

Baptism



When Jesus was about to leave His disciples, He gave them a very important command.

‘...go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’ (Matthew 28:19).

Originally the word ‘baptism’ meant to immerse. It can also mean ‘to dip’. So then, if you were living in the days of Christ and were wanting to dye a garment, once done you could say, “I have baptised the garment” as it had been immersed in dye. If a ship battled mountainous seas, it was said to have been baptised if waves broke over it.

When Jesus was baptised He went down into the Jordan River and was baptised by John the Baptist, see Matthew 3:13-17. In doing that Jesus endorsed the importance of baptism.

Baptism in the New Testament

What qualifications are necessary for baptism?

Acts 2:38 _____

Acts 2:41 _____

Acts 16:29-33 _____

Notice baptism does not depend upon whether we feel good enough or not. However, Jesus makes it very clear that you need to be a disciple (*Matthew 28:19*) and a disciple is someone who follows his master's example.

In the following references is it babies or believers who get baptised?

Acts 8:35-38 _____

Acts 9:17-18 _____

Acts 19:3-5 _____

For Believers is baptism an option or command?

Matthew 28:19 _____

If you are going to be a disciple of Jesus Christ then you need to obey what He commands.

In whose name should we be baptised?

Matthew 28:19

Those who hesitate in getting baptised

Do you hesitate in getting baptised? Let's look at some of the common objections.

1. **I don't belong to the Baptist denomination.**

Baptism is not peculiarly a Baptist belief. Believer's baptism is for all believers regardless of the denomination in which they worship. The command of the Gospel is not limited to part of the church, but it is to all Christ's followers. It's a call that has never been withdrawn.

2. **It's not necessary, I can be just as good a Christian without it.**

True, baptism isn't necessary for salvation, for 'it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast' (Ephesians 2:8-9). But to say that something our Lord commands is not necessary, 'I can be just as good a Christian without it', is a strange thing for one of His followers to say.

3. **I have been already baptised as an infant.**

Baptism as an infant was not 'Believers' baptism as practised in the New Testament church, so there is now no reason for refusal to follow Christ in His way. Infant baptism grew from the traditions of some churches e.g. some presume the jailer would have had young children in his family baptism. (Acts 16:31-34).

4. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit has superseded Believer's baptism.

That is not so. Both experiences are mentioned in the New Testament and neither invalidates the other. In Acts 10:44-48 both are spoken about and Peter replied "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". (See also Acts 2:39-41).

5. I don't feel ready, I will wait until I'm sure I can live up to it.

This is a real difficulty with many earnest Christians. They shrink from the possibility of dishonouring Christ after being baptised in His name, but it is a false difficulty. Faith, not perfection fits us for baptism as we have already seen. Was Paul 'ready for it' when he was baptised three days after his conversion? Think of his earlier life and bitter hostility Paul showed to Jesus Christ, His followers and the early church.

The meaning of baptism

It is important to understand something of the meaning of baptism.

1. It is a public witness.

Getting baptised is normally a public witness to our personal faith in Jesus Christ. In many places that is an unsafe thing to do. The Ethiopian eunuch may have had only one or two people with him.(Acts 8:36).

In what place was John baptising, was it public or private?

Matthew 3:5,13 _____

It is important to note that those who were baptised in the New Testament were done so immediately or very soon after their declaration of faith in Jesus Christ.

2. It signifies our new life with Christ.

As we go under the water when baptised, so it is a picture of our old life dying with Christ. As we come up out of the water, it signifies our resurrected new life in Christ. Read Romans 6:3-5. Therefore we are demonstrating to others that we have died to (put behind) our old way of living without Christ and now we intend to live this new life with Christ. This understanding grows as we continue on in our life in Christ.

Conclusion

In baptism a person is taking a public stand for God. He is declaring that he has died to his old way of life and is seeking to live this new life with Christ! Don't be surprised if you experience great turmoil in making the decision to get baptised. It was the most difficult decision I experienced in my teens. Likewise some people experience strong testing following their baptism. Satan may test you like he did Jesus, see Matthew 4:1.

If you are a believer make arrangements to get baptised. Contact your pastor or a wise Christian leader. Go for it and God will bless you!