

WATER BAPTISM

Many new Christians question the reason for water baptism. They know that Jesus has forgiven them for their sins, but they do not understand why they should be baptized. In this lesson we see why the Bible says we need to be baptized.

I. REALIZE THE EXAMPLES GIVEN OF WATER BAPTISM

1. The Example of Christ

a. In practice -- Matthew 3:11-17; Mark 1:9; Luke 3:21

Jesus the supreme example of our lives, was baptized as a *witness to others*. If we would follow, Jesus, we will have to follow Him in water baptism.

b. In preaching -- Matthew 28:19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them..." Jesus gave a three-fold command here: go, teach and baptize. This was *not* a request or plea given by Christ, but a command -- that all who believe be baptized.

2. The Example of John the Baptist

a. Mark 1-4 "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." John the Baptist's message involved repenting from sins and being baptized. He drew the crowds also! Matthew 3:35 tells us that people from all over Jerusalem and Judea came to hear him and be baptized.

3. The Example of the Disciples

a. They were baptized. John 3:22-23 "And they (the disciples) came, and were baptized." The closest men to Jesus while He ministered on this earth, set the example for us by being baptized

b. They baptized others. John 4:1-2 These disciples were not only baptized, but they also baptized others to show the importance of baptism

4. The Example of the Early church

a. Acts 2:38-41 -- Christians baptized on the day of Pentecost

b. Acts 8:12-13 -- Samaritans baptized after Philip preached to them

c. Acts 8:36-39 -- Ethiopian eunuch baptized after he accepted Christ

d. Acts 9:18 -- Saul baptized after he was converted

e. Acts 10:47 -- Cornelius' household baptized after Peter preached to them

f. Acts 16:14-15 -- Lydia baptized after she received Christ

g. Acts 16:33 -- Philippian jailor's household baptized when they accepted Christ

h. Acts 18:8 -- Christians of Corinth baptized after Paul preached to them

1. Acts 19:5 -- Christians of Ephesus baptized after they heard the Gospel

II. REALIZE THE MEANING OF WATER BAPTISM

Water baptism basically is an outward sign that we want to be associated with Christ. Baptism gives a three-fold picture of Christ as seen in:

1. His death -- Romans 6:3 "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into his death?"

When we are laid back into the water, it is symbolic to the death of Christ. As Christ died for us, so we must die for Him; die to the life of sin.

2. His burial -- Colossians 2:12 "Buried with Him in baptism..."

When we are under the water, it is symbolic of being buried with Christ in His death. We are buried to the old life, dead to sin.

3. His resurrection -- Colossians 2:12 "...wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of God, who both raised him from the dead."

When we are brought up out of the water it is symbolic of the resurrection of Christ. As Jesus was raised from the dead, so are we raised into the newness of life in Christ.

III. REALIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER BAPTISM

Water baptism is important because it is:

1. An institution from God -- John 1:33

John the Baptist stated, "... He that sent me (God) to baptize with water ..."

God sent John the Baptist to baptize. God has ordained water baptism as "the outward sign to the inward work of grace." Water baptism was not conjured up by a church, preacher or denomination, but by God. That makes it important!

2. An Imperative by God -- Mark 16:16

We are commanded to believe and be baptized. Baptism is important because God commanded it for us. If it was just another man telling us, we could ignore it. But we dare not ignore God's commands, whatever they may be.

3. An Identification with God -- Galatians 3:27 "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

When we are baptized, we put on the likeness of Christ and are identified with Him. Water baptism is an act that will associate us with Jesus to other people.

CONCLUSION

For these reasons, we as Christians, are baptized. As we are baptized, we begin then to step in obedience in the Christian life as God would have us walk. This is an important and meaningful step for you as a new believer, but it is just the beginning of an exciting new life in Christ!