

What is it?

When the New Testament was translated from the Greek into English, “baptism” was one of the words that remained in Greek! Why? I don’t know. The word in Greek means to immerse. If the Greeks dunked their donuts in coffee, they would baptize them. It was not a religious word. Here are three Bible verses that verify that fact.

Acts 8:26-39 “...**went down into the water**” and “**they came up out of the water.**”

Matt.3:13-17 “When He had been baptized, Jesus **came up** immediately from the water ...”

John 3:23 “Now John was also baptizing ... because **there was much water there.**”

How important is it?

Mark 16:15-16, “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be damned.’”

Matt.28:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

To save space here, only the references will be given for many other accounts of conversions. If you want to read them all, you will discover that they were each baptized immediately after believing the

gospel. That is the Biblical pattern. Acts 2:37-41, 8:34-39, 9:10-19, 10:44-48, 16:13-15, 16:25-34, 18:8, and 19:1-7. This also tells us that a candidate for baptism must be old enough to understand the gospel and then choose to believe it.

Infant baptism is a church tradition and is not in the Bible. This tradition began because of believing that babies are born sinners and thus are damned. Please re-read an earlier verse, Mark 16:15-16. Only if a person chooses to not believe is he damned.

What does it mean?

Rom.6:3-4 “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized **into His death**? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also **should walk in newness of life.**” (As you read on, this will connect with other truths and make more sense.)

Col.2:11-12 “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead.”

From these two verses, we see that baptism pictures the death and resurrection of Jesus, and also circumcision. These next verses speak of **circumcision of the heart**:

Rom.2:29 “...and circumcision is that of the heart.” Also, Deut.30:6, Lev.26:31, Eze.44:7, and Jer.9:25-26. **Clearly, God wants a heart change.**

What heart change?

If you will re-read Col.2:11-12, you will see that circumcision of the heart has something to do with “the flesh.” Circumcision removes some flesh. The older versions of the Bible use this term referring to the desires of the body and mind, or feelings. **It’s what the self thinks, desires or feels.** That is the soul of a person. Many Christians think soul and spirit are the same, but they are not. I Thess.5:23 and Heb.4:12 prove this. The Greek words are psuche (mind/soul) and pneuma (spirit.) The soul part of us is what has to die. You will learn that **this is a process.**

Gal. 5:24 “Those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

Gal.2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.” I have a brochure given entirely to this subject called, *What is My Cross?* Those who are serious about their spiritual growth will want to get it.

Does it Wash away Sins?

Acts 2:38 “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (forgiveness) of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” Acts 22:16, “And why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” The majority of verses on baptism point to it as being a new beginning, so it must wash away the past.

Here are three others that speak of cleansing from sin that might be for afterwards: Acts 3:19, “Repent therefore and **be converted** (changed) that your sins may be blotted out ...” Acts 10:43, “... whoever **believes** in Him will receive remission of sins.” And I John 1:9 “If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

I Pet. 3:20-21 says, “... in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us -- baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, **but the answer of a good conscience toward God**) ...” So it’s an act of obedience. God said do it; so we do it. But this verse begs another question:

Is it necessary For Salvation?

The preceding verse seems to say it does. Are there others? Well, if you consider it as an act of obedience, there are many verses that say “If you love me, keep my

commandments,” John 14:15 is one. I have another brochure called, *If we’re not saved by works; why obey?* The issue of faith versus works is covered in that one.

Titus 3:4-7 is a scripture that makes some Christians uncomfortable because they don’t understand it. Verse 5 says, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through **the washing of regeneration** and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” The phrase in bold type is the problem. But if you re-read the Rom.6 verses, you will see that they perfectly agree. Regeneration means to begin again or have a fresh start. Rom.6:4 said, “... newness of life.” And verse 6, “... our old man (the sinful human nature) was crucified with Him...”

Gal.3:27 “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

John 3:3-7 Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again. When he asked, Jesus said, “...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.” The people who say baptism isn’t what Jesus is referring to here point out that Jesus was comparing physical birth with spiritual birth. However, would Jesus say you **must** be born physically or you cannot go to heaven?

This study is enough to show you that baptism is important; and probably it is more important than most want to believe.

What does the Bible Really say about **BAPTISM?**



A mini Bible study
By Cheryl Boone