

precedes one's entrance into the body of Christ.

The blood of Christ begins to work (Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:5). Logically, putting these verses together show that at baptism one contacts the blood of Jesus AT baptism. Baptism washes away sin. It is not the literal water that does the cleansing, but the act of obedience to God's commands and the blood of Christ that does.

One is saved (1 Peter 3:21). Peter implies that the UNBAPTIZED are lost. Baptism is the point at which one goes from drowning spiritually to treading confidently. Before baptism we are lost in sin, after baptism we are overwhelmed in Christ.

The Kingdom doors open wide (John 3:5). Those born again through teaching and water (Baptism) can have entrance into the Kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13). Baptism allows one to get into the church (1 Corinthians 12:13). When one submits to baptism, Jesus HIMSELF adds him to the church (Acts 2:47). One becomes a citizen of Christ's kingdom at baptism!

Service to sin become service to God (Romans 6:4, 16-18). Baptism shows a change. A change of direction and servitude. A change of likes and dislikes. A change of goals and dreams. Before baptism, one wallowed in sin, but after baptism, one begins a new life in service to God. Before baptism, sin was one's master, after baptism, sin is one's enemy. Baptism is the point at which one goes from being a slave to sin (cf. John 8:34), to a servant of God (Romans 6:22).

Dear reader, don't you want to enjoy the beautiful benefits and blessings of baptism today?

Baptism's Urgency.

A man was life flighted to the hospital and was in need of emergency surgery. His wife claimed, "let's wait till the rest of the family gets here." The doctor said, NO! He is dying now! We are doing it NOW!" The one in need of a medicine is going to act NOW. The house on fire needs to be put out NOW. Those who are lost in sin need to be baptized NOW! Scheduled baptisms are unbiblical.

The urgency of obedience. Life is short and death is sure (Proverbs 27:1; James 4:14). God's commands should not be delayed (Acts 24:25). The Scriptures look down upon delayed obedience.

- "Now" (Romans 13:11; 2 Corinthians 6:2).
- "To day" (Hebrews 3:7, 13).

We should be redeeming the time (Ephesians 5:16) because there will be a time when it will be too late. We should be as the Psalmist and not delay to keep God's commandments (Psalm 119:60).

Baptism is something one does immediately. Look at the book of Acts and one will see this principle laid forth (Acts 2:41; 8:30, 38; 16:30-33; 22:16).

If baptism saves, puts one into Christ, and one receives its blessings after submitting to the command, what does that imply if one is NOT baptized? Dear reader, you do not know when Jesus will come (cf. Matthew 24:36). Do you not want to be ready? Do you not know that today is the day of salvation (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:2)? Do you not want to be saved TODAY?

Baptism, baptism, baptism. Oh, how important it is to obey the command from Jesus, yet many reject it. Do you not want to heed to Jesus' command before its too late: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

Endnotes

- 1<https://www.thoughtco.com/requirements-to-serve-as-president-3322199><https://www.thoughtco.com/requirements-to-serve-as-president-3322199>
- 2<https://www.padfield.com/acrobat/taylor/denominations.pdf>
- 3Ibid.
- 4Ibid.

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"Is Baptism Really That Important?"

WORDS WRITTEN
ON THE HEART

Proverbs 3:3

In a person's life, there are certain highlighted events that are unforgettable

- Driving for the first time.
- First job.
- Graduation from high school or college.
- Marriage.
- First child.
- Grandparenting.

Many more events could be listed; however, what is truly the greatest event to happen in one's life? The answer doesn't have to do with a car, money, or children. Truly, the above memories create joy; however, there is no true greater joy than to obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The greatest question to ever ask is "what must I do to be saved" (Acts 16:30).

Interestingly, yet confusingly, one of the most disputed topics in the religious world is that of baptism. One lady would say to a preacher on one occasion, "I just wish God would make the essentiality of baptism so plain." The preacher responded and said, "ma'am, how can you get plainer than Peter's words in 1 Peter 3:21: 'baptism doth also now save us?'" While men are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9), Jesus is the author of salvation to those who OBEY Him (Hebrews 5:9). Obey Him in what... baptism (Mark 16:16)!

The word baptism appears 22x in the Bible and it means to dip, plunge, or immerse. Beautifully, water has always been part of God's plan in certain situations for deliverance.

- It was the Israelites who had to pass through the Red Sea to be delivered (Exodus 14).
- Priests were to wash themselves in the Bronze Laver before entering the tabernacle (Exodus 30:17-21).
- Joshua and Israel passed over the Jordan RIVER to enter the promised land (Joshua 3).
- Naaman was told to WASH in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:10).
- John taught baptism for remission of sins (Mark 1:4-5).

Sometimes the mention of baptism is figurative (Matthew 3:11; Mark 10:35-38), but context matters.

Many New Testament writers mention baptism. Baptism is a command, there is no doubt about such (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). It is how one enters Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). It saves a man (1 Peter 3:21). We would do well to let Jesus decide the parameters of salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Jesus commands it, the Bible numerous mentions it, and you need to obey it! Let us take a brief look at baptism.

Baptism's Candidates.

Not everyone is a candidate for everything, special qualities must be met in order for one to be successful in obtaining certain prizes, sit in certain positions, or be in certain places. A teenager, foreigner, or newly arrived person in the US cannot be president.¹ Not everyone is a candidate for Yale. Those under 62 years of age are not eligible for Social Security. While all have can have the opportunity to be baptized, there are certain requirements one must meet to be a candidate for it.

One must be a believer (Mark 16:16). Trusting and having faith in the Lord is a first requirement. No person was ever Scripturally baptized without first believing (Acts 2:37; 8:13; 18:8). One must believe in

- The Lord's deity (John 8:24).
- Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 2:23-26; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
- The church (Acts 8:12).
- Sin's damnableness (Romans 6:23).

Since small children cannot believe, they are not to be baptized, along with those who are not mentally capable of understanding the need for salvation.

One must be a sinner. In order for one's sins to be washed away, he must believe he has some. Baptism DOES NO GOOD IF ONE DOES NOT HAVE SIN! If you think you have too much sin for baptism, then baptism is for YOU! It was not made for those who are not sinners. Sin should lead to godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10), which should lead to repentance and ultimately obedience (Acts 2:38). Since children are not sinners and are purely innocent (Matthew 18:3), they have no need to be baptized. Only sinners were baptized in the New Testament.

One needs to be committed (Luke 14:26-33).

Counting the cost is important. Before one sits to build or one goes to army, blueprints or a military strategy will be drafted. Before baptism, one should know what he or she is getting into. One doesn't want to say "I do" to Christ without knowing what is involved. One should know that

- There is the responsibility of personal growth. This includes study, repentance, confession, and prayer.
- There is responsibility in worship. This includes expectation of assembly attendance, acts of worship, and involvement in the work of the local congregation.
- There is responsibility to others. This includes evangelism, edification, and love.

Those baptized too early without understanding what is involved, are not good candidates for baptism.

Dear reader, are you a good candidate for baptism?

Baptism's Benefits.

Baptism is a joyous occasion (Acts 2:47; 8:39). Erringly, many denominational bodies have took the blessing and joy of baptism and have turned it into a ritual of little importance. Note the following:

- Lutheran, Episcopal, and Baptist churches say that one is saved by faith alone and then is baptized later.
- The Methodist church says that water baptism "is a church ordinance, and not essential to salvation."²
- One said that "One must relate an 'experience' than the membership votes whether to receive the new member and allowed him to be saved."³
- One reported that even "An aborted foetus must also be baptized."⁴

The above ideas are false and unscriptural. Baptism is the way in which one goes from lost to saved, sinner to saint, child of the devil to child of God. Baptism is the response of one's humble attitude to God's holy commands. What are the benefits of baptism?

It allows one to be IN Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). One cannot faith, repent, confess INTO Christ, he must be BAPTIZED into Christ. The moment one is baptized, he is placed in the body of Christ where all spiritual blessings reside (Ephesians 1:3). Baptism