

# BAPTISM/FALSE DOCTRINE STUDY

There are many false teachings about conversion, including baptism. This study introduces some of the most common misconceptions to provide context that will help to clear up the misunderstanding and correctly interpret the related texts. The Bible is very clear in its teaching about the purpose of baptism. You may recommend to anyone with questions about baptism to examine at all of the verses in the Bible with the word baptism, asking the question, “what is the purpose of baptism?”

**OPENING QUESTION: Do you have any questions about baptism, forgiveness of sins, and conversion?**

Review of Biblical Conversion

- HEAR - Romans 10:17
- BELIEVE - Mark 16:16, Romans 10:9
- REPENT - Acts 2:38, Luke 13:3
- CONFESS - Romans 10:9, Acts 22:16
- BE BAPTIZED - Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 3:21

## FALSE DOCTRINE

1) Baptism is just a “Symbol” or an “Outward Sign of an Inward Grace”

Does the Bible ever call baptism a symbol?

- *Romans 6:1-4* – Baptism is a sharing or participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The Bible never calls baptism a sign or a symbol.

Does anything actually happen during baptism or is it just a sign?

- *Acts 2:38* – God forgives sins and gives the Holy Spirit through baptism.
- *Galatians 3:26-27* – we become clothed with Christ and children of God

2) Infant Baptism and Original Sin

What is the difference between infant baptism and adult baptism?

- True conversion requires personal faith (*Colossians 2:12*).
- The Bible contains no examples of infant baptism; it was popular in the 3rd century.

What does the Bible teach about “original sin”?

- “Original sin” teaches that we are born with the guilt of Adam’s sin.
- There is no scripture that teaches original sin (Psalm 51 is poetry).
- *Ezekiel 18:20* refutes this doctrine saying we are responsible for our own sin.

3) Pray Jesus Into Your Heart

Is there any example of conversion by saying a prayer (without baptism)? NO!

- Conversion requires faith, repentance, and baptism for forgiveness of sins (*Acts 2:38*)
- *Revelation 3:20* in context, addresses a church: Christians who have already responded to Christ in faith, repentance, and baptism. It does not teach how to become a Christian, but how to come back to God after becoming lukewarm.

4) Accept Jesus as Your Savior

- Can you be saved by accepting Jesus as savior without making him Lord (repentance) or being baptized?
- *Romans 10:9* is to Jews whose primary issue was their need to confess Jesus as Lord.
- *Romans 6:1-4* has already stated the need for baptism in the same Letter.
- *Acts 2:38* explains that Jesus must be both Lord and Savior (Messiah) and that our response is not simply to ask for a savior but to repent and be baptized

5) Baptism Is a Work

Is faith, confession, repentance, baptism, or staying faithful a work that saves us?

- We are not saved by what we do. Our faith and deeds work together (*James 2:14,24*).
- Jesus taught that obedience to his commands is a demonstration of our love for God (*John 14:15,23*).
- It doesn’t make sense to single out baptism as a work more than believing (*John 6:28-29*), repentance, confessing Jesus as Lord, or obeying Jesus’ commands.
- *Colossians 2:12* says we are saved by FAITH in the WORKING OF GOD at baptism. God is the one who at work in baptism.... not man. The strongest way to say not a work done by man is: “...circumcision not performed by human hands.”

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### 6) The Thief On The Cross was Saved without Baptism

Was the thief on the cross saved under the New or the Old Covenant?

- The New Covenant went into effect after the resurrection of Christ – the thief on the cross died under the Old Covenant (OC)!
- *Mark 2:10* – Jesus had the ability to forgive sins while he was on earth.
- John’s baptism (OC) was also for repentance and forgiveness of sins (*Luke 3:3*).
- Jesus taught his disciples how to make disciples under the New Covenant – “*he who believes and is baptized will be saved*” (*Mark 16:16*, see also *Matt. 28:19* and *Acts 2:38*).

### 7) Believers Baptism

Can a person be saved by something that they don’t believe is for salvation?

- Believers baptism is baptism as an adult, but it is not in conjunction with the understanding that one is being saved at this point in time.
- *Acts 19:1-6* – Retroactive understanding is not sufficient for salvation.
- Understanding is vital for baptism to have its intended effect.

### 8) Baptism Does Not Save You

Is there any place in the Bible where it says that baptism saves you?

- *1 Peter 3:21* – baptism DOES save you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- *Mark 16:16* – “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.”

### CONCLUSIONS

- Baptism literally means immersion and is part of the conversion process.
- God established his plan for saving people under the New Covenant: Preach the gospel, explaining the love of God demonstrated through the cross and calling people to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins and to receive the Holy Spirit.
- By faith, baptism is an actual participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.
- A candidate for baptism should have faith in Jesus as both Lord and Christ, be ready to repent of their sins, decide to become a disciple and make Jesus Lord – therefore it is for adults who understand why they are doing it.
- Baptism saves us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Faith, repentance, confession, or baptism should not be considered works that earn us salvation, but rather our response in faith to God’s gift of salvation offered through Jesus.