

BAPTISM IN IT'S BIBLE SETTING

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INTRODUCTION:

- A. Very few things in life can be truly appreciated outside of their proper context:**
1. Think about some things in the physical realm that demonstrate this:
 - a. A rose petal, in and of itself, gives us no appreciation of the true beauty of the rose
 - b. A single piece from a jigsaw puzzle cannot make us appreciate the whole picture
 - c. A cymbal that is clanging sounds like noise, unless it's in the setting of a band
 2. Unless you look at these things in the setting in which they go, you cannot have a true appreciation for them and really understand what they are all about!
- B. The same thing is true as we approach the subject of baptism and what the Bible says:**
1. **Illustration:** Lady calls in radio show and gives multiple passages about the necessity of baptism. The next caller says, "I just wish people like that would just keep their opinions to themselves and not keep bringing the scriptures into it!" -- ABSURD!
 2. It's one of the most controversial subjects today, but it's one of the most clear in the Bible!
 - a. There are some who will believe anything but the truth! Any view on baptism is acceptable today, unless you believe it is necessary for salvation! (**2 Cor 11:4**)
 - b. Baptism is so misunderstood, undervalued by some, and even ridiculed by others!
 3. Why do so many not get baptism? Don't see it in its Bible setting... Take it out of context

I. LET'S SEE BAPTISM IN IT'S BIBLICAL CONTEXT:

A. What is over baptism?

1. Jesus is the authority over baptism (**Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:18-20**)
 - a. If one asks, "Why do you emphasize baptism? Why is it such a big deal?" The answer is, "Jesus commanded it! Anything Jesus commands is important!"
 - b. It was the death of CHRIST that provided the sacrifice for sins... the blood of CHRIST that washes us from sin, and it is the gospel of CHRIST we obey!
 - c. Why is it that we say, "I now baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?" - This isn't some rite or custom but a statement of what's being done!
 - d. So those who have a problem with baptism have a problem submitting to Christ!
2. So on the first time following Jesus being given all authority we find Peter commanding baptism in the name of Christ! He's the reason & has the authority! (**Acts 2:38**)
3. It is possible to be baptized into the wrong thing or by the wrong authority (**Acts 19:5**)
 - a. Someone might say, "Well... I've already been baptized so I'm saved!" – Not necessarily... Here's an example of a baptism that did them no good!
 - b. They had John's baptism, not the baptism of Jesus Christ... It had the wrong authority over it! When they saw this no objection is made to doing it again!
 - c. The two baptisms looked similar but were different... Change any of the process or reason & it's NOT the same! Small changes to the pattern matter! (**Gal 1:6-7**)
4. When Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, he spoke of ONE baptism! (**Eph 4:5**)
 - a. Some want to talk about "baptism in the Holy Spirit" and how that is what saves man... but the Bible only relates ONE baptism with salvation – Water baptism!
 - b. Notice with Cornelius and his household... They had been baptized in Holy Spirit but they still needed to be baptized... What baptism was this? (**Acts 10:47-48**)

B. What follows baptism?

1. The scriptures are very clear in showing that salvation from sin comes AFTER baptism!
 - a. Jesus said belief PLUS baptism brings salvation... Salvation not only follows baptism, but is depends on baptism just as much as belief! (**Mark 16:16**)
 - b. Paul sins were washed away FOLLOWING his baptism... Note: People like to talk about calling on the name of the Lord, this verse says how! (**Acts 22:16**)
 - c. In the first gospel sermon Peter said the remission of sins followed it (**Acts 2:38**)
 - d. You might ask someone who questions the essentiality of baptism, "What if God

- says plainly baptism saves?” – He does! Plainly baptism saves! (**I Peter 3:21**)
2. It is also at baptism when one puts on Jesus Christ! (**Gal. 3:26-27**)
 - a. There is only one way we can have hope of eternal life and that is if we are found in Jesus Christ having a relationship with Him! W/O Christ we have no hope!
 - b. A simple question: According to this verse, at what point do we “put on” Christ?
 - c. Not only does the forgiveness of sins follow baptism... but fellowship with Christ!
 3. This fact is also apparent in observing the reactions of those who obeyed the gospel of Christ through baptism: (**Acts 8:39; 9:19-20; 19:33-34**)

C. What must precede baptism?

1. When someone was baptized in the Bible, other things occurred first:
 - a. **Acts 2:41** – Those on Pentecost had to first hear the teaching of the gospel
 - b. **Acts 8:5, 12** – Those who heard Philip preach believed... Faith in the message
 - c. **Acts 2:38** – Repent & be baptized... repentance from sins must come first
 - d. **Acts 8:37** – The Ethiopian eunuch believed in the Messiah, saw water, made the connection, & wanted to be baptized! When Philip asked if he believed, he confessed Christ! Paul said confession is made UNTO salvation (**Rom 10:10**)
 - e. **Acts 18:8** – Crispus and his household heard, believed, and were baptized
2. This is what we refer when we talk about the gospel plan of salvation: (**Rom 1:16-17**)
 - a. It is a simple observation of all the things you read people did in order to have their sins washed away & become a Christian – It’s putting the big picture together!
 - b. Someone coined the five steps to salvation. This was easy to remember & can be counted on five fingers – Hear, believe, repent, confess & be baptized
 - c. All of these can be seen as people in the book of Acts obeyed the gospel of Christ!
3. Baptism alone does not save – Takes the whole process! (**I Pet 1:22; 4:17; Rom 6:17-18**)
 - a. Just as faith alone is worthless, so repentance alone & baptism alone is worthless!
 - b. Since some completely dismiss the necessity of baptism we find ourselves emphasizing it more... But it’s no more important than any other part of it!
 - c. **Note:** We need to be careful how we use the phrase “Be baptized” – We often use it to represent the entire process. Outsiders may not know what we mean!

D. What is the foundation of baptism?

1. Baptism standing alone has no power to save man... It’s what under girds it! (**Phil 3:9-11**)
 - a. It serves as a means of connecting us to the death, burial, & resurrection of Jesus
 - b. Baptism apart from the death, burial, and resurrection is nothing... All a person is doing is getting wet, going under water, and that happens all the time!
 - c. There’s no power in the water... It’s not holy water blessed by God – The power is in what Baptism connects us to – Christ’s death, burial, & resurrection!
2. The power for man’s salvation is in the blood of Jesus Christ (**I Pet 1:18-19; Mt 26:28**)
3. So if it’s the blood of Christ that is powerful to save man from sin, when and how do we come in contact with that blood? (**I Cor. 6:9-11; Acts 22:16**)
 - a. **Illustration:** Song – “Are You Washed In The Blood Of The Lamb”
 - b. Baptism is the final act of a process where one is cleansed by the blood of Jesus!
4. Baptism represents in us the death, burial, & resurrection of Christ (**Rom 6:2-4**)
 - a. We die with Him in our repentance – a decision to longer live in sin, we are buried with him in baptism, & then we are raised with Him to walk in newness of life!
 - b. Notice – Baptism is not at all an act to merit salvation but is an appeal to the Lord for salvation from sin based upon what Christ did and accomplished!
 - c. The process of baptism is like our representation of what Christ did in relationship to sin – He died to sin, was buried, & raised to live to God (**vs. 8-11**)
 - d. **Illustration:** Here’s a check for 1 million dollars! The paper it’s on is basically worthless. It’s value is the money it represents. The action of baptism alone is worthless... It’s the death, burial, & resurrection which it represents!
5. The power of baptism is it’s connection to Jesus Christ! (**Col 2:12; I Pet 3:21**)

II. NOW CONSIDER HOW SOME TAKE BAPTISM OUT OF CONTEXT:

A. In what is over baptism – An ordinance of the church

1. Some view baptism as an official church ordinance that's all about the church:
 - a. See it as performed by one who is ordained by the church to baptize people & the one to be baptized is first voted on or in other ways approved by the church
 - b. They may also view baptism as something to be done to become part of that religious group – Why be baptized? To join their church!
2. Consider a few facts concerning this misconception about baptism: **(Acts 2:40-41, 47)**
 - a. First of all – It separates baptism from the actual purpose... Forgiveness of sins
 - b. Secondly – It transfers the focus of baptism away from Christ to becoming part of a particular religious denomination... It's suddenly all about a local church
 - c. Thirdly - It's without any basis in scriptures! What church did the eunuch become a part of? What denomination were those on Pentecost added to?

B. In what follows baptism – Salvation before baptism

1. No where does the Bible show salvation occurring before baptism!
 - a. Those who would ascribe to "FAITH ONLY" don't truly believe this – Why? They often require a sinner's prayer be said, a confession of faith, and repentance
 - b. Some will do EVERYTHING related to salvation save one... leave out baptism!
 - c. Show an example of a person saying "The Sinner's Prayer" & being saved! Now I can provide many examples where people were baptized to be saved!
2. Some would teach that baptism is a sign of a change that has ALREADY occurred!
 - a. **Illustration:** We'd say it's morbid to take a living person out and bury them alive!
 - b. This is exactly what one is doing when they say you are saved and then you are baptized as an outward sign of the inward man!
 - c. Paul clearly shows that you are dead spiritually up until the point that you are raised from the grave of baptism... Then and only then can you truly say you are raised to walk in newness of life! **(Rom 6:4-5, 11)**

C. In what proceeds baptism – Baptism of infants

1. Some churches practice what is known as "infant baptism"
 - a. Often this is in the form of sprinkling or pouring... It's technically not even baptism
 - b. Sometimes it is to show the parents intentions for the children to be raised right – Sometimes done at dedication services... This is more about the parents!
 - c. Sometimes it is the result of false teaching – That children are born sinful, inheriting the sin of Adam and thus need that sin washed away **(Rom 5:12; Ezek 18)**
2. When you consider baptism in its biblical setting, infant baptism is absent!
 - a. Some have pointed to "household" conversions as proof that infants were baptized; however, the term "household" speaks nothing of age! **(Acts 16:15)**
 - b. Think about what true of those who are baptized – Do infants believe? Can infants confess? Do they repent? Do they have a choice in the matter?

D. In what is the foundation of baptism - Sprinkling

1. Throughout the Bible, the act of baptism is always the same... IMMERSION! **(John 3:23)**
 - a. Not one person has water "poured" or "sprinkled" on their head for salvation
 - b. Baptize: Greek "Baptizo" – "To overwhelm, to cover wholly with a fluid, to immerse"
2. Consider the example of the Ethiopian Eunuch: **(Acts 8:38)**
 - a. Some might argue that taking the time, preparations, and the clean up to actually immerse another person in water is inconvenient – But it was for this man!
 - b. It would have been much simpler to get a handful or cupful of water and sprinkle it on his head, if that was an acceptable thing to do – So why go into the water?
3. Sprinkling & pouring removes any likeness to the burial & resurrection of Christ!
 - a. **Illustration:** Pouring just a cup of dirt on a dead man & calling it a burial
 - b. Some might suggest... "It's just a representation... you aren't really burying the man!" - But it's what God commanded & it is a picture of what is happening!