

## What Is A Valid Baptism

First, let me say that forgiveness takes place in the mind of God. It is God who pardons sin. He has determined that forgiveness would take place when a sinner is immersed, for the Lord has said, *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”* (**Mark 16:16a**)

I believe that immersion into Christ is essential to salvation. I am grieved that many have abandoned the truth of the subject, or even slacked off preaching about it in order to get numbers or promote unity with the unimmersed denominational people.

However, I believe that a repentant believer **who is immersed to simply be obedient to the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ** has the promise of salvation. I believe that if a man obeys the Lord in immersion **before he hears or understands Acts 2:38**, is saved. The *“remission of sins”* is what God does, not what man does.

Jesus Himself was baptized with the purpose of obeying God. He did it to *“fulfill”* all righteousness. God commanded it. Jesus obeyed it. When one is immersed to be obedient and to fulfill all that God requires, he follows in the footsteps of his Lord. In my judgment, one baptized to please and obey the Lord has a higher motive than the one baptized just to have his sins forgiven.

When one is baptized **into Christ**, he receives all the benefits of being in Christ even though he does not understand all the benefits at that time. When an alien becomes a citizen, he may not realize all the privileges and guarantees that he has as a citizen. They are his to enjoy upon learning them. Nor is it necessary for him to be naturalized again because he did not know those privileges before he became a citizen.

When one is immersed into the Name of the father, Son, and Holy Spirit, he receives all that is included in being under their authority. The one immersed into the Name is found in Christ, in His Body, and receives the full benefits of His shed blood. He receives not only the remission of his sins and the Gift of the Holy Spirit, but redemption, sanctification, atonement, ect. If the remission of sins needs to be mentioned and understood in order for the baptism to be valid, it follows that every other benefit bestowed at that time must be mentioned. If not, why not? To lay emphasis on the one expression and to make a test of fellowship over the knowledge contained in **Acts 2:38** to the exclusion of all the other promises received at immersion borders on sectarianism.

The general statement seems to me to be *“baptizing them in the Name (or authority) of the Lord Jesus Christ.”* When baptism occurs by His authority, all the benefits of being in Christ follow.

Look at **Acts 2:38** *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

This verse is often misunderstood.

In this verse we see 2 commands and 2 promises.

The **2 commands** are to those who believe: **1) Repent** and **2) be Baptized**.

The **2 promises** are **1) the remission of sins** and **2) the gift of the Holy Spirit**.

The remission of sins cannot be both the command and the promise. The command is **NOT:** *“Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.”*

The command is to repent and be baptized, **in order that** you may receive the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Remission of sins cannot be both the cause and the effect. It cannot be both obedience and the result of obedience. The commands are what the believer is to do; the promises are what God will do for the obedient believer.**

Romans 6 was written to people who had to be informed again of the significance of their baptism because the brethren who believed the false teachers were confused about when pardon occurred. Paul corrected them.

**Matthew 25:34-40**

*"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."*

Those believers, who fed, clothed, visited, and shared with the sick, the needy, and those imprisoned, received blessings and were bidden to enter into the Kingdom, though they did not know that they had done it unto Christ.

Faith and obedience from love and honor for God is the very purest and highest of motives. Thomas, who had to see the resurrected Christ before he would believe and act, is not worthy to be compared to Nathaniel who believed on much less testimony.

The phrase *"for the remission of sins"* is **NOT** a part of the command in **Acts 2:38**. It is a part of the promise. Otherwise, it would require a man to remit his own sins. Jesus did NOT say, *"He that believeth and is baptized for the remission of his sins shall be saved."* **Acts 2:38** happens to mention 2 promises or purposes, but the Scriptures mention up to 20 more reasons. To hold that one must know each of these before baptism is performed makes the baptism of the Philippian jailer, who was baptized the same hour of the night, ludicrous.

The command of the Lord was *"he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."* **Mark 16:16a**. This is what God promised. Salvation is the result of obedience; can one be saved without the remission of sins?

Of course not. The teaching of Jesus and Peter are in perfect harmony.

**Hebrews 9:22**

*"And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission."*

Not all immersed believers are Christians. Some, such as the Jehovah Witnesses, do not accept Jesus as the Son of God.

Mormons worship another Jesus other than revealed in Scripture.

Adventists and many other denominations baptize into and by the authority of their denomination.

In fact, in many Churches only their ordained clergy have the authority to baptize into their Church.

What is necessary, is that the immersed be immersed as a repentant believer who desires to obey the authority of Jesus Christ and therefore submits to the Lord's command. Does

the opinion of the denominational preacher who baptizes a repentant believer affect the validity of a repentant believer's immersion?

We have no authority for trying to amend the ignorance of a denominational preacher by reimmersing those baptized by him.

The motive of immersion must be obedience to the Lord's command, not the demands of some denomination. One, who is content with being immersed into a denominational church rather than in obedience to Christ, needs to re-evaluate his baptism before God. In whose name or by whose authority were you baptized?

That is the question.