

# Is Baptism Essential For Salvation? (No. 13)

By Casey Head

Since the middle of March, I have been writing this series of articles in which I have repeatedly affirmed that water baptism is essential for salvation. Not only have I dealt with the common objections to baptism, but I have highlighted the many New Testament passages which prove the necessity of baptism (Mk. 16:16; Ac. 2:38; Rom. 6; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21). As I close this series of articles, I want to contrast denominational baptism and Bible baptism.

Many teach that sprinkling and pouring are valid modes of baptism, but the Bible only authorizes immersion. The very word “baptism” comes from the Greek word *baptisma* which means “the process of immersion, submersion and emergence.” Also, passages such as Romans 6 reveal that baptism is a burial. Paul says in Romans 6:4, “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death...” When someone is buried, is dirt simply sprinkled over their grave? No! Burial involves complete immersion. The fact is, there is no Bible authority for sprinkling or pouring.

Another unbiblical denominational practice is the baptizing of infants. The Bible teaches that “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mk. 16:16), and that one must “repent and be baptized...for the remission of sins” (Ac. 2:38). Faith and repentance precede baptism, but an infant is incapable of such. Furthermore, infants are not guilty of sin (Deut. 1:39; Eccl. 7:29; Mt. 18:1-5) so they have no need of conversion. Again, I ask, where is the Bible authority for infant baptism? It is not there!

The denominational world also teaches that one is baptized into the local church, that is, as a means of entrance into the local church. This is also foreign to the scriptures. Paul was first baptized by Ananias in Acts 9:18 and he didn’t officially join a church until he came to Jerusalem (Ac. 9:26). If we are baptized into a local church, into which church was the eunuch baptized in Acts 8:35-39, and into which church was the Philippian jailor baptized in Ac. 16:30-33? You see, in the first century, they were not baptized to join the local church. Rather, they were baptized to be saved from their sins (Ac. 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21).

Finally, the majority of religious people teach that baptism is an “outward sign of an inward grace,” that it is something you do after you are already saved. But where is this ever taught in the New Testament? Over and over again, we are told that they were baptized to be saved.

Some people might ask, “What’s the big deal? We may not all agree on the mode of baptism or the purpose of baptism, but we’re all baptizing, aren’t we?” Next week, I want to show why it is necessary to teach and practice biblical baptism. After all, there is just “one baptism” (Eph. 4:5).

If you have any questions or disagreements about the content of this article, or if you would like to agree to a public debate, please contact me. I want to hear from you. My phone number is (828)467-1463. My mailing address is P.O. Box 401, Spruce Pine, North Carolina 28777 and my email address is NCBibleQuestions@yahoo.com. If you contact me, you can expect to be treated with kindness and respect. After all, this is not a personal dispute. It’s not about who is right, it’s about what is right. Also, you can find all of the previous articles in this series at our website, [www.LookingToJesus.com](http://www.LookingToJesus.com).