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Ever any Need for a Second Baptism?

Question: If a person has been baptized once, is there any reason why he should ever be baptized again?

Answer: The Bible speaks of twelve men at Ephesus who were baptized a second time (Acts 19:1-7). These disciples had known only John's baptism. Although John the Baptist was sent of God and taught a baptism commanded of God (Luke 7:30), the validity of his baptism had ceased. John taught the people that they should believe on Christ of whom he was the forerunner. When Paul came to Ephesus he found these twelve men had not been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. John had been dead at least twenty-five years, and the gospel had been preached since Pentecost, yet they did not know Christ. The apostles had long since been commissioned, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

In answer to your question, this Bible example tells us "yes, there are circumstances wherein one may need to be baptized a second time." Many different baptisms are being practiced today, but the Bible says there is "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5).

(1) Were you a penitent believer at the time of your baptism? If not, you need to be baptized again! Those who were baptized as infants could not have had. Neither could those who were baptized simply to please their parents or friends. When the gospel was first preached on Pentecost, "they that gladly received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:41). They were told to "Repent and be baptized" (v. 38). Infants could neither receive the word nor repent. You see, baptism is much more than being dipped in water; it is the "answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Pet. 3:21). Though there must be outward obedi-

ence manifested, baptism is actually "from the heart" obeying the doctrine delivered of God (Rom. 6:17-18, cp. 6:3-5).

(2) Were you immersed? If not, you need to be baptized again! Those who were sprinkled or poured upon for baptism have done so with no higher authority than the commandments and traditions of men. The Bible word for baptism (baptidzo) literally means "to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge" (THAYER'S GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON, p. 94). If the Lord had commanded sprinkling or pouring, a different word altogether would have been used. Immersion is illustrated: "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water ..." (Acts 8:38-39). Why was it necessary that both the preacher and the one baptized go into the water if sprinkling was performed? Furthermore, the Bible explains why baptism is a burial: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:4-5).

(3) Were you baptized for the remission of sins? If not, you need to be baptized again! Those who believe they were forgiven before and without baptism misunderstand its purpose. Denominations that practice immersion of penitent believers but who will postpone the baptismal service for several days do not believe it is essential. Why else would they delay obeying a command necessary to eternal life?

The Bible explains the urgency of baptism:

• Acts 22:16 - "Why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

- Acts 2:38 - "Repent and be baptized ... for the remission of sins ..." (Compare the same phrase in Matt. 26:28 as to the purpose of His blood.)
- Gal. 3:27 - "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
- Rom. 6:3 - "...as many as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death."
- Col. 2:11-13- "...in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; Buried with him in baptism..."
- 1 Pet. 3:21 - "...baptism doth also now save us."
- John 3:5 - "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
- Rom. 6:4 - "...buried with him by baptism into death...even so we also should walk in newness of life."

If your baptism was not in obedience to these Bible commands, then it was not "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19). It could not have been in obedience to the commandment "in the name of the Lord" (by His authority) Acts 10:48. Men have tampered with God's word by changing the "one baptism" taught in the Bible, but they have no more right to do that than they do to vote whether or not one is a proper subject for baptism. Only God can forgive, and only those who obey His commands will be forgiven (Matt. 7:21).

-A Christian