

The Circumcision Made Without Hands

Many passages clearly teach that baptism is necessary to gain salvation (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:1-4; Galatians 3:26-29; Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19).

The strongest passages supporting baptism may be found in Colossians 2:11-13. Last month, we began a series of studies on Colossians. We learned that God expects us to grow and mature spiritually. Developing in Christ involves increasing our understanding of Jesus (Colossians 1:13-18). Not only must we grow in our understanding of Jesus, but we must also grow in our knowledge of our identity. Paul begins addressing this very thing in Colossians 2.

We must strive to walk in Christ (Colossians 2:6). We must seek to be firmly rooted, built up, and established in the faith (Colossians 2:7). Doing these things are necessary to avoid being deceived by false teachers (Colossians 2:8). In Christ we have access to God and every spiritual blessing (Colossians 2:9-10).

The avenue to get into Christ is baptism. Baptism is described as a process of "circumcision made without hands" performed by Christ (Colossians 2:11).

The Removal of Sin

- Circumcision began being performed by God's people in the days of Abraham (Genesis 17:11-12). All of Abraham's male descendants were to be circumcised on the eighth day following birth. This procedure would serve as a sign between God and His covenant people.
- Paul uses the physical practice of circumcision to describe what happens to sinners when they are baptized. When a person is baptized into Christ, sin is cut off! Sin is completely removed by God (Colossians 2:11).
- God completely forgives all past sins at the point of baptism (Colossians 2:13; Acts 2:38). He promises not to hold them against us on Judgment Day (Hebrews 10:17).

The Work of God

- Baptism is described as a "burial" (Colossians 2:12).
- Baptism involves belief and trust (faith) in God's promise to remove sins by the blood of Jesus.
- Baptism is described as "the working of God" because God performs spiritual surgery through it. He forgives, washes away sins, and adds us to the church (Acts 2:47).
- He also cleanses our conscience (1 Peter 3:20-21).
- This information should encourage us and remove any doubts about salvation. God has truly worked in our lives if we were baptized into Christ!

The Giving of Life

- Before baptism, we were dead in our sins (Colossians 2:13; Romans 6:23).
- After being buried and raised with Christ, we were made alive spiritually (Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; John 3:3).
- This reality should motivate us to avoid sin and becoming spiritually dead again. Our spiritual life should be evident in our conduct, attitude, worship, and mentality towards sin!

Conclusion:

Have you experienced the circumcision of God?

- Shawn Jeffries