

Why Water Baptism? –Acts 2:38 Matthew 28:19-20

The act of water baptism (being immersed in water in response to receiving salvation) is a **very important first step in the Christian life.**

In Matthew 3:13-17, we see the Lord Jesus Himself coming to His cousin John to be baptized, in order to "fulfill all righteousness."

He then went on to establish baptism as an **eternal ordinance for His church**, calling every believer to follow in His footsteps (See Matthew 28:19.)

Rather than requirements for Sacraments, salvation, ordinances are visual aids to help us better understand and appreciate what Jesus Christ accomplished for us in His redemptive work. Ordinances are determined by three factors: they were instituted by Christ, they were taught by the apostles, and they were practiced by the early church. Since [baptism](#) and [communion](#) and footwashing are the only rites which qualify under these three factors, there can be only 3 ordinances, neither of which are requirements for salvation.

In our modernized, "*comfort zone Christianity*" we do, sad to say, tend to take God's commandments far too lightly.

- As Chuck Colson points out:
- Most Westerners take baptism for granted,
- but for many in the world the act requires immense courage.
- In some countries it once meant imprisonment.
- For Soviet or Chinese or Eastern bloc believers, it was like signing their own death warrant."

A wedding ring is an outward sign that a person is married.

- **A military uniform is an outward sign that a person is involved in that particular branch of service.**
- **Similarly, water baptism is a symbol designed by God to identify a person as a disciple of Jesus Christ.**

However, I use the word "*symbol*" here with caution. To say that it is "*just a symbol*" takes away from the depth and beauty of water baptism. Baptism is a symbol, but it is so much more than that.

When we are saved, we are spiritually baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27,) and into His Body , the church (1 Corinthians 12:13.)

Baptism in water is an outward representation of these inward realities.

In **Biblical symbolism**, water **represents inner cleansing** (Ephesians 5:26, Hebrews 10:22,) and spiritual rebirth (John 3:5,) both of which are central themes of baptism.

Water baptism is, in essence, a funeral.

It is an act of faith in which we testify, both to God and to the world, that the person we were before is dead and buried, and we are raised as a new creation in Christ.

This is beautifully illustrated by these Scriptures:

"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."– **Romans 6:4**

"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

Being baptized is a command from God, not an option. It is an act that God requires of every

believer. In fact, among Jesus' last recorded words on earth were . "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...." (Mark 16:16.) **Think about that for a moment.** Jesus' very call to believe on Him includes a call to be baptized.

Acts 2: 38. When the people respond to **Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost**, the first thing he instructs them to do is "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." We further read in verse 41 that they "gladly received his word, and were baptized...."

Acts 8:26-40- This is the account of **Phillip** leading the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ. As they finish their discussion, the eunuch enthusiastically asks "What is hindering me from being baptized?" to which Phillip replies "If you believe with all your heart, you may." Then they come to a body of water, and Philip promptly baptizes him.

Acts 22:16- The first thing the **apostle Paul** is told to do after his conversion was to be baptized.

These people all responded to Jesus in simple faith. However, they didn't see their faith as complete until they had obeyed God by being baptized.

Keep in mind that faith without works (corresponding actions) **is dead** (James 2:17.)

A living faith produces an obedient heart (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6: 46; 1 John 2:3-4) and

Water Baptism Is To Be Our First Act Of Obedience

Christians who do not follow Jesus in water baptism have a much higher rate of backsliding than those who do. After all, if our walk with God didn't begin with the most basic act of obedience, it got off to a faulty foundation in the first place. This will make it more difficult to walk obediently in other areas of our lives.

Baptism is a very special way of God communicating His love to us.

When we receive God's saving grace, **it is no accident that He calls us to identify with Him in a way that makes it real to us.** Are you struggling with guilt over your past?

Water baptism is a very powerful reminder of God's wonderful grace.

The person we were before is dead forever, and we are raised with Jesus as a totally new creation:

"Therefore, if any person is (ingrafted) in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old (previous moral and spiritual condition) has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come!- (2 Corinthians 5:17 Amplified Bible)

Baptism is a simple, but profound act of obedience that you will carry with you for the rest of your life.

If you have not yet taken this step, I strongly encourage you to do so as soon as possible.

Of course, we cannot take baptism without first embracing the reality that it represents:

A living relationship with Jesus Christ. Without this, baptism is simply getting wet. If you have not given your heart to Him, why not do it now?