

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM

By T. Sean Sullivan

### Introduction:

It is essential for us to never grow weary of hearing the basic principles of Christ’s Doctrine. These basic building-blocks must never be allowed to slip away from our teaching. If these points are forgotten—our hearts will not be prepared to stand against all the noise from the doctrines of men; and we will see souls drifting—away from the truth. Routinely covering subjects, like the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins, reminds those who have already learned and obeyed; and admonishes those who need to know. There are far too many things in this life that “mankind” has decided are completely up to “man” to decide. Interestingly, even “religious doctrine” is on the list.

So, with all of this confusion and false-concept in religion today, is there any hope of finding truth? Thankfully, there is. If we are willing to focus on the Bible alone, we can know the truth. Let’s go to the word, let’s consider only God’s revealed opinion on these points.

### Is Baptism Necessary?

Questioning the necessity of baptism in the New Covenant is a product of men’s false-doctrines. The Scriptures are not at all indecisive or unclear about baptism. The rejection of baptism is a classic case of men “twisting” the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16).

Baptism is essential: Jesus commanded baptism for all who would obtain discipleship in Matthew 28:18-20. That passage says, *“And Jesus came 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 of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”* There is no way around this command of the Lord. There is no way to be a disciple of Jesus today without baptism. Therefore, there is no way to be a Christian, without baptism. Jesus commanded baptism for all who would obtain salvation in Mark 16:15-16. That passage says, *“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.’”* There is no way around this command of the Lord. Therefore, there is no way to be saved today without baptism. Therefore, there is no way to be a Christian, without baptism. Baptism is taught consistently throughout the record of the early church. In Acts 2:38, the people were commanded to *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...”* In Acts 8:9-13, the Samaritans believed the gospel message and were baptized. In Acts 8:34-38, the eunuch believed the gospel message and was baptized. In Acts 10:47-48, Cornelius and his family believed the gospel message and were baptized. In Acts 22:16, Saul of Tarsus was instructed to *“Arise and be baptized, washing away his sins.”*

There is no way that we can rightly-study the word of God and ignore or refuse the necessity of baptism.

### Does it Matter How, or Why, I am Baptized?

The “form” of baptism is patterned for us. According to the Scriptures, baptism is in water. An example that we considered a little earlier in this study, Acts 8:34-38, declares knowledge and action. The eunuch, with the knowledge of baptism’s necessity, said *“See here is water...”* and then took action to obey the gospel as, *“... both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and he baptized him.”* According to the Scriptures, baptism is complete immersion, in water. Paul said that *“in baptism”* we are *“buried with Christ”* (Romans 6:3-4).

The word baptism is a transliteration of the Greek term, which forms the English word baptizo (pronounced bap-tid'-zo); this word we further anglicized into the more recognized word baptism. All this being said, we know the original term and therefore we can find the original definition, which is "to immerse, submerge; to make overwhelmed (i.e. fully wet)" – Strong's definition. The only form of baptism taught by the Scriptures is complete immersion—nothing else fits the definition of the word.

The "function" of baptism is essential: Baptism demonstrates our humble submission to God: There is no great accomplishment, feat of strength, intelligence, or valor in submitting to God's instructions (Acts 2:41). Baptism allows God to work in our life (Colossians 2:11-13): We are dead in sins (Romans 3:23, 6:23). We are buried with Christ in baptism (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3). Then by the power of God we are raised to walk in the newness of life (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:4). Baptism is the required action of those to whom God provides forgiveness and newness. Baptism puts us into Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27): Baptism therefore aligns us with **"every spiritual blessing, in the heavenly places"** (Ephesians 1:3-14). Baptism therefore aligns us with **"redemption"** (Romans 3:24). Baptism therefore aligns us with **"everlasting life"** (Romans 6:23). Baptism's function is the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21).

**"Faith"** while taking on the action of baptism is essential. There is nothing gained by baptism, if it is not taken on by faith. Jesus said, **"...he who believes and is baptized"** (Mark 16:16). When the gospel was preached those who believed were baptized (Acts 8:12-13).

### **What is holding YOU back from Baptism?**

Everlasting life in Heaven is a covenant–promise made by God to those involved in the New Covenant. The New Testament Scriptures clearly teach us that, if we have not been baptized, we are not in the New Covenant (Colossians 2:11-13). God's word parallels the necessity of entering into the Old Covenant (Genesis 17:10-14) with the necessity of baptism for entering the New Covenant. If there is no promise outside of the covenant, the only hope is to be inside the covenant–baptism is the requirement for entrance.

We all want to find life everlasting in Heaven, after this life. So, what is stopping you? The Scriptures are clear, just listen to God and trust Him (Psalm 118:8, **"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man."**) The needed supplies are available to you, all things are ready (Acts 8:36, **"...see here is water..."**).

### **Conclusion:**

Satan knows the one thing that will ensure your soul is never saved, is for you to refuse baptism. I believe that is why he has tempted the hearts of men to pervert the gospel of Jesus Christ and so vehemently oppose the need for baptism.

The only way for any of us to know the truth is to abide in the word of God (John 8:31-32). We can know what is required of us, to have a relationship of promise with God, through Jesus Christ our Savior. However, "knowing what to do" must be followed by "doing what must be done".

One final question, for this lesson: Have you, in faith and humble-submission to the command of Jesus Christ, been immersed in water, for the remission of your sins? This is what is necessary; and now is your moment to obey? ■

***"Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 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?' 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.' So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing"*** (Acts 8:35-39, NKJV).

**Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM**

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