

Water Baptism

IS IT IMPORTANT?

SHOULD A CHRISTIAN BE WATER BAPTIZED?

WATER BAPTISM - IS IT IMPORTANT?

In order to understand the purpose of water baptism, we will examine the principal scriptures surrounding it to see why it was established and why even Jesus participated in it. In order to understand its importance to us today in the 21st century, we will look at why it was important to the Early Church in Acts.

What is the significance of baptism?

Have you ever thought about getting baptized but have too many questions still unanswered?

We would love to help you understand a little bit more about this significant, next step in your journey of following in the footsteps of Jesus.

Purpose & Importance.

Water baptism is fondly known as a “baptism of repentance” (Acts 19:4) because it is a public show of a person’s repentance from their sins. It originated with John the Baptist and is actually what earned him the title “The Baptist”. John was widely known for baptizing people in the river Jordan and Jesus Himself was water baptized by John at the beginning of his ministry (Luke 3:21).

Why should I consider getting baptized? Following Christ:

In order to understand the reason for being water baptized, it is important to carefully consider what the Bible says about it. Jesus himself was baptized He was not a sinner, yet he humbled himself in obedience to identify with us and give us an example to follow.

"At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan." (Mark 1:9)

An Act of Obedience:

Water baptism is an act of faith and obedience to the commands of Christ. On water baptism one of the principal passages, which establishes it as a doctrine is Matthew 28:19-20: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

This passage establishes water baptism as a commandment from Jesus himself, and it is the principal reason why water baptism remains important for us today.

First off, water baptism is not a requirement of salvation. True faith in Jesus' finished work on the cross is sufficient for salvation and doesn't require any additional "works" by us (Ephesians 2:8-9). Not being baptized, does not mean you will not make heaven, the prime example of this is the thief on the cross with Jesus, he was promised paradise even without baptism (Luke 23:39-43).

However, his circumstances were quite exceptional, and they exist to illustrate that one who truly gives their heart to Jesus on a death bed, will not be kept out of heaven because they failed to be baptized. Baptism does not make you a believer; it shows that you already are one! Baptism does not 'save' you; only your faith in Christ does that.

Since Jesus left a final command for us to be baptized (as disciples) and to baptize others (to make them disciples), there is nothing stopping us who are not on our death beds from doing the right thing and obeying His wishes for us on this matter. Baptism demonstrates our love for Jesus, "If you love me, keep my commands." (John 14:15).

The apostles and the early church made sure to keep the commandment of water baptism. Several passages in Acts describe the apostles immediately baptizing nearly everyone who accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Acts 8:5-13; v12. "But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

Acts 9:10-18; v18 "...He got up and was baptized."

Acts 10:34-48; v48 "So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."

Acts 16:13-15; v15 "When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home."

Acts 16:30-33; v30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized."

Acts 18:8; "Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized."

Purpose of Baptism

Baptism connects us to the body of Christ and gives us a real sense of being joined with other believers in a communal journey towards the goal of perfection in Christ Jesus. "For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body..." (1 Corinthians 12:13)

A Public Declaration:

Baptism declares that you are a follower of Jesus Christ. It is a public confession of your faith in, and commitment to, Jesus Christ. It is the next step after salvation through repentance and faith and is an important foundation for the Christian life. Water baptism is a practical demonstration of a spiritual reality that has already taken place in your life.

"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like His, we will certainly also be united with Him in a resurrection like his."

(Romans 6:1-5)

A Brand-New Life: Here is one simple way to explain baptism:

It is a symbol of your new life as a Christian. We bury the ‘old life,’ and we rise to walk in a ‘new life’. Baptism is like a wedding ring; it is the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart, a commitment that has to be followed through and lived out on a daily basis. We continue the practice of water baptism today as a symbol of our personal and public identification and union with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:12 "Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead."

Baptism is a symbol. It’s meant to show the world that that you love, trust, and have put your hope in Christ. It’s like the wedding ring example.

Let’s say I’m not married right now, but if I put a wedding ring on my finger, would that make me married? No, of course not. Similarly, I can be baptized in a church, but that doesn’t make me a true believer in Christ. Imagine that I was married, though. My spouse and I really did go through the marriage ceremony, but I just didn’t have my ring on my finger. Would that mean I wasn’t married? No way, of course, I would still be married.

Similarly, I can be a believer in Christ, but not baptized, and my sins are still paid for and forgiven by God. But imagine that I truly was married, and I really, really loved my spouse. Would I wear my wedding ring? Of course! I would love my spouse and want the whole world to know it! In the same way, if I have trusted Christ to save me from sin, and He is the lord and joy of my life, then I’ll want everyone to know about it. So, baptism is a statement to everyone who sees it that I have trusted Christ for my salvation, and I’m committed to living for Him.

" Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Going into the water, we are united with Christ in His death and coming out of it, we are resurrected into newness of life! A common illustration that demonstrates the purpose of baptism is the wearing of a wedding ring – “with this ring, I thee wed”.

Water baptism is like a ring of identification. It is the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart, a commitment that has to be followed through and lived out on a daily basis.

Going under the water was a burial of your old life; coming up out of it was a resurrection, God raising you from the dead as he did Christ. When you were stuck in your old sin-dead life, you were incapable of responding to God. God brought you alive—right along with Christ! Think of it! All sins are forgiven, the slate wiped clean, that old arrest warrant canceled and nailed to Christ's cross. He stripped all the spiritual tyrants in the universe of their sham authority at the Cross and marched them naked through the streets.

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Romans 6:4)

Water baptism is a way to visually preach the gospel. Standing in the water symbolizes a Jesus dying on the cross, immersing in the water symbolizes Jesus being buried in the tomb and being raised from the water symbolizes Jesus rising from the dead. We bury the 'old life,' and we rise to walk in a 'new life'.

A Blessed Life:

In baptism, the believer has the triune name of the triune God placed upon them, 'Father', 'Son' & 'Holy Spirit.' The name of the Lord Jesus Christ is the name of the Godhead (one God in three persons). The Gospels tell us to baptize believers "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," (Matthew 28:19)

Baptism confirms our position 'in Christ' and affirms the blessings of the Father on us as his children.

A New family:

Baptism also connects us to the 'body of Christ,' his people in the earth. In baptism there is a real sense of being joined with other believers, not just participating in an individual act of our own spiritual journey.

"... For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body..." (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

How are we to be baptized?

As per the example of Jesus – by being immersed in water. The word “baptize” comes from the Greek word “baptize” which means “to immerse or dip under water”.

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water.” (Matthew 3:16)

Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion under water. The book of Acts shows us that this was the norm for every believer.

“...then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water...” (Acts 8:38,39)

Who should be /Baptized?

Every person who has made the decision to believe in Christ. When Paul writes to the believers in Rome, he assumes that all of them have been baptized (Romans 6). The one requirement for baptism is belief in Christ!

“Those who accepted his message were baptized...” (Acts 2:41)

“But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12)

We believe in baptizing children when they are old enough to understand what it means and make a personal declaration of belief.

When are we to be baptized?

Believers in the New Testament were baptized the same day. As soon as a person decides to believe in Christ, he can be, and is encouraged to be baptized

“Those who accepted his message were baptized...” (Acts 2:41)

“ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn't be baptized?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.” (Acts 8:35-39)

In Summary:

1. Water baptism is a demonstration of our obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Water baptism is a symbol to identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.
3. Water baptism is a public declaration of our promise not to continue walking in sin.
4. Water baptism is a practical demonstration of our spiritual reality and a personal testimony that we have passed from the old life of sin to the new life in Christ.
5. Baptism connects us to the wider Body of Christ.

We must be careful not to let the significance of baptism be lost on us or simply consider it a mere tradition of Christianity. There is a deep symbolism to the core of our faith embedded in water baptism, and everyone who engages in it must be first made aware of its purpose and importance in scripture.

Baptism is not a rite of purification for Christians. For spiritual cleansing, we look to Jesus alone. Instead, baptism is a way to demonstrate the spiritual reality that Jesus has already accomplished through his work at the cross.

We pray that these answers will help shed some light on your decision to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

