

Searching His Word
God's Word Reveals His Plan – Baptism
By Russell Earl

There is no doubt that baptism is a part of God's plan for man's salvation. In the book of Acts, we find case after case where those who obeyed God were baptized FOR the remission of their sins and to be placed in the body of Christ. It was a part of the conversion of the Jews on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-38), of the Samaritans (Acts 8:12), of the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:38), of Saul (Acts 22:16), of Cornelius (Acts 10:48), of Lydia (Acts 16:15) and of the Phillipian Jailer (Acts 16:33). Thus, we see from these accounts that baptism is necessary for salvation.

What is baptism? Since there are a lot of ideas from men about baptism, we need to define it biblically. Baptism is biblically defined as immersion. We see this from Acts 8:26-39 with Phillip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. If sprinkling or pouring were acceptable, there would have been no reason for Phillip and the Eunuch to "go down into the water." Paul goes on to say in Romans 6:4-5 that baptism is a burial. Colossians 2:12 tells us we are "buried with Him" through baptism. By this we see that anything other than immersion is not biblical baptism.

What is the purpose of Baptism? Romans 6:4-6 says that at baptism our "old man," a man of sin, is crucified with Him. This is why Peter said what he did in Acts 2:38 "*Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;"*". To "wash away" one's sins is the purpose of baptism (Acts 22:16). When a person is baptized several things happen. 1) All sins are forgiven and washed away (Acts 2:38, 22:16). 2) We are added to God's family (John 3:3-5). 3) God places us "in Christ" where we receive spiritual blessings (Gal 3:27, Eph 1:3, 2 Tim 2:10). 4) The Lord adds the saved to His body which is His church (Acts 2:47, 1 Cor 12:13, Eph 1:22-23, Gal 3:26-27).

All of these blessings take place AFTER a person is baptized and not before. Have you been baptized in water for the remission of your sins? A person cannot have part of eternal life with Christ unless they have been baptized for the remission of sins by the authority of Jesus and placed in the body of Christ. There were those who knew only John's baptism and they were baptized again unto Christ's baptism. Why? Because it was necessary (Acts 18:25, Acts 19:4-5). We must be baptized. If you were baptized, was it for all the right reasons? Were you baptized for the reasons the Bible teaches? When do men say you receive forgiveness of sins and is that different from when the Bible says you receive forgiveness of sins? The Bible tells us we are forgiven of our sins at baptism (Acts 2:37-38). Have you been scripturally baptized?