



The Basics of Baptism

Importance of Baptism

Two mistakes we can make:

1. We can overemphasize the importance of baptism. (I.E. Claim that baptism is necessary to be saved – cf. Acts 2:38; Mk 16:16)
 - We are not saved by baptism. We are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - We are not saved by faith + works (Eph 2:8-9)
 - The thief on the cross was never baptized (Lk 23:42-43)
2. We can underemphasize the importance of baptism. (I.E. Have a nonchalant attitude toward baptism and ignore it.)
 - Baptism is an essential part of the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20). It is a command, not a suggestion. It's the expected, normal response to salvation for every believer.
 - Jesus modeled baptism for us (Mt 3:14-15) so we would follow in his footsteps.

Meaning of Baptism

Why is baptism so important? What does it mean?

1. Baptism signifies our cleansing from sin (Acts 22:16)
2. Baptism signifies our union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection (Rom 6:3-5)

Mode of Baptism

Should Christians be baptized by immersion or sprinkling?

The Greek verb for baptism – *baptizo* – normally means immersion in the New Testament.

The Didache – oldest surviving Christian catechism (approx. AD 100)

- “Concerning baptism, you should baptize this way: After first explaining all things, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in flowing water. But if you have no running water, baptize in other water; and if you cannot do so in cold water, then in warm. If you have very little, pour water three times on the head in the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Before the baptism, both the baptizer and the candidate for baptism, plus any others who can, should fast. The candidate should fast for one or two days beforehand.”

Timing of Baptism

When should a person be baptized?

Paedobaptism – baptism of infants

- Based on the assumption that household baptism included infants. But there is not one clear/explicit example of infants being baptized in the NT.
- Based on the belief that baptism has replaced circumcision as the sign of the New Covenant. But circumcision of the heart is the fulfillment of the OT law regarding circumcision (Rom 2:28-29).

Credobaptism – baptism of those who profess faith in Christ

- This is the pattern explicitly taught in the NT. Baptism follows belief (Act 2:38, 8:35-38, 18:8).

If someone professes to be born again, they correctly understand the message of the gospel, and they are willing to confess their faith and commitment to Christ, they are ready to be baptized!

Obedience of Baptism

Baptism is a public confession of allegiance to Christ (Mt 10:32-33) and a matter of obedience (Lk 6:46).

If you are a believer and you have not been baptized, the question is why.

It's never too late to get baptized...

Discussion Questions

1. Describe your experience being baptized. What was it like?
2. As important as baptism is, explain why it's not necessary for salvation.
3. What is the symbolic significance of water baptism?
4. What would you say to someone who professes to be a follower of Christ but has never been baptized? Explain why all Christians should be baptized.
5. What point challenged, encouraged, or confused you the most in this message?