

ABC's of Water Baptism

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The subject of water baptism is such a contentious subject in the religious world. Contrary to popular belief, Paul had this baptism in mind in [Ephesians 4:5](#) as a foundational pillar of our Christian faith. Nevertheless, the Biblical subject is so fundamental to a New Testament Christian, it is as simple as A-B-C.

Water baptism is the means of APPROPRIATING the grace of God. While it is completely true that the grace of God is the source of our salvation ([Eph. 2:8](#)), such salvation is conditional upon the obedience of our faith. Included in such are the clear words of our Lord and Savior just prior to His ascension: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” ([Mark 16:16](#)). While these words were still ringing in the ears of His apostles and the thought still fresh in their minds, it is no wonder that Peter declared to the Jews on Pentecost, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” ([Acts 2:38](#)), to which about three thousand souls complied ([Acts 2:41](#)). Therefore, salvation is equal with one gaining remission of sins, which makes the message of Jesus and His apostle, Peter, to be consistent. Again, contrary to the denominational word, the preposition “for” preceding the statement “the remission of sins” does not mean “because of,” but it rather means “in order to receive; unto, into,” to which many Greek theologians agree. Since the blood of Jesus is the instrument of cleansing ([Matt. 26:28](#); [Rev. 1:5](#)), no one in any right mind would allude to the element of water cleansing the soul, but knowledgeable Bible students understand that water baptism places one in the blood of Christ; hence, Ananias told Saul, “And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” ([Acts 22:16](#)). To clarify even further, Peter explains that the element of water in baptism is not for physical cleansing but for spiritual cleansing:

Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. [1 Pet. 3:20-21]

God proclaims consistently throughout the New Testament that water baptism is the means of one entering the kingdom of God ([John 3:5](#) – “born of water”) and appropriating the saving grace and mercy of God ([Eph. 5:25-27](#) – “washing of water”; [Titus 3:4-7](#) – “washing of regeneration”).

Water baptism is a BURIAL. Multiple passages are conclusive to this fact, supporting immersion (as opposed to sprinkling or pouring) as the proper method of water baptism. Paul says to the Christians in Rome, “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” ([Rom. 6:4](#)), and also told the Colossians, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen *with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead*” ([Col. 2:12](#)). In addition, God offers written, inspired illustrations of such in [Acts 8:36-39](#) (“and they

went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water”) and [John 3:23](#) (the baptism of John in the Jordan required “*much water*”).

Water baptism is a *COMMAND*. One major problem with correctly understanding water baptism is that the denominational world confuses such with Holy Spirit baptism. The problem is easy to alleviate whenever one understands that Holy Spirit baptism was never a command, but a specific promise (cf. [Acts 1:4-8](#)). On the other hand, water baptism is a command for every believer in Jesus. After Peter taught Cornelius and those gathered with them, “...*he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord*” ([Acts 10:48](#)).

Thus, with this simple outline, one can properly understand the New Testament doctrine of water baptism. If you have not been baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost for the remission of your sins, why not be baptized today? If you have, would you find someone to share this message?