

Baptism

The Meaning of Baptism

Baptism is a teaching of scripture that is misunderstood by many people. This need not be so, because as we let the scripture speak it is not difficult to understand.



Baptism and the Double Cure —

- Sin creates two problems for the sinner. First, sin brings the legal problem of guilt which means the sinner is liable for the penalty of sin which is an eternity in Hell.
- Second, sin makes a person sinful; that is it affects the person's very nature. It makes a person spiritually sick.
- To deal with our problem, God provides forgiveness of sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the time when God graciously applies this double cure (Acts 2:38).

Acts 2:38

This verse says that baptism is for _____. The key word is for. The word for is translated from the Greek word *eis* which means “a motion towards something” or “for the purpose of obtaining something.” This is the same word that Jesus uses in Matthew 26:28 where he talks about his blood being poured out for many for (eis) the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 2:12

Here the scripture says that the sinner is _____ with Christ in baptism and _____ with him.

This passage clearly shows that the above mentioned activities are associated with baptism. This does not mean before baptism or after baptism, but rather in baptism.

Other Scriptures that Deal with the Double Cure

Acts 22:16 — _____ away of _____

John 3:5 —

Titus 3:5 —



Why Did God Institute Baptism?

God may have reasons for baptism beyond what we understand, but we can certainly determine some of the reasons why God would institute baptism.

1. Baptism helps us to remember Jesus and our identification with Him. Romans 6:3-11 shows us how we imitate the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus in baptism.
2. The Holy Spirit is active in the life of the Christian. He dwells within the Christian's life. Baptism was established as the time when the penitent sinner receives the gift of the Spirit.
3. Baptism gives us a concrete objective event that can stand in our memory of the point when we received God's grace. We have personal assurance of our salvation because we have obeyed Christ. Since God is faithful, we are assured of our salvation.

Who Can Be Baptised?

Some groups practice infant baptism. Roman Catholics and Lutherans baptise for salvation. They believe that infants inherit sin from Adam and Eve. Others such as the Presbyterians and Methodists baptise babies because they believe that the children of Christian parents are automatically members of the church. Baptism then signifies their identification with the church.

There are several good reasons NOT to baptise infants.

- The meaning of baptism is for forgiveness of sins. Babies have not sinned. (Rom 4:15; 7:7-11).
- We are children of God "through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:26).
- There is no mention of infant baptism in scripture.
- Children cannot hear the gospel (Acts 18:8), believe its promises (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:41; 8:12-13; 16:14, 31, 34, 18:8; Col 2:12), repent of his sins (Acts 2:38), and call upon the Lord (Acts 22:16). Since infants cannot do such things, baptism has no relevance for them.

The Mode of Baptism

Some say that baptism is by immersion while others claim that it can apply to sprinkling or daubing or pouring a small amount of water on the head. The Bible seems clear that baptism means only immersion.



- The Greek word that is translated as baptism literally means “to dip, to plunge, to immerse.” Grammatically, baptism means only immersion.
- The symbolism of baptism requires immersion (Rom 6:3-11, Col 2:12).



Jack Cottrell writes, “From this specific meaning of the phrase we can see why we are baptized ‘into the name of’ the entire Trinity. God the Father paid the price to acquire us as his property, namely, the blood of the God the Son (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Peter 1:18-19), he also applies the seal which marks us as his own, namely, God the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13). All of this comes into sharp focus in baptism, where the purchase price — Christ’s blood — is applied to us (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12) and the mark of ownership — the Holy Spirit — is given to us (Acts 2:38). Thus we are baptized ‘into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’; we become God’s own special possession in the act of baptism.”

For Further Study

Read Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26-27; Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 2:11-13; 1 Peter 3:21. After reading these verses answer the following:

Why is baptism such a controversial subject?

What if anything is unclear about baptism?