

Series: Baptism - What Does the Bible Really Teach?
Tonight's Lesson: "Common Misconceptions About the Baptism of Jesus"

Introduction:

1. There is probably not a more debated issue in Christendom today than the subject of water baptism.
 - Some believe that baptism is essential to salvation.
 - Some believe that baptism is unnecessary to salvation, but is necessary after salvation.
 - Some believe infants should be baptized, some believe it is wrong.
 - Some believe in baptizing by sprinkling, others by immersion.
 - Some believe you have to be baptized by their denomination or it's no good.
 - Some believe that baptism is totally unnecessary at all. It is not needed in any form.
2. One thing every denomination or church has in common is that they all quote Scripture to support their views.
3. Of course the answer to the confusion is **2 Timothy 2:15** where we are told to rightly divide the word of truth.
 - If you do not have a grasp of the big picture of Scripture, the various programs of God, and where you fit, you will never understand issues like baptism.
 - A failure to rightly divide God's Word in the area of baptism is literally damning millions upon millions of people. People all over this world are trusting in a water ceremony that was performed on them, rather than trusting in Christ.
4. One of the most misunderstood subjects concerning baptism is the baptism of Jesus. Let's read about this. **Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-23; John 1:29-34**
5. There are a couple of very common misconceptions that we need desperately to understand because many religions will use this event from the life of Christ to derive their teachings regarding water baptism.

First misconception: Christ was baptized according to a New Testament ordinance.

1. Preachers and churches may think this and teach this, but it is **not** found in the Scriptures.
2. Nowhere is baptism referred to as a New Testament ordinance. I had always been told that there are two New Testament ordinances - water baptism and the Lord's Supper.
 - There is no chapter and verse to prove this, yet people believe this and teach it as if it were an absolute Biblical fact that permeates the Bible.
3. In **1 Corinthians 11:1**, Paul praised the Corinthians for keeping the ordinances that he delivered to them. The word "ordinances" simply means "precepts, traditions."
 - Paul never says that there were only **two** traditions he gave them and he never lists them as baptism and the Lord's Supper.
 - "Ordinances" refers to the commandments and precepts he had taught them.
2 Thessalonians 2:15, 3:6 ("traditions" is same word as "ordinances")
4. Did you know it is utterly impossible for Christ to have been baptized according to a New Testament ordinance?

5. According to **Hebrews 9:14-17**, when does a testament go into force? **After** men are dead!
 - The New Testament could **not** go into effect until after Christ's death. Jesus' water baptism was three and a half years **before** His death.
 - The New Testament could not be made possible until after Christ's death at the end of Matthew through John.
6. Christ was actually baptized under the Old Testament economy and according to the Old Testament system of ordinances imposed under Moses' law. **Hebrews 9:9-10**
 - "*Divers washings*" is the exact same word translated "baptisms" in **Hebrews 6:2**.
 - There were various water baptisms (or washings) that were in order under the Old Covenant of Moses. We will see those later as we study in this series.
7. Someone may say, "But what about **John 1:17**? Didn't Christ do away with Moses' law and usher in a New Testament?"
 - Did the verse say that Jesus did away with the Law of Moses while on earth?
 - Did the verse say anything about Jesus replacing the Old Testament of Moses with a New Testament during His earthly ministry?
 - Jesus' earthly ministry was done in complete submission to the Law of Moses. **Matthew 5:17-18, 8:4**
8. If a person believes the Bible, there is no way he can say that Jesus was baptized according to a New Testament ordinance.

Second misconception: Jesus was baptized as an example for people to follow.

1. Again, the Bible never says this, yet it is proclaimed constantly (especially by Baptists).
2. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. What did John's baptism consist of? **Mark 1:4-5** explains clearly.
 - Notice, John didn't preach baptism as a first step of obedience after salvation. He preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. John said he was sent to baptize. **John 1:33; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:17** (two different programs, commissions, and ministries)
 - John's baptism of repentance summarized the gospel of the kingdom to Israel.
 - Peter preached the same thing to Israel in **Acts 2:38**.
3. If people were following Christ's example in baptism, that would mean that Christ was also baptized for the remission of sins. This, of course, is heresy. It would make Him a sinner like everybody else.
4. To say that we should be baptized to follow Christ's example is bad doctrine. People use this argument to justify their positions regarding water baptism, but as you can see, it casts a terrible reflection on our Savior.

In Conclusion:

1. If Jesus wasn't baptized to fulfill a New Testament ordinance, nor was He baptized as an example for people to follow, then why was He baptized?
2. This is a crucial and important question.
3. Next week we will examine from God's Word four reasons why Jesus was baptized.