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Unless otherwise indicated, every article was written by our preacher, Russell M. Kline

# THE PAPER PULPIT

A quarterly publication of Bible studies presented by the Madisonville Church of Christ

Baptism: the Gateway into the Church

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## Sprinkling, Pouring, or Dipping?

According to Webster's Dictionary, *baptism* is "a Christian sacrament marked by ritual use of water and admitting the recipient to the Christian community." Most denominations teach that baptism may be administered either by sprinkling water on one's head, by pouring water over one's head, or by dipping one's entire body in water. Some denominations allow the one being baptized to select which mode of baptism he would like to experience, with the understanding that it really does not matter how one is baptized, in the first place.

But, is it really the case that the mode of baptism does not matter? What does the Bible have to say about this issue? How were people baptized in the ancient church? Did the apostles give people a choice?

The fact of the matter is that the Scriptures teach that there is only "*one baptism*," which is recognized by the Lord, as valid (Eph. 4:5). The New Testament tells us all about baptism, but it only speaks of *one* form of baptism. In Matthew 3:13-17, we find that, in the account of Jesus' own baptism, the Lord, "*when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water.*" For

Jesus to come up out of the water, He must have gone down into the water. This account depicts Jesus' baptism as being by immersion in water. In Acts 8:27-40, in the account of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, we find that "*they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.*" The text goes on to say that they both came back up out of the water, and the eunuch went on his way. Again, baptism is depicted as immersion in water.

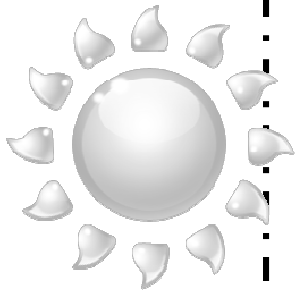
**"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..."**

**—Mark 16:16**

Also, it is worth noticing that, in Romans 6:4 and in Colossians 2:12, the text says that we are "*buried with him in baptism.*" The concept of baptism as a burial in

water shows that baptism is done by dipping, plunging, or submerging someone in water. Just as you cannot bury someone with a sprinkling of dirt, or with a handful of dirt, you cannot baptize someone with a sprinkling or a handful of water.

There are many other proofs, which show that baptism is immersion in water. If you have been baptized, was it by immersion in water, or by some other means? According to the Scriptures, there is only one way to be baptized under the Law of Christ. Have you really been baptized?



## Quotable Quotations

“...the words *baptist*, *baptism*, *baptize*, *baptized*, and *baptizing* are all Greek words anglicized in termination to satisfy the demands of English euphony, and *translated* (not translated) to our version of the sacred Scriptures...”

—T.W. Brents

“But when does baptism actually save one? Only

when the individual has heard the pure gospel of Christ, believed it, genuinely repented of his sins, confessed the Christ as the Son of God, and thus has been baptized in compliance with the Scriptures.”

—J.C. Choate

“...no matter how religious, how sincere, how zealous and so on a person may be, if

he has not been baptized into Christ, then he is not a child of God...”

—Thomas B. Warren

“...it is not the water in and of itself that saves...but our salvation is in the shed blood of Christ, which cleanses the soul based on our obedient faith and the grace of God.”

—Jim Laws

***“Then Peter said unto them, 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

## Should Babies Be Baptized?

**T**he practice of infant baptism is most ancient. Its history can be traced all the way back to the end of the second century—but no further. Therein lies the problem with infant baptism: it is a practice, which is not authorized by the Scriptures. Nowhere in the New Testament may we read of anyone who was ever baptized at a pre-adolescent age; much less at infancy. That is why, whenever I am asked if babies ought to be baptized, I always say, “No!”

Advocates of infant baptism sometimes point to

passages like Matthew 19:14 and Acts 16:15, as proof of their assertion that the practice is Biblical, but these verses offer them no support, at all. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus did say that little children should be allowed to come to Him, for every Christian ought to emulate the desirable characteristics of a little child (Mat. 18:3), but He did not ever teach that infants ought to be baptized. As for Acts 16:15, it does tell of Lydia and her entire household being baptized for the remission of their sins, but it is the height of presumption to say that her household

included babies or little children. If one goes strictly by the Bible, then one must admit that there is no Scriptural authority for the practice of baptizing babies.

In the minds of many people tradition outweighs the authority of the Bible. But, God is not going to judge us based upon whether or not we kept with tradition, but whether or not we obeyed His Word (Mark 7:9; John 12:48). Infants do not need to be baptized, but people who are old enough to know that they must be baptized to be saved **do**.

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# Should I Be Baptized Again?

**J**n Acts 18:24-28, there is a record of an encounter between Aquila and Priscilla and a preacher named Apollos. Apollos had preached mightily in the city of Ephesus; spreading the word about Jesus, but knowing only the baptism of John the baptist. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and helped him to understand what his preaching had been lacking. Later, Apollos went to Corinth and became the preacher for the church of Christ in that city.

In Acts 19:1-7, there is a record of an encounter between the apostle Paul and twelve men who had been baptized in accordance with the message of John the baptist. Paul supplied them with the knowledge they were

lacking and then baptized all of them in accordance with the teaching of Jesus Christ. Why did these twelve men have to be baptized again, but Apollos did not?

The answer lies in knowing when these men were baptized and what they had been taught. Apparently, Apollos had been baptized either by John, or by one of his disciples. Somehow, he had not been involved in the Earthly ministry of Jesus (perhaps he was in Alexandria or Asia at the time).

When he encountered Aquila and Priscilla, he was in a right relationship with God, for none of John’s disciples needed to be baptized again, but he needed further training, so he could preach the full gospel. The men that

Paul encountered had apparently been taught and baptized by Apollos, while he was still preaching the baptism of John. They had to be baptized again, because the baptism of John was no longer in effect, after the day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2. They had been taught the wrong doctrine, and could not, therefore, be baptized rightly.

The same principle applies today. One cannot be taught false doctrine, and somehow be baptized rightly. If you were taught and baptized according to denominational doctrine, I submit that you have not really been baptized at all. The question is not really “Do I need to be baptized again?” but, “Have I been baptized rightly?”

**“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...”**

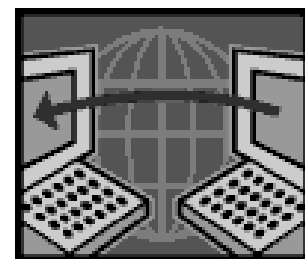
**—1 Peter 3:21**

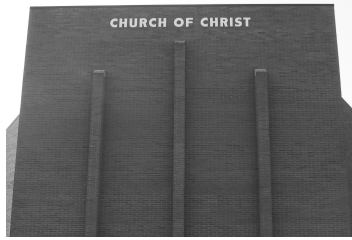
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—9:30 a.m.

### **Sunday Morning Worship**

—10:30 a.m.

### **Sunday Evening Worship**

—6:00 p.m.

### **Wednesday Evening Bible Study**

—7:00 p.m.

*A Christ-Preaching, Bible-Teaching Church*

## What Do You Need?

People's wants and whims change every day, but people's needs tend to remain the same. That is why the Bible is still relevant in the modern world. While times may change and the wants of humanity may change, the spiritual needs of mankind stay the same. The Bible is the only thing that can satisfy the spiritual needs of man—even if it doesn't always supply us with all our wants. In a world where religion is bent more and more toward giving people what they want, the Madisonville Church of Christ is more concerned with giving people what they need. Why not come and see if we can help meet your needs?

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