

The Purpose For Baptism

"There is one baptism" (Eph. 4:5). Our last article discussed who is the subject for baptism. This article examines the purpose of baptism.

When Philip preached to the Eunuch, they came to a certain water and the Eunuch said, "See, here is water. What doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36). Why would the Eunuch desire to be baptized? Why should any person desire to be baptized?

There was unity of doctrine among these early proclaimers of the word: unity because they were guided by the Spirit in the things they spoke. It is significant that when people were charged with crucifying God's Son and they were pricked in their hearts and asked the apostles "Brethren, what shall we do?" that Peter's response was "Repent ye and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts. 2:37f). It is also significant to note that when the Lord told Paul to go into Damascus where he would be told what things he MUST DO, that Ananais told him, "and now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash about thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Since Philip was guided by the same Spirit which guided Peter and Ananais, we can be certain he told the eunuch he must be baptized that he might be saved, for that is what Jesus had told his preachers to preach (Mk. 16:16)! Having been told that he must be baptized that he might be saved, is there any wonder why, when they came to water, that he asked Philip what prevented him from being baptized?

Men are baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38). Baptism has significance ONLY because Jesus said it does. When Jesus told His apostles to preach the gospel to every creature and that those who believed and were baptized would be saved, the apostles understood Him to make baptism a condition of salvation. Peter wrote, "Baptism doth also now save us," perfectly agreeing with what he had told inquiring sinners years before when he preached his memorial Pentecost sermon (1 Pet. 3:21, Acts 2:38). He never changed his message. Paul was to be baptized to wash away his sins "calling on the name of the Lord"; i.e., calling on the authority of Jesus that at baptism his sins would be washed away.

Now, since the scriptures so clearly set forth the necessity of baptism for salvation, why do some who profess to believe Jesus is Lord, question his

authority and Lordship? That is precisely what men do when they say "baptism does not save"; "baptism is an outward form of an inward cleansing"; "baptism is essential for obedience, but not essential for salvation." Nowhere in all the scriptures is there any hint of these three preceding statements. Those who echo them make themselves Lord and dethrone Jesus!

Please do not charge that we believe in salvation by baptism only. Nothing is further from the truth. Please do not charge that we believe in "water salvation." That, too, is a misrepresentation. It is strange that one can see that believing in Christ does not mean that one is saved by faith apart from Christ and yet cannot see that being baptized into Christ does not mean that one is saved by water apart from Christ.

Water baptism has a part in salvation ONLY because Jesus says it does. In His word Jesus said that baptism puts one into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). Baptism puts us into contact with Christ's blood (Rom. 6:3-4). Baptism puts us into the one body, which Jesus purposes to save (1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23).

Are you a "Bible Believer"? You aren't if you do not believe what the Bible says about Baptism!

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