

"Christian Baptism 1"

The Bible never speaks of a believer in Christ who has not been baptized. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Today we're exploring what the Bible teaches about baptism. Stay with us.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way. God desires that we believe and obey Him. And we want to please God, because we love Him. The apostle Paul said in Galatians 1 verse 10, "If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ." That's why we ask what God says about every moral or spiritual matter. We're involved in a search for the truth, for the Lord's will. We want nothing more and nothing less. We pray that you too are seeking God's truth, and that's why you've tuned in today. We want to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

Several years ago, a man far from God asked me to study the Bible with him. When he was a young teenager, he was baptized in a denominational church. But years later he learned what he did as a youth and what the Bible teaches about baptism were different. This left him confused, and he wanted to know what the Word of God said. He desperately wanted to be right with God. He was in poor health; and the doctor told him that if didn't change his ways, his heart would give out and he would die. And he remembered promises he had made many years before and wanted to do what was right.

I met with him, and we studied from Scripture what the Bible says about Christian baptism. That is baptism into Christ. I wanted to share with you what we studied that day. So today and next week we'll study what the Bible says about baptism.

Now if you want the details of this study, we offer the information on this program free. If you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org and on YouTube.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, and then we'll read from Matthew 3:13 to 17.

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to Matthew chapter 3 verses 13 to 17. And talks about the baptism of Jesus Christ.

Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

God was pleased when Jesus was baptized because Jesus wanted to fulfill all righteousness. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father help us always to do Your will to love You and to do things as You would want them to be done. Help us to build our houses upon the rock and not upon sand. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

For centuries people have discussed baptism. And we're focusing on what the New Testament teaches about baptism into Christ. We want to know how baptism fits with our conversion to Jesus Christ and becoming a Christian. And so we're going to study through the New Testament. We'll move fast and only make the most important points.

In Matthew 3:15 to 17, Jesus considered it important to be baptized. He left his home in Nazareth and walked many miles to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. John was surprised at Jesus' coming for baptism and objected to it, since John's baptism was according to Mark 1 verse 4 and Luke 3 verse 3 a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." Well, Jesus has never sinned and didn't need forgiveness. But Jesus said, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

Well, Jesus was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, and it's also the right thing for us to do. Luke 7:29 to 30 says that anyone who rejected the baptism of John was rejecting the purpose of God. Well, if this is true of John's baptism, it is even more true of the our baptism into Jesus Christ.

Matthew 3:16 to 17 says, "And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'" God approved of this baptism. Notice that after baptism, Jesus went up from the river, from the water. The water baptism of Jesus took place down in the river. John 3 and verse 23 says that, "John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized."

In His last words recorded in Matthew, Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18 to 20).

The apostles made disciples by teaching and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and second, by teaching them all that Jesus commanded them. The idea of a non-baptized disciple or Christian is never contemplated in the New Testament.

The Lord said in Mark 16:15 to 16, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." Now two things are necessary to respond to the gospel and to be saved: faith and baptism. It's not right to say one is necessary but the other is optional. The Lord included both.

In John 3 and verse 3 Jesus told Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered in verse 5, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Now what we need to know is that all the early church fathers agreed that the new birth of water and the Spirit in John 3:5 is baptism in water. In fact, no one said otherwise until the 1500s. The idea of a person being born again before he is baptized is simply not found in Scripture.

On the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 Peter and the apostles preached the first gospel sermon. Peter's sermon convicted the people. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

Acts 2:37 to 39 says: Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 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. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

Now these guilty people asked what they should do about their sin of crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ. And Peter said they needed to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus in order to have forgiveness of their sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Both repentance and

baptism precede God's forgiveness. Some say one ought to be baptized because their sins are already forgiven, but this idea ignores the context. They aren't asking what to do after they're forgiven but what to do to be forgiven.

Remember the phrase "for the forgiveness of sins" was used of John's baptism in Mark 1:4 and Luke 3 and verse 3. It's also found in Matthew 26:28, where the Lord says, "for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Jesus poured out His blood so people might have forgiveness. Peter heard Jesus say this just fifty days before. It's not an accident that he uses this very phrase in reference to repentance and baptism.

Now some recent translations make Acts 2:38 clearer. The New Revised Standard Version says, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven." The International English Bible says, "Change your hearts and each one of you must be immersed by the authority of Jesus the Messiah, so that your sins may be forgiven."

Well, Acts 2:40 to 41 shows this even stronger. It says: And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls." Now those who heard this message to save themselves were baptized! Clearly, three thousand people understood this message and gladly did what Peter told them. They understood what to do and why they needed to do it. And they wanted to be saved.

Next we looked at Acts 8 and verse 12. The Bible says, "But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Now they baptized men and women but not infants or small children. They baptized people who were old enough to believe in the name of Jesus Christ and to repent. Acts 5 and verse 14 tells us that believers were added to the Lord, both men and women. Infants aren't old to believe. The words for men and women speak of males and females of full age and stature. They could believe and needed to repent. They could responsibly decide for themselves.

Acts 8 also tells of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home. In his chariot he was reading from the book of Isaiah. The Holy Spirit told Philip to join the eunuch in his chariot. Philip ran to him and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" Well the eunuch replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" The place he was reading is Isaiah 53:7 to 8.

Well Acts 8:34 to 38 says that: "The eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. "

Now Philip preached the gospel of Jesus to the Eunuch. Apparently, preaching the gospel included preaching baptism, because as soon as Philip finished, the Eunuch asked, "What prevents me from being baptized?" And they both went down into the water. Philip baptized him, and they both came up out of the water. Now whatever baptism is, it happens when people go down into water.

Baptism is a specific word; it points to an immersion in water. Some translations no longer use the English word baptism; instead, they translate the Greek word baptizo as "immerse." Baptism is a dipping, an immersion in water. Baptizo is never used to speak of sprinkling or pouring. Other words in

Greek describe those actions. The word for sprinkle is rhantizo, and the word for pour is cheo. Philip immersed, baptized, the Eunuch in water to obey the gospel.

In Acts 9 Saul of Tarsus was on his way to Damascus to take Christians back to Jerusalem as prisoners. A light blinded him, and he encountered the Lord Jesus. Verses 4 to 6 say: he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." Now not one word suggests that Saul was saved on the road. In fact, we know that he isn't saved at this point. He must go to Damascus and be told what he must do.

Verse 9 says that Saul is without sight for three days, and he neither ate nor drank. Saul was in shock. He had been persecuting Jesus who really was the Son of God and risen from the dead. And though he blind, he had his spiritual eyes opened to the truth. He thought he was doing the right thing by persecuting the church, but Saul was wrong. In 1 Timothy 1:15 he calls himself the chief of sinners.

In Acts 9 verse 11, Saul is in Damascus in a house on a street called Straight, praying. Saul prayed more fervently than ever. He was blind, humble, and penitent for all the evil that he had done to the church. This broken man desperately wanted to be healed and to be right with God. But he had to wait to learn what he must do. Fervent prayer didn't wash away his sins. This might shock you, but stay with me on this. Some ask people to say a sinner's prayer with them, and they promise them salvation. But Acts 9 says nothing about a sinner's prayer bringing salvation. In fact, Saul is not yet saved; even though he prayed for three days, and we can know this from the Bible.

In Acts 22:13 Paul tells of Ananias who "came to me, and standing near said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' Now some say the word "brother" means Saul is a Christian, but Ananias is just referring to him as a fellow Jew. Jews called each other "brother."

Verses 14 to 16 says: And at that very time I looked up at him. "And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'" Ananias told Saul that he must "be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." If Saul was saved on the road or by prayer, he wouldn't need to wash away his sins in baptism. At the Sanders house, we wash dirty clothes. We don't wash the clean ones. The washing of baptism is necessary because our souls need cleansing by the blood of Jesus Christ. And we need to do that.

If you've never been immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins, as a penitent believer, then maybe you need to think about doing so. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that Your word teaches us the right thing to do. And help us Father to do what is right so that we may please You. And show You our love. We're thankful for the grace that's through the blood of Jesus in baptism. This our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Many refer to being baptized as a work. Well, it is indeed a work, but not a work that we do. We're saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2 verse 8). Baptism is not something we do, but something done to us. The command is to be baptized, which means the person being baptized is passive, receiving baptism. The one baptizing does the work; the one being baptized is acted upon. And just as the one baptizing does the physical work, so God does the saving in a spiritual act. Think with me. In baptism God is the One who washes away our sins. God is the One who forgives our sins and causes us to be born again. God is the active One in baptism and we are the passive ones receiving His kindness and grace.

Baptism is never something done all by itself. Without exception, those who were baptized in the New Testament first heard the gospel preached and believed it. Baptism without faith is useless; for this reason, we don't baptize people who don't believe or can't believe (such as infants). In addition to faith, the Lord also expects us turn our lives around in repentance. We must leave sin and give our heart in service to the Lord. When people have repented and confessed their faith before others and, they are ready to be baptized. When they're baptized is the time God washes away their sins by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Now if you have listened carefully to our study so far, you may have learned that what you did years ago in being baptized is different from what the Bible teaches. You may want to download the transcript and compare what we've said with the New Testament Scriptures. Study these things for yourself. And we'll have more to say about baptism next week.

We hope today's study about baptism into Christ has blessed you or challenged you to think. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area at www.searchtv.org. Now you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." Hit that bell so that you'll be notified and hit the like button. Be sure to like the programs you watch because this helps spread the program so that others can see it. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. We're glad to send them out. And now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. Keep searching God's Word with us, tell a friend about the program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.