

# Why Be Baptized?

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It is interesting to note the many religious people today who deny that obedience to the command of the Lord to be baptized "for the remission of sins" to those who have heard, believed the truth, and repented of their sins. The amazing part of this is how such a conclusion could be drawn in the face of all that is taught in the New Testament on the subject. Why does one have to be baptized for the "remission of sins"?

Man cannot decide this question; it must be done by the word of God. Following are some of the reasons given in the New Testament regarding the reason for baptism:

1. It is commanded by Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:19; Acts 10:48).
2. It is in answer of a good conscience (1 Pet. 3:20-21).
3. It is in order that one may rejoice in the forgiveness of sins (Acts 8:39; 16:33-34).
4. It is to get into Christ (Gal. 3:27).
5. It is to get into the death of Christ where remission is found (Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12).
6. It is to be raised with Christ to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).
7. It is to wash away sins (Acts 22:16).
8. It is to be saved (Mark 16:15-16; 1 Pet. 3:21).
9. It is for or unto the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

The English "*for*" in Acts 2:38 has had its part in the effort to explain away the purpose of baptism. Baptists especially stress that this word looks backward to a thing already accomplished. They say that baptism is "with reference to remission of sins" - i.e., because sins have already been forgiven by faith alone. Let us read a few translations of this passage and see what the scholars of the world understood about "for" or "unto" remission of sins in Acts 2:38.

- ▶ **King James Version:** "Repent, and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins."
- ▶ **American Standard Version:** "Repent ye, and be baptized . . . unto the remission of your sins."
- ▶ **Revised Standard Version:** "Repent, and be baptized . . . for the forgiveness of your sins."
- ▶ **Goodspeed's Translation:** "You must repent, and every one of you be baptized . . . in order to have your sins forgiven."
- ▶ **The Living Oracles:** "Reform, and be each of you immersed in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to the remission of sins."
- ▶ **Diaglott Translation:** "Reform, and let each of you be immersed . . . for the forgiveness of your sins."
- ▶ **The New International Version:** "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven."
- ▶ **Weymouth Translation:** "Repent . . . and be baptized . . . for the remission of your sins."
- ▶ **Emphasized Translation:** "Repent ye, and let each one of you be immersed . . . into the remission of your sins."
- ▶ **Williams' Translation:** "You must repent . . . be baptized . . . that you may have your sins forgiven."
- ▶ **Douay Translation:** "Repent and be baptized . . . for the forgiveness of your sins."
- ▶ **American Bible Union:** "Repent, and be each of you immersed. . . . unto remission of sins."

- ▶ **New World Translation:** "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized . . . for forgiveness of your sins."
- ▶ **Modern, English:** "Change your mind and be baptized . . . for a release of your sins."
- ▶ **Twentieth Century Translation:** "Repent," answered Peter, and be baptized . . . for the forgiveness of your sins."

Many others could be given, but these are enough to show that the scholars of the world understood the original words used by Peter on this occasion placed baptism as an act of obedience to the faith unto or toward the forgiveness of sins.

Acts 2:38 is easily understood in the light of Mark 16:16 which says: "He that believeth AND is baptized shall be saved." If "he that believeth" shall be saved means that the belief is in order to obtain forgiveness, the "AND IS BAPTIZED" is in order to the same forgiveness. When a man wants to be saved from past sins by Jesus Christ, he must do what the Lord requires, and it includes baptism.

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