

SHOULD BABIES BE BAPTIZED?

What is baptism? Who should be baptized? What is the purpose of baptism? Men have argued over these questions for many years. Is there an answer that we can all understand? Yes, there is. God has given the answer. It is found in the Bible.

What is Baptism?

There are three ways by which denominations baptize people today--sprinkling, pouring, and immersion. Which one is correct baptism?

In the Bible, baptism is called a burial. *“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). If we want to bury a dead body, we will not sprinkle a little dirt on the head. We will cover the body completely with dirt. Baptism is like that. It is a burial in water. Sprinkling water on the head of a person does not baptize him. He must be completely buried under the water. *“Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized”* (John 3:23). John chose a place to baptize where there was much water. Sprinkling requires only a little water. A burial in water requires much water. John did not baptize by sprinkling. He baptized by burying in water.

“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).

When Philip baptized the eunuch, both of them went down into the water. After the baptism, both of them came up out of the water. To sprinkle a person, it is not necessary to go down into the water. To baptize a person by burying him in the water, it is necessary to go down into the water. Therefore, Philip baptized the eunuch by a burial, not by sprinkling.

Who Should Be Baptized?

The Bible says there are certain things a person must **DO BEFORE** he can be baptized. A person **MUST BELIEVE** in Jesus Christ before he can be baptized. Jesus said, *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”* (Mark 16:16). How do we come to believe in Jesus as the Son of God? It is by hearing the Word of God. *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Romans 10:17). Therefore a person **MUST** have faith in Christ **BEFORE** he can be baptized. To be baptized before a person believes is wrong. That baptism is no good! Now let's ask a question, Can a baby believe in Jesus as the Son of God? We all know the answer is “no!” Then, babies are **NOT** to be baptized.

A person **MUST REPENT** of his sins before he can be baptized. The Bible says, *“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). To repent means to change one's life from bad to good. To repent means to have a change of mind. A person no longer wants to do things his way, but now he wants to do what the Lord says. Can a baby repent? Can he change his mind and way of life? In no way! Therefore a baby is not to be baptized!

Before a person can be baptized, he **MUST** also **CONFESS** his faith in Christ. ***“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”*** (Romans 10:9,10). A good example of this is in Acts 8. The man from Ethiopia was being taught by Philip. They came to some water (v. 36). The man from Ethiopia wanted to be baptized. Before Philip baptized him he confessed, ***“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”*** (v. 37). After his confession, he was baptized. Baptism came **AFTER** confession, not before. Can a baby confess his faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God? The answer is a definite “no!” Therefore, a baby is not ready for baptism. What have we learned so far? A person must hear the Word of God. He must believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Then he must repent of his sins. After that, he must confess his faith in Christ as the Son of God. All of this must be done **BEFORE** a person can be baptized. A person cannot be baptized and then believe, repent and confess. The Bible doesn’t teach it that way. That is why a baby is not to be baptized. A baby **CANNOT** have faith in Christ. A baby **CANNOT** confess his faith in Christ. A baby **CANNOT** repent of his sins for two reasons. First, he has no sins. Second, he couldn’t repent of them if he did have them. Let’s follow what the Bible teaches and then we can all agree. The Bible says, ***“But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized”*** (Acts 8:12).

Why Be Baptized?

There are several reasons mentioned in the Bible as to why we must be baptized. First, we must be baptized if we want to be saved. ***“He who believes and is baptized will be saved”*** (Mark 16:16). The apostle Peter said, ***“There is also an antitype which now saves us-baptism. . .”*** (1 Peter 3:21). To be saved and to have our sins forgiven is the same thing. If a person wants to be saved, then he must be baptized in order to be saved. If a person wants to have his sins forgiven, then he must be baptized. Peter told the people on the day of Pentecost to ***“. . .Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (forgiveness) of sins . . .”*** (Acts 2:38). There is no way a person can be saved, or have his sins forgiven, without being baptized (buried in water).

Another reason to be baptized is to put a person ***“into Christ.”*** To be “in Christ” means “to be a Christian.” You are not a Christian if you are not “in Christ.” How does a person get “into Christ?” The Apostle Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia: ***“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ”*** (Galatians 3:27). You get ***“into Christ”*** through baptism. That makes you a Christian. That baptism is a burial in water. It also saves you and forgives you of your sins.

Baptism also puts us into the body of Christ. The body of Christ is Christ’s church. ***“. . .and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body. . .”*** (Ephesians 1:22,23). Christ built only one church (Matthew 16:18). That church is His body. The church is the saved. Christ is the Saviour of the church. If one wants Christ as His Saviour, then he must be in Christ’s church. The only way one can get in Christ’s church is through baptism (a burial in water).

WHAT does the Bible say about **WHAT** baptism is? The Bible teaches that baptism is putting a person completely under water for a short time. This is called a burial or immersion.

WHY should a person be baptized? So that he can be saved and have his sins forgiven. This baptism makes him a part of Christ and His church.

WHO should be baptized? The Bible says the one who is to be baptized **MUST** believe, repent and confess his faith **BEFORE** he is baptized.

Have **YOU** been baptized the Bible way? Did you believe, repent and confess your faith **BEFORE** you were baptized? Were you buried in water for your baptism? Were you baptized **FOR** the forgiveness of your sins? If you cannot answer **YES** to **ALL** of these questions, then your baptism is not according to the Bible.

If you have more questions about baptism or you wish to be baptized according to the Bible, let us know.