach baptism is essential. What should I think about them?* "Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other" (1 Corinthians 4:6).

38) *What is the purpose of Holy Spirit baptism?* "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). **NOTE:** This was spoken to the apostles. They were already saved. Therefore, Holy Spirit baptism was not for the purpose of saving men. Holy Spirit baptism empowered the apostles to perform miracles. "And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen" (Mark 16:20). "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" (Hebrews 2:3-4). Holy Spirit baptism "confirmed the word" spoken by the apostles. Baptism in water "washes away sins" (Acts 22:16).

39) *How is baptism performed? Can it be performed by sprinkling?* "So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:38-39). "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 6:4). "Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized" (John 3:23).

40) *You keep quoting Acts 2:38, "for the remission of sins." Don't you know the Greek word translated "for" (eis) means "because." Therefore Acts 2:38 means, "be baptized because your sins are already forgiven." Why do you say baptism is essential?* Men must do two things according to Acts 2:38: (a) repent and (b) be baptized. If the Greek wording of this passage means "be baptized because you are already forgiven," then it teaches men should "repent because you are already forgiven." This is incorrect. Men do not repent nor are they baptized because they are already forgiven. Notice the following passage: "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). The phrase "for the remission of sins" in Matthew 26:28 is identical in Greek and English to Acts 2:38. Jesus did not shed His blood because men were already forgiven. He shed His blood "in order that" men might be forgiven. Likewise, men must repent and be baptized "in order that" they might receive the remission of sins.

41) *Didn't Paul say, "I am thankful I baptized none of you" (1 Corinthians 1:14)? Why would he say this if baptism was essential for salvation?* "I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name" (1 Corinthians 1:14-15). Some Christians were bragging they were better than others because of who baptized them (1 Corinthians 1:12). Paul did not want anyone doing this. He did not want anyone bragging that they had been baptized by Paul and were therefore better than other Christians who had not been baptized by an apostle. Paul certainly taught that baptism was important (Romans 6:3-6), but he also taught it was not important who administered the act of baptism upon the sinner.

42) *Didn't Paul say, "Christ sent me not to baptize" (1 Corinthians 1:17)? Why would he say this if baptism was essential for salvation?* Paul was an apostle (Galatians 1:1). "Apostle" means "one sent forth" on a special mission. Paul was made an apostle so he could reveal and preach the gospel (Ephesians 3:5). Paul was not made an apostle ("sent forth" on a special mission) just so he could baptize people. Any faithful Christian man can baptize sinners. Therefore, Paul correctly said, "Christ sent me not to baptize," but this does not mean baptism is unnecessary. Baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

43) *When I was baptized I thought I was already saved. My preacher taught me to say the "sinners prayer." Since I was not baptized correctly, should I be re-baptized?* "And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the

upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:1-5).

44) *If baptism is essential for salvation, when should one be baptized?* "And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized" (Acts 16:33). "For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

To be saved from past sins, God requires the following steps:

- 1) **Belief** in Christ as the only begotten Son of God (Jn. 3:16).
- 2) **Repentance** of sins ("turning away from") (Acts 17:30).
- 3) **Verbal Confession** of faith in Christ (Rom. 10:10).
- 4) **Baptism** (immersion) into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

Acts 2:38

*38 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.***

Acts 22:16

*16 'And now why are you waiting? Arise and **be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**'*

Romans 6:3-4

*3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were **baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?***

*4 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.***

Baptism is the “*point in time*” that God applies the blood of Christ to the sinner’s life. The sinner is baptized into the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4). Sinners were never told to “*pray the sinner’s prayer*” as is commonly believed today (see Jn. 9:31). Only Christians have the privilege of praying for forgiveness of sins (1 Jn. 1:9; 2:1 – notice these verses were written to Christians, not sinners). Those who have not been baptized correctly must be rebaptized (see Acts 19:1-5) in order to be saved (1 Pet. 3:20-21).

While it *may* be true that the “thief on the cross” was never baptized (perhaps he may have been—see Mt. 3:5), it must be remembered he was saved while the Old Testament law was still in force (Heb. 9:16-17). This is exactly what the controversy over the Sabbath day revolves around—which law applies today and what does the Lord require of men today. The Lord’s requirement of baptism “*for the remission of sins*” came after His death and resurrection (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16).

After baptism, we must continue in “*all things*” which the Lord “commanded” (Mt. 28:20). We must be careful “*lest we fall*” (1 Cor. 10:12). Even saved Christians can “*fall away*” (Gal. 5:4), have their name removed from the “*book of life*” (Rev. 22:19), and suffer a worse fate than “*death without mercy*” (Heb. 10:26-29). Christians must “*make their calling and election sure*” by “*giving all diligence*” (2 Pet. 1:5-11).