

# What Is Baptism? – No. 9

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Scriptural evidence has established the following truths concerning baptism:

1. It is immersion (Rom. 6:4).
2. It is in water (Acts 8:36; 10:47; 1 Pet. 3:20–21).
3. It is a condition of salvation, forgiveness, being added to the church, and is the act in which one's sins are washed away (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 41; 22:16, etc.).
4. To teach such is not to teach "water salvation," as some charge, but it is to simply teach what Jesus and the apostles taught – salvation is through the blood of Christ at the time of baptism (Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5).

Does the Bible say who should be baptized? Jesus told the apostles to go and preach the Gospel to every creature, and promised, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15–16). Upon hearing the Gospel, one must believe the evidence presented concerning Christ as the Son of God, else he is not ready to be baptized. But it is not enough to merely believe. Paul said, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). Jesus will not confess us before the Father if we will not confess Him before men (Mat. 10:32–33). One is not ready to be baptized until he both believes in his heart and confesses with his mouth that Christ is God's Son, and that the believer is owning Him as his Lord. However, one could both believe and confess and still not be a fit candidate for baptism unless he repents. The people at Pentecost were commanded, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). There is no record in Scripture where God has ever forgiven a sin apart from repentance of the sinner. Repentance is not mere sorrow over sin; rather, "godly sorrow worketh (produces, DM) repentance" (2 Cor. 7:10). Repentance is a change of mind concerning sin that causes the sinner to change his life and quit the practice of sin. Until one does this, he is not ready to be baptized and baptism would be a useless act.

These prerequisites to baptism obviously rule out so-called "infant baptism" since infants are incapable of any of them. Baptism is for those who are old enough and intelligent enough to bring a believing heart, a confessing mouth, and a penitent life to Christ. Such baptism is indeed the Scriptural baptism that saves.

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