

San Juan church of Christ

1414 Hawk Parkway, Unit C
Montrose, CO 81401 | (970) 249-8116

What Does God's Word Say About... Baptism According to the Pattern

As mentioned in our article last week, there is much confusion in the religious world concerning the doctrine of baptism. There are some that teach that baptism can be sprinkling or pouring of water, while others teach that baptism must be an immersion (burial) in water. Some teach that baptism is a burial in water for the forgiveness of sins, and others teach that baptism is a burial in water but is not for the forgiveness of sins. There are those who teach that baptism is only for those of accountable age (those who can understand believing, repenting, confessing), and then there are those who believe in administering baptism to children and infants. There are those who teach that baptism involves the Holy Spirit and has nothing to do with water. All of these various teachings are enough to confuse anyone!

All of us must open up our hearts and minds to what God has said on the subject of baptism within the pages of the Bible. All of us must have the courage to accept what the Bible teaches no matter if it is contrary to what we have previously believed or practiced.

We learned last week that baptism is an immersion (burial) and is associated with water (Acts 8:26-39). If sprinkling or pouring were acceptable practices there would be no reason for Philip and the eunuch to go DOWN into the water.

Peter and Paul also taught that baptism is the only way to have your sins forgiven and to come into contact with the blood of Jesus (Acts 2:37-38; Romans 6:3-5). Paul was told by Ananias "to arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22:16). Jesus taught that baptism is the new birth "of water and of the Spirit" that gives entrance into the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5).

So, the question we need to ask is, "Can a person be taught incorrectly, and be baptized correctly?" Peter and Philip took the time to verbally teach their audiences the word of God. It is the Word that produces faith (Rom. 10:17) and the understanding of that Word leads us to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10), and then changes how we live our lives (Eph. 5:8-10).

When Paul went to Ephesus he realized that Apollos was teaching the baptism of John after the baptism of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) had become effective. John the Baptist taught of a baptism looking forward to the coming of Christ, and the establishment of His kingdom, the church. Apparently, those in Ephesus had been taught John's baptism, which had fulfilled its purpose in the Old Testament. They, no doubt, were sincere in what they had been taught, which was good before Pentecost. Paul understood this incorrect baptism, taught by Apollos, did not have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2). Did Paul say to those 12 men, "Well, as long as you are comfortable with your baptism, we will accept it as well"? No, that was not Paul's attitude at all. In fact, notice what Acts 19:4-5 reveals that Paul did. He taught the truth on this matter, and then the men were baptized with the baptism of the Great Commission. God still demands that for baptism to be scriptural and effective, the one who is being baptized must understand WHY he is being baptized. Incorrect thinking and understanding of the correct scriptural baptism will lead to an incorrect baptism every time.

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
info@sanjuanchurchofchrist.org