

## Back to Basics – Baptism Acts 2:37-39

*Thesis: To help us better understand the purpose of baptism.*

### Introduction:

- A. It is interesting to notice that **Heb. 6:1** considers baptism an “elementary principle.”
  - 1. Even though it is elementary, i.e. easy to understand, many denominations have a difficult time with baptism.
  - 2. Most denominations say that baptism is not necessary for salvation.
  - 3. Some even go as far as to not practice it at all.
- B. Today we will notice the place of baptism as it concerns salvation.

### I. There is something that takes place immediately before baptism.

#### A. The people believed in Jesus as the Son of God (2:37).

- 1. Notice that our text says, “Now when they heard this...”
  - a. What exactly did they hear?
  - b. They heard that they had crucified the Son of God, and not an imposter as they had thought (2:22-36).
- 2. The people believed that Jesus was the Son of God, and that God had raised Him from the dead after they had killed Him.
- 3. Even though the people did believe that Jesus was the Son of God, they understood that there was something else to do.
  - a. Therefore, they asked, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”
  - b. If belief in Jesus as the Son of God is the only thing necessary for salvation, Peter would have said that they had done all that they needed to.
  - c. However, Peter told them to do something else.

#### B. Peter commanded them to repent before they were baptized (2:38).

- 1. Based upon their belief, Peter commanded them to repent of their sins.
  - a. To repent is to change your ways.
  - b. Peter is commanding them to follow the One whom they killed.
- 2. Again, if belief and repentance were the only things needed for salvation, Peter would have stopped there; but he didn't.

### II. There are two results from baptism (2:38-39).

#### A. Peter says that baptism is “for the remission of sins.”

- 1. The purpose of baptism has been greatly distorted by the denominational world.
  - a. Some say that Christians are baptized because they have been forgiven.
  - b. By implication, this means that baptism is not necessary for salvation because salvation has already been achieved.
  - c. Incidentally, these are the same ones that say that faith alone will save a person, even though the Bible never says such a thing.

2. To help us understand this phrase, notice how this phrase is used throughout the New Testament (our text being one of four times that this phrase is used).
  - a. Twice it is used to describe the baptism of John (Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3).
  - b. Jesus used it to describe the purpose of the shedding of His blood.
    - 1) Mt. 26:28 - For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.
    - 2) It is obvious that Jesus did not die because our sins had been forgiven, but rather He did so that we could be forgiven.
3. The purpose of baptism is simple: it is “for the remission of sins.”

**B. Baptism results in receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

1. The promise that Peter made was that those who were “baptized...for the remission of sins” would “receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (2:38).
  - a. This is not the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit.
  - b. The miraculous gift of the Spirit would soon be done away with (I Cor. 13:8-10).
  - c. The promise of the Holy Spirit was made “to all who are afar off.”
  - d. This indicates that the Holy Spirit would be given for a long time to come.
2. The gift of the Holy Spirit that Peter refers to is the Spirit of God that dwells in us.
  - a. I Cor. 6:19 - Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?
  - b. II Cor. 6:16 - And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”
3. It is the Spirit that helps in our weaknesses.
  - a. Rom. 8:26 - Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
  - b. The Holy Spirit is there to help us.
4. It is the Holy Spirit that is our assurance of eternal life.
  - a. II Cor. 1:21-22 - Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, {22} who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.
  - b. II Cor. 5:5 - Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.
  - c. Eph. 1:13-14 - In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having

believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, {14} who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

### III. In every conversion throughout the book of Acts, baptism is mentioned.

- A. This is not true for repentance or faith (belief in Jesus as the Son of God).
- B. Notice some conversion stories in Acts.
  - 1. Acts 8
    - a. Philip preaches in the city of Samaria (8:5-13).
      - 1) Acts 8:12-13 - But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. {13} Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.
      - 2) They believed and then were baptized.
    - b. Philip preaches to the Ethiopian Eunuch (8:26-40).
      - 1) The eunuch was reading from Is. 53, and did not understand what he was reading.
      - 2) Acts 8:35-38 - Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. {36} Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" {37} Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." {38} So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.
      - 3) It was only after his baptism that the eunuch "went on his way rejoicing" (8:39b).
  - 2. Acts 9
    - a. Paul is converted.
    - b. Acts 9:18 - Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.
    - c. In fact, it was only after Paul was baptized that he ate food (remember, he had fasted for three days).
  - 3. Acts 10
    - a. Acts 10:46b-48 - Then Peter answered, {47} "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" {48} And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.
    - b. Although they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit, it was the miraculous gift, and not the gift that we receive today.

4. Acts 16
  - a. Lydia (16:11-15)
    - 1) Acts 16:15 - Lydia “and her household were baptized.”
    - 2) It is especially interesting that this is given as a “matter-of-fact” statement, indicating that this is the way that it was supposed to be done.
  - b. Philippian Jailer (16:25-34)
    - 1) When he asked Paul what he needed to do, Paul told him to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”
    - 2) This is because the jailer did not believe in Jesus as the Son of God at this time.
    - 3) When we continue reading, we again see baptism
    - 4) Acts 16:33 - And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.
5. Acts 19
  - a. Paul meets some who were baptized into the baptism of John (19:1-10).
  - b. Notice what happens when Paul teaches them of the baptism of Christ.
  - c. Acts 19:5 - When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

**C. Question: If baptism is not necessary for salvation, then why does every story of conversion in the book of Acts include baptism?**

1. Again, not every story of conversion includes direct mention of faith and repentance (although by implication, they are there).
2. The obvious answer is because baptism ***IS*** necessary for salvation.
3. In each case, it was baptism that put them into Christ.
4. It was baptism that gave them forgiveness.

**Conclusion:**

- A. The reason we stress baptism at some point during every lesson is because of the importance of it.
  1. Without baptism, one cannot go to heaven.
  2. To put it more bluntly, without baptism, one will go to hell.
  3. This does not mean that one automatically goes to heaven when he is baptized (he still has to live a faithful life); but without baptism, one has no hope of living eternally.
- B. The New Testament is very clear that baptism is necessary for salvation.
  1. Rom. 6 – Paul compares baptism to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
  2. I Cor. 10 – Paul compares baptism to Israel crossing the Red Sea.
  3. Gal. 3:27 - For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

4. Col. 2:12 - 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.
5. I Pet. 3:21 - 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), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
6. Numerous other examples could be listed as well.