

# BIBLICAL **BAPTISM**

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# I. Commandment or Optional

The first question we seek to answer is whether baptism is an option for a believer or if it's a commandment.

## **Mark 16:15-16**

- 15 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*
- 16 *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

In the preceding scripture we see Jesus commissioning His Disciples. He tells them to go into all the world and “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”.

Jesus ties baptism to salvation. After stating this we read those who don't believe will not be saved.

From this scripture we find that baptism is tied to salvation and according to Mark, essential to be saved.

We read similar statements in the commissioning of His Disciples in Matthew and Luke:

## **Matthew 28:18-19**

- 18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*
- 19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

Again, we find Jesus commands his Disciples that they are to evangelize by baptizing believers.

### **Luke 24:46-47**

- 46 *And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:*  
47 *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

What does Jesus say should be preached in His name? Remission of sins which is baptism (Acts 2:38).

In the preceding three books Jesus commands His disciples to preach the gospel and in so doing, baptize converts. If this was an option, why did Jesus command His disciples to evangelize by conducting baptisms?

### **John 3:1-6**

- 1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:  
2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.  
3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*  
4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?  
5 *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*  
6 *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

In talking to Nicodemus, Jesus states the requirement to make heaven your home. You MUST be born again. When Nicodemus does not understand this statement it is broken down into two parts:

- Born of Water (Baptism)
- Born of Spirit (Infilling of the Holy Spirit)

Summarized, if someone is not baptized (born of water) they are not going to make heaven their home.

This is why Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize converts. It was essential to salvation. If someone wants to make heaven their home, they must be baptized or born of water.

### **Matthew 3:13-16**

- 13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.  
14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?  
15 And Jesus answering said unto him, *Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him.*  
16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

John, knowing who Jesus was, stated he wouldn't baptize Jesus because John needed to be baptized by Jesus. However, Jesus said John should baptize him as it was to fulfill all righteousness. In other words, Jesus needed to submit to the ordinance of baptism.

Why did Jesus say this?

## **I Peter 2:21**

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

Jesus set the perfect example of what we should follow and how we should live. We need to follow what he did. Jesus was baptized by John to show us it is an ordinance that must be obeyed.

Jesus put importance on baptism stating it was essential for someone to be saved. Let's look at the importance the Disciples placed on baptism.

## **Acts 2:37-38**

- 37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?
- 38 Then Peter said unto them, 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.
- 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached to the Jews who were amazed by the outpouring of God's Spirit. In verse 36 of Acts 2 Peter tells them they had crucified Jesus, who was their Messiah. In verse 37 they are convicted or pricked in their heart realizing they had crucified their Messiah. They ask the important question of how they could get right with God. Peter's response entailed three actions they must take to get right with God:

- Repentance
- Baptism in Jesus Name for the remission of sins
- Infilling of the Holy Spirit

## **Acts 8:12**

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

When the Samaritans believed what Philip was preaching about Jesus, they were baptized.

## **Acts 8:35-38**

- 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.
- 36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?
- 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
- 38 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.

Again, when Philip is preaching Jesus to the eunuch, we find the eunuch is baptized.

## **Acts 9:17-18**

- 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.
- 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

When Saul was converted, we read he was baptized. Are we better than Saul that we should not be baptized? The consistency we find in the Word of God is Jesus commanded baptism in order to enter the Kingdom of God and the Apostles followed that command by baptizing converts.

Here are more examples of the Apostles preaching baptism:

### **Acts 10:47-48**

- 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?  
48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Peter, in preaching to Cornelius' household, commands them to be baptized. He didn't make it optional to the Gentile believers, but showing the necessity, made it a direct command to be baptized.

### **Acts 16:14-15**

- 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.  
15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

### **Acts 18:8**

- 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

### **Acts 19:2-5**

- 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.  
3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.  
4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.  
5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

### **Acts 22:12-16**

- 12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,  
13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.  
14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.  
15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.  
16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

We clearly see that Jesus commanded baptism as part of salvation and the Apostles commanded new believers to be baptized.

Is baptism an option or command? The scriptures clearly state it is a command and a requirement for salvation.

### **I Peter 3:20**

- 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.
- 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

As we see, baptism is a commandment. However, why is baptism a commandment? What is the purpose of baptism?

### **Acts 2:38**

- 38 Then Peter said unto them, 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.

Peter, in responding to the onlooker's questions about getting right with God, states that baptism is for the remission of sins.

The word remission, used in this instance, is the Greek *Aphesis*, which means pardon or freedom. In other words, Peter was saying baptism was for the pardoning of sins.

### **Acts 22:16**

- 16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Ananias, in speaking to Saul, asks him why he is waiting, but rather, be baptized to wash away his sins.

We see again, that the Apostles referred to baptism as the method to remit or wash away your sins.

### **I Peter 3:20-21**

- 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.
- 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

In Peter's letter, he refers to baptism as not cleansing the outward part of the body, but rather, cleansing the inward part of the body in giving us a clear conscience before God. Why does baptism give a clear conscience before God? As we read in the preceding, it washes or remits our sins.

To summarize, the purpose of baptism is to remit or wash away our sins. We are to stand clean before God and baptism fulfills the cleansing by ridding us of our past sins.

## II. Sprinkling or Immersion

Knowing the importance of baptism, we must now find the correct mode in administration. Again, depending on what fellowship you attend, you will see different modes of baptism. We want to find what the Bible says is the correct mode.

### **Matthew 3:16**

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

In reading of the baptism of Jesus we see he went “straightway out of the water” meaning, there was much water there and more than likely a baptism that was done by immersion (dunking).

### **Acts 8:39**

39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

Philip and the Eunuch, came “up out of the water” during the Eunuch’s baptism. Obviously, this was a baptism done by immersion.

### **Romans 6:3-5**

- 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
- 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
- 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

## Colossians 2:12

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Lastly, we read in Romans and Colossians baptism is our burial with Christ. How do you bury someone? They are completely under dirt in a cemetery. In baptism, we are fully buried (immersed) with Christ.

Lastly, the definition of the word baptism gives us our instruction on what mode we should follow. The New Testament was originally written in Greek, so looking up the Greek word for Baptism we find the word “baptizo”. Baptizo is defined by Strong's Concordance as follows: “to make whelmed (that is, fully wet)”. It is also defined “to dip, immerse, or plunge”. The very definition of the word is to immerse. Looking at God's Word, we find the Apostles baptized by full immersion.

## III. Titles or Jesus Name

In looking in the scriptures we find baptism was a command for salvation and to be administered by immersion. Lastly, we will look into the method they followed when performing this rite.

### Luke 24:46-47

- 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:  
47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

### Matthew 28:18-19

- 18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.  
19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Luke and Matthew record Jesus' last instructions to His followers. Luke records baptism should be done in Jesus name, yet Matthew records the titles Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Is this a contradiction?

Let's look at how the Apostles baptized and then look back at Luke and Matthew.

### Acts 2:38

- 38 Then Peter said unto them, 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 8:16**

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

### **Acts 10:47-48**

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

### **Acts 22:16**

16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

### **Acts 19:5**

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

In reading how the Apostles baptized the converts in the early Church, we find they baptized in the name of Jesus.

Other scriptures supporting the importance of the name of Jesus:

### **Acts 4:12**

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

### **Colossians 3:17**

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

### **Philippians 2:9-11**

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### **I Corinthians 1:12-16**

12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

### **Galatians 3:27**

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

What about Matthew 28:19? Is this a contradiction in the bible? Is there a mistake in the Word of God? Were the Apostles mistaken in how they baptized?

### **Matthew 28:19**

19 **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:**

Jesus states to baptize “in the name of”. Is Father, Son or Holy Ghost a name? No, rather, these are titles. What name is being spoken of?

## Name of the Father:

Name of the Father = Jesus

### John 5:43

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

### John 14:9

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

## Name of the Son:

Name of the Son = Jesus

### Matthew 1:21

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

## Name of the Holy Ghost:

Name of the Holy Ghost = Jesus

### John 14:26

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

There is no contradiction in Luke and Matthew. Rather, they coincide and they instruct the name in baptism is Jesus. We find the Apostles followed those instructions and baptized in Jesus name. We also find scriptures showing the importance of the

name of Jesus. We do not find one scripture in the bible where anyone was baptized in the titles Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

## Conclusion

In light of the Bible, we find that baptism is a command that one must follow for salvation as it washes away our sins. The proper mode of baptism according to the Bible is by immersion in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins.



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