

God's Plan Of Salvation

Baptism (I Pt 3:20-21)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on "God's Plan Of Salvation."
 - a. We have examined four of the six steps necessary to get to heaven.
 - i. Hearing/Studying God's most precious Word.
 - ii. Putting ones faith in Jesus as the Christ.
 - iii. Giving oneself to Christ in repentance.
 - iv. Confessing Jesus as the Christ.
 - b. Today we are going to examine the most controversial of all the steps which is...
 - i. ...Baptism
3. Over the years baptism has come to have different definitions.
 - a. How baptism is defined today.
 - i. "a ceremonial immersion in water, or application of water, as an initiatory rite or sacrament of the Christian church." (<http://goo.gl/aVpTi>)
 - ii. "a Christian sacrament marked by ritual use of water and admitting the recipient to the Christian community" (Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc.)
 - iii. "a religious ceremony in which water is used as a symbol of cleansing from sin. Churches today baptize by sprinkling or pouring or immersing a person, in water. Baptism is a sign that our sins are washed away and that Jesus has taken us to be his own." (The NIV84 Dictionary-Concordance pg. 957)
 - b. How baptism is defined by Greek lexicons.
 - i. "to whelm, i.e. cover wholly with a fluid; in the N. T." (Strong, J. (2009). Vol. 1: A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible (18). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.)
 - ii. "consisting of the processes of immersion, submersion and emergence" (Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). Vol. 2: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (50). Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.)
 - iii. "In the N. T. it is used particularly of the rite of sacred ablution, first instituted by John the Baptist, afterwards by Christ's command received by Christians and adjusted to the contents and nature of their religion (see βάπτισμα, 3), viz. **an immersion in water**, performed as a sign of the removal of sin, and administered to those who, impelled by a desire for salvation, sought admission to the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom" (Thayer, J. H. (1889). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti (94). New York: Harper & Brothers.) (emphasis mine)
 - c. How baptism is defined by the Bible.
 - i. **Ac 8:38-39** "And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing."¹

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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- ii. **Mk 7:4** "and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches."
4. The truth is if anyone does any kind of "decent" study of the word they will see that it means to immerse ie cover completely.
 - a. With that out of the way let us examine what the scriptures say concerning this most important step.

I. Baptism's Necessity

- A. The Reformation Movement and baptism's necessity
 1. Baptism under Catholicism has always been necessary for salvation though there are "exceptions" for it.
 - i. "... the early Church Fathers wrote in the Nicene Creed (A.D. 381), "We believe in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins."" (<http://goo.gl/dX1q8>)
 - ii. "Yet Christians have also always realized that the necessity of water baptism is a normative rather than an absolute necessity. There are exceptions to water baptism: It is possible to be saved through "baptism of blood," martyrdom for Christ, or through "baptism of desire", that is, an explicit or even implicit desire for baptism." (Ibid)
 2. With the Reformation Movement there was a "revolution" of sort on what it took to be saved.
 - i. Jacobus Faber a French Catholic priest, five years before Luther posted his 95 theses, wrote his "Commentary on the Epistles of Paul" where he argued that justification before God is by faith without attendant works. (<http://goo.gl/dec58>)
 - ii. Martin Luther not long after would write, "I, Doctor Martin Luther, unworthy herald of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, confess this article, that faith alone without works justifies before God." (Ibid)
 3. This "faith only" doctrine or as Martin Luther put it "passive righteousness" has stuck and has become a doctrine of elimination of baptism. (<http://goo.gl/jA6bA>)
 - i. "One of the most nagging questions in Christianity is whether or not baptism is necessary for salvation. The answer is a simple, "No, water baptism is not necessary for salvation."" (<http://goo.gl/vkM5A>)
 - ii. "As far as I know, there is no place in Scripture that actually says that salvation occurs at baptism." (<http://goo.gl/8YIcD>)

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B. The Bible and baptism's necessity

1. The Bible is clear on this subject.

- i. **I Pt 3:20-21** "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" (KJV)
- ii. Several have tried to undermine this verse with the "good conscious" argument.
 - a. "But, water did not save Noah. This is why Peter excludes the issue of water baptism being the thing that saves us because he says, "not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God." Peter says that it is not the application of water that saves us but a pledge of the good conscience." (goo.gl/vkM5A)
- iii. There are several reasons why this doesn't hold water.
 - a. First a "good conscience" doesn't necessitate salvation.
 1. **Ac 23:1** "And looking intently at the council, Paul said, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.""
 - b. Second it is completely illogical and unwise to say "I know the Bible say baptism saves you, but that isn't what it means."
 - c. Third the word answer or appeal is the Greek word "ἐπερώτημα" or "eper-o-tema."
 1. This word means " As the terms of inquiry and demand often include the idea of desire, the word thus gets the signification of earnest seeking, i. e. a craving, an intense desire...to long for something" (Thayer, J. H. (1889). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti* (230). New York: Harper & Brothers.)
 2. For this reason it has had many a great translation.
 - i. "which (baptism) now saves us [you] not because in receiving it we [ye] have put away the filth of the flesh, but because we [ye] have earnestly sought a conscience reconciled to God" (Ibid)
 - ii. baptism is "an appeal to God for a clear conscience." (goo.gl/dec58)
 - iii. "Baptism does not confer physical cleansing but saves as a request for forgiveness" (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (262). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.)

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- iv. Charles B. Williams respected Baptist scholar said baptism is "the craving for a clear conscience toward God."
3. All that is said to point this out, each show that the good conscience comes after the immersion not the other way around.
2. This verse alone proves baptism is necessary for salvation.

II. Baptism's Mode

- A. The two main theological modes are "water" & "spirit"
 1. There isn't or at least shouldn't be any debate that in the Bible there were multiple modes of baptism.
 - i. Water & Holy Spirit & Fire baptism
 - a. **Mt 3:11** "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."
 2. The Scriptures make it clear that there is but one baptism "now."
 - i. **Ep 4:5** "one Lord, one faith, one baptism"
 3. The question simply is which one?
- B. Water or Spirit baptism in Romans
 1. **Ro 6:3-4** "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."
 - i. Notice that someone that is baptized is being buried and raised from the same mode.
 - a. If I am buried in the Holy Spirit and raised out of the Holy Spirit I end up without the Holy Spirit which is a contradiction of scripture.
 1. **Ro 8:9** "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."
 - b. If I am buried in water and raised out of water we find no contradiction of scripture.
 2. Thus we find the mode is simply water.
 - i. **Ac 8:38-39; I Pt 3:20-21**

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III. Baptism's Purpose

- A. Water does not save
 - 1. It is God who saves through the mode He established.
 - i. **I Pt 1:18-19** "knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."
 - 2. This isn't hard to understand I wouldn't think.
 - i. "If" belief or the sinners prayer saved then this is still the "mode" through which one is saved by God.
 - a. Belief without God would not save.
 - b. A sinners prayer without God would not save.
- B. Baptism's purpose is to save us by washing away our sins
 - 1. **Mk 16:16** "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."
 - 2. **Ac 2:38** "And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
 - 3. **Ac 22:16** "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name."
- C. Baptism's purpose is to get us into Christ
 - 1. There are only two verses in the Bible that say "how" to get into Christ.
 - i. **Ro 6:3** "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"
 - ii. **Ga 3:27** "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

CONCLUSION

- 1. The lengths by which people will go to try and make the Bible say something it doesn't is heartbreaking.
 - a. We need to be people of the book and simply do what it says allowing it to determine what we do and why we do it.
 - 1. **Co 3:17** "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."
- 2. Question: Are you willing to either obey Christ and be baptized if you need to, or are you living in such a way worthy of your calling.
- 3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.

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| i. Hear/Study | Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15 |
| ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ | Jn 3:16; 8:24 |
| iii. Repent/Turn To God | Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47 |
| iv. Confess Jesus As Lord | Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9 |
| v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins | Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21 |
| vi. Live A Faithful Life | I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8 |