

It Is Written

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THE WRONG IDEA ABOUT BAPTISM

By T. Sean Sullivan

Introduction

If the New Testament were a novel about a man and his followers, no one would argue that his followers were required to be baptized in water. Now, the New Testament is not a novel; it is the divinely given instruction in righteousness-the authoritative word of God (2 Timothy 1:13; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Man has been determined to go around God's rules; this has been our problem since the Garden. Today, most religious doctrines have rejected the necessity of baptism in water for the remission of sins.

Back to us: Because of this world's outspoken denial of baptism, we may have also changed our take on baptism. Some have the idea that baptism is "Church of Christ Doctrine. A miraculous life-transformer. The only step in the plan of salvation. Let's open the Scriptures to evaluate these ideas-to see if they are right or wrong.

Some Have the Idea that Baptism Is:

Church of Christ Doctrine

First things first, there is no such thing as "Church of Christ Doctrine", and there must never be. There is only one doctrine that God will ever accept, and it is Christ's doctrine (2 John 9). We did not design or decide baptism; it is God's divine instruction for today and always. In a world filled with those who make up their own religious rules, why wouldn't they think that we do the same? Of course, this would make baptism meaningless in the big picture and would render its necessity a product of human decision.

The Bible says: Baptism is required to express your obedience to God's will, "those who gladly received the word were baptized" Acts 2:38-40). Baptism puts us into Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 1:3-10). Baptism washes away our past sins (Acts 22:16). Baptism is irrevocably linked to the salvation of man's soul: Jesus said it was (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). John recorded that it was (John 3:5). The Apostle Peter said it was (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21). The Apostle Paul said it was (Acts 19:1-5; Romans 6:1-4; Galatians 3:27).

We do not say, or teach, that baptism is a "ritual of acceptance"; however, it is a necessary point of obedience according to God's word.

A Miraculous Life-Changer

Over the centuries, many have come to the water of baptism, seeking a great inexpressible feeling. Looking for a powerful new take on life, cured from addictions and/or corruptions. Hoping for the miraculous; the unexplainable; the mystical.

When one is properly baptized, they have no sensation other than the joy of knowing that their sins have been cleansed. Like the Ethiopian, who went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:35-39). Or, like the Philippian man, who "rejoiced" over having obeyed God (Acts 16:30-34). It is not baptism that brings about freedom from addictions and corruptions. That is a different part of God's plan called "repentance" (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Peter 3:9). It is when one truly repents

(determines to cease from sin) that they can conquer their addictions and/or corruptions.

Baptism is not repentance, and repentance is not baptism-we must not get these two confused. It is repentance that changes actions, and changes lives (Acts 26:20, "...repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.").

The Only Step in the Plan

There are so many, even among members of the Lord's church, who emphasize baptism over any other part of God's plan. Statements like: "As long as we get them baptized". "We need to get them baptized". Or, "baptism is the most important part". Because of these false conclusions, too many over the years have only been "wet sinners" instead of truly being "cleansed converts". When one is baptized for the wrong reason, they are not cleansed (Acts 19:1-5). These people were baptized for the wrong reason, and even though they had "been baptized," they were still in their sins. Paul instructed them more accurately; they immediately desired accurate baptism.

There is more to the plan than just baptism: Much of the plan for our salvation is knowledge. Learning who Jesus is (John 8:24, 20:30-31). Learning what He did for us (Matthew 26-28; Hebrews 9:22-28). Learning what He expects from us now (Matthew 7:21). Information that we must believe with all our heart (Acts 8:37). Then our actions of belief begin. The acknowledgment of our guilt in sin and the determination to stop sinning: Repentance (Acts 2:38, 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9). Confession of our faith in Jesus Christ (Matthew 10:32; Acts 8:37). These lead us to baptism in water, for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38, 22:16). Then the determined continuation of the newness of life is our life-long goal (Hebrews 10:35-39).

Conclusion:

We need to know the facts about baptism. The church has not invented the requirement of baptism. It will not bring a miraculous change. It is one part of a larger plan from God for your salvation. If you want to be saved, baptism is a requirement, not an avoidable option. Not one record of conversion in the New Testament under the New Covenant fails to demonstrate baptism as necessary. Baptism in water is the difference between being lost and being saved when coupled with faith, repentance, confession, and continued endurance. The opportunity for you to obey all of God's plan is right now.

God Goes Before You

By Zeke Flores

"The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes" (Deuteronomy 1:30).

Deuteronomy 1 opens with Moses reminding Israel of their long journey and the moments where fear held them back.

One of the most striking lines is God's reassurance in Deuteronomy 1:30. Israel had seen God's power, yet when the moment came to trust Him, they froze. It's easy to shake our heads at them, but honestly, we do the same thing. We know God has carried us through past battles, yet new challenges make us hesitate.

Moses retells this story so the next generation won't repeat the same mistake. He wants them to remember that God doesn't send His people into battles alone. He goes ahead, sees what's coming, and fights for them. That truth is meant to steady us when life feels overwhelming. When you're facing something that feels too big, too complicated, or too painful, remember that God isn't asking you to handle it solo. He's already gone ahead of you.

Take a moment today to name the thing that's weighing on you. Then remind your heart of Deuteronomy 1:30. God is not distant. He's not passive. He's fighting for you.