

## What Baptism Does Not Do

Franklin Church of Christ  
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September 17, 2006  
AM Assembly

### Introduction:

We spend a great deal of time discussing baptism. Should we not talk a great deal about something on which the Bible says our salvation hinges? “There is an antitype which now saves us—baptism” (**1 Peter 3:21**, NKJV). However, we must not come to believe that baptism is somehow all powerful—that it is the answer to all spiritual questions. In fact, we must recognize that there are several things baptism does not do. We must keep baptism in its place. Note ten things it does not do.

### Discussion:

- I. Baptism does not save us by itself.
  - A. We must not misunderstand **1 Peter 3:21** to claim that baptism, all by itself, apart from anything else, saves us. If that were the case, then who would not be saved? There are few people who have never been immersed in water. But that does not mean they are saved.
  - B. As you read the New Testament, you will find that there are several things that all work together to bring about salvation. You will find that God saves us. Jesus saves us. The Spirit saves us. The blood saves us. Belief saves us. Loving the truth saves us. The list goes on. Without all of these factors, we will not be saved. Because baptism does not save us by itself.
- II. Baptism does not take the place of faith.
  - A. We cannot be baptized and expect to be saved if we do not believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God who has risen from the dead for our salvation.
  - B. In **Mark 16:16**, the scripture teaches we must believe and be baptized. Despite what many have said, this verse does not teach that baptism is unnecessary. What it does say is that you have to be baptized, but that does not take the place of belief. Without faith it is impossible to please God, even if you have been baptized (**Hebrews 11:6**).
- III. Baptism does not take the place of repentance.
  - A. God expects us to change our lives. In **Acts 2:38**, Peter taught that we must all repent and be baptized. While baptism will be one action of the truly repentant heart, baptism does not take the place of repentance. That is, it does not take the place of changing our minds and actions.
  - B. **Romans 6:3-4** says God wipes our sins away when we are baptized. He makes a change in us, cleansing us. But He also expects a change from us. He expects us to turn from sin and present our bodies as instruments of righteousness (**Romans 6:13**). That is, He expects repentance.
- IV. Baptism does not take the place of confession.
  - A. A common misconception regarding baptism is that it is a confession to mankind of our faith. You may have heard someone describe baptism as “an outward sign of inward grace.” In that system, people do not get baptized in order to be saved. Rather, they get baptized in order to let other people know what is going on in their hearts.
  - B. However, note the example of the Ethiopian Eunuch in **Acts 8:36-38**. Philip needed to know what was going on in the eunuch’s heart, so the eunuch confessed with his mouth. The baptism itself was not the confession. Rather, the confession was the basis on which Philip could baptize the eunuch. No doubt, baptism is a demonstration of faith, but it does not take the place of confession mentioned in **Romans 10:9-10**. So we need to do both, as the eunuch did.
- V. Baptism does not prevent temptation.
  - A. Please, do not think that Satan will leave you alone if you are baptized—not in this life. Do not think that those who have been baptized are no longer tempted. Do not think that you are different from everyone else because you still deal with temptations even though you were baptized. Baptism does not prevent temptation for anyone.
  - B. Look in the New Testament. Ananias and Sapphira lied about their gift to the saints in **Acts 5**. Simon the Sorcerer thought he could purchase the gift of God with money in **Acts 8**. Peter played the hypocrite and led others to do the same according to **Galatians 2**. All these were tempted. Though you have been baptized you will still face temptation.

- VI. Baptism does not provide us a license to sin.
- A. You will still be tempted, but you must understand that baptism does not provide a license to sin. Remember, God expects a change (**Romans 6:13**).
  - B. The wages of sin are death for the Christian as well as the non-Christian (**Romans 6:23**). Do not view the grace God granted when you submitted in baptism to be a license to do whatever you want (**Romans 6:1-2**). You have died to sin, you are no longer to live in it.
- VII. Baptism does not prevent suffering.
- A. According to ancient Greek legend, Achilles' mother dipped him into the River Styx as an infant. This "baptism" made him impervious to harm from outside attack, with the exception of at the ankle where his mother's hand kept the waters from touching him. Thus, we speak of the Achilles heel. Our baptism is not like that. It does not make us impervious to suffering. We will still have pain. We will still get sick. We will still die. Baptism does not prevent those things.
  - B. In **I Timothy 5:23**, we read that Timothy was frequently sick. In **II Timothy 4:20**, Paul claims he left Trophimus sick in Miletus. Christians still face all of these things. But only in this life.
- VIII. Baptism does not develop spiritual maturity.
- A. Baptism makes us babes in Christ, not mature Christians. We must view baptism as a birth, after which we must grow or we will die. As **I Peter 2:2** encourages, we must desire the milk of the word, which makes us grow.
  - B. Do not think that you have reached the summit whenever you are baptized. You are just beginning your climb. Grow in Christ. Do not be surprised when somebody who has been baptized stumbles. They are babies in Christ. Babies stumble as they first learn to walk. We need to regard them with patience, just as we do our children, because baptism does not produce spiritual maturity.
- IX. Baptism does not make us better than anyone else.
- A. How easy it could be to become like the Pharisee in **Luke 18:9-14** regarding baptism. After all, those who are baptized in the context of all that we have discussed in this lesson are saved. Those who have not been baptized are not saved. How easy it could be to pray, "God I thank you that I am not like all these other people. I have been baptized. I am better than them."
  - B. Baptism makes us spiritually better off than others, but it does not make us better. We are saved when we are baptized, but we are not more worthy. We are not more valuable. We are unprofitable servants, having only done what was our duty to do (**Luke 17:10**).
- X. Baptism does not merit salvation.
- A. God does not owe us salvation because of baptism. In judgment, we will not receive wages, because we have not earned salvation. We will receive grace (**Ephesians 2:8-9**).
  - B. I heard a story of a preacher who debated this very issue. He took four nights to explain that we do not do anything to be saved because we cannot earn salvation. He concluded his final speech by letting everyone know about his newsletter that would teach more on this subject. "The good news," he announced, "is that this newsletter is just like salvation. It's free. All you have to do is put your name and address on this sign-up sheet and I will send it to you." The newsletter was free, but accepting the newsletter was conditional. You had to sign up for it. That is all we are doing when we are baptized: signing up for God's free gift. We are accepting the grace He has offered, not earning it.

### Conclusion:

Baptism does a great many things. But we must be sure to keep baptism in its place as a part of our salvation, not the whole. While baptism does not take the place of so many of these other things, please understand, none of these other things take the place of baptism either. The scriptures are clear: you must be baptized if you desire to receive God's grace. "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved" (**Mark 16:16**) Have you believed and been baptized? If not, why not right now?