

What is "Baptism?"

Baptize is an action word, as verbs tend to be. In the Greek language it is βαπτίζω - *baptizō* - a verb. That Greek word was transliterated into English. To transliterate is to write words or letters in the characters of another alphabet. *Baptizō* is used 83 times in the New Testament, and is always understood to mean "*To dip, immerse, submerge.*"

For Paul, baptism denotes participation in the body of Christ—the Church—and in Christ's death (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; cf. Romans 6:4; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12).

In baptism the believer identifies with Christ's suffering and death; moreover, this testifies to one's own death to this world and its values.

In addition, in baptism the believer "rises" to new life lived according to the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; cf. Romans 6:4). Baptism thus capsulizes the believer's hope for resurrection and eternal life.

This promotes holy living and a new perspective on this world's values. Baptism dramatizes the decision to follow Christ rather than the world.

Acts 22:16 (NASB-U)

'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

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Forty-One Reasons

You Should Be Baptized

Dr. James E. Smith

A believer's baptism is an important moment in his spiritual life according to the Bible. Study the following references on the subject. If you are a believer and have never obeyed Christ in baptism you should seek out a faithful Christian to immerse you.

1. Because Jesus commanded it.

He commanded his disciples to baptize those whom they had taught.

Matthew 28:19 (NASB-U)

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

The implication is that those who have been taught the Gospel should willingly submit to baptism.

2. Because Jesus modeled it.

Though sinless, he walked seventy miles to be baptized by John in the river Jordan in order to fulfill all righteousness.

Matthew 3:13-15 (NASB-U)

Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. [14] But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" [15] But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.

If it was the right thing for him to do, how much more is it vital for sinners such as we all are.

3. Because baptism is coupled with faith and linked to salvation in the teaching of Jesus.

Mark 16:16 (NASB-U)

"He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

4. Because baptism is linked with repentance and the forgiveness of sins in the teaching of the apostles.

Acts 2:38 (NASB-U)

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

5. Because baptism is essential to receiving the "gift of the Holy Spirit"

Acts 2:38 (NASB-U)

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized 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 19:3-5 (NASB-U)

And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." [4] Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." [5] When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6. Because in baptism our sins are washed away.

Acts 22:16 (NASB-U)

'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

Not by the water, but by the blood of Jesus.

7. Because in baptism we call on the name of the Lord.

Acts 22:16 (NASB-U)

'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

Baptism is like an action prayer. In this act we call upon God to fulfill all the promises which he has made to us through Christ. Such calling upon the Lord is essential to our salvation.

8. Because in baptism we are brought into spiritual contact with the blood of Jesus.

Romans 6:3 (NASB-U)

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

9. Because in baptism we act out the burial of Jesus

Romans 6:4 (NASB-U)

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

We are "buried with Him,"

10. Because in baptism we act out the resurrection of Jesus

Romans 6:4 (NASB-U)

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

We are raised with him.

11. Because in baptism we mark the formal beginning of a new life in Christ

Romans 6:4 (NASB-U)

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

After our baptism we walk in "newness of life."

12. Because in baptism we come "into Jesus Christ"

Romans 6:3 (NASB-U)

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

Galatians 3:27 (NASB-U)

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

13. Because in baptism we demonstrate our hope in the resurrection of the righteous

Romans 6:5 (NASB-U)

For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

14. Because in baptism we "put on Christ"

Galatians 3:27 (NASB-U)

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

As a garment provides protection from the elements, so Christ provides spiritual protection to those who wear him. As a uniform identifies a soldier as the member of a particular army, so the one who puts on Christ testifies to the world of his spiritual allegiance.

15. Because in baptism we complete the process of the new birth

which began when the Holy Spirit-inspired word was implanted in our hearts.

John 3:5 (NASB-U)

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

16. Because being born of water and the Spirit is essential

to entering Christ's kingdom of salvation.

John 3:5 (NASB-U)

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

17. Because in baptism we experience the circumcision of Christ

in which the sins of the flesh are removed in the sight of God.

Col. 2:11-12 (NASB-U)

and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; [12] having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

18. Because in baptism we are "raised with Him"

through faith in the operation of God, i.e., baptism demonstrates in the physical realm our faith about what God is doing in the spiritual realm When we are baptized.

Col. 2: 12 (NASB-U)

having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

19. Because baptism is a necessary prerequisite to be counted among the Followers of Christ.

Acts 2:41 (NASB-U)

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

20. Because even Holy Spirit baptism is no substitute for obedience to Christ in water baptism.

After Cornelius and his household were baptized in the Holy Spirit, Peter

Acts 10:48 (NASB-U)

ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

21. Because even the baptism of John the Baptist was no substitute for baptism

Acts 19:3 (NASB-U)

And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism."

Merely being immersed is not baptism!

22. Because when people in the first century believed the gospel they were baptized immediately

Acts 8:36 (NASB-U)

As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

Acts 19:5 (NASB-U)

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The action must have been considered very important.

23. Because baptism was a prominent part of the preaching about Jesus.

Philip preached "Jesus" to the Ethiopian. As part of his message he must have spoken of the importance of baptism. At the first opportunity the Ethiopian asked

Acts 8:35-36 (NASB-U)

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. [36] As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

24. Because if one believes that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the Living God, there is nothing to hinder his baptism

Acts 8:36-37 (NASB-U)

As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" [37] [And 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."]

This means that those incapable of believing in Jesus are not proper candidates for baptism. While teaching about the

significance of baptism is important, one need not know all there is to know on the subject because he submits to the Lord in this act

25. Because baptism leads to a realization that one has obeyed the Lord, hence to joy

Acts 8:39 (NASB-U)

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.

The newly baptized Ethiopian "went on his way rejoicing."

26. Because baptism, being the final act of a series of initial responses to the gospel, saves us.

The Apostle Peter declared

1 Peter 3:21 (NASB-U)

Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

27. Because in baptism one is following the prompting of a good conscience.

It is evidence that one is sincerely trying to do exactly what the Lord commanded.

1 Peter 3:21 (NASB-U)

Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

28. Because we are baptized in the Name (by the authority) of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Matthew 28:19 (NASB-U)

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

Baptism is the only act commanded by all three persons of the Godhead.

29. Baptism is the natural result of having believed the preaching of the good news about the kingdom of God.

Acts 8:12 (NASB-U)

But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

30. Because baptism is required of all believers regardless of sex or race or economic status.

Acts 8:12 (NASB-U)

But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

1 Cor. 12:13 (NASB-U)

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

31. Because we are baptized in (or into) the Name of the Lord and King Jesus

Acts 8:16 (NASB-U)

For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Jesus is Lord, and baptism is the pledge of our loyalty to our new King.

32. Because miraculous healing is no substitute for obedience in baptism

Acts 9:18 (NASB-U)

And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized;

Miraculous events do not prove that our sins have been forgiven. God's gracious actions should make one even more anxious to obey this simple command.

33. Because baptism is the natural response of a heart opened by the Lord

Acts 16:14-15 (NASB-U)

A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. [15] And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

Through the gospel the Lord opened Lydia's heart to respond to Paul's message. She responded by being baptized.

34. Because baptism is coupled with faith in the reports of salvation in the book of Acts.

Acts 18:8 (NASB-U)

Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.

35. Because baptism is the antitype of the crossing of the Red Sea

1 Cor. 10:2 (NASB-U)

and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

Just as Israel left the bondage of Egypt by passing through the sea, so we also leave the bondage of sin to enter into a new relationship with God in baptism.

36. Because baptism is the antitype of the waters of Noah's flood

1 Peter 3:20-21 (NASB-U)

who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. [21] Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the

removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Just as the waters removed Noah from a sinful world, so in baptism we pass from a sinful state to a forgiven state.

37. Because baptism is the result of the work of the Spirit on the heart and mind through the word.

1 Cor. 12:13 (NASB-U)

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

38. Because there is one baptism

which has been required since the first century and shall be required until the Lord returns.

Ephes. 4:5 (NASB-U)

one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

39. Because before we draw near in our service as priests to god, our bodies must be washed as well as hearts sprinkled.

Hebrews 10:22 (NASB-U)

let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

The text suggests that the sprinkling of the heart for cleansing and the washing of the body take place simultaneously.

40. Because baptism is one of three contemporary witnesses to the deity of Christ.

1 John 5:8 (NASB-U)

the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

For nearly twenty centuries the act of baptism has been picturing the central fact of redemption, viz., the burial and resurrection of Christ. The Spirit witnesses through the Word. The Lord's Supper bears testimony to the blood.

41. Because baptism is the gracious provision of a gracious God.

Titus 3:5 (NASB-U)

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

The text suggests that the renewal by the Holy Spirit follows the washing of rebirth (baptism).

In view of these forty-one biblical reasons, why not decide this very hour to "ARISE AND BE BAPTIZED WASHING AWAY YOUR SINS, CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD" (Acts 22:16).

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