

# The Old Paths

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## “Some Passages On Water Baptism”

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Often, we are asked, “What does the Bible say about water baptism?” But when we “give an answer” as the Bible commands (I Pet. 3:15), we are treated to a barrage of false allegations. For example, some will allege that we believe in “water salvation” – i.e., that there is some inherent power in the water itself to remove sin. Others allege that we believe in “earning” salvation by works of merit. Not only are such responses untrue, they also do not remove any of the “baptism passages” from the Bible! In light of such responses, it often feels as if we are fighting a losing battle, as we try to teach people about water baptism. Perhaps another approach is in order...

In this article, I will simply quote some passages on water baptism, without any comment. You may simply read the passages for yourself, and draw your own conclusion. After all, the apostle Paul did say, “*When you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ*” (Eph. 3:3-5). For this study, we shall simply trust in your God-given ability to comprehend the Scriptures!

As you read these passages, please note how many times water baptism is mentioned in the Bible (and my list is far from complete). For a subject that is as “unimportant” as some would

have us to believe, it sure is widely discussed! Finally, as you read these passages, ask yourself one question: “Is water baptism essential to salvation?”

**Matthew 28:19** — Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

**Mark 16:16** — He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

**Acts 2:38, 41** — Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

**Acts 8:12-13** — But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

**Acts 8:36-38** — And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine

heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

**Acts 10:47-48** — Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

**Acts 18:8** — And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

**Acts 22:16** — And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

**Rom. 6:3-4** — Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 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 newness of life.

**Gal. 3:27** — For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

**I Pet. 3:21** — The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

So, my friend, what do you think? Does God require water baptism or not?

## Plain Talk About Plain Talk

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**T**here are two things that have always been true from Biblical times until now: 1) God expects the truth to be taught; and, 2) most folk don't like it.

These two things are not a big secret. Everyone knows (or should know) that God makes demands of us, with which we MUST comply – or else! It is also no secret that most people don't like what God has to say. As the old saying goes, "There is more than one way to skin a cat; but no matter how you do it, the old cat ain't gonna like it!" But these facts bother us sometimes – yes, they even bother ME sometimes! Would you think with me about the need for "plain talk" when it comes to the gospel?

Preaching the gospel is one of the most important works that can be done; and the consequences of accepting or rejecting its truths are serious. Yea, our response to Divine truth is a matter of eternal life and death! For this reason, preaching demands plain talk. Paul said, "Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech" (II Cor. 3:12). The Greek word translated "boldness of speech" means: "freedom in speaking; openness; frankness; bluntness; freedom of speech; unreservedness of utterance" (see Mounce, Strong, Vine, etc.). When preaching, we cannot soft-pedal the truth. Love for the lost calls for frank discussion.

Now before you over-react, understand that "plain talk" is not the same as "abusive speech." The pulpit is not a place for attacking individuals personally (e.g., "John Doe, I hate you; and here is why..."). Likewise, the pulpit is no place for seeing how obnoxious one can be (e.g., "Anyone who would join that church is a moron."). But sinners MUST be told

that they are wrong – and usually, they are not going to like it! It might even make them mad, or drive them off (Matt. 15:12-14; Jn. 6:60-66). However, they will have no motivation to repent, until they see that they are in sin. Stated another way, you cannot bring someone out of a particular sin until he knows he's in that sin. The modern-day method of, "get them in the door today, but don't mention their specific sins until later," will SURELY drive people away when they realize they've been manipulated by a "bait and switch" tactic. It is far better to get things on the table from the start. Let the truth to the separating it was intended to do (I Cor. 1:18).

I am also persuaded that, deep down, most Christians know this. The Scriptures are literally FILLED with such plain talk from Jesus, His apostles, and early Christians. Consider some examples: "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign" (Matt. 12:39). How could Jesus indict AN ENTIRE GENERATION of scribes and Pharisees as evil and adulterous? Or, consider this one: "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the Devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:10). How could Paul talk that way to a man he just met? And one more: "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your father did, so do you" (Acts 7:51).

How could Stephen – who wasn't even an apostle – speak that way to the Sanhedrin Council? Yet he did – and with Divine approval! (cf. v. 54-56)

And consider this: is it possible that those who heard such preaching had family or friends nearby who heard it, too? Would it have been appropriate to ask Jesus, Paul, and Stephen to "tone it down" lest they drive those people away? We all know the answer, don't we? And right here we learn a VITAL lesson! You see, when we read that plain talk in the Bible, it doesn't bother us. Why is that? Because that was someone else, in another place, and another time – i.e., they're not "real" to us. But rest assured, they were just as real as you; and they had family and friends with the same feelings as yours. Nevertheless, the truth was preached, just as God required.

In view of the countless Biblical examples of plain talk, a word needs to be said about some oft-heard criticisms thereof. It is neither true nor productive to say or imply that plain talk (as defined above) is unloving (Rev. 3:19). It is neither true nor productive to say or imply that we would baptize more people if we just didn't speak so plainly (cf. Acts 2:36-41). That's not the way Jesus, His apostles, or the early church did things (I Cor. 11:1). May we learn to trust God's word to the extent that we are unashamed to declare its every truth to a lost and dying world!

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