

- Few topics within the realm of theology has been more hotly debated and contested than that of water baptism. For years, men and women have had discussed and debated many aspects of water baptism. They have asked how one should be baptized. Should they be dipped, sprinkled, poured, or immersed? They have asked who should be baptized. Should an infant, child, or adult be baptized? They have asked what the purpose of baptism is. Is a person baptized simply as an outward sign of an inward change, as an act of obedience through faith, or as a church tradition and nothing more? They have debated if baptism is necessary for salvation or if ones eternal destiny doesn't depend at all on water baptism. In all honesty, these discussions and debates will more than likely continue until the return of our Lord.
- With that said, just because people debate this issue doesn't mean that the Bible is unclear about the role of water baptism in regards to our faith and God's will. The understanding of most people when it comes to water baptism is shaped based upon their understanding of God's grace and man's role in salvation. Some people can't fathom baptism being necessary for the forgiveness of sins because their minds have been shaped so much by reformed theology or Calvinism into thinking that man has no part in the salvation process. Others can't imagine baptism and other deeds not being for salvation because their understanding of salvation is that man must do good things and build up enough credit before God in order to be saved in the end. These are obviously the extremes of the issue of salvation, but I mention them simply to show how our backgrounds and basic understandings of salvation can cause us to approach water baptism with preconceived notions. Instead of letting the Bible teach what part water baptism plays in salvation, some look at water baptism and make it fit into what they already believe. That approach is what has caused much of the division on the issue. So this morning, I want to show us 4 things that the New Testament teaches that happen when a person is baptized in water through faith in Jesus Christ. Just being immersed in water isn't enough. We must be immersed with a purpose in mind. Baptism is only valid when it is with purpose. So therefore, we must be baptized with a purpose and knowing what takes place at that moment. Let's see what the Bible teaches about that moment of faithful baptism with a purpose.

I. ...we are forgiven of our sins. (Acts 2:38)

- A. Peter is preaching to the very men who were responsible for crucifying and murdering the Son of God.
 1. They are convicted by the message of Peter and they asked what they could do to have this grievous sin taken away from them.
 2. Peter responds that they need to repent, turn from their wickedness and commit their lives to Jesus, and be baptized in His name for their sins to be forgiven.
 3. It was only with their true repentance and for faithful baptism that they would have their sins forgiven of them and be clean in the sight of God.
 4. Notice that these two actions were necessary before their sins could be forgiven.
- B. Some would argue that the "for" of v.38 means "because of", so therefore you are baptized because your sins have already been forgiven through accepting of Jesus as your Savior.
 1. This argument does not work for a couple of reasons.
 2. The exact same phraseology is used in **Matt. 26:28**. If "for" means "because" in **Acts 2:38**, then we must be consistent and say that it means the same thing in **Matt. 26:28** and Jesus shed His blood because sins were already forgiven.
 3. Few people, if any, are willing to accept that line of thinking in **Matt. 26:28**. Therefore, we cannot accept that same line of reasoning in **Acts 2:38**.
 4. Peter was clear that repentance and baptism were necessary for these men to have their sins forgiven. These men recognized the simplicity of Peter's teaching and 3,000 of them were baptized at that very time. (**Acts 2:41**)

II. ...we are united in Christ's death and resurrection. (Romans 6:3-11)

- A. When we are baptized through faith in Christ Jesus, we become united in His death and our old man of sin dies. (**vv.3-7**)
 1. Jesus died and was buried in the ground and we must die and be buried but instead in water.
 2. Our old life is done away with and is crucified with Jesus. (**v.6**)

3. We are freed from sin and are no long slaves of it. **(v.6)**
- B. Upon our raising from the water, we begin a new life that is alive in Christ Jesus. **(vv.4,8-11)**
 1. Jesus was buried, but He did not stay buried forever. He was raised and walked again. We too are raised to walk again upon our baptism.
 2. When we are raised, we are raised to a new life that focuses on and lives for Christ. **(v.11)**
- C. It is at the point of baptism in water through faith that our old life is ended and our new life begins.

III....we put on Christ. (Galatians 3:27)

- A. Salvation is only found in Jesus Christ. **(Acts 4:12)**
 1. The Apostles went from Pentecost preaching a message of salvation in Jesus Christ.
 2. Peter and John speak to the people in **Acts 3** about Jesus being the Messiah of God.
 3. After many more people obey the Gospel as the thousands did in chapter 2, Peter and John are put through interrogation about who's name they are speaking for.
 4. Peter, filled with the Holy spirit says that they are speak in the name of Jesus and that no one can be saved without being in Jesus because their is salvation in no one else. **(Acts 4:8-12)**
- B. The next logical question must be, "How then do we get in Jesus?" Our text for this point answers that all important question.
 1. Faith and baptism are put together here in **Galatians 3** as being necessary for one to be a son of God.
 2. Therefore those who are saved are those who are sons of God and those who are sons of God are those who have clothed themselves with Christ through water baptism through faith in Christ. **(Gal. 3:26,27)**
 3. We are not clothed within Christ or in Christ until we are baptized through faith.

IV. We are added to Christ's church. (I Corinthians 12:13)

- A. Some churches require you to be baptized in order to join that particular church although you have already been added to the universal church through other means.
- B. In **Ephesians 5:23**, Paul speaks of Jesus being the savior of the body, which earlier he teaches is the church. From this we must infer that only those who have joined the church of our Lord will be saved. So again, how are we added to that one body, church?
- C. Our verse in **I Corinthians 12:13** teaches us that we are baptized into the one body.
 1. When we are baptized through faith in Christ Jesus, we are added to His body that He shed His blood for.
 2. This church is based in heaven and its members are listed their. **(Heb. 12:22,23)**
 3. The only way we see people being added to the "general assembly" or the "church of the firstborn" is through baptism of water through faith in Christ Jesus. At that point of baptism is a person added to the body that Jesus died to save.

Does the Bible's teachings of water baptism matchup with what we normally hear in the religious world? Not much at all, honestly. Baptism has been changed into something that would hardly be recognizable by the Christians of the first century. We must not allow our preconceived notions dictate what we believe about a teaching of the Bible. We must allow the Bible to speak for itself and simply follow its explanation on any subject. May God help us to always preach, teach, believe, and practice the simple truth of God's Word on the subject of baptism and the role it plays in our salvation, and may we be ready and able to teach someone God's simple way of salvation.