

## Optional or Necessary?

Many denominations teach that baptism is an optional matter, which in no way affects our eternal destiny. One of the world's largest denominations, which amazingly uses a form of "baptism" for their name, teaches that baptism is not essential for salvation, but is necessary for getting into their denomination. Thus, according to their own doctrine, it is easier to "get saved," than it is to become a member of their denomination. Strange, isn't it?

However, the definitive answer to our headline question is not what any religious group teaches, but what does God's Word teach? Since God's Word will be the standard of judgment at the last day (Jn. 12:48), we ought to pay careful attention to what the following Scriptures teach:

**Mark 16:16** - "He that **believeth** and is **baptized** shall be saved..."

**Acts 2:38** - "...**Repent**, and **be baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."

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

**Galatians 3:27** - "For as many of you as have been **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ."

**I Peter 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:"

According to these passages, baptism is necessary in order to **be saved**, to have our **sins remitted**, to **wash away our sins**, to **get into Christ**, to **put on Christ**, and to **answer God with a good conscience**. How could it be any clearer than that? You literally would have to have help to miss the point that baptism is an essential element of salvation according to the teaching of the Gospel. To those who truly love God and want to "keep his commandments," this is certainly not even an issue. What will you do in response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

~Wayne Rodgers