

## Water Baptism

The New Testament talks about two baptisms, water baptism and Holy Spirit (Ghost) baptism. These are two distinct experiences. This article will deal with "Water Baptism".

### Is Water Baptism Necessary for Salvation?

According to the Bible, water baptism is necessary for salvation. Consider the following scriptures.

- Mark 16:16 "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...."
- John 3:5 "...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (Being born of water refers to water baptism.)
- Acts 2:38 "...Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins..."
- Acts 22:16 "...arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
- Galatians 3:37 "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
- I Peter 3:21 "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us..."

### What Does Water Baptism Do?

Water baptism does many things for us. First, it identifies us with the Gospel message, which is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4). After Jesus died for our sins, he was buried. The Bible says that we are buried with him in baptism (Romans 6:3-4, Colossians 2:12). By being baptized in Jesus' name, we identify with his death. Water baptism is only effective if a person has first repented of their sins. Repentance is a type of death to sin. Water baptism is a type of burial. When a person has died to sin, they are ready to be buried.

Baptism also remits sins. The word remission comes from a Greek word that can be translated as forgiveness, but when used in the context of water baptism, it means "freedom from". Water baptism provides remission of sins or "freedom from sins". A sinner needs both forgiveness as well as freedom from the penalty of sin. Sin has both a moral and legal application. The sinner has sinned against God. When the sinner repents and asks forgiveness, the Lord forgives the sinner. However, even with forgiveness, there is a legal judgment that says the soul that sins will die (Romans 6:23). Since God is a just and righteous God, He must execute judgment. Water baptism remits and washes away our sins by applying the name and blood of Jesus to us. Consider the following scriptures.

- Luke 24:47 – Jesus said, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.
- Acts 2:38 – Peter said, to be baptized for the remission of sins.
- Acts 22:16 – Paul was told to wash away his sins by being baptized. (See I Corinthians 6:11)
- Hebrews 9:22 – Without the shedding of blood is no remission (of sins).

If all that was needed for our sins was forgiveness then Jesus didn't have to die on the cross. Many people repented of their sins in the Old Testament and in the Gospels before Jesus died. Jesus died because sin required an innocent blood sacrifice to pay the debt (Matt 26:28).

### **What Is the Proper Way to Be Baptized?**

A careful study of the Book of Acts and the New Testament will reveal that baptism in the early church was always done in the name of Jesus or the Lord Jesus. (See Acts 2:38, 8:14-16, 10:48, 19:4-5, 22:16, Gal 3:27) The word baptize comes from a Greek word which means to dip or immerse. So, the proper way to be baptized is to be immersed in the name of the Lord Jesus.

What about the end of the Gospel of Matthew with Jesus saying, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"? A careful study of the passage reveals several things:

- The command is looking for a single name in water baptism, "in the name" which is singular and not plural.
- The terms "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" are not names but titles.
- In Matthew 28:18, Jesus stated that he had all power in heaven and earth. Christians know that the power is in the name of Jesus.

We know that the name of the Son is Jesus. Jesus said I am come in my Father's name and that if we have seen him, we had seen the Father (John 6:43, 14:7-9). The Spirit that was in Jesus is the Holy Spirit, so the name of Jesus fulfills the titles Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Jesus said he had all the power, so it is his name that must be applied in baptism. (Matt 28:18).

We know that the Bible is inspired by God's Spirit, so there can't be a contradiction. The apostles did not misunderstand Jesus when he commanded them to baptize in Matt 28:19-20. The apostles knew that the name of Jesus fulfilled the command Jesus had given. This is why Peter said to the crowd on the Day of Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized in the 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).