



*For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place. (1 Thessalonians 1:8)*

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## WHAT IS BAPTISM?

**A** while ago I saw a question posted on a Facebook group's page concerning baptism. The question was something to the extent of "If someone's toe comes out of the water when they are baptized are they still saved?" Most people who replied to this question ridiculed the person for asking the question, however, it is an important question to be discussed. There are so many people who have genuine questions about things of this nature. It is our job to be able to answer those questions. There are different beliefs as to what baptism does, and different beliefs regarding the method to be employed. In this article we will be discussing some of those things in order to clear the air when it comes to baptism.

The first thing that we need to understand is the importance of baptism. One main belief is that baptism is an outward show of what has already taken place inwardly. The second main belief is that baptism saves us. This is, undoubtedly, the position that we are lead to if we study the scriptures with an honest heart and open mind. There are far too many clear passages in the word of God that prove this. Most notably, 1 Peter 3:21 which states, "baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ". It is clear to see that in the mind of Peter baptism is what saves us. If we do not understand the importance of baptism then we cannot give the correct answer to the question above.

The second thing we need to consider is the method of baptism. There are three common beliefs regarding this: sprinkling, pouring, and immersion. In order to answer this question we need only go to one passage (though many teach the same). Romans 6:3-4 state, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." If you look at the Greek word for baptized in verse three you will find that it is the word "baptizo". This word according to Strongs means "to make whelmed (that is, fully wet)." So, the word itself means to make fully wet, full immersion is what is being discussed here. This is also laid out for us in the language Paul used in verse four. He stated that we are "buried" in baptism. If someone were to pass away and they desired to be buried in a cemetery would we leave their toe, hand, leg or any other part of their body sticking up out of the ground? Certainly not! That is not a complete burial. We are to be buried, fully immersed, in baptism.

There is so much confusion, doubt, and conjecture about baptism. However, if we just simply go to the word of God all of our questions will be answered. Baptism is for the remission of sins and it is to be a complete burial.

-Renn Ferguson