

BAPTISM

Many religious people today seem to think that baptism is not very important. It seems strange then that among the last words spoken by Jesus before he returned to Heaven were words concerning baptism. Jesus said, ***“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”*** (Mark 16:16). The fact is, Jesus spoke about baptism because it is a subject of great importance. It is a matter of spiritual life and death! For this reason, one needs to understand the difference between what man says about baptism and what God says about baptism.

One common teaching of man concerning baptism is that a person does not have to be baptized in order to be saved. Is this what the Bible teaches? Absolutely not! On the day of Pentecost mentioned in Acts 2, Peter said to the people, ***“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”*** (Acts 2:38). If a person wants his sins forgiven by God, he must be baptized. Again, the Scriptures teach the importance of baptism through the words Ananias spoke to Saul, saying, ***“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”*** (Acts 22:16). One can see that without baptism there is **no forgiveness** of sins. The Lord stated, ***“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”*** (Mark 16:16). From these passages it is clear that God wants all men to know they **must** be baptized to be saved.

Another teaching of man that contradicts the Bible is the idea that sprinkling and pouring are acceptable forms of baptism. This, however, cannot be true since the meaning of the word “baptize” is immerse, dip, or plunge. The Apostle Paul describes baptism as a **burial** in which one dies to the guilt of sin (Romans 6:1-7). Examples of baptism also show it is an immersion in water. Concerning the Ethiopian eunuch’s conversion, the Scriptures state, ***“And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him”*** (Acts 8:38). Pouring or sprinkling water on the Ethiopian’s head would not have required both men to go down **into** the water. There is no doubt that **immersion** was practiced here.

Some men teach that infants need to be baptized. The purpose of baptism, however, is to remove sin by the blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Revelation 1:5). Do babies have sin? NO! One needs to understand that sin, as defined by the Bible is the breaking of God’s law (1 John 3:4). Infants are not capable of breaking the laws of God or understanding the difference between good and evil. Can a child inherit sin from its parents? NO! Ezekiel 18:20 makes it clear that, ***“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”*** From the passages above, one can see that babies do not have sin and therefore, do not need to be baptized.

A careful and honest study of the Scriptures will help one to understand the truth about baptism. The Bible plainly teaches that baptism is essential to salvation. In addition, one learns from examples of conversion that baptism is immersion in water and that it is for those who are guilty of sin--not for infants.

Are you following the teaching of God about baptism or the teachings of men? If

you have not been baptized according to the teaching of the Word of God, will you not do so today? Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Mark 16:16), repent of all your sins (Acts 2:38), confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:37) and be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26,27). Please let us know if we may assist you in obeying the gospel.