

From My Bible

Sermon Notes & Outlines



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Introduction

These messages are compiled from study notes and outlines of my own and many others. I hope they are a help to you.

I'm sure that all of us have at times "*borrowed*" or "*used*" a sermon we heard or read somewhere along the way. A thought, a word, or an idea jumped out to us from another preacher and we took that thing and ran with it. You have probably used an outline from a preacher brother but ended up preaching something that was uniquely different. Same idea, it just came out differently when you preached. Using your own thoughts, experiences, and illustrations.....the message became your own.

I heard an old-time preacher once say, "*Any message worth preaching ought to be worth preaching again!*" Well, I have certainly preached some sermons again and again. I have borrowed from others to preach theirs again too. Please use these messages as the Lord leads and preach His Word over and over again!

I make no claim of complete originality for this material. Also, please remember that these messages are not expected to substitute for your own personal study of the Word of God! The thoughts and ideas are given as a catalyst to help begin your ideas on a given passage of Scripture or trigger a seed thought to get you going. It is my prayer that the "*stuff*" contained here will further kindle the fire of God's message that is already in your heart. Your own thinking, praying, and studying will be necessary to guide you into the delivery of His Word to your own people.

May these sermons become *messages* from the Lord that He uses in your own life as He has used them in mine.

Why Is A Person To Be Baptized?

(1) Because it is commanded that a saved person be baptized (**Acts 10:48**).

(2) Because Jesus was baptized (and He says, *"Follow me"*).

(3) Because it is becoming. *"Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."*

(4) Because it is sacred - it describes and honors the Trinity (*"baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"*).

(5) Because it is pleasing to God (*"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"*).

(6) Because it pictures the Gospel. When a person is immersed upon his profession of faith he is picturing again the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, his Saviour.

(7) Because it is a confession of faith. *"When they believed, they were baptized."*

(8) It is part of the Great Commission. We are taught not only to preach or teach the Gospel but to baptize the converts after they are saved (**Matt. 28**).

(9) Because it is a testimony to the world that one has received Christ and is thus identified with Him.

So in **Acts, chapter 2**, the people who cried out to Peter had heard the Word and believed it, having been taught in verse 21 that if they would call on the name of the Lord they would be saved. As they were pricked in their hearts in verse 37, they cried unto Peter saying, "*What shall we do?*" (not, "*What must we do to be saved?*"). So Peter told them to repent, that is, to thoroughly change their mind about sin and turn from sin and to follow the Lord in believer's baptism because they had been saved, and as an evidence of the fact that their sins had been remitted. Verse 41 in the chapter tells us that they that gladly received His Word were baptized. Having been baptized, they continued to give further evidence of their salvation by their fellowship, breaking of bread, prayers, and their services of praise in the Temple.

In I Peter 3, Peter gives a figure of salvation and the heretic jumps on this in an attempt to try to prove his water theory again. Notice the text in **I Peter 3:18**. Peter assures us that "*Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.*" This is the means of our salvation--the death of Christ on the cross in the sinner's stead. Then he says in verses 19 and 20, "*By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*" The next verse reads, "*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 verse 19 he reminds us that Jesus proclaimed to the bound spirits in prison the wonderful deliverance that had been effected by His death on the cross, mentioned in verse 18. Then in verse 20, he describes the time *"when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."* Now, of course, it was the ark that saved those people in Noah's day. The eight souls in the ark were saved before the water came. If they had not been in the ark, they would have been eight souls lost in water. You must be safe in the ark (that is, in Christ) before baptism becomes a figure. All the other souls were lost in water because they were not in the ark. The eight saved were in the ark, not in the water, so the water did not have anything to do with their salvation! In the next verse (21) Peter plainly declares that this is a *"figure "* of salvation and that baptism is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.

Dr. Keith L. Brooks explains:

Water saved Noah, not of itself, but by sustaining the ark which had been built in FAITH resting on GOD'S WORD. It was to him a sign of the coming regeneration of the earth. So water baptism saves not of itself, nor of the mere material water, but the spiritual thing conjoined with it, faith in Christ, of which it is the sign or figure, as Peter explains here.

In an excellent tract put out by the Utah Christian Mission to help Mormons who are deceived on the same verses, this explanation is given:

This whole portion of Scripture--from verse 18 through 22--is telling about the Gospel of Christ being preached through Noah by the Spirit in the days in which Noah lived. In other words, the people of Noah's time were without excuse because the Spirit through Noah preached Christ to them. They had many opportunities to accept Christ, but all but eight souls rejected Noah's preaching. What saved Noah and the other seven people? Water or the ark? If you answer right, you must say the ark. The water drowned those who did not go into the ark. Those souls that were saved in the ark were brought safely through the water and escaped the flood. Corresponding to that figure, baptism now saves us--not the washing off of material defilement, but the craving of a good conscience after God--through the resurrection (Weymouth).

In other words, we are saved by that of which baptism speaks--the death, burial and resurrection of Christ!

Remember, the eight souls that were saved were saved in the ark, not in the water! The ark was a type of Christ.

*Still another verse that troubles some people and that is frequently used by the baptismal regenerationists is a statement in **Acts 22:16**. This is a part of the testimony of Paul when he was retelling his experience of conversion and the things that followed it. It reads, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Now, on the surface, if this verse were all by itself, and if we did not have the hundreds of verses that teach salvation by grace through faith, one might wonder if it were possible that baptism was a part of a man's salvation and cleansing. However,*

you need to read the entire 22nd chapter to get the story, and then we need to read, in order to be honest, the conversion of Paul in the book of Acts.

Please remember that Paul was born again on the road to Damascus, not three days later when he was baptized (See **I Cor. 15:8** and **Acts 9:17**). Paul prayed and was heard for three days before his baptism (**Acts 9:8-15**). He was a "chosen vessel," selected by God, before he was baptized (**Acts 9:15**). He was called "Brother Saul" (a brother in the Lord) before his baptism (**Acts 9:17**). And he had received the Holy Ghost before his baptism in water. No one has the Holy Ghost except a saved person (**Rom. 8:9**).

Now what did Paul mean in **Acts 22:16** when, in telling his conversion experience, he quoted Ananias as saying, "*Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins*"? Before jumping to conclusions, remember that the Bible very plainly teaches that our sins are washed away in the blood of Christ (**I John 1:7, Rev. 1:5**). Sins are cleansed by the blood of Christ, not by water, as any honest Bible reader knows. What then does this mean? How are we to understand this statement? It can only be understood to be a figurative statement. "*Wash away thy sins is figurative.*" So, Paul's baptism only figuratively washed away his sins. Incidentally, if the statement "*wash away thy sins*" is to be taken literally rather than as a figure, then a man can wash away his own sins, for that is what the verse commands! Understanding a verse like this is what God is talking about when He says, "*....rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

"When Jesus said, "The good seed are the children of the kingdom," He did not mean it literally; He meant the good seed represented the children of the kingdom. To continue: When our Lord took the bread and the fruit of the vine at the time He instituted the Lord's Supper, He said, 'This is my body, and this is my blood.' He didn't mean it was His literal body and blood. He didn't mean that the individuals who take the Lord's Supper eat the literal flesh and blood of our Lord. He meant the wine and the bread represented His body and His flesh. My friend, when Paul was told 'Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins,' it was a figurative expression which pictured that which actually took place in the heart. Whenever you see a person baptized, it says to the world that he has died to sin and we are raising him to walk in newness of life. When you see that individual baptized, you get the outward picture of what has taken place inwardly, for the heart has been washed by the blood, and the washing of the water on the body pictures what has taken place in the heart.

It would seem unduly strange to me that if water were necessary and essential to salvation, that Paul, in all of his epistles to the church, never told anyone to be saved in that fashion. When Ananias said, *"Come, arise, and be baptized,"* it was a figure of speech saying to the world that Paul had been saved. If Ananias meant otherwise, and if he meant water was to literally wash his sins away, isn't it strange that when Paul became a preacher, he never told anybody to be baptized to wash away their sins? Rather, he said, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"* (**Eph. 2:8,9**). To teach

that **Acts 22:16** declares the actual and literal removal of sin by the washing of baptism would mean to deny a host of plain statements in the Bible that our sins are washed away by faith in the blood of Christ!

What Is Baptismal Regeneration?

The teaching that states, infers, or implies that baptism is essential to salvation is known as Baptismal Regeneration. This pet heresy of many so-called “Christians” has done great damage to the Body of Christ today. They would take the entire scope of God’s glorious Word and try to bring it all under the shelter of a few dripping wet verses (taken out of context) which they declare teach that our sins are washed away, and salvation is brought about, through the means of baptism. These people would have us to believe that a man is saved through baptism, or through the obedience of baptism (in case you drop dead on the way to the water, your obedience is good enough without the water). This command of God, (Biblically, for believers only), is taken by them to be THE command above all others that brings remission of sin. While these may mean well in their zeal and effort for God, they labor not according to knowledge (**Rom. 10:2-5**).

They teach that when a man repents, believes, and confesses he is still not saved. What does he lack? Baptism! Baptize him and he is saved; so what is that but baptismal regeneration? There are numerous verses that plainly teach that a man is saved without baptism. Some of these are offered in this brief discussion and are listed below:

John 1:12, 13 - *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

These verses teach that to believe on Christ is to receive Him, and that those who receive Him receive the power to become the sons of God, and verse 13 teaches that it is not by human administration (for instance, a person baptizing you) or by anything that man can do.

John 3:15-18 very plainly proves that salvation is by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice particularly verse 18, *"He that believeth on him [literally trusteth on him] is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."* Observe that these verses have nothing to do with baptism, nor do they include any reference to baptism.

In **John 6:29** Jesus very clearly declares, *"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."* What could be plainer?

John 3:36: *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."*

John 5:24: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."* Here again the way to have everlasting life is to hear the Word and believe on Him! Thus one, *"shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."*

John 6:37 declares: *"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."*

John 6:40: *"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."*
What could be plainer than that?

John 11:25: *"He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."*

John 8:24 states that Christ said, *"If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."* Notice again baptism has nothing to do with it! If a person believes on Christ, he has everlasting life. If he does not believe on Christ, he will die in his sins!

Acts 10:43: *"Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."*

Acts 13:39: *"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."*

Acts 13:48: *"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."*

Acts 16:30,31: *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."*

Luke 7:50: *"Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."*

Romans 3:28: *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by **faith.**"*

Romans 4:3: *"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."*

Romans 4:5: *"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."*

Galatians 2:16: *"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ."*

Galatians 3:26: *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.;*

Romans 5:1 *"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

1 Corinthians 1:21: *"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."*

1 John 3:23: *"And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ."*

Surely these verses teach that a man is saved without baptism. We could find many more, but these should suffice.

Read **I Corinthians 1:14-18**. Paul kept no record of those he baptized. He thanks God that he did not baptize more people! He said, *"Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel."* Paul did say that he came to preach the Gospel. Paul contrasted baptism with the Gospel. Take

note of the account of the healing of the paralytic in **Luke 5:18-20** and observe that Jesus, *"when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee."* Here is a man whose sins are forgiven without baptism.

Now perhaps you are thinking that if all of these verses that we have mentioned prove that a person is saved without baptism, *what about the few verses the false teachers use* that they say make it necessary for a person to be baptized in order to be saved? Keep in mind now that we are to interpret the few obscure portions in the light of the plain teaching of the Word of God and never the other way around. Since God teaches throughout the entire Bible that salvation is by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ, and since God states again and again in such books as the Gospel of John that we are saved by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, then if we find a few verses that would appear (by themselves) to teach that salvation is by baptism, we must look at those verses carefully to find the answer since we know that God does not contradict Himself.

Now, for instance, **Mark 16:16** is used by some to try and prove that we are saved by baptism. It reads, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."* Now look at **Mark 16:16** in the light of **Acts 13:38, 39** and you will discover that forgiveness of sins comes through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Also look at **Mark 16:16** in the light of all the verses we quoted earlier which plainly declare that salvation is by believing on Jesus. You say, *"But does it not say that 'he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved'?"* Yes, it does, but it also says, *". . .he that believeth not shall*

be damned." It does not say that a person will be damned if he is not baptized.

I can say if I get on a Greyhound bus and take my seat I will get to the next town. Now if I get on a Greyhound bus and stand up all the way, I will still get to the next town. However, I will be more comfortable and I certainly will be doing the right thing if I take my seat on the bus instead of trying to stand up all the way. I'll get there whether I sit down or not. You could take Mark 16:16 and say he that believeth and is baptized and goes to church and lives right will be saved, and you would be correct; but it is not doing all those things that gets one saved, since the Bible plainly teaches that we are saved by believing on Jesus. Jesus says, *"He that believeth and is baptized"* because it is true that if a person really does believe, he will obey God and be baptized. But he will be baptized not to get saved but because he is saved by believing. Not in order to get to Heaven but because he is going to Heaven.

Let's Look at Acts 2:38

Now take another verse that is frequently abused by these people. In fact, they can hardly preach a sermon without camping for awhile on **Acts 2:38**. Now, let us look at the context of **Acts 2:38**. In verse 21 of chapter 2, Peter has already told them how to be saved. In verse 37 they cried, "What must we do?" They did not ask, "What must we do to be saved?" *That's answered clearly in **Acts 16:31**! Now the difficulty and the friction over **Acts 2:38** comes because of the little word "for."* Peter says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins." What does the word "for" mean? The word "for" is the Greek word *eis* which means "*because of*." As in **Matthew 12:41** they repented *eis*, or **Matthew 3:11** "*water eis repentance*. Or **Acts 2:25**, "*David speaketh eis him*." In these cases the word *eis* has to mean "*concerning*" or "*because of*." A man is put in jail for a crime, not "*in order to*" commit the crime, but *because of* the crime, as anyone could readily see. We say that a man shouts for joy and we do not mean that he shouts in order to get joy, but he shouts *because* he already has joy. In fact, no Greek teacher in the world thinks that, because if it meant, "*in order to*" it would have used the Greek word *hina* instead of the little Greek preposition *eis*. So all good Greek scholars know.

Peter tells us in his epistle that baptism was a "*figure*" and was the answer of a good conscience toward God. Baptism, then, is the outward expression of an inward salvation. Baptism follows salvation. Baptism is essential to obedience but not to salvation. It is true that if a person is

truly saved he will want to be baptized. But it is not the baptism that saves him, according to the Word of God.

Dr. Bruce Cummons has given an excellent illustration in reference to the word "for" in **Acts 2:38**:

*Consider another passage of Scripture, where the same word "for" is used in a similar way. Read carefully **Luke 5:12-15**. Christ healed a leper of his dread disease. Since this was before Calvary, the healed man was still under the law, and Christ was faithful in fulfilling the law. Jesus said to the man, therefore, "Go, and show thyself to the priest and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them" (vs. 14). Notice the language carefully: "Offer for thy cleansing." Did Christ heal, or did the offering heal? Why, you may say that's ridiculous! Christ healed! The offering was only a testimony to the truth that had taken place in the life of the man healed! You are right! Furthermore, the same language is employed and the same purpose is set forth in **Acts 2:38**. "Repent," as I have shown to mean, biblically, "repent unto salvation" and then "be baptized for the remission of sins," or as a testimony that your sins have been remitted. If the offering did not cleanse or was only a testimony of, "for thy cleansing," then by the same Bible truth, baptism does not save but is a testimony of the truth that your sins have been remitted; or to be baptized "for the remission of sins," or actually as a testimony that your sins have been remitted. Christ alone is the Saviour and not the baptistry, nor the water in it! Thus, the purpose of baptism is to show forth the salvation that has already taken place in the heart and life of the believer. If the blood of Christ was shed for the remission of sins, then baptism cannot*

*bring about, or be, the means of remitting sins. You cannot have two ways of salvation. If you want to set this verse (**Acts 2:38**) against the hundreds of passages in the Bible that declare salvation to be by faith and make **Acts 2:38** say what Peter never intended it to say, then that is up to you.*

The Water Department

Let's visit the "water department." It is also true that since many distort and mutilate almost every verse of Scripture they touch, it is not surprising that they would misinterpret **John 3:5**. Of course, in the entire Gospel of John, the Lord is stating, *"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name"* (**John 20:31**).

Again and again, as we have already quoted, God declares in the Gospel of John that salvation is by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, what about **John 3:5** where Jesus said, *"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"*? Keep in mind that the entire Gospel of John does not mention baptism once in connection with the plan of salvation. Dr. Keith L. Brooks states in commenting on this:

John 3:5 is not taken by Bible scholars to be a reference to water baptism. A very literal rendering of the verse would be, "Born of water and wind." Wind is taken to be typical of the Spirit and is so carried into the text. Water is frequently used as a type of the Word (John 15:3; Eph. 5:26; Prov. 25:25). The Word, with the Spirit, are recognized as the agents of salvation (See James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:22,23). Keep in mind that Jesus said, "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). In Ephesians 5, verse 26, we are told, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water by the word." So it is the Word of God by which men are born again. Only in this sense is water used.

Another, even clearer, understanding of **John 3:5, 6** can be seen within the context of the verses themselves. Nicodemus referred to his first birth (vs. 4) and to *"his mother's womb"* in seeking to understand the concept of being *"born again"*. This first birth of a man is a *"water"* birth, water in the mother's womb, that is to say - physical birth. Jesus goes on to say that a man must be born of water (physical birth) and of the spirit (spiritual birth). Water, in this context indicates physical birth. Thus a man must be born again, or born twice - once, of his mother (water birth and physical) and twice, of the Holy Spirit (of the spirit - spiritual).

Another case in point that the baptismal regenerationists like to speak about is the thief on the cross. The false teachers, in attempting to explain how the thief on the cross could have been saved without baptism, states that this was before Jesus died, therefore it was under a different covenant. However, the thief actually died *after* Jesus did; thus, according to their teaching, he would have been under the new covenant. They try to put the thief on the cross on the other side of Calvary; but then, in contradiction, they take **John 3:5** (also on the other side of Calvary), and try to apply it as meaning that baptism is essential for us today!

What Jesus is really teaching in **John 3:5,6** is that the only way into the true spiritual body of Christ is by a spiritual birth. Jesus went on to explain to Nicodemus the way of salvation without once mentioning baptism. Did the snakebite victims do anything to be delivered from the fiery serpents? No. Jesus declares, *"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be*

lifted up" (**John 3:14**). As the children of Israel simply looked in faith to the serpent of brass, so we simply look in faith to the Saviour lifted up on the cross for our sins. "*The end of your faith*" is the salvation of your soul (**I Pet. 1:9**). Our hearts are purified by faith (See **Acts 15:9**).

In **I Corinthians 10:2**, God refers to an Old Testament type of baptism, declaring, "*And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*" Now when were these children of Israel led through the sea as a type of baptism? It was after they had been saved by the blood of the Passover lamb in Egypt. They were saved by the blood, then they passed through the typical waters of baptism!

Scripture compares with Scripture, and God never contradicts Himself!

No Understanding Spiritual Baptism

The other verses that the false teachers primarily use to attempt to teach baptismal regeneration are verses that refer not to water baptism at all but to the baptism of the believer by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. For instance, **Galatians 3:26** plainly tells us that we are *"the children of God by faith"* in Jesus Christ. Then in verse 27 Paul goes on to say that, *"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."*

This, of course, is what he is talking about in **I Corinthians 12:13** where he declares, *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."* Now it is quite evident here to anyone who can read that it is the Holy Spirit who does the baptizing in this case. For some to attempt to call their water baptism the Holy Spirit's baptism is actually a blasphemy of the Holy Spirit's work! The *"one baptism"* mentioned in Ephesians 4:5 is not water baptism at all but the same baptism of the Spirit mentioned by Paul in **I Corinthians 12:13**.

The false teachers have been deluded into preaching that they can actually baptize one into Christ. The question may be asked: *"If not by human instrumentality, how does one get into Christ?"* The answer is plainly given in **Ephesians 1:4**. We were *"chosen in, him before the foundation of the world."* *"To the praise of the glory of his grace. . .he hath made us accepted in the beloved."*--**Eph. 1:6**. *"Through his blood"* we have *"the forgiveness of sins."*--**Eph. 1:7**. *"...after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that*

Holy Spirit of promise."--**Eph. 1:13.**"...according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead."-**Eph. 1:19, 20.** Thus, having been chosen in Him by God, accepted in the Beloved, forgiven through His blood, sealed by His Spirit, and experiencing the mighty power of God through the resurrection, the believer is baptized by the Spirit into the church "*Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all*" (**Eph. 1:23**). To confuse this glorious work of God with the human administration of water baptism is warped interpretation beyond human comprehension!

It is evident from Scripture that there are a number of different baptisms mentioned in the Bible. Some of these include:

(1) *Israel's baptism unto Moses (I Cor. 10:4).* Actually they did not even get wet in that particular baptism because they went through the Red Sea on dry ground.

(2) *John's baptism of repentance (Luke 3:3).*

(3) *Christ's baptism in water (Matt. 3:13-15).* This baptism was unique in that Christ was not a sinner and yet said that this was in order to fulfill all righteousness. He was identifying with the human race whom He came to save.

(4) *Christ's baptism in death (Luke 12:50; Mark 10:38,39).*

(5) *The baptism of the early church for power, prophesied in Acts 1:5.*

(6) *The Holy Spirit baptism of fire (Matt. 3:11)*. This is a baptism of judgment when the chaff shall be burned with unquenchable fire (yet future).

(7) *The water baptism by immersion of true believers in Christ*, thus identifying with Him and making public their profession of faith in the finished work of Christ (**Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:41; 8:12; 8:38**).

(8) *The spiritual baptism of every believer by the Holy Spirit into Christ* which takes place when a sinner turns from sin to Christ and is born again (**I Cor. 13:12; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12**). Of course, the water baptism of a believer signifies and pictures this baptism of the believer into Christ.

Baptism, in the Scriptures, never saves. It often pictures salvation figuratively, but never is it invested with any power to save the soul. Every believer should be baptized to evidence their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But it is not essential to salvation.

Teaching Your Child About Baptism

As a Christian parent one of the utmost concerns you will have is that your children would one day trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. You want them to feel the joy and the assurance of their salvation. And you want them to move forward in their faith and obedience as followers of Jesus Christ.

During these first steps of faith, your children are likely to ask you about baptism. They may feel that they are ready to make this step. As an effort to assist you in this important step of preparation for your child, here are some of the most common questions received from parents about baptism. Please take some time to look over these items and discuss them with your child along with any other concerns you may have.

Baptism - What Is It?

Baptism is an outward symbol of an inward change. It is a symbol of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. It is also a picture of what God has done to save us on the inside by cleansing us from our sin. Thus, baptism must be under water to show the truth of our being united to Jesus in his death and resurrection.

Who Is Supposed To Be Baptized?

Since baptism is a depiction of beginning the Christian life, it is only for *believers* in Jesus Christ. A believer in Jesus Christ is able to give a convincing profession of faith

in Jesus and shows evidence of that faith in his or her heart and life.

Does Baptism Save Anyone?

Baptism does not save anyone. Some have fallen into the lie that baptism is necessary for salvation. They think that faith + baptism = eternal life. But this is not what the Bible says. **Ephesians 2:8-9** says, *"By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works so that no one can boast."* It is clear from this passage of Scripture that faith in Christ is the only thing that saves and faith itself is a gift from God.

If Baptism Does Not Save, Then Why Be Baptized?

Baptism is an act of obedience to God. We get baptized to obey God's Word. When Jesus gave the Great Commission to his disciples he said, *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"* **Matthew 28:19**. This is not an option, it is a command. Baptism is also the main way we publicly profess our desire to follow the Lord. In baptism we are saying that God has saved me and I belong to Him.

How Old Should Children Be Before Baptism?

The Bible does not give us an exact age at which we should baptize children. For that reason we do not have an age requirement. However, the Bible is clear that children must be able to give a convincing profession of their faith—one that is genuine and rooted in a biblical

understanding of salvation—before being baptized. This does not mean that children should be able to rattle off all the “*right*” answers before they are ready for baptism. It does mean that children should show that they have genuine faith based on a right understanding of God, sin, and salvation through Jesus alone. Likewise, a child must possess a simple understanding of what baptism is and why baptism is important.

Is It OK To Wait Until Children Understand?

Yes. We encourage parents to wait until their child is mentally and spiritually ready for baptism. There is no rush. We want baptism to be a very significant experience for children and one that a child remembers. The older a child is the more likely he or she will look back on his or her experience with the confidence that it reflected a sincere desire to obey the Lord.

We understand that oftentimes parents fear that by telling their child to wait it may bring discouragement and frustration. However, by encouraging a child to wait and anticipate baptism, parents can emphasize the significance and importance of baptism. The promises we are making in baptism to follow the Lord publicly should not be made lightly. Therefore, parents should take seriously the time they give to preparing their child for baptism giving consistent encouragement along the way.

How Can I Best Prepare My Child For Baptism?

The most important thing you can do is to keep talking with them about the Gospel each day. Help them to

understand that God is their Creator, Saviour, and King who deserves to be treated with honor and love. Help them to understand that we have not treated God as we should. We have all sinned and deserve to be punished. Help them to understand that God loved us so much that He sent his Son Jesus to die on a cross to take our punishment so that we could be forgiven of our sins. And help them to understand that Jesus rose again and now offers us two ways to live. We can try to be our own king by doing what we want to do, or we can turn from our sin and trust in Jesus as our Saviour and King and do what He wants us to do.

When sharing the Gospel with your children, I encourage you to keep asking them questions to get them to state their faith in Christ *in their own words*. It's important that children understand that they are individually accountable to God. No other person can respond to God for them. We want children to be able to express their faith in their own words even if they use very simple terms.

An Encouraging Word

We want you to know that wherever you are at in this process with your child, we are here to help you. God has given parents the primary role in nurturing the faith of their children, but we are here to partner with you and encourage you in any way we can. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Church Letter To Parents About Baptism

Dear Parent,

Today, during our Children's Church services, your child indicated an interest in making the greatest decision of their life: Asking Jesus to become their Saviour and Lord. The plan of salvation was presented in a simple, nonthreatening way to all children in grades 1-6. The children learned about trusting Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord.

A counselor has talked briefly with your child, completed an information card, and given your child some information to bring home. We will have someone from our church call you this week as a follow-up to your child's decision.

If you attend another church, please contact a minister in your church and make an appointment for follow-up with your child. Do this soon while the decision is fresh on your child's mind.

If you attend Faith Baptist Church or if you do not have a current church home, please allow one of our ministers an opportunity to sit down and visit with your family soon. We are eager to help you and your child understand his decision.

God has given us a great blessing in seeing children receive Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord! Please call us any time we can be of service to your family. We will have a special baptismal service soon for those who

trusted Christ as Saviour. If you wish for your child to be baptized at this time, please call the church office.

Sincerely,