

## Arguing With Jesus – No. 5

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They never learned. The opponents of Jesus prepared their questions and hypothetical situations. Each time they conspired and lay in wait to “catch him in his words” (Mark 12:13), they came away licking their wounds in embarrassment. These were the elite leaders in religion, education, and even politics – scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, lawyers – who argued with Jesus.

With the passing of 20 centuries since He was on earth, men still have not learned; they continue to foolishly argue with Jesus with the same result every time. A doctrine concerning which men persistently argue with Him is baptism. Let us look at His words on this subject.

- **Men argue with Jesus about the action of baptism.** The word He and His apostles (and John the Baptist used in speaking of Baptism was *baptisma* and its cognates. This word without exception means to dip, immerse, submerge, or overwhelm the subject in whatever element the context indicates. By far, most of the New Testament references to baptism involve the baptism of human beings in water. The Greek language (as our English) has distinct words for “sprinkling” and “pouring,” but the Holy Spirit chose *baptisma* for this spiritual action. Religious leaders and their followers by the millions argue with Jesus that their sprinkling or pouring rituals are acceptable substitutes for immersion. They should be afraid and ashamed to thus presumptuously argue with Jesus.
- **Men argue with Jesus about the purpose of baptism.** His words in Mark 16:16 are unambiguous: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned” (cf. John 3:5). Men argue, “Jesus, your statement is too exclusive. Many may believe in you, but may never have an opportunity to be immersed, such as those on their deathbeds and soldiers in battle. Surely, you meant to say, ‘He that believeth is saved and may be baptized if he is able or so chooses.’” This vain arguing implies that Jesus was so dull He could not foresee such issues. He made His clear declaration in full knowledge of them. The other New Testament writers bear witness to the fact that baptism stands between the sinner and salvation, making it unquestionably a condition of pardon by the blood of Christ (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3–4; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21).

Woe unto those who think they know more than Jesus about His own plan to redeem mankind. As those of Jesus’ day, so now, those who argue with Jesus never seem to learn.

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