

Water Baptism - An Important Step of Obedience

What is baptism, and why should a Christian get baptized? Well, the Bible clearly states: "...Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. . ." (Acts 2:38). This is a clear command of Scripture!

Christian water baptism is the public identification of one's self with Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, illustrating that we have been delivered from both the bondage and condemnation of sin, having made peace with our Saviour. Baptism testifies of our death to sin, our severance from its domination, and our pledge to live a new life through our faith-union with Jesus Christ. The Bible declares, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). In Christian baptism, the action of being immersed in the water symbolizes dying and being buried with Christ. The action of coming out of the water pictures Christ's resurrection. Getting baptized may be considered as one of the first steps of obedience for a new believer, i.e. publicly declaring faith in Christ and commitment to Him.

There are however some misconceptions surrounding this ordinance:

The first misconception is that a person must be baptized in order to inherit eternal life, also known as "baptismal regeneration". Water baptism does not in any way contribute to a person's salvation. Scripture clearly teaches there is nothing a person can do to merit eternal life (Ephesians 2:8-9). It is only through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ do we find forgiveness of sins, and thereby gain eternal life. Placing one's faith in any other person, object or practice for salvation, will most certainly lead to eternal destruction.

Christening, a non-Biblical tradition practiced in many "churches", has been promoted in place of Biblical water baptism. This tradition can be considered to be unbiblical for the following major reason. In Scripture we see we are commanded to "Repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:37-38). Since an infant is unable to comprehend such a concept as repentance and death to sin, and therefore unable to obey such a command, how then should the infant be expected to appreciate the full implications of baptism?

It would also seem clear from Scripture that those who were baptized were fully immersed in water, rather than a simple sprinkling. Here's one reason why: "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. . ." (John 3:23). If John was merely sprinkling believers, he would have only needed a cup full of water. In addition, christening often has often been seen to have a negative effect later on in a person's life, in that a person can receive from it a false sense of security regarding their spiritual well-being. Baptism does not save a person. It does not matter whether you were baptized by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling - if you have not first trusted in Christ for salvation, baptism (no matter the method) is meaningless and useless!

So what are the prerequisites to getting Biblically baptized? In order to get baptized as a Christian, there are two important requirements. The first is that the person desiring to be baptized has fully placed his/her trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour. The second prerequisite is that the person fully understands what baptism is or represents.

In conclusion, Biblical water baptism is a command, and the Christian ought not only to obey the command, but also do it in a Biblical way. It's all part of having a [surrendered life](#). There should be no question now as to whether or not you should be baptized. The only questions that remain are "when", and "by whom"? Baptism should be done as soon as possible, after a person has placed their faith in Jesus Christ, and has gained an accurate understanding of the concept of baptism. The person to administer this ordinance should be another believer who is in fellowship with the Lord, and who is in obedience to His commandments. This typically may be a pastor of a Biblically based church, or another mature Christian. The Philippian jailer and his family were baptized at midnight, as soon as they believed (Acts 16:33). So what are you waiting for?