

# **Let The Bible Speak Series**

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## **"Unto What Then Were You Baptized?"**

Acts 19:1-5

In Acts 18 we read of Apollos, a very eloquent man, who was mighty in the scriptures. This man came to Ephesus, and being fervent in spirit, he preached, proclaiming the way of the Lord. Aquilla and his wife Priscilla heard him as he exhorted in the synagogue, and immediately realized that his understanding was lacking, since he preached the baptism of John. They took him aside or unto themselves and explained unto him the way of God more accurately. John's baptism was to prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. It was upon a promise to believe in Christ when He should come, The baptism of the great commission, on the other hand, is upon faith in Christ who has come. John's baptism had been out of date since the great commission baptism went into force on Pentecost. Mt. 28:18-19 "All power is given unto me" Jesus said. He then commissioned the preaching of the Gospel to all nations. In Acts 2:37-38 we have the first example of the baptism being carried out. After Apollos was shown the truth, he accepted it and went to Corinth (Acts 19:1)

Later Paul returned to Ephesus and found certain disciples. Thinking they were Christians, he asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed. (Obviously referring to the fact that perhaps some Apostle had laid hands on them and imparted some spiritual gift) When they replied that they had not heard of the Holy Ghost, he immediately knew something was wrong. Hence the question "unto what then were you baptized?" People baptized under the great commission were baptized "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." They replied "unto John's baptism." These people were likely baptized by Apollos, who at the time knew only John's baptism. They like him, needed an understanding of the complete will of God. Paul explained the matter to them, that is, that John's baptism was limited to a certain time and was received under certain conditions. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Paul then laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. These people were re-baptized. That raises a very important question:

### **I. Who Should Be Re-baptized?**

#### **We Answer:**

#### **a. People who were baptized when they were infants need to be re-baptized.**

Infant baptism is not one time mentioned in the scriptures. The silence of God's word rules against it being a New Testament practice. Why? Infants cannot comply with the requisite requirements of New Testament baptism.

#### **1. The subject must believe---Mk.16:16 (Infants cannot believe)**

The eunuch asked "see here is water what doth hinder me from being baptized? Philip replied you may "if you believe with all your heart..."(Acts 8:35-37).

Repentance---Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30 Infants and small children cannot grasp the meaning of repentance.

Confession of faith---Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37 ( infants cannot confess Christ with their mouth. Small children could respond but would not know the meaning of what they were confessing.)

2. The practice of infant baptism sets aside the bible teaching regarding the innocence of children.

N. T. Baptism is for the remission of sins Acts 2:38; "wash away sins..." Acts 22:16 Children have no sins. They have not violated God's law. In Mt. 18:3 and 19:14 Jesus taught that men should seek to be like children. Surely He did not mean that we should become sinners. Sin is not hereditary. No such thing as original sin being passed to children. We sin when we transgress the law of God, not before and not until. ( See 1John3:4 and 5:17) Those people who were baptized as infants need to be re-baptized for the remission of sins.

b. Those People who were baptized after they were saved, need to be re-baptized.

The person who says "I was saved, then baptized" indicates that they think baptism has nothing to do with salvation. To them baptism is nothing more than an outward expression of an inward change, that previously took place. In the scriptures there certain things are said to be accomplished when one is baptized:

1. Mk. 16:15-16-----Baptized-----saved
2. Acts 2:38-----Baptized-----Remission of sins
3. Acts 22:16-----Baptized-----Wash away sins
4. Romans 6:3-4-----baptized-----Walk in newness of life
5. Gal. 3:27-----Baptized-----Into Christ
6. Gal. 3:27-----Baptized-----Put on Christ
7. 1Peter 3:21-----Baptized-----Answer of Good Conscience

If salvation comes before baptism, then one would have all these benefits before being baptized. There would be no purpose for baptism if all the things mentioned were ours before baptism took place. One is saved only after completing obedience to bible commands of which baptism is a part. Salvation follows baptism, it does not precede or come before it.

c. One who was baptized into a denomination, needs to be re-baptized.

One does not become a member of the Lord's church by accident. Membership in the kingdom of God is the result of purposeful action. The scriptures teach "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body..."1Cor.12:13. Eph. 4:4 "There is one body." Eph. 1:22 "Christ is the head of the body, the church." Col. 1:18 He is the head of the church, which is his body." The one body into which we are baptized, is the one body for which Christ

died, and of which he is head. We are not baptized into a denomination, when we obey the gospel of the great commission. We are baptized into Christ. And the Lord adds us to "the church" i.e. his church, not a denomination (See Acts 2:47).

When you were baptized, did you answer those who asked what church you were a member of, by saying, "the church of Christ?" Probably not. You had joined a particular denomination and you knew it. You honestly had no intention of becoming a member of the Church of Christ. Did the Lord add you to his church without your knowledge or consent? Of course not.

Another aspect of denominational baptism that is wrong is the confession often made i.e. "I believe that God for Christ sake has forgiven my sins." Here again the idea is that Christ has already forgiven my sins, when He has not, and will not until scriptural baptism takes place. The bible confession is given in Acts 8:37 "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." That is the confession that every penitent believe should make prior to baptism.

In some denominations baptism is administered in the form of "sprinkling" or "pouring" rather than immersion or a burial. Note carefully Rom. 6:3-4 the scripture says that we are "buried" in baptism. Baptism is a burial not sprinkling. People who have been baptized into some denomination, regardless of how sincere they may be, need to be re-baptized.

d. People who have not been properly taught, and who did not understand what they were doing or why they were being baptized, need to be re-baptized.

Mt.13:23 "But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." Jno.8:32 "ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." 1Peter 1:22 "Since you have purified your soul in obeying the truth..." But just how much does one have to know and understand before baptism?

Note Acts Chapter 2:

This was the first sermon these people had heard.

The church was being established that day, hence there were many things regarding its work and worship that were not revealed at that time

From Peter's sermon they learned:

- (1) they were sinners, they had crucified Christ,
- (2) They asked what shall we do?
- (3) They were told to repent or turn and be baptized for remission or forgiveness of sins
- (4) Some gladly received his word and were baptized
- (5) Those who did were added unto them v.41 added to church v.47
- (6) They continued as they were taught more i.e. in "apostles doctrine" or teaching.

We conclude that one must know these things in order to be saved. He may know more, but he may not know less. He must know that Christ died for his sins, that he is a guilty

sinner, that he needs salvation, that salvation comes from Christ, that he must repent of sin and turn to Christ (reformation of life), and be baptized.

People who do not know or understand these basic truths, are not fit subjects for baptism. People who did not know or understand these truths when they were baptized, need to be re-baptized.

However, we must all realize that we learn and progress as a Christian. Often people learn more and soon decide that they did not know enough when they were baptized. Such a conclusion is often unwarranted. Remember you did not need to know everything when you were baptized.

e. People who are baptized for the wrong purpose, need to be re-baptized.

The scriptural purpose for baptism is salvation or remission of sins. Such an act involves committing one's life to the Lord with the full intention of serving Him. Gospel obedience should not be entered into lightly or for the wrong reasons. One should never be baptized:

1. In order to get someone to marry them,
2. Just because someone else is being baptized,
3. Just to please your spouse, friend, or parents,
4. For another individual (a practice of some religious sects).

II. People Who Should Not Be Re-baptized

1. Those who have been baptized according to the teachings of the New Testament Scriptures, and who did so out of an obedient heart. (No such thing as scriptural second and third baptisms)
2. Those who have thus obeyed and later sinned. Acts 8:13-24 People who sin after obeying the gospel need to repent and confess their sin to God, but do not need to be rebaptized. 1Jno.1:9 "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive..."
3. Those who have thus obeyed and were baptized by someone in error. The administrator in the act of baptism does not affect the validity of the baptism.
4. Those who have obeyed, but are now in some denomination. They need to come out and come back to the church and ask God's forgiveness, but do not need to be re-baptized.