

SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM

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There are so many different religious groups and so many doctrines associated with baptism that it is impossible to track them all. Instead, our Lord has given us his New Testament so we can learn, do and teach what he says is correct, regular, and scriptural baptism.

Here are four basic elements to scriptural baptism. These are listed as follows:

1. Scriptural administrator/teacher
2. Scriptural candidate
3. Scriptural mode
4. Scriptural action

These four elements as described in detail below. Allow me to say that the validity of baptism is not based on the feelings of the candidate, or what he thinks. The validity of baptism is based on the New testament. The baptism either fulfills the New testament requirement, or it does not.

1. Scriptural Administrator

It is very easy from reading the new Testament to learn who has the authority to baptize.

First, there was a man sent from God whose name was John. He was sent by God to baptize, and even our Saviour submitted to John's baptism. As John's ministry decreased, Jesus' ministry increased.

In John chapter 4 the Bible says Jesus baptized more disciples than John. However, it also says in the same place, that Jesus baptized not, but his disciples.

From that point on, it is Jesus' disciples who do the work of baptizing. But who are his disciples?

In Matthew 16, Jesus says he will build his church, and he gives the keys to Peter. He mentions his church again in Matthew 18, telling Peter how often he should forgive, and when to bring a cause before the church.

Later, in Matthew 28, the Lord gives his Great Commission to the eleven disciples, first saying he has the all authority (power) and therefore the eleven should go forth and teach and baptize.

This commission is a transmission of AUTHORITY to baptize from Jesus Christ to the eleven apostles (leaders and teachers) of the church.

At this point one must decide whether this commission of authority is given *to all people* without limitation; *to the eleven only*, and no others; or to a certain class (i.e., leaders of Jesus' church). If Jesus gave the authority to some, and not others, then those who are included have the authority, and those excluded do

not have the authority. Following common sense then, those who have authority perform scriptural baptism, and those who do not have authority perform un-scriptural baptism.

I contend the commandment (and authority) to baptize was passed on by church authority to certain disciples approved by the churches.

Let's look at the remainder of the New Testament:

Peter – a leader in the church in Jerusalem – in Acts 2 commands Jews to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38).

Philip, in Acts 6 is ordained by the apostles as a deacon. In Acts 8 he is seen baptizing the Ethiopian.

In Acts 9, Saul is converted, and is subsequently baptized by Ananias, a *disciple* in Damascus.

In Acts 10, Peter is found baptizing the Italian Cornelius and other Gentile believers.

In Acts 13, the Apostles Barnabas and Saul are sent (authorized) by the church in Antioch, and in the same chapter are found baptizing. In Acts 16, Paul and Silas baptize the Philippian jailer.

In Acts 19, Paul is found baptizing Jewish believers who knew only the baptism of John.

In 1 Corinthians the implication is Paul, Silas, and Apollos baptized different brethren in that church.

To the honest mind it is clear the New Testament has church leaders baptizing, and not only limited to the first eleven apostles, but to other sent men.

Since Jesus promised the church would endure (Matthew 16:18, 28:20), this authority has been passed down through the New Testament church to its ordained men.

2. Scriptural Candidate

Again, it is easy to see the candidate for baptism is a believer in Jesus Christ. Jesus said in Mark 16, “he that believeth and is baptized.” Peter wrote that baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God.

Philip said to the Eunuch that he could be baptized, “if thou believest with all thine heart.” Upon the profession of the Eunuch Philip baptized him. This is why we ask for a profession of faith before baptizing a person.

There are no instances where infants or babies were baptized

3. Scriptural Mode

Although some groups sprinkle or pour water on a candidate, the clear teaching of the New Testament is that baptism is performed by immersion. The word “baptism” means immersion. And since immersion pictures the death, burial and resurrection of our Saviour, it is a wonderful testimony of one's faith.

4. Scriptural Action

Baptism in the New Testament accomplishes some things, and some things it does not. See the list below:

What Scriptural Baptism accomplishes:

- A first step act of obedience of the believer to the commandment of Jesus Christ, or rather, it is the answer of a good conscious toward God
- A public testimony that one is now a believer
- A point in time when the believer now walks in the steps of the Lord (I say without baptism, this cannot be done).
- Baptism adds to the church, or a believer becomes a member of the church through baptism (Acts 2, I Corinthians 12)
- Baptism, being performed in a scriptural manner, never has to be repeated

What Scriptural Baptism does not accomplish:

- Baptism does not wash away sin
- It is not part of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 1), but follows the Gospel
- Baptism does not merit any added grace from God
- Baptism does not administer any spiritual gift