
Bible Talk

This week the question is: **Is immersion the only acceptable form of baptism?**

In the New Testament baptism is given a very special and important place in God's plans for man. The Bible of course teaches that Jesus shed His blood "for the remission of man's sins." For example, when Jesus was instituting the communion with His disciples, He said concerning the fruit of the vine:

Matthew 26:28

28 ... this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

So then, Jesus shed His blood "for the remission of sins." There is no hope of being saved without His blood.

QUESTION: When does Jesus' blood take away the sins of man? Does a man have to do anything in order to receive the benefits of this saving blood?

REPLY: YES, the Scriptures teach that there is something a man has to do to receive forgiveness of sins thru the blood of Jesus. The Scriptures teach over and over again that a sinner must be baptized in water in order to receive the remission of sins that comes with Jesus' blood:

Acts 2:38

38 ... "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; ...

Now, since the blood of Jesus and the remission of sins comes when one is baptized in water, it becomes very critical that we get baptized just exactly like the Lord commanded! If we refuse to obey His command like He gave it, we will not receive the forgiveness of sins which He promised!

FROM HEAVEN, OR OF MEN?

A very important passage which teaches this principle is found in:

Matthew 21:24-25

24 But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things:

25 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?'

Now to Jesus it was very critical as to where John's baptism originated! If John's baptism originated with men, then John was not a prophet; his baptism would be unnecessary, and it would in fact be a false doctrine that would endanger the souls of men.

On the other hand, if John's baptism was from heaven, then men were required to be baptized by that baptism if they hoped to be saved!

In the same way, if the baptism of Jesus originated with men it would be unnecessary. In fact, if Jesus' baptism originated with men it would mean Jesus was a false prophet and to be baptized would endanger the souls of men.

But, if the baptism of Jesus originated from heaven, men are required to be baptized by that baptism if they hope to be saved! My friend, we of the Lord's church, firmly believe that the baptism Jesus commanded originated in heaven! All men that would be saved must be baptized!

QUESTION: Was the baptism from heaven a sprinkling of water on the head, or was it an immersion of the entire person?

To this question we turn our attention and seek for a Bible answer.

BAPTISM IS IMMERSION

If we were to look up the word "baptism" in a modern-day dictionary, we would find that this word means: "to sprinkle, to pour, or to immerse."

That is how men use the word "baptism" today. But we are not so much concerned with how men use the word today as we are with how Jesus used the word back in the Bible days. The question we are interested in is: Back in the days of Jesus, what did the word "baptism" mean?

To this question all authorities of language agree, "baptism" in the days of Jesus meant "to immerse, to dip, or to overwhelm." Baptism in the Bible never means "to sprinkle, or to pour." Always, without exception Bible baptism was an immersion in water for the remission of sins.

FIRST:

John 3:23

23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized.

Now if baptism were merely a sprinkling of some water on someone's head, John would not have needed much water! But because Bible baptism is an immersion of the entire body, much water is required. Therefore, the Scriptures specifically state that John was baptizing near Salim because there was much water there. John was immersing people and he needed a lot of water.

SECOND:

Acts 8:36-38

36 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?"

37 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."

38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

Do you see that Scriptural baptism is an immersion? It requires both the sinner and the preacher going down into the water! If baptism were merely sprinkling, there would be no need for this! Once again, the Scriptures bear out that baptism is a total immersion in water for the remission of sins.

THIRD:

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.

Notice that baptism is described as a burial. Only immersion of the entire body could fit this description!

To illustrate, suppose that a pet dog had died and we were going to "bury" it. Could we sprinkle a handful of dirt on top of the body and truthfully say that we had "buried" the dog? Certainly not. And neither can we take a handful of water and sprinkle it in someone's face and say that they have been "buried" into Christ. No .ÿ.ÿ. baptism is a total immersion of the sinner in water for the remission of sins!

CONCLUSION

My friend, there is only one baptism that will give you the benefits of Jesus' blood:

Ephesians 4:5

5 [There is only] one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

If you have never received that one baptism described in the Bible, you are not saved from your past sins. According to the Scriptures, you must:

- Believe
- Repent
- Confess
- Be immersed in water, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins

If you would obey these simple steps, and remain faithful to the Lord, He would be your Saviour, not because you deserve to be saved, not because you have worked and lived so perfectly that you deserve heaven, but because He would graciously forgive you. There is no forgiveness, dear friend, apart from baptism!

John 3:5

5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.