

Title: What's The Big Deal About Believer's Baptism?

Text: Various

Baptism is weird!

I mean, from the world's perspective, baptism really doesn't make a lot of sense.

Most people do not understand the rich, beautiful truth undergirding the practice of baptism. It has, in many churches, become a perfunctory activity that takes place soon after a baby is born. But is this what God intended? Is this what He has revealed in His word? Is Baptism that important for us today?

I believe the Bible is many things. It is God's love letter to us on how we can know we have eternal life! But it also is a book of instruction on how to do "kingdom life" on this earth. It is a book that instructs us on how to live life in the world as a Christian as well as how to live life in His church. There are many subjects we must learn that He addresses in His word. Baptism is one of them...

You need to know what the bible, not tradition, not opinion says about BAPTISM.

So I have a very simple question I'd like to answer today...

Main Idea: What is Believer's Baptism?

There are 6 answers to this question that I'd like to share with you this morning and the first one is this...

1. Believer's Baptism is Important !

Baptism is not an afterthought of God. The concept of baptism is rooted in the Old Testament (Levitical cleansing, proselytes, John the Baptist). God never institutes things without purpose. This includes the ordinance of Baptism. Look at what He has to say...

Matthew 28:18–19 ESV

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Baptism...

A Soldier doesn't question his commanding officer because he has learned that the officer has what's best in mind for the soldier as well as all the soldiers. He trusts his officer and obeys him.

You are a soldier of Christ! And For no other reason, the importance of baptism is accentuated by the fact that it is a command of Jesus.

A believer's baptism is important! Do you believe God desires you to be baptized?

Review - What is Baptism?

1. Believer's Baptism is Important!

2. Believer's Baptism is the First Step of Obedience.

Acts 2:41 ESV

⁴¹ So those who received his word were **baptized**, and there were **added** that day about three thousand souls.

Not much time expired between belief and the reaction to that belief, aka baptism. It was the next logical public display identifying them with Jesus Christ.

Today we refer to this immediate action as *"The First Step of Obedience"*.

Believer's Baptism was clearly a normative practice in the New Testament Church. It was commanded by Jesus and they followed through.

Acts 2:38 ESV

³⁸ And Peter said to them, *"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

"For' the forgiveness, or remission, of sins means 'because of' the forgiveness of sins. In other words, baptism doesn't save us. It is an act of obedience after we have been saved." - Barnett

Continued explanation...

It's one thing to believe in your heart secretly that Jesus is your Lord and Savior. It is an altogether different thing to publically proclaim that "secret" faith to the world around you. Baptism is God's way for every born-again Christian to make such a proclamation.

"Muslims conversion in the Middle East would lead to their public proclamation of their faith by being baptized in a open body of water. Often times the Muslim brotherhood would follow this new Christian home after the baptism to harass and even kill them." - Clay Nuttal

Christian Convert Imprisoned for Holding Baptism in Turkey

Alireza Seyedin, 31, a Muslim who converted to Christianity four years ago, was sentenced to six years in prison by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court," the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran reports. <https://www.persecution.org/2011/12/15/christian-convert-imprisoned-for-holding-baptism-in-turkey/>

Dr. MacArthur posits the question - *"Perhaps the church in America is weak because she has forgotten to follow the command of Baptism. If we can easily ignore His first command, then it becomes easy for us to minimize the rest."*

Expound...

Will you take this first step of obedience regardless of the cost to you personally?

Review - What is Baptism?

1. Believer's Baptism is Important
2. Believer's Baptism is The First Step of Obedience

3. Believer's Baptism is a Beautiful Picture

As the old saying goes, *"A picture is worth a thousand words."* Baptism gives us this picture!

Romans 6:1–5 ESV

¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

According to this passage, baptism is a picture of...

Our death with Christ - Falling back into the water

Our burial with Christ - Being submerged under the water

Our resurrection with Christ - Coming up from the water

Jesus' baptism was a picture of His death, burial, and resurrection. This is true of our baptism as well. When you step into the waters of baptism, there is nothing magical or mystical that happens. What does happen, however, is that you demonstrate to a watching world that you are now declared righteous based solely on Christ's righteous, sacrificial work on the cross for you.

When you stand in the waters of Baptism, fall back into the water, and then are pulled up from the water, it is a beautiful picture of what Christ has done for you! Assuming He has saved you, will you paint this living picture before your family, friends, and even those who might be your enemies? God will use this powerful testimony!

Review - What is Baptism?

1. Believer's Baptism is Important
2. Believer's Baptism is the First Step
3. Believer's Baptism is a Beautiful Picture

4. Believer's Baptism is for Christians

There is a proper biblical order to biblical baptism.

Notice in this passage. Who did Philip baptize?

Acts 8:12 ESV

¹² But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

How about in Acts 2:41? Which people were baptized on the Day of Pentecost?

Acts 2:41 ESV

⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

Notice what the believing Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip for...

Acts 8:36–38 ESV

³⁶ And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” ³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

Baptism is ALWAYS for believers in the Scriptures. Over the centuries, church tradition has changed this practice. But if we are to be Biblicists, we must follow the progression found in His Holy Word!

Saved – Baptized – Added to the Church

What is the danger of baptizing nonbelievers? Those who have yet to become Christians?

The church becomes full of the unregenerate. This is an oxymoron. The very definition of the word “church” (ecclesia) means “called out ones”. Called out from where? Called out from the world. Those who are born again. The true church is comprised solely of born-again, spirit-filled believers in Jesus Christ.

If we do not respect the order that God has laid out - Saved, Baptized, and Added to the Church, we end up with an unregenerate perversion of what God intended. The church is the bride of Christ which assumes a relationship with Christ. Baptism recognizes those who are legitimately part of His Kingdom.

Baptism does not make you a believer -

Ephesians 2:8–9 ESV

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Baptism shows that you already believe. Baptism does not "save" you, only your faith in Christ and through His power does that occur.

Baptism is like a wedding ring – it is the outward symbol of the commitment you make in your heart.

Are you a born-again Christian? Have you been baptized?

Review - What is Baptism?

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4. Believer's Baptism is for Christians

5. Believer's Baptism is by Immersion

What's the big deal if someone is baptized by pouring water on their head or being sprinkled? Isn't that sufficient? We see no biblical examples of these modes as actual baptism...

Why must it be by Immersion?

1. Jesus was baptized this way...

Mark 1:9–10 ESV

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

Matthew 3:16 ESV

¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him;

2. Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion

Acts 8:38–39 ESV

³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. ³⁹ And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

3. Biblical Baptism needs a lot of water...

John 3:23 ESV

²³ John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized

4. The Greek work *Baptizo* means, "*To immerse or dip under water.*" It best symbolized a burial and resurrection!

5. The founders of various denominations agree:

Martin Luther... "*I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the work imports and the mystery signifies.*"

John Calvin... "*The word 'baptize' signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.*"

John Wesley.. "Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church."

There are various modes today that are called baptism (pouring, sprinkling, etc), but there is only one the bible means is baptism and that is immersion.

Have you been baptized by immersion?

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6. Believer's Baptism is Identifying with the King

Lead in...This, for me, is possibly the most persuasive reason for baptism.

If baptism is a picture of the unregenerate becoming clean by the washing and renewal of the Holy Spirit, why was Jesus baptized?

He was no sinner that needed regeneration. Most people respond to this question by declaring, "Jesus was baptized as an example to us all. True, but is that the only reason? I don't think so.

Let me give you a brief biblical history lesson...

A very long time ago, God told the Prophet Samuel to anoint the first King of Israel, Saul...

1 Samuel 10:6 ESV

⁶ Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.

1 Samuel 10:9–11 ESV

*⁹ When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day. ¹⁰ When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the **Spirit of God rushed upon him**, and he prophesied among them. ¹¹ And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, "What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"*

When Saul sinned against God by not obeying God regarding the obliteration of the Amalekites, God removed His Spirit from Him and sent it to another...

1 Samuel 16:11–13 ESV

¹¹ Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him, for

we will not sit down till he comes here.”¹² And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.”¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

David then sinned against God in the most egregious way...

Psalm 51:9–11 ESV

⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

David was not praying to God and asking Him to not take away his salvation, but to not take away the Theocratic anointing.

Dr. Bookman argues that David’s son, Solomon had this anointing as well...

There is no explicit record of such an enabling on any of the kings after David, but it is possible to find a reference to the concept in Solomon’s request for “an understanding heart to judge Your people” (1 Kgs 3:9; cf. 2 Chr 1:10). God answered that request by promising Solomon, “I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you” (1 Kgs 3:12 NKJ); those qualities could certainly be interpreted as an extra measure of the theocratic anointing. But after David, explicit mention of the ministry of the Spirit is reserved for prophets (2 Chr 15:1; Dan 4:8, 9, 18; 5:11, 14; Neh 9:30; Zech 7:12) and for priests and Levites (2 Chr 20:14; 24:20).

<https://therabbittrail.wordpress.com/2009/02/27/the-old-testament-%E2%80%9Ctheocratic-anointing%E2%80%9D-of-the-holy-spirit/>

Whether Solomon did or didn’t, none of the other Kings listed in the Old Testament enjoyed this level of empowerment that Saul and David did...Until Jesus came along...

Matthew 3:13–17 ESV

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Do you know why Jesus was baptized? Certainly as an example. But also, and I believe more importantly, His baptism was the inauguration of His Kingdom.

Messiah means King! Christ means Anointed One! The King had at last arrived and His baptism was the formal introduction of Him by His Heavenly Father, where He (Jesus) was theocratically anointed by the Holy Spirit. David’s Son had finally arrived to establish His Kingdom! His baptism proved it!

So, when you and I are baptized, we are declaring that we are one of the King's subjects. We are publically identifying ourselves as a follower of King Jesus!

Do you realize your baptism is that important? Do you realize the promise you are making as you step into the waters of baptism? You are not saved by baptism, you are, however, publically declaring your allegiance to Jesus!

Have you repented of your sinful life? Have you trusted Jesus as your only hope of eternal salvation? If you have, have you publically identified with Jesus Christ as your King of kings and Lord of lords?

It's a big deal!

Matthew 10:33 ESV

³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Do you need to be baptized?

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Conclusion (Visualization)

So, I hope baptism isn't as weird to you as you might have thought prior to this sermon.

In fact, it is not only not weird, it is a beautiful act that each of us, as followers of Jesus have the privilege of participating in.

Are you a believer? Have you been immersed for Jesus? If not, why not?

Invitation

Connection Group Questions / Reflection Questions

1. What stands out to you from this Scripture?
2. Why do you think believer's baptism is important?
3. Why does God want baptism to be the first thing we do as Christians?

4. Discuss the reasons why God's picture of baptism is important.
5. What is dangerous about baptizing infants?
6. We do we Baptists insist on immersion? Aren't we being a bit too rigid?
7. Why do you think Jesus was baptized? How does this effect you?