

## **The Ordinance of Baptism**

### **Romans 6:1-14**

#### **The Meaning and of Baptism**

The New Testament churches practiced two ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. While the term "ordinance" is not a New Testament word, it is used to indicate these two ceremonies are not sacraments. Baptism is the first ordinance one receives after their profession of faith in Christ. Today, not all denominations practice baptism with the same meaning, method, message and motives as Southern Baptists.

#### **The Motive for Baptism**

Some denominations make baptism a necessary component for salvation. There is abundant evidence in the New Testament that this is **not** the case. There are numerous references that clearly show salvation is a result of repentance from sin and faith in Christ, see e.g. Lk 13:3, 5; Jn 3:16-18; Rom 8:8-10; Eph 2:8-10; 1 Pet 1:18-23; 1 Jn 5:10-12. One verse often used to argue for the necessity of baptism for salvation is Acts 2:38 "Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus **for** the remission of sins" However, the word translated "for" is the Greek preposition *eis*, which also is translated "because of." Based on the clear teaching elsewhere in the New Testament, it is clear that we are baptized "because of the remission of our sins," not in order to obtain remission. Baptism demonstrates our obedience to Christ, presents a visible testimony of our heart commitment, and affirms our belief in His resurrection and hope of our own.

#### **The Method of Baptism**

The word "baptize" is a transliteration of the Greek *baptizo*, which means to immerse or submerge something. John the Baptist baptized those who responded to his call for repentance as a sign of ones being cleansed from sin and ones desire to identify with the Kingdom of God (see e. g. Mt 3:6-8; Lk 3:3-16). Only baptism by immersion can convey the intended meaning of message of New Testament baptism as presented in Romans 6:1-14. Only baptism by immersion can picture the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

#### **The Message of Baptism**

Baptism in the early New Testament church was a way of making a public profession of faith in Christ and identification with His life, death, burial and resurrection and the resurrection of all believers. Romans 6:1-14 clearly shows us this purpose for baptism as a physical symbol was to be practiced only once, to symbolize the inner change in the life of a person when they trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord.

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