

Baptism Is and Isn't Lee Edgar Elkins

In spite of the fact that the New Testament Scriptures are simple and easy to understand on the teaching of baptism, there continues to be disagreement and controversy over the subject of baptism. I hope that by this simple examination of what the passages teach that we will be able to point out what they reveal about baptism. Many make the assumption of what baptism is and what it isn't. Let us make a honest attempt to clarify that in this article.

Baptism is for taught believers, not the untaught. Matt 28:18-19; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:35-37. What precedes baptism in these passages? Teaching! People must first be taught and that is what is taking place within Scripture. There is no passage teaching that that one is to be or can be baptized before and without being taught the gospel! This rules out infant baptism for those who wish to baptize babies. Babies, unteachable persons, and unbelievers are not subject for Bible baptism.

Baptism is something that the taught, penitent believer in Christ must do in order to be saved, to receive remission of sins. Acts 2:36-38; Acts 22:8-16. Throughout these passages, please take note of the **who** was told **what** to do and for what **purpose**. There is not one single scripture that teaches you are saved before baptism and that the reason for being baptized is because you have already been saved. Baptism has never been for saved people, it's to save people!

Baptism is **not** a replacement for the Savior! The accusation made by many are that we are trying to replace grace or that we are losing sight of Jesus Christ. That is simply not true especially when we consider the words of Jesus himself. Lk 6:46; John 8:31-32. If you forget about the Savior while being baptized, then your focus isn't upon Christ to begin with! The writer of Hebrews makes it clear for us as well. Heb 5:8-9. In fact, baptism **is** for **putting on** Christ! Gal 3:27.

Baptism in the name of Jesus is something the thief on the cross could be saved without, but it **isn't** something that you and I can be saved without. This is probably the most used example people will use against baptism. Some with a honest heart, others not so much. The question stands, why could he be saved and not us? Note that the thief on the cross lived and died under the Law of Moses, a law that did **not** require baptism in the name of Jesus in order to be saved. You and I however, live under the law of Christ that **does** require baptism in his name for the remission of sins. Consider the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

Baptism is a burial in water. Col 2:12. Acts 10:47-48. Baptism has always been complete immersion. Baptism has since been changed into sprinkling and pouring as acceptable forms of baptism. Question is, is it acceptable to God? Was Jesus sprinkled or poured into the Jordan river? Was the Eunuch sprinkled or poured into water over in Acts 8? There is no Biblical example of pouring or sprinkling being used as baptism so why change? Sprinkling and pouring is only taught by men who have come up with their own doctrines and creeds. Matt 15:9

Baptism isn't the only condition of salvation for past sin but is one of several specified by Jesus and his Apostles. To ignore one condition and keep the rest, of what benefit is it to us? Consider Noah for a moment. Heb 11:6-7. If he would have used oak wood instead of gopher wood, do you think the ark would have floated? Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord because he lived an obedient life to God. We would do well to consider his example in our lives.

I would hope that our reason for being obedient to the faith is not only because of what we would benefit. I hope it is because of our love and faithfulness to God! We are not worthy of being saved so lets not get it in our heads that we have accomplished anything. We couldn't do this without the Lord. Let us not forget that baptism's place in man's salvation from past sins has been assigned by divine order. It follows hearing, believing, repenting, and confessing Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God but it precedes salvation or remission of past sins.

(Referenced: Edgar J Dye outlines on baptism)