



THE FIVE B'S OF BAPTISM

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There is much confusion about baptism. Many do not believe a person must be baptized to be saved from his sins. Others say baptism is necessary for salvation. Some say sprinkling or pouring are acceptable forms of baptism. Others say only immersion in water is acceptable. There is only one way to settle the confusion about baptism. We must go to the New Testament, which is the law for all men today. What does the Bible tell us about baptism? Its teaching is clear on this subject. Let us notice the five "B's" of Bible baptism.

First, baptism is a **BURIAL**. Notice the Apostle Paul's statement in Romans 6:3,4. "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Paul states clearly that baptism is a burial. To bury something is to cover it completely. Sprinkling or pouring will not substitute for the burial which baptism demands. In fact, the word "baptism" itself means "to immerse, dip, plunge." Bible baptism is a burial.

Second, baptism is for **BELIEVERS**. Bible baptism is for those who can show they believe in Jesus, the Son of God. In Mark 16:16, Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." No where in the New Testament will one find a person baptized who was not able to express his belief in Christ. In Acts 8:12 we read, "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." Notice that "both men and women" were baptized, not little children. Why? Because baptism is for believers, not babies. Babies are born innocent. They are not guilty of the sins of their parents, as some teach (Ezekiel 18:20). Jesus used little children as examples of humility, and said we must become like them to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:1-5).

Would Jesus use sinful children as examples of what we must become to be pleasing to God? Certainly not!

Third, baptism comes **BEFORE** forgiveness of sins. Jesus made this clear in His statement, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved: but he who does not believe will be condemned." Jesus said belief AND baptism bring salvation. He did not say belief brings salvation, and then one is baptized. One cannot be saved without baptism. In Acts 22:16, Saul of Tarsus, a man who believed in Christ, repented, and confessed Jesus as Lord, still had to be baptized to wash away his sins. There is not a single instance in the New Testament where anyone was said to be saved until he was baptized. Baptism comes BEFORE forgiveness.

Fourth, baptism is the **BIRTH** of the Christian. It is the beginning of the Christian's life. In John 3:5, Jesus told a man named Nicodemus, "... Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." To be born of water and the Spirit involves being baptized in water in obedience to the teaching of the Holy Spirit. How does the Spirit teach us? He does so through the Word of God. In the New Testament we learn of the importance of being baptized in water. So it is the Spirit who teaches us to be baptized as we read His Word. This is what the apostle Paul meant in 1 Corinthians 12:13. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." Paul says all must be baptized into the body of Christ, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22,23). It is by the teaching of the Spirit through the Word that we learn of our need to do this. Then, we must "drink into one Spirit," which means we are to continue to study the Word which the Holy Spirit has given--the New Testament. We must grow in our knowledge of God's Word, and we must remain faithful in the one church (Revelation 2:10).

The final "B" is that Bible baptism is where the **BLOOD** of Christ is applied to cleanse us from our sins. Can a person be saved from his sins without the blood of Christ? No! But only in baptism is the blood applied from Heaven to take away our sins. The blood of Jesus was shed in His death. The soldier pierced the side of the slain Saviour of the world, and "...immediately blood and water came out" (John 19:34) Then, in Romans 6:3,4, Paul speaks of being buried in the "likeness" of Christ's death through baptism. The blood that was shed in Christ's death is reached only in the likeness of His death --baptism. In Revelation 1:4,5, John says Jesus washed us from our sins in His blood. When does that washing take place? It is the washing of baptism. Remember what Ananias said to Saul of Tarsus: "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." When we look at Acts 22:16 and Revelation 1:4,5, we conclude that in baptism the blood of Jesus is applied to wash away our sins.

We should never forget the five "B's" of baptism. They remind us of what the Bible teaches about this very important subject. The Bible says baptism is a BURIAL. It is for BELIEVERS, those who can express their belief in Christ. It comes BEFORE forgiveness of sins. It is the BIRTH of the Christian, and it is where the precious BLOOD of Jesus is applied to wash away our sins. Have you received Bible baptism?