
BAPTISM

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Jesus said, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26). Since Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” (Mark 16:16) baptism in water is an important subject.

Jesus considered baptism important enough to walk some 60 to 70 miles from Nazareth to be baptized by John in the Jordan River to set us an example. Our lord and the Apostles believed baptism to be a vital part of obedience and so must we.

I. What Baptism is All About

God gave the local church two ordinances to administer: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. An ordinance means that these practices were “ordained” or “set apart” as special by the Lord. Both are symbolic reminders and clear object lessons of the “gospel,” the “good news” that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

A. What Does Baptism Mean?

The literal meaning of the word “baptize” (baptizo - Greek) is “to immerse, to submerge, to dip, to plunge, to place under, to sink.”

Baptism is the outward, public symbol of an inward spiritual **commitment (to Christ)**.

For followers of Christ: identification with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:4). A symbolic death to the old you; life of the new you.

B. What Does the Bible Teach About Baptism?

The baptism of His followers was commanded by Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19,20). It was practiced by the church.

1. Acts 2:41 - Jewish believers in Jerusalem.
2. Acts 8:21 - new believers in Samaria.
3. Acts 8:26-39 - an Ethiopian in the desert.
4. Acts 9:18 - Saul, later Paul, in Damascus.
5. Acts 16:14,15 - Lydia in Philippi.
6. Acts 16:33- the jailer in Philippi.
7. Acts 18:8 - new believers in Corinth.

Summary of what is seen in the early church.

- Baptism is for every believer in Jesus Christ. When someone believed, they were baptized.
- Baptism is a “believers only” action: none of the people baptized were baptized until after they believed on Christ.
- Baptism is an act done by those old enough to believe: none of the people baptized in Scripture were said to be infants.
- Baptism is not an action to be put off for a long period of time; after a new group of people believed on Christ they quickly identified with Christ by being baptized.

II. The Authority for Baptism

After His resurrection, Jesus gave the Apostles the Great Commission. He said, “Go ye therefore and make disciples of (or teach) all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19, 20). The command came from the Lord Jesus and was to be done in the name of or authorized by the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. There can be no higher authority than this.

In Acts 2:38, Peter commanded baptism “in the name of Jesus Christ.” Since God has delegated all authority to Jesus, during this age (Matt. 28:18), it would not be necessary to repeat each time, the name of the Father, and the Holy Spirit, because to do it in the name of Jesus would be doing it by the authority of all three.

III. The Method or Action of Baptism (How Should Someone be Baptized?)

A. **Water Baptism.** There has been much discussion regarding the proper form or action of baptism. What is done, physically speaking, when one is baptized?

Because the word baptism means “immersion,” and because the symbol is “identified with death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6:4), it only makes sense to be baptized **one time by immersion in water after salvation.**

The Bible teaches that the act of baptism requires:

1. **Water** Acts 10:46, 47; Matt. 3:13
2. **Much Water** (John 3:23). “And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.” Baptism requires much water.
3. **Going to the water.** The Bible never mentions water being brought to the candidate. “... And they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins” (Matt. 3:5,6; Acts 8:36).
4. **Going down into the water.** The act requires both the person being baptized and the person doing the baptizing to be in the water (Acts 8:38).
5. **Coming up out of the water.** After Jesus was baptized, when He was “coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him” (Mark 1:10). *Reference: Acts 8:39.*

Baptism is an act requiring much water; the candidate goes to the water, goes down into it, along with the administrator and then comes up out of it. All these requirements would be useless if the act of baptism required only a few drops of water placed on the candidate's head. The act of immersion, however, requires all these conditions.

B. **Holy Spirit Baptism.** Baptism is not just a physical act. It is an act filled with spiritual meaning.

Baptism, a burial and a resurrection. Baptism is the burial ceremony for the old man of sin (through faith and repentance, being now buried in the watery grave) – this person is baptized into Christ, he is joined to Him, then he is raised a new man in Christ, to walk in a “newness” or new way of life (Rom. 6:1-5).

Baptism, a birth. Jesus told Nicodemus, “Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5).” “Wherefore if any man is in Christ he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). Paul refers to baptism as the “washing of regeneration,” or “cleansing (bath) of the new birth” (Titus 3:5).

The Christian is begotten or conceived by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, and is born of water. Baptism constantly remind us of Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection. To change baptism from immersion, not only departs from the plain teaching of the scripture but robs Christ of the honor which is due Him.

IV. The Person to be Baptized

Who is the proper subject for baptism? Not every person is ready to be baptized. There are certain prerequisites to the act of baptism.

A. **A person must be a believer in Christ.** Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).

References: Acts 18:8; Matt. 28:19.

B. **A person is not only to be a believer, but he should be a penitent believer.** Repentance is also required before baptism. “Repent ye and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins ...” (Acts 2:38). One who has sinned and will not repent is not a proper subject for baptism.

C. **Those to be baptized must be teachable.**

D. **There seems to have been a public confession of Christ preceding baptism.** Imply in Romans 10:10 when Paul says, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Reference: Acts 8:37

V. The Proper Purpose for Baptism

Why should one be baptized? Christ gave the commandment for baptism. He alone is qualified to state the purpose. Jesus and the Apostles commanded baptism for these reasons:

- **For the remission of sins** Acts 2:38
- **For washing away of sin** Acts 22:10, 16
- **Baptism into Christ** Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:26, 27

Baptism alone will not save a person or take away sins, but Scripture clearly state that when it is preceded by faith in Christ and repentance of sin, that it does procure for the penitent believer God’s forgiveness. We must be baptized into Him. One cannot be saved outside of Him!

References: Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21 Rom. 3:24, 8:1; Phil. 2:1; 1 Cor. 15:22; 2 Cor. 5:17

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QUESTIONS -- BAPTISM

MATCHING

COMPLETE

PRAYER