

The Christian and Water Baptism

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I. Introductory Remarks.

Water baptism is a vital part of the Christian experience as we will see in this study. In fact, it is a very necessary part of the spiritual foundation that is being built in our lives. It is much more than a Christian ritual. Like everything else in the Christian life, we must have the application of faith in it, in order to experience what God has truly purposed for the Christian in water baptism.

- **The Importance Of Faith In Water Baptism.**

***Hebrews 4:2** For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*

***Acts 2:41** Then those who gladly received His word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.*

What is faith? We understand that it is “the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen according to the Book of Hebrews.

How do we receive faith? The Book of Romans tells us “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

Faith is simply agreeing with God and His Word. What does God’s word say concerning water baptism? We need to find out and know and then we need gladly receive it and come into agreement with it in order for it to have the desired affect that God has purposed.

God’s thoughts and ways are higher than our ways, so it is our responsibility to come into agreement with God – not His responsibility to agree with us.

II. The Primary Condition for Water Baptism.

What is the primary condition for water baptism and when should it happen in a Christian’s life. We find in Scriptures there is really only one condition.

- **You Must Be Saved! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!**

There's a beautiful illustration of this in Acts chapter 8 with the story of Philip the Evangelist in Samaria. Philip was having a wonderful revival in Samaria with multitudes coming to know Jesus and with one accord heeding the things he was saying. In the midst of this revival an angel of the Lord speaks to him and tells him to go out on a desert road.

Acts 8:26 Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gasa." This is desert.

While on the desert road he is then told by the Holy Spirit to join himself to a chariot that happened to be coming by. As the story goes, the man was an Ethiopian eunuch who happened to be reading from the Prophet Isaiah. Philip asks him if he understands what he is reading and the eunuch says, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" Philip began to preach Jesus to him from that point.

Acts 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.

In the process Philip had evidently been telling him about the importance of being water baptized as well, because when they came to some water, he asked Philip what would hinder him from being baptized.

Acts 8:36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. **What hinders me from being baptized?**"

Acts 8:37 Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Notice Philip's response is, "If you believe with all your heart." What does it mean to believe with all of your heart? The Bible says in the Book of James, "the demons even believe and tremble." So, we want to make sure we are believing with all of our hearts. God doesn't want just some of our heart He wants it all. The word "*believe*" is a verb, an action word, which means our whole life needs to be consumed with what we believe. To believe in something means you are trusting upon, relying upon and adhering to what you believe. We see this again in the apostle Paul's writings.

Romans 10:9 (NASB) that if you **confess** with your mouth **Jesus as Lord**, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;

Notice, Paul didn't say, "confess Jesus as Savior." He said we must confess Him as Lord. It is my conviction that Jesus becomes our savior when we confess Him as Lord, which means we are totally surrendering our lives to His Lordship.

Hebrews 5:9 *And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all **who obey Him**,*

Have You Been Born Again? If you believe Jesus is the Son of God and you have sincerely repented of your sins, you may be baptized.

YOU MUST BELIEVE! There is no basis for infant baptism in the Bible. Contrariwise, the tragedy of infant Baptism is that many people go through life thinking they are "saved" because they were baptized as infants.

Our first step of obedience following salvation should be to be water baptized. In every occurrence in the New Testament it always followed immediately after confessing Jesus as Lord.

- On the day of Pentecost when 3,000 people were saved, they were all Baptized immediately – Acts 2:40-41.
- When the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles they were Baptized immediately also. In this case they were baptized in the Holy Spirit before they were Water Baptized. They were actually Saved, Spirit filled, and Water Baptized within a few hours – Acts 10:44-48
- Paul and Silas baptized the jailer and his entire household the same night that they were saved. They didn't wait until the next morning, which would have been a more convenient time. They did it immediately – Acts 16:25-34

II. What is the Proper Method for Water Baptism?

1. Water Baptism is by Immersion.

There is no one Scripture that says water baptism is by immersion, but all of the examples of people being baptized show that it is by immersion.

- **The example of Jesus being immersed – Jesus is a good example to follow.**

Matthew 3:16a *When He had been baptized Jesus came up immediately from the water;*

- **The example of Philip and the Eunuch**

Continuing with the Story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, we see that he was also fully immersed in water. It says, "he went down into the water."

Acts 8:38 *So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.*

- **Baptism Definition – Greek**

The very word "Baptism" means to be fully wet. Baptizo, bap-tid'-zo; makewhelmed (i.e. fully wet)

2. The Correct Formula For Water Baptism

Is there a correct formula for water baptism and does it really matter how we do it? I believe it is always important to follow the way it was done in the Bible during Biblical times. The whole Bible was given to us for instruction in righteousness. (See 2 Timothy 3:16) Jesus told John the Baptist when being baptized by him that it was to fulfill all righteousness. It is equally important for us to fulfill all righteousness by doing things according to the order that God the Father has established.

- **Jesus' instructions concerning water baptism.**

Matthew 28:18-19 *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

Christians should be Baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which name is the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The fullness of the Name of God was given at the birth of the church on the day of Pentecost. Jesus had been made both Lord and Christ.

Acts 2:36 *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

- **Jesus Bears The Name That Represents The Godhead.**

Colossians 2:9-10 *For in Him (Jesus) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.*

Jesus bears both the name of the Father and the name of the Holy Spirit, because the fullness of the Godhead dwells with Him.

The name of the Lord has been given to Him, because the Father has made Him Lord of all; and the name Christ has been given to Him because it represents the work or the anointing of the Holy Spirit in His life. The Greek word for "Anointing" is "Chrisma" from which the word Christ is derived from.

This does not mean that Jesus is the Father or that Jesus is the Holy Spirit. Neither does it mean that the Father is Jesus nor does it mean the Holy Spirit is Jesus. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three distinct personalities of the Godhead. It simply means that the authority of the Father and the anointing of the Holy Spirit dwell with Jesus, because it has pleased the Father that in Him (Jesus) all the fullness should dwell. (See *Colossians 1:15-18*). **Therefore Jesus has been given the name that represents the Triune God, the Lord Jesus Christ.**

- **The Early Church Baptized In The Name Of The Lord Jesus Christ.**

The disciples in the Book of Acts understood the proper way to baptize in the Name. They never once baptized in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We should understand that if the disciples baptized in this name and they were told to baptize in the Name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, then by simple deduction, this is the name of the Godhead that we are to baptize in.

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 8:12 *But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.*

Acts 8:16 *For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Note that the full name is always given in the full context of each one of these passages of scripture.

Acts 10:47-48 *"Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"* ⁴⁸*And he commanded them to be baptized in the **name of the Lord**. Then they asked him to stay a few days.*

They were baptized in the Name of the Lord, but in Verse 36 He was proclaimed Jesus Christ as Lord of all.

Acts 19:4-5 *Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." 5 When they heard this, they were **baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**.*

Ephesians 3:14-15 *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

The Name the whole family of God in heaven and earth is called upon is the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

James 2:7 *Is it not they who slander and blaspheme that precious name by which you are distinguished and called (The Name of Christ invoked in Baptism)? (Amplified)*

- **What It Means To Be Baptized Into The Name of The Lord Jesus Christ.**

When we are baptized into the name of the Father it gives us the place of a child and all the privileges of a child, all the inheritance and wealth of the child. We are baptized into the protection and care and fellowship of the God of the universe as our Father. We take on all what that union means. We have the standing of a son, the privilege of a son, and the responsibilities of a son. We become by that baptism a joint heir with Jesus, and an heir of God. When we are baptized into the name of the Holy Spirit, we are baptized into the name, wealth, power, wisdom, and glory of God's representative on earth. All that the Spirit has we are baptized

Being baptized in the name of our Lord is an essential part of our baptism in water. As in an earthly marriage, when a bride takes the name of her groom, so also Christians are baptized in the name of their heavenly bridegroom in water baptism.

Baptism is our official espousal or engagement to our heavenly bridegroom. Paul writes that we have been presented as a chaste virgin unto Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2 *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

III. Why We Need to be Water Baptized

1. Jesus Commanded us to.

First of all, Jesus commanded it, and if we knew nothing more than this, this would be reason enough. It really should be our very first step of obedience. It's the first thing Jesus wants from us after receiving Him into our lives.

Matthew 28:18-19 *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

2. Baptism Is a Necessary Part of Our Spiritual Foundation.

We are being built up as a spiritual house in the Lord as it says in 1 Peter 2:5. According to the Scriptures it is very important that we build a strong foundation. We see this in the parable of "The Wise and Foolish Man" in Matthew 7 and then again in 1 Corinthians 3:11-17.

Hebrews 6:1-2 *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of the doctrine of baptisms. . .*

It is basic Bible doctrine. We can't go on to maturity until we have experienced these things as it says in verse 3. *"and this we will do if God permits."* In other words, God has to issue us a building permit, otherwise we are simply building with our own plans and devices, which will be nothing more than wood, hay and stubble.

3. Water Baptism Breaks the Bondage of Sin in our Lives.

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

The word “remission” here is a strong word that encompasses more than forgiveness. It also means deliverance.

- **Remission Definition-Greek**

aphesis, af-es-is; freedom; (fig.) pardon:--deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, remission.

- **Jesus Used This Word When He Talked Proclaiming Liberty.**

Luke 4:18 *The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has ...sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty (aphesis) to the captives.*

- **The Old Testament Type of Israel Leaving Egypt.**

In the Old Testament, when Israel left Egypt in Exodus chapter 12 they applied the blood of the lamb to the doorposts of their homes and were saved from the wrath of God as He went through the land and destroyed the firstborn of every creature and person. This is a type of our salvation and what the blood of the perfect Lamb without blemish – Jesus Christ will do for us.

As the Children of Israel left Egypt they came up against the Red Sea, which is a type of Christian Baptism. The Children of Israel passed over on dry land. The Egyptians tried to follow them and were all drowned in the process. They were completely destroyed. The children of Israel were no longer in bondage to the Egyptians. God had truly delivered them. In water baptism God wants to destroy our old nature and set us at liberty as well from our past.

Do you have faith to believe this? Remember faith is simply agreeing with God’s Word. When we come into agreement with God’s Word, He is able to work in our lives in a mighty way.

4. In Baptism We Identify With Christ In His Death, Burial & Resurrection

Romans 6:3 *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?*

One of the most important things that we as Christians must do is change our identity. We can no longer identify with the world and all of its lusts and pride. We must totally identify with Christ and all that He desires to do in our lives. We begin this process by identifying with Him in His death.

5. Our Old Nature Is Crucified With Him

Romans 6:4a *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death,*

Romans 6:5-6 *knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*

Water baptism confirms the fact that our old nature (the sin nature) has been destroyed just as the Egyptians were destroyed in the Red Sea. We are no longer slaves to sin just as the Israelites were no longer slaves to Egypt. God delivered them and God delivers you of our bondage to sin.

Romans 6:11 *Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Galatians 2:20 *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

6. In Water Baptism Our New Nature Comes Forth

Romans 6:4b *. . . that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Romans 6:5-6 *For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,*

7. We Experience Circumcision of the Heart.

In the Old Testament, God established circumcision to be an outward work which signified a change of heart and a new covenant relationship between the Israelites and Himself.

In the New Testament, Water Baptism parallels this and is required for all of God's people.

Colossians 2:11-12 *In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, **by the circumcision of Christ,** ¹² **buried with Him in baptism,** in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

8. God promises to bless everywhere His Name is recorded

Exodus 20:24b *In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you.*

IV. Concluding Thoughts.

Water Baptism was instituted by God to be an essential part of our Spiritual Foundation. If you have not been water baptized you need to be.

The Bible's final encouragement to you is:

Acts 22:16 *'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'*