

## Bible Basics - Chapter 20

### Water Baptism for Believers or Believer's Baptism in water

#### 1) Water Baptism for Believers : Baptism after Believing in Jesus

There is hardly any passage/verse in the New Testament which speaks of a person taking water baptism before believing in Jesus Christ. The Bible does not advocate it.

**"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."(Mark 16:16)**

**"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do? Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."(Acts 2:36-38 )**

**"Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."(Acts 2:41)**

**"But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."(Acts 8:12)**

#### 2) Water Baptism for Believers: Commanded by Jesus Christ

**"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."(Mathew 28:18-20)**

Although "Water Baptism of the Believer" is considered a trivial act by some, the fact is just the opposite. It is a public proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ.

Remember what we read in Colossians 2:15

**"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."**

It's not only a proclamation to people around us, but also denouncing Satan publicly that we believe in the one and only One who made a public spectacle of Satan and his evil armies by the victory on the cross.

So to uplift the name of Jesus you should be baptized in water after you receive Christ as your Saviour"

#### 3) Water Baptism for Believers : An act of obedience

**"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."(Mark 16.16)**

Some say that this part of Mark (16: 9-20) has been added to the Bible and that it was not part of the early manuscripts. Well if it's still there in your Bible it's genuine for God the Holy Spirit wouldn't put any unwanted material in God's Book.

And if it's still there in your Bible it's better to obey than to reject. God loves obedient children.

Before God pronounces most of his blessings in his Word he always commands obedience.

“If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God.”(Deuteronomy 28:1)

“Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”(John14:23,24)

#### 4)Water Baptism for Believers: Apostolic doctrine for New Testament Church

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do? Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”(Acts 2:36-38 )

Peter preached at Pentecost,“Repent and be Baptized”and we read ““Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”( Acts 2:41 )

It’s those who accepted the Word who were baptized ; those who could not understand or accept it with faith were not baptized AND so it should be even today.

This was same even in Samaria where Philip preached,

“But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”(Acts 8:12)

Also we read of certain disciples who were ignorant during Paul’s time too.

“While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”“John’s baptism,”they replied. Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.”On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.”(Acts 19:1-6)

#### 5)Water Baptism for Believers: Pledge of a good conscience

“ For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God.”(1 Peter 3:18-21)

8 people were saved in the ark Noah built on God’s command ; very few when compared to the great population on earth then .Peter says they were saved through water and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves us, not the removal of dirt from the body (sinful nature) but the pledge of a good conscience towards God

The flood symbolizes baptism & baptism symbolizes salvation. Baptism is a symbol of salvation in that it depicts Christ death, burial & resurrection and our identification with him in these experiences. (Romans 6:4).

In reality ,believer’s are saved by what baptism symbolizes : Christ’s death and resurrection .The act of baptism is a commitment on the part of the believer in all good conscience to make sure that what

baptism symbolizes will become a reality in his /her life.

Have you pledged a good conscience toward God by being baptized? if not : “Now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.”(Acts 22:16)

#### **6)Water Baptism for Believers: Outward profession of faith in Jesus Christ**

Baptism is the outward sign of an inward work of grace.The Bible says,

“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.”(Romans 6:3-5)

These verses give a clue to the “how”of water Baptism. It’s says, “buried with him through baptism”. That means totally immersing the person being baptized into the water indicating the death, burial & resurrection of Jesus Christ.(The going down into the water indicating the death on the cross, the immersion part indicating the burial and the coming out part indicating the resurrection )

The word Baptize comes from the Greek word baptizein which means to immerse; baptize, substituted for earlier baptein, to dip (used in post-classical Gr chiefly in sense “to dip in dye”)

Also concentrate on this passage in (Acts 8:35-39)

“Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized? And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.”

Here both baptizer & the person being baptized go down into the water; then the person is baptized. Now let’s concentrate on 2 passages that causes rifts as to who can & who cannot be baptized.

“At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family.”(Acts 16:33-34)

“Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.”(Acts 18:7-8)

In both these verses we read of whole households believing in Christ and the jailer and his family being baptized.

There should be no controversy as such; if children have knowledge and are at an age where they can consciously accept Jesus Christ as Saviour & Lord by understanding his work on the cross they can be baptized. But that leaves out infants & small children whose mental faculties are yet to develop.

Infants & small children are innocent and they are justified and righteous in God’s sight.

Accepting Jesus is an act faith which one has to do by oneself & not by force or external pressure from friend or family members.

Children brought up in the right knowledge of the truth of the Gospel respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and when He thinks it is the right time, then by faith they come forward to accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord .

#### **7)Water Baptism for Believers: Fulfilling all righteousness**

There are a few instances in the New Testament where believers received the baptism with Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues before they were baptized in water.

**“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, “Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.”(Acts 10:44-48)**

**Being filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues does not mean that one does not have to take water baptism.**

**It’s very clear in the above verses that Peter saw it right to baptize in water people who had received the Holy Spirit baptism & were speaking in tongues**

**Some say that these people were baptized because they were originally gentiles and not Jews.**

**Look at Saul of Tarsus who was a Jew; Jesus struck him down & he became blind ; for 3 days he neither ate nor drank anything.**

**Then in Acts 9:17-19 we read**

**“Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord-Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here-has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.”**

**Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit, received his sight and then he got up and was baptized in water. Jesus the son of God need not have been baptized in water by John yet he wanted to fulfill all righteousness so he went down into the water and submitted to His heavenly Father’s will.**

#### **8) Water Baptism for Believers : An act of faith**

**In Colossians 2:11,12 we read “In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”**

**Water baptism is an act of faith (in the power of god) on the part of the person taking water baptism, wherein one declares that God will also raise us up as He raised up Jesus from the dead.**

**So water baptism after one accepts Jesus Christ as Saviour is a must for the following reasons:**

- 1) It is the Lord’s command (Mathew 28:18-20)**
- 2) It is an act of being obedient to God (Mark 16:16)**
- 3) It is an Apostolic Doctrine for the New Testament Church (Acts 2:36-38,41)**
- 4) It is a pledge of a good conscience (1 Peter 3:18 -22)**
- 5) It is a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ & his victory over Satan (Romans 6:3-5)**
- 6) Its is fulfilling all righteousness ( Acts 10:44-48) (Mathew 3 13-17)**
- 7) It is an act of faith (Colossians 2:11-12)**