

## Subjects of Bible Baptism

*by John Isaac Edwards*

There is misunderstanding concerning who is to be baptized. A good way to settle this is to find out who was baptized in Bible days.

**1) Those Who Have Been Taught.** The Lord commissioned the apostles, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them...” (Mt. 28:19). Teaching comes before baptizing. Mark’s account records, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk. 16:15). One must hear the gospel before he is ready to be baptized. In every case of conversion in the book of Acts, folks were first taught and then baptized! For example, Acts 2:41 states, “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized...” 1 Peter 1:22-23 says, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth...Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God...” In order for a person’s soul to be purified and for him to be born again,

it is necessary that he obey the truth. Do you think it is possible for one to be taught error, hear error, believe error and obey error and have obeyed the truth? You can’t mix any amount of error with truth and still have the truth!

**2) Those Who Believe.** The Lord said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mk. 16:16). The Samaritans were baptized “...when they believed...” (Acts 8:12). Simon “...believed also: and when he was baptized...” (Acts 8:13). Philip answered the eunuch who asked, “...what doth hinder me to be baptized?” with the words, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest...” (Acts 8:36-37). When the jailer asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”, he was told, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ...” (Acts 16:30-31). Acts 18:8 records, “...and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were

baptized” (Acts 18:8).

**3) Those Who Repent.** Peter told Jews on Pentecost, “Repent, and be baptized...” (Acts 2:38). Acts 3:19 teaches, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...” Paul preached, “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). A good example showing what repentance is appears in the story Jesus told about a man with two sons. “...he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went” (Mt. 21:28-29). Repentance, therefore, is a two-fold action involving a change of mind that results in a change in action.

**4) Those Who Confess.** Most people have been made to believe they confess their sins in becoming a Christian. Let’s see what the Bible says.

The Lord said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Mt. 10:32). Paul wrote, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10). The Ethiopian confessed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37).

**5) Those Who Are Guilty of Sin.** Since baptism is "...for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38) and to "...wash away thy sins..." (Acts 22:16), it follows that subjects of baptism are sinners. Many think infants are subjects of baptism. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, "Born with a

fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called. The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism. The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth" (p. 319, par. 1250). Further, "The practice of infant Baptism is an immemorial tradition of the Church. There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century on, and it is quite possible that, from the beginning of the apostolic preaching, when whole 'households' received baptism, infants may also have been baptized" (p. 319, par. 1252). Those who assume household

conversions like Lydia and her household (Acts 16:15) and the jailer and his house (Acts 16:31-34) include infant baptism need to give us the names and the ages of those baptized! Sins are not inherited. Ezekiel 18:20 teaches, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Sin is defined as lust conceived (Jas. 1:14-15), transgression of law (1 Jn. 3:4), and all unrighteousness (1 Jn. 5:17). Without lust-conceived, law-transgression and unrighteousness, infants are without sin and thus not subjects of Bible baptism! In Bible days, "...they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

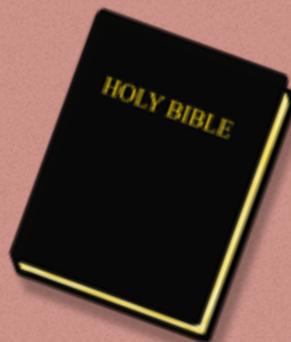
Are you a subject of Bible baptism?

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