

## What Makes A Valid Baptism?

**Baptism now saves you.** — **1 Peter 3:21** Don't jump to conclusions. Peter was not teaching that the water saves, or that we can somehow demand salvation simply because we have been baptized. He explains that it works "as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." So the power of baptism is in the resurrection, and God extends His grace to cleanse the conscience of the one who believes in Jesus.

That's why Peter (the writer of the quote above) told believers to "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins.**" — **Acts 2:38**

But **not just \*any\* baptism will work!** Many people have been baptized, but most baptisms don't count. There are many "baptisms" in the world — to join a church, to please their parents or a spouse, to fit in, by being sprinkled, etc. But the Bible says that there is "**one baptism**" (Ephesians 4: 5, that is, one that counts!).

That "one baptism" has certain characteristics:

### Who

- A **believer** - "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16) One's faith comes by the word of God (about the kingdom, including the church, the identity of Jesus, etc. - Acts 8:12)
- A person of sufficient **age** - Babies, for example, cannot believe. Also, young children have not developed a sense of their soul or their accountability before God, and so do not understand the concept of seeking the "forgiveness of their sins."

### When

- After **repentance** — **Acts 2:38**
- After **confessing** one's faith — **Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9-10**

### How

- Being **immersed** in water — **Matthew 3:13-17; Acts 8:38**

### Why

- In the name of Jesus — **Acts 2:38; 19:1-7**. This means "by His authority" as is seen in an account in Acts 19:13-16 where some men invoked the "name" of Jesus without trying to follow Him. They were terribly mistaken and taught a painful, memorable lesson!
- **For the forgiveness** of sins — **Acts 2:38; 22:16**
- Wanting to **follow** Jesus — **Matthew 28:18-20**

### *Have you been baptized like this?*

#### Things that do not matter about baptism:

- The **preacher** — **Philippians 1:12-18** The personal faith of one who baptizes another person. (*Illustration: A bad farmer can use good seed.*)
- The **water**. Note the location of the Ethiopian in **Acts 8:36**.
- **What anyone else thinks** about my motives - Someone can teach me and ask me questions (as in Acts 8:36-37). Then the person simply has to trust my responses. It is a matter between God and me.