

# *What The Bible Says About Water Baptism*



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Note from Pastor Dennis:

In my years of being a Pastor/Teacher perhaps the most frequently asked question I get asked has to do with water baptism. Questions like:

1. What is baptism for?
2. Do I have to be baptized to be saved?
3. Should a child be baptized?
4. And similar questions.

The best place to start is with this question: **“What would you accept as an answer?”**

My point is simply if we settle on the fact that **the Bible is God’s Word**, then we need to find out what **the Bible** says and let **the Bible** answer our questions. I hope you will agree that at the end of the day it does not matter what I think or say – it only matters what God said! That’s the basis for this study:

### ***What the Bible says about water Baptism***

On the following pages you will find a list of Bible references that include baptism. The intention here is to focus on all that **the Bible** says about water baptism - **without comment or editorializing** – and let **the Bible** speak for itself – then draw your conclusions from it.

The hard part for all of us is to put our personal or family traditions aside as best you can, and just take **the Bible** for what it says. What I hope you will be impressed with is there are a lot more than one or two places baptism is mentioned – it is prevalent in the New Testament.

*I encourage you to take your time and read slowly – take it all in – note the Wording carefully.*

\*All references are taken from the New American Standard Bible. In a few places I put a word or phrases in bold simply to point out the reference to baptism.

### **Matthew 3:13-17**

Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John (the Baptist), to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" But Jesus answering said to him, "**Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**" Then he permitted Him. And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

### **Mark 16:14-16**

Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, "**Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.**"

### **Matthew 28:16-20**

But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**"

### **Acts 2:36-39**

Therefore, let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "**Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

## *Conversions in Samaria*

### **Acts 8:12-13**

But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, **they were being baptized**, men and women alike. Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed.

### *The conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch:*

### **Acts 8:26-40**

But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.) So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this:

"He was led as a sheep to slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He does not open His mouth. In humiliation His judgment was taken away; Who will relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth."

The eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?" Then Philip opened his mouth and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. **As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"** And 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." And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him but went on his way rejoicing.

*The conversion of Saul of Tarsus – the Apostle Paul:*

**Acts 9:17-19**

And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, **and he arose and was baptized**; and he took food and was strengthened.

*The Conversion of Cornelius:*

**Acts 10:1-6**

Now there was a certain man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, a devout man, and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people, and prayed to God continually. About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in to him, and said to him, "Cornelius!" And fixing his gaze upon him and being much alarmed, he said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God. "And now dispatch some men to Joppa, and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter; he is staying with a certain tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea. "

- My Note: Peter arrives and preaches the gospel to Cornelius and household. Cornelius and others believe the gospel. The Holy Spirit comes on them and they begin to speak in tongues just as the Apostles did in Acts 2.

**Acts 10:47-48**

"Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" **And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.** Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

*The conversion of Lydia:*

**Acts 16:13-15**

And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. **And when she and her household had been baptized**, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

*The conversion of the Philippian Jailer:*

**Acts 16:31-34**

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, **and immediately he was baptized**, he and all his household. And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household

*The conversion of Crispus:*

**Acts 18:8**

And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians **when they heard were believing and being baptized**.

*The Baptism of John the Baptists Disciples:*

**Acts 19:1-5**

And it came about that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found some disciples, and he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." And when they heard this, **they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**.

### **Romans 6:1-5**

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that **all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus** have been baptized into His death?

Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

### **Galatians 3:27**

**For all of you who were baptized into Christ** have clothed yourselves with Christ.

### **Ephesians 4:5**

One Lord, one faith, **one baptism**.

### **Colossians 2:12**

Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

### **1 Peter 3:21**

And corresponding to that, **baptism now saves you** - not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience - through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

### **Acts 22:16**

“Now why do you delay? **Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins**, calling on His name.”

## Closing thoughts from Pastor Dennis:

The above passages come right from the Bible. I encourage everyone to believe what it says and do what it says. Don't argue with it, or change it, or put a different meaning to it. God said what He meant and meant what He said. *It's that simple.*

There are three things I would add, only because I get asked them a lot.

1. "What about the thief on the cross? He wasn't baptized, and Jesus said he would go to heaven."

My answer is: Actually, that is a simple thing to address. The New Testament did not begin until Jesus **died** on the cross, was **buried**, and **rose** again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day (1 Corinthians 15:1-5). At the point in time Jesus spoke to the thief, Jesus obviously was still alive. The thief on the cross was part of the Old Testament and should not be held to the standards of the New Testament. All of Jesus commands about baptism came **after** His death, burial, and resurrection.

2. If a person believes in Jesus but cannot be baptized, such as a person lying in the hospital who places faith in Jesus and then dies, or cannot be baptized, will they go to hell?

My answer is: **I believe they will go to heaven.**

The God I know is loving and understanding and full of grace. God knows the heart. I do not believe God would condemn a person for what they **cannot** do.

However, people who can be baptized should be baptized.

3. Do I believe people who believe in Jesus and serve Him and are not baptized because they misunderstand what the Bible says about baptism, will not see heaven?

My answer is: **"I'm not in management, I'm in sales!"** That is, I am not the General Manager of the Universe, God is. Decisions like that are way above my pay grade! The God of the Universe will judge righteously.

My job, and yours, is to teach **what the Bible says** and leave the rest to God!

“For I didn’t shrink from declaring all that God wants you to know.” Acts 20:27 (NLT)