

Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Upon that profession, the Eunuch was baptized.

One thing is plainly taught in our text - Faith in Jesus Christ is the one thing essential for baptism. In setting forth this proposition, I will address four questions.

I. Who Has The Privilege And Responsibility Of Being Baptized? This is the great point of controversy. This is the place where Baptists differ from all Protestant denominations. Baptists have, throughout their history, insisted that baptism is to be administered upon a personal profession of faith in Christ, denouncing as unscriptural the practice of infant baptism. Now the question is this - Is the practice of requiring faith before baptism Scriptural? Our concern is not what do the Baptists believe or what do the Protestants believe. Our concern is, what does the Word of God teach?

If we accept something as a point of doctrine, or as a religious practice, we must have some direct precept of Revelation, or some direct precedent in the Scriptures for it. Neither of these can be found for infant baptism. Nowhere in the New Testament will you find a single example or precept for this practice. On the contrary, everywhere baptism is spoken of in the New Testament it is performed only after an individual has

received Christ as Savior and Lord. The universal teaching of Christ and his apostles is that every person who has a genuine heart faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can and should be baptized. You must have a personal faith in Christ - "if thou believest." You must confess your own sin. You must repent. You must trust Christ. No one can do this for you as a representative. This is the one pre-requisite to baptism. It is as dangerous to your soul to be baptized without faith in Christ as it is to partake of the Lord's Supper without faith in Christ. In both the unbeliever presumes to take what he has no title to, failing to discern the body of Christ. Everything is given in God's house for those that believe. If Jesus Christ is the unsupported pillar of your hope, the solitary stay of your heart, his righteousness your only clothing, and his blood your only cleansing, I say, "Arise and be baptized." But, if you trust him not for yourself, the waters of baptism are forbidden to you.

When I speak of faith, I do not merely mean that you should mentally agree to gospel truth. You must believe with all your heart. Christ must be loved, as well as believed: He must be obeyed, as well as trusted. Heart faith reverences, worships, and trusts Christ, preferring him to all others.

II. What Must A Person Believe In Order

To Be Baptized? It is not enough simply to have faith. Your faith must arise from a sense of personal need and be fixed in the proper object. Philip preached the gospel to this Eunuch as it is found in Isaiah 53 (Acts 8:32-33). And it was this message that the Eunuch believed.

The Ethiopian believed God's message concerning his own sin, acknowledging his guilt and deserved punishment. He believed God's report concerning the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, trusting that alone for his acceptance with God. The Eunuch believed God's testimony concerning the resurrection, ascension, and intercession of Christ. This man believed that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God", and that he has the power to save sinners.

As Philip required such faith from the Eunuch before he was baptized, God's ministers must require the same of you. If the Eunuch had not believed, he would not have been baptized.

III. How Is Baptism To Be Performed? If men were not prejudicial by human opinion and religious tradition this question would be redundant. The word "baptize" translated always means to immerse.

Immersion is not a mode of baptism. Immersion is baptism, without it there is

no baptism.

Paul speaks of baptism as a burial. When you bury a corpse in the earth, you do not throw a few grains of sand in his face. You put him beneath the ground. And a man is not buried in baptism by sprinkling a few drops of water in his face. He must be immersed in water.

IV. In the last place, Why Should Every Believer Be Baptized? If baptism is pressed so urgently upon believers, there must be some good reason for it. Otherwise, it would be a mere empty religious ritual. Every believer should be baptized, because this is the first act of obedience to King Jesus. Baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God.

Believing it to be an ordinance of God, we submit to it as such. Thus we discharge a good conscience toward God, which brings us joy and peace. Baptism identifies us with the people of God. It is a public renunciation of the world, and a representation of our anticipation of the resurrection.

But, primarily, our baptism is an essential part of our public profession of the faith of the gospel. By baptism we confess our union with Christ, and confidence in him as our representative before God - "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." In baptism we acknowledge our sin and its just

punishment, and we testify of our faith in Christ's substitutionary death to put away sin - "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" And we confess our faith in the resurrection of Christ, and our spiritual resurrection by his power in our baptism - "We were 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." "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 the newness of life."

Do you believe with all your heart? If so, then you ought to follow the Lord in believer's baptism. Secret disciples, like Joseph and Nicodemus, must always be suspect disciples. Children of God, let us remind ourselves continually of our public profession in baptism. Are we indeed crucified with Christ? Let us, then, count the world as a dead thing to us. Are we indeed risen with Christ? Let us, then, walk in the newness of life.

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WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Acts 8:37

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"If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest.

Acts 8:37

In recent years, an increasing number of Baptists have felt compelled to be silent on the subject of baptism or to compromise this ordinance for the sake of "unity", classifying it as a matter of secondary importance. My heart is greatly burdened about this. To be sure, in so far as salvation is concerned baptism is secondary. But, with regard to obedience to God, it is primary. Baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God. It is an outward profession of an inward reality. Therefore, it ought to be conscientiously observed.

The picture before us in our text is simple and instructive. We see the Ethiopian Eunuch desiring baptism at the hands of Philip, after having heard Philip expound the gospel. And Philip told him plainly what the Scriptures require before baptism can be administered, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that