

## Elementary Truths of Christianity – Baptism

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- We've said numerous times up to this point in our study a basic fact of life
  - One must learn the basics of something before becoming an expert
  - Math for instance – algebra and trigonometry come before calculus
  - You learn to read small words like “cat” and “dog” before larger words
- Christianity is no different whatsoever
  - There are elementary truths that we must understand before we can claim to be mature Christians according to Hebrews 5:11 – 6:3
- **Hebrews 5:11 – 6:3**
  - We've talked about a few of these topics already
  - How they all revolve around Christ our Savior
  - How we must repent of our lifestyle without Christ and submit our lives to Christ
  - How putting our faith in God is essential
  - And now we move on to instruction about baptisms
- We all know that baptism is a sensitive subject in the religious world – I totally understand that, so I do not look to offend anyone – that is certainly not my goal and never will be (my goal is to provide sound Biblical doctrine as instructed by Titus 2:1)
  - Jesus knew that His words are very powerful
  - Luke 12:52-53 – *“From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”*
  - The words of the Lord are powerful
  - In this case, Jesus says that they are so powerful – they will turn family members against other family members
  - Earthly family members of course
  - Now hopefully all of your family members are also faithful brothers & sisters in the Lord's church, but if not – which bond is stronger
  - If you have brethren who are united in the Lord's church – there is no stronger bond
  - Even the bond of fleshly blood cannot overcome this
  - Think about it: not all family members get along
  - But true members of the Lord's church are united to one another via the gospel of Christ, and true Christians will remain in that state
- So though baptism is a sensitive subject, I must preach the truth according to Titus 2:1
  - Therefore, what I preach to you in this sermon contains none of my opinions – nor will they ever
  - Just points pulled directly from the Bible with Scripture references as I will always provide
- Let's begin by defining baptism

- Baptize was transliterated from the Greek word *baptizo*
- *Baptizo* – dip, plunge, immerse, submerge
  - Had the translators properly translated this word, one of those words listed above is likely what would have been used – and should have been used
  - But this word was transliterated – basically they ‘Americanized’ this Greek word to make it all encompassing of some’s belief that baptism is sprinkling or pouring
- To prove that baptism is immersion, let’s look at a few Scriptural examples
  - Matthew 3:16 – when John baptized Jesus, we’re told that He came up out of the water (obviously implies that Jesus went into the water first)
  - Acts 8:38-39 – Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch went into the water and came out
  - Romans 6:1-11 – what baptism represents is laid out plainly here. Just as Christ died, was buried, and arose, so our old self must die, be buried, and we rise a new creature
    - This new creature is one with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)
    - Your old self is put to death and is buried in the watery grave of baptism
    - One cannot be buried unless he/she is totally immersed – sprinkling or pouring is not going to get the job done if the job needing to be done is a burial
- So we can confidently say that baptism is an immersion, a burial – nothing else
- Let’s continue by identifying one important thing: what baptism is being discussed in Hebrews as an elementary truth? Let’s examine this by first examining the types of baptism discussed in the NT
  - Ephesians 4:4-6 – *“There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*
    - Paul is writing to baptized believers here (Acts 19:1-7 is where we read that several folks from Ephesus were baptized)
    - Acts 19 is actually a very excellent passage to illustrate this point as there are 2 different baptisms discussed there – John’s baptism and baptism into Christ
    - But Ephesians 4 states there is just 1 baptism – which is it?
    - They are both correct – Ephesians 4 says there is only 1 baptism in the Lord’s church today – only 1 baptism that leads to salvation
    - We will continue to discuss of course, but Acts 19 has already told us that this baptism is the baptism into Christ
    - With this in mind, there are a few other baptisms discussed in the NT – but again, only 1 will lead to eternal salvation
  - We will discuss 4 baptisms in the NT – not to beat a dead horse here, but to avoid confusion – only 1 of these leads to salvation as Ephesians 4 teaches us
  - Baptism with the Holy Spirit (**Matthew 3:11**)

- Note that Jesus Himself performed this (vs 11)
- John 14:15-27
  - Jesus will ask the Father and He will send the Holy Spirit to Jesus' disciples (vs 16)
  - Father will send the Holy Spirit in Jesus' name (vs 26)
- Acts 2:1-4
  - Holy Spirit comes to the disciples at Pentecost
  - They were **filled** with the Holy Spirit (vs 4)
  - Filled = immersed = submerged = baptized with Holy Spirit
- Acts 10:44-48
  - Cornelius and the large gathering of people in his household received the Holy Spirit during Peter's preaching
  - You could say that these folks were baptized by the Holy Spirit in this instance
- This was more of a miraculous baptism – one that we do not receive today
- We will discuss more later, but we do not receive the Holy Spirit in this manner today
- 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 – miracles are no longer in existence
  - We no longer need miracles – we have the completed gospel of Christ in our NT
- These Scriptures describe for us the baptism of the Holy Spirit referenced in Matthew 3:11
- Baptism with fire (**Matthew 3:11-12**)
  - Note again that this is performed by Jesus (vs 11)
  - Vs 12 indicates that this is related to the final judgment
  - By definition, this means to be immersed/submerged in fire
  - John 5:26-29
    - Jesus is the judge (vs 27)
  - 2 Timothy 4:1
    - Further Scriptural proof that Jesus is going to be our judge
  - Revelation 20:14-15
    - Lake of fire – this is what will immerse with fire
  - Baptism with fire is eternal condemnation
  - This baptism is very much still in effect today, only it will never happen in this life
  - It will be the result of a life lived not unto Christ
  - And you do not want to receive this baptism
- John's baptism (Matthew 3, Mark 1, Luke 3, John 1)
  - Was it from God? YES
    - John 1:6-9
      - John was sent from God as a witness to the light

- John 1:33
    - John was sent by God to baptize with water
- Purpose of John's baptism
  - Luke 3:3
    - Baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins
  - John 1:26
    - Baptism with water
  - John 1:31
    - To reveal Jesus to Israel
  - Mark 1:4
    - Baptism for repentance of sins
  - Matthew 3:11
    - Baptism with water for repentance
  - Acts 19:4
    - Baptism of repentance for belief in Jesus
- Jesus was baptized by John to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15)
  - Can we fulfill all righteousness without baptism?
    - Jesus says no (Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10)
    - Romans 3:7-8 – those who live an unrighteous life will not be saved
- Is John's baptism still in effect today? NO
  - Acts 19:1-7
    - Here we read of a group of men in Ephesus
    - These men were baptized under John's baptism
    - Paul states that John's baptism was for repentance and that John himself told people to look to the one who was to come – Jesus
    - Then they were re-baptized – this time, into Jesus
    - So we can clearly see from Scripture that John's baptism is no longer in effect
- Baptism into Christ (Galatians 3:27)
  - Compare this thought with Malachi 2:16 – *“I hate divorce,’ says the Lord God of Israel, ‘and I hate a man’s covering himself with violence as well as with his garment,’ says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.”*
  - Also compare with Isaiah 64:6 – *“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”*
    - The Lord is not pleased when we are clothed with our own garments – violence, divorce, our own self-proclaimed righteousness, our arrogance, etc.

- Rather, we must be clothed with Christ
- The only way to do that is through baptism according to Galatians 3
- Consider another illustration from Scripture – Luke 12:49-53 & Romans 6:1-11
  - Now you may say – Jesus has already been baptized, what is He talking about here?
  - Jesus was baptized under John’s baptism in Matthew 3, Mark 1, and Luke 3
    - He was baptized by John to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15)
    - No one in the religious world today can say that Jesus was not baptized
    - If Jesus Himself needed to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness, then we must be as well
  - Jesus says there is another baptism He must undergo
  - What is He talking about?
  - Romans 6 explains this for us
    - Just as Jesus died, was buried, and then arose – so we do when we are baptized, and only when we are baptized
    - Jesus is referring to His death, burial, and resurrection in Luke 12
    - We cannot mimic the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in any other manner
    - Paul says our old self died to sin (Romans 6:2) – it died
    - Our old self was baptized into the death of Christ Jesus
    - Just as Jesus was buried, our old self covered in sin was buried in the watery grave of baptism
    - And just as Christ arose from the dead, so we arise from the watery grave of baptism to be united with Christ
    - Think about it – if we are not baptized or if we are baptized for the wrong reason (as the example from Acts 19 teaches us), we have not removed our garment of sin to be clothed with Christ
    - We cannot be clothed with Christ without baptism (Galatians 3) and we cannot mimic the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ without baptism (Romans 6)
- So to answer our question of what baptism is being discussed in Hebrews 6 – it is clearly the baptism into Christ that leads to salvation
  - John 14:6 – *“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me,’”*
  - Acts 4:12 – *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”*
  - These elementary teachings are all about Christ (Hebrews 6:1)

- In addition, Hebrews was written sometime between Christ's death and 70AD – the Hebrew writer makes mention of Christ's death multiple times and makes no mention of Jerusalem's destruction
  - So timing wise – it fits as well
  - This elementary teaching of baptism in Hebrews 6 is clearly the baptism into Christ that is still very much in effect today – it is an essential part of God's plan of redemption for mankind today
- Let's look at just a couple more examples from Scripture to completely paint the picture of baptism
- **Acts 16:25-34**
  - When the doors of this prison were opened and the jailer realized this, he was about to kill himself – he knew that he was going to die anyways for letting prisoners go and apparently didn't want to face the music
  - But before he did so, Paul assured him that all the prisoners remained in the prison
  - Trembling before Paul and Silas, he asks "What must I do to be saved"
  - They respond with "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved"
    - Many a preacher will stop there, but this story does not stop there
    - Think about it, when you are giving directions, you must first understand where the person is physically located
    - I can't give you directions to my house without first understanding where you're at
    - This situation is no different here – belief is used as a synecdoche here as it is used everywhere else in the Bible where it mentions belief is required for salvation
    - Yes, it certainly is – but what does it mean to believe? Just mere mental assent?
    - Surely not – because demons believe (James 2:19), but are not saved
    - We must continue reading and not stop at vs 31
  - After Paul's and Silas' response in vs 31, the jailer and his household were baptized (vs 33)
  - And it wasn't until after their baptism that they were considered believers (vs 34)
- I could literally go on and on with these examples, but I'll just do 1 more
- **1 Peter 3:18-22**
  - Vs 20 – Noah and his family were saved through the water
  - The water washed away the sins of the world at that time, and that's what Noah and his family were saved from
  - The ark was the method that God used to spare Noah while the rest of mankind were being wiped out by the flood waters
  - I've had people tell me before – water doesn't save us today
  - Is that what the Bible says? **Vs 21**
  - It most certainly is not – the flood waters of Noah's days are representative of the waters of baptism today

- If we want our sins washed away, you need to be baptized – that’s the only way it’s going to happen
- Ultimately, the big argument I have heard against baptism is the following
  - Ephesians 2:8-9 – works do not save
  - Baptism = work, so baptism doesn’t save
  - There are numerous flaws with this argument that boils down to a misunderstanding of Ephesians 2
  - Yes – it is correct that works of man do not save us
  - I can donate every dime I have to charities, do all sorts of community services, but if I’m not a faithful member of the Lord’s church, I will still stand condemned on the day of judgment
  - Ephesians 2:10 states that we are God’s workmanship so we need to be working – but doing the works of God – a big part of which involves being obedient to His plan of salvation
  - But just note that even after you’ve spent your life doing God’s work – it is still God’s grace that saves you (Luke 17:10)
  - This is what Ephesians 2 is talking about – this is not proof to say that baptism isn’t necessary for salvation – there would be far too many Scriptures that this would be in contradiction with and true Bible students know that God’s word is not contradictory at all
    - Belief is a work of God (John 6:29)
    - Anyone who has repented will tell you that that takes work – to give up what your old man of sin was involved with to submit to Christ, you think that doesn’t involve work? Will we be saved if we don’t repent?
    - Anyone who is of the opinion that baptism is not necessary for salvation and uses this argument as your justification – I sincerely challenge you to read Romans 6 with me in person, look me in the eyes, and tell me that this is something that man thought up
    - I couldn’t have thought of that if I tried my hardest for 1000 years
- I will close with the following
  - Acts 10:15 – *“The voice spoke to him a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’”*
  - We are told numerous times in the NT that baptism is necessary for salvation – do not overthink this, it is simple – believe and be obedient
  - Do not call anything unclean that God has made clean
  - And do not call something clean when God’s word does not say it is clean
- The plan of salvation is simple and will never change
  - **Step 1: Hearing the gospel** – *Romans 10:13-17*
    - Gospel = Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, arose, and appeared to many – *1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 1:16*
  - **Step 2: Believing the gospel** – *Mark 16:16, John 3:16*

- **Step 3: Confession that Jesus is Lord** – *Romans 10:8-10, 1 John 1:9*
- **Step 4: Repentance of sins** – *Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38*
  - Repentance: a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God. Change of mind that produces a change in action.
- **Step 5: Baptism into Christ** – *Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38, Romans 6:1-10, 1 Peter 3:21-22*
  - Baptism: immerse or submerge
- **Step 6: Live faithfully** – *Revelation 2:10*