

Water Baptism in the Name of Jesus

“Then Peter said unto them, ‘Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of JESUS CHRIST for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost’
(Acts 2:38).

What Is Baptism?

“**B**aptism” comes from a Greek word *baptizo*, which means “immersed, plunged into, or completely covered.” Immersion is the only mode of baptism the Bible records.

John immersed Jesus: “*And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water*” (Matthew 3:16). “*And straightway, coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened*” (Mark 1:10). Philip immersed the Ethiopian eunuch when he baptized him: “*And when they were come out of the water, the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip*” (Acts 8:38-39).

Christian water baptism is a ceremony where one who has repented of his sins is immersed in water. This is a personal step of obedience taken by a repented soul.

Why Should We Baptize?

Water baptism held a crucial position of importance in the Old Testament plan of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. God gave them this plan, and it included a type of baptism – the washing of the priests in the brazen laver before they could enter the Holy Place (Leviticus 8:6; Exodus 30:19-21).

- 📖 In the New Testament, water baptism is also an essential ingredient. As our memory verse says, this baptism is not just for getting wet, but for the remission of sins, and must be applied with a specific formula.
- 📖 In the Old Testament, Leviticus 16 says it was important that the priest was dressed and washed correctly before he offered the sin and burnt offerings, and before he entered the Holy Place. He entered the Holy Place once a year, for the atonement of the sins of the people. This chapter gives special instructions to the priesthood. Aaron’s sons were killed when they did not carefully follow the instructions of the Lord concerning this sacred ritual of atonement. God does not approve those who do not know His instructions and follow them carefully.
- 📖 Hebrews 9:22 says: “*And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*” Remission of sins is provided:
 - By the name of Jesus, who shed His blood on Calvary (Hebrews 9:12-15), and
 - By obedience to the instructions and example given to us by Jesus Himself.
- 📖 When we are obedient to the instructions given by Peter in Acts 2:38, we are committing an act of faith in Jesus Christ and the power of His blood to cleanse us from all sins.

Baptism is a type of burial as recorded by Paul in Romans 6:4-5: *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”*

In writing to the church at Rome, Paul was letting them know that the death they would experience was not like the one Jesus experienced, but was a death to the sinful nature with which they were born. And the calling of His name – Jesus – the One who shed His sinless blood – was what gave them a new life, a cleansing from past sins.

Baptism is a strong commandment of God’s Word; the Lord Himself spoke about it on several occasions:

- ☞ He told the ruler of the Jews, a Pharisee named Nicodemus, that there were special instructions for anyone who wanted to enter the kingdom of heaven: *“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”* (John 3:5).
- ☞ After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to the eleven and rebuked them because they didn’t believe those who had reported seeing Him alive again. Then He gave them this commission: *“Go ye into the all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover”* (Mark 16:15-18).
- ☞ Just as there were serious consequences in the Old Testament when the priest did not follow the instructions given by the Lord, the New Testament also records grave results for those who do not obey the Lord’s instructions regarding baptism:
 - *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned”* (Mark 16:16).
 - *“...baptism doth also now save us”* (1 Peter 3:21).

Let us be careful to obey the instructions of the Lord!

How Should We Baptize?

1. Follow the example of the Apostles.

Jesus asked His followers an important question one day. He said, *“Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”* (Matthew 16:15). They gave various responses, and then Peter said, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”* (Matthew 16:16). When Jesus heard this, He was pleased and told Peter that flesh and blood had not revealed this to him.

He went on to give Peter an important commission: *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 16:18-19). This was no chance statement, but was Biblical authority given to one man who had received a revelation of who God was.

Neither was it a chance happening when Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, and the people asked him, *“What must we do?”* He used his revelation of who God was to tell them: *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you, In the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”* (Acts 2:38).

But what about the commandment of the Lord in Matthew 28:19? *“Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”*

- 📖 So, what was His father’s name? John 5:43 says: *“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.”*
- 📖 What was the name He came in? Matthew 1:21 says: *“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”* Luke 1:76-79 speaks about this child who would be born, and explains what He will do for us: *“. . .to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins. . .”* **What a wonderful name!**

2. What Was the Example of the Apostles?

Peter and the rest of the apostles carried out this command in the New Testament. Their followers were baptized by immersion, and in the name of Jesus Christ. Examples include:

- 📖 On the Day of Pentecost – those that received the word Peter preached were baptized (Acts 2:41) – Jews.
- 📖 The Samaritans believed the preaching of Philip and were baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 8:12, 16) – Samaritans.
- 📖 Cornelius, the first Gentile, was baptized when he heard the truth (Acts 10:47-48) – Gentiles.
- 📖 Even John the Baptist’s disciples at Ephesus – when they heard what God had done for His disciples, they obeyed the word also (Acts 19:1-7).
- 📖 Peter taught in Acts 4:12 – there is no other name that can save us.
- 📖 Paul taught it when he wrote to the church at Colosse – do *all things* in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17).

Conclusion

There is really no way around it. If we want to obey the Bible, baptism by immersion, in the name of Jesus is the only way. It was the way Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, and to the Samaritans and Gentiles. Jesus gave Peter the keys to His kingdom, and Peter used them until his death. In his first epistle to the church in general (written to believers scattered throughout the world through persecution), Peter reminded them of the importance of baptism:

“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21).

“We may never be martyrs but we can die to self, to sin, to the world, to our plans and ambitions. That is the significance of baptism; we died with Christ and rose to a new life.”
(Vance Havner)

Water baptism saves us in the sense that it is an obedient expression of our repentance and faith in Christ and of our commitment to come out of the world. It is our confession and pledge that we belong to Christ and have died and risen with Him. *“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead”* (Colossians 2:12).

Water baptism is not a magical act; it is without spiritual value unless it is accompanied by conscious faith and repentance. Baptism is important only because God has ordained it to be so. When we submit to water baptism according to God’s plan, God honors our obedient faith and remits our sins.

Study Questions

1. _____ is the only mode of baptism the Bible records.
2. “Baptism” comes from what Greek word? _____
What does this Greek word mean? _____

3. Explain what is meant by the term “Christian water baptism.” _____

4. What two groups of people does God not approve of?
1) _____
2) _____
5. How did the plan of worship in the Tabernacle in the wilderness relate to water baptism in the New Testament? (Give Scripture to support.) _____

6. According to Paul in Romans 6:4-5, baptism is a type of what? _____

7. List and briefly explain (with Scripture reference) at least three times Jesus spoke about baptism.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

8. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus commanded his followers to “baptize them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Write out (with reference) at least two (2) scriptures that tell us the name of His father that Jesus came in.

1) _____

2) _____

9. Peter and the rest of the apostles carried out the commandment of Matthew 28:19 in the baptisms performed in the New Testament. List four (4) groups of other believers who had not heard this truth before. Provide Scripture reference where possible.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

10. Explain how water baptism saves us. Support your answer with Scripture.
