



Christian Water Baptism



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Water Baptism

Before embarking on a study of baptism with the possible intention of engaging in this rite of Christian passage, one should be grounded in the basics of the faith and be sure of salvation. You can do that now by visiting the web page <http://www.countdownto6000.info/gospel.html>

Baptism is submerging something in water. It is like washing clothes or dishes and utensils. It signifies cleanness. In the Christian religion it symbolizes by an outward act the inner cleansing that has already taken place in the life of a believer through faith in Jesus Christ.

In Christianity, baptism (from the Greek noun Βάπτισμα *baptisma*; itself derived from *baptismos*, washing[2]) is for the majority the rite of admission (or adoption[3]), almost invariably with the use of water, into the Christian Church generally[4] and also membership of a particular church tradition. Baptism has been called a sacrament and an ordinance of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament contains four related words; two verbs and two nouns. :

- * *baptein*—to wash something
- * *baptizein*—to wash, often a person in a ritual context
- * *baptismos*—Jewish ritual washing
- * *baptisma*—the new Christian rite

From: Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptism>

Baptism was a ritual or custom in many societies long before Christianity arrived on the scene. However, the significance of baptism in Christianity means much more than in other usages. Only in Christianity does baptism signify both the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the rite of passage of a believer in Jesus Christ to a new life. We will review the scriptures on that topic later in this study.

Baptism in Christianity is also a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ. It is similar to a bride and groom making public vows of marriage, symbolizing the private vows or promises they have already made to each other at their engagement.

John the Baptist baptized those who were believers in the Old Testament and the promises of a coming savior before Jesus made himself known as the Messiah.

Acts 13:24 Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel.

Matt. 3:6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

John preached that a candidate for baptism must have exhibited willingness to confess and repent of sin.

Matt. 3:7-9 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our father. I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

John the Baptist would not baptize the religious leaders of that day until they exhibited repentance. They felt no need to repent because they thought that they were without sin. Before one can repent he or she must recognize that there is a need to repent. Jesus tried to explain this to some Pharisees.

John 9:40-41 Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, What? Are we blind too? Jesus said, If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

At another time Jesus told a parable to illustrate the same lesson.

Luke 18:9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable:

Luke 18:10-13 Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get. But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Luke 18:14 I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Before a person can make a good repentance leading to salvation, they must recognize their need for forgiveness. A person who believes that they are perfect will see no need for faith in Jesus Christ.

The crowd of people who were desiring to be baptized asked John what they should do in order to make a good repentance.

Luke 3:10 What should we do then? the crowd asked.

Luke 3:11-14 John answered, The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same. Tax collectors also came to be baptized. Teacher, they asked, what should we do? Don't collect any more than you are required to, he told them. Then some soldiers asked him, And what should we do? He replied, Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.

John basically told the people to repent of whatever evil practices they were involved in. Some were greedy, some were thieves, some were using their position in the military to mistreat others. Repentance was by no means limited to these few examples of sin. This just happened to be what the people who asked the question were involved in. Any and all sin needed to be renounced before baptism was permissible. At the time John was baptizing they were going by Old Testament law to determine sin. Jesus clarified the situation for our time, the Christian era.

Matt. 22:34-40 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?

Matt. 22:37 Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

Rom. 13:9 The commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not covet, and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: Love your neighbor as yourself.

Our test is to love the Lord with all of our heart and our neighbor as ourselves. If we do these two things we will automatically be following the Ten Commandments. Repentance means to get our lives in line with following the Lord's commandments, or at least to be willing to do so as he gives us the ability through His grace.

Jesus Himself was baptized and He gives us another reason for doing so ourselves.

Matt. 3:13-16 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me? Jesus replied, Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness. Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.

Jesus Himself was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus did not need to be baptized to have forgiveness of sins, he was perfect. He did it to follow the command of God the Father given through John the Baptist. He did it as an example for us that we also should do all that God commands, even things that we may not think we need to do.

Luke 6:46 Why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?

1John 2:4 The man who says, I know him, but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

When a person says that they know the Lord but do not even try to do what he says, the scriptures call that person a liar.

Luke 7:30 But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected Gods purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)

On top of that refusing to follow God's commands leads us out of his will for our lives. The Pharisees missed out on the good things that God had for them because they refused to repent and be baptized by John. They could have been leaders in Christianity but instead they missed the greatest move of God up to that time. Rather than leaders they became enemies of the Messiah and salvation and most not only suffered loss in this life, but also rejected salvation and escape from hell in the life to come.

He Who Believes and He Who Believes and is Baptized Will be Saved

Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Acts 16:31 They replied, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.

Rom. 10:9-10 That if you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Down through the centuries of the Church age there has been much debate on whether or not a person who has not been baptized can be saved. It seems clear in the scripture that a person who believes will be saved. That being the case then it of course follows that a person who believes and is also baptized will certainly also be saved.

There are some who die before they have opportunity to be baptized, like the thief on the cross, and some who are given bad teaching and are instructed not to be baptized. Taking the scriptures as they read, it is clear that only belief is required for salvation.

A Baptist minister explained it to me long ago in this manner. It is true that a car can be driven down the road. It is also true that a red car with a radio can be driven down the road. According to him, Mark 16:16 is not meant to exclude those who have not been baptized from salvation. It is simply describing the normal process of baptism following conversion. Any other explanation would make salvation contingent on our own good works rather than God's grace. That is the best explanation I have ever heard and it seems to be the most agreeable to the scriptures. You are free of course to hold to any opinion you like, but why take any chances? if you have the opportunity to be baptized, Just do it!

Acts 2:37-38 KJV) Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Peter replied, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

Acts 2:41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

In many years of Christian service I have also noticed that those who follow Christ's command into the waters of baptism seem to grow spiritually faster than those who do not. Those who knowingly resist His command to be baptized are not able to receive all of the blessings God has for them (like the Pharisees) and miss out on many good things in life, especially spiritual understanding.

Matt. 5:19 Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven , but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Some believers may forgo baptism for various reasons but doing so will result in loss of stature or rewards in God's kingdom. Those who teach and follow Jesus' commands will be called 'greatest' in His kingdom.

2Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Examples of New Believers Being Baptized

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

Acts 9:18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,

Acts 16:33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.

Acts 18:8 Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

Acts 19:5 On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Gal. 3:27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Acts 19:4 Paul said, John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.

The Great Commission

Matt. 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

The entire foundation of the Church rests on the words of Jesus to preach the gospel to all nations and to baptize them after they have received and believed the gospel.

Philip and the Eunuch

Acts 8:5-6 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said.

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

Acts 8:26-28 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of

Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet.

Acts 8:29-34 The Spirit told Philip, Go to that chariot and stay near it. Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. Do you understand what you are reading? Philip asked. How can I, he said, unless someone explains it to me? So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth. The eunuch asked Philip, Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?

Acts 8:35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized? And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

Acts 8:39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Baptism in the Early Greek Church (From the Didache, 100 AD)

7:1 But concerning baptism, thus shall ye baptize.

7:2 Having first recited all these things, baptize {in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit} in living (running) water.

7:3 But if thou hast not living water, then baptize in other water;

7:4 and if thou art not able in cold, then in warm.

7:5 But if thou hast neither, then pour water on the head thrice in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

7:6 But before the baptism let him that baptizeth and him that is baptized fast, and any others also who are able;

7:7 and thou shalt order him that is baptized to fast a day or two before.

In the early church baptism was by immersion except in emergencies.

Participation in Communion Permitted Only After Baptism

9:1 But as touching the eucharistic thanksgiving give ye thanks thus.

9:2 First, as regards the cup:

9:3 We give Thee thanks, O our Father, for the holy vine of Thy son David, which Thou madest known unto us through Thy Son Jesus;

9:4 Thine is the glory for ever and ever.

9:5 Then as regards the broken bread:

9:6 We give Thee thanks, O our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou didst make known unto us through Thy Son Jesus;

9:7 Thine is the glory for ever and ever.

9:8 As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and being gathered together became one, so may Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom;

9:9 for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever and ever.

9:10 But let no one eat or drink of this eucharistic thanksgiving, but they that have been baptized into the name of the Lord;

9:11 for concerning this also the Lord hath said:

9:12 {Give not that which is holy to the dogs.}

Mat 7:6 KJV Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

10:1 And after ye are satisfied thus give ye thanks:

It was the practice of the early Church that baptism was required before a person was allowed to participate in communion.

1Cor. 11:24-25 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.

1Cor. 11:26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Communion proclaims or shows the Lord's death until he returns and baptism shows his resurrection in addition to his death and burial. With these two sacraments even a mute person who cannot speak can proclaim that they are a servant of Christ by their actions. People know that we are Christians when we are baptized and participate in communion. This is a part of our testimony. This fulfills Romans 10:9-10.

So then, baptism in the early church was in effect the membership initiation into the local body of believers. At that time there were no denominations, only one church. What it shows us is how important baptism was in the early days of Christianity. Today some wait years and years before they seal their relationship to Christ by being baptized. This should not be because an un-baptized Christian is at least slightly outside of God's will by not following Christ's commands and thereby they are missing blessings on their life and have stunted spiritual growth.

What Baptism Pictures

Rom. 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Col. 2:12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

Rom. 6:11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

As we stated in the very beginning of this study, baptism pictures both Christ's death and resurrection as described in Romans 6:4, and in a spiritual sense our own death and resurrection to sin and our faith in God who raised Christ from the dead.

1Pet. 3:21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

As Peter explains, it is not some magical mystical ceremony where our sins are washed away by the water. The water symbolizes the resurrection of Jesus Christ, by which we are saved, if we believe. Once again, baptism shows the world what has already transpired in our life, faith in Jesus Christ.

Do It Now!

Acts 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.