

¹Matthew 28:19,20

²Acts 2:38

³Acts 9:18

⁴Acts 16:14,15

⁵Acts 16:32,33

⁶Acts 18:8

⁷Acts 8:37

⁸Acts 2:41

⁹Acts 8:39

¹⁰Matthew 3:16

¹¹Acts 2:38

¹²Romans 6:3-6

¹³Matthew 10:32,33

How To Become A Christian

Receiving Christ Jesus as your Lord and Savior is the most important step you or anyone else will ever take.

To receive Christ:

- You must acknowledge yourself to be a helpless sinner in God's sight and in need of a Savior (Romans 3:23).
- You must believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to be the very Savior you have just admitted needing (1 Peter 3:18), and that He rose from the dead, having accomplished the defeat of sin (Romans 4:5; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
- You must personally repent of your sin (Romans 2:4) and confess Jesus Christ as Lord over your life (Romans 10:9-10), believing that as God, He can and will forgive your sins (John 1:1,12; Mark 2:1-13), and grant you eternal life.

*WHAT THE
BIBLE SAYS
ABOUT. . .*

BAPTISM

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Even in a casual reading of the New Testament, it is impossible to overlook the importance that baptism holds in Scripture. The New Testament commands believers in Christ to be baptized. Jesus commanded His church to make disciples, baptize them and teach them.¹ Peter's instruction to the people who heard him preach was repent and be baptized.² Many examples are given of those who were baptized after they had trusted Christ for salvation. After Paul's conversion, "he arose and was baptized".³ Lydia was baptized following her conversion.⁴ The Philippian jailor was baptized.⁵ Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue in Corinth, and many other Corinthians, were baptized after they heard the gospel and believed.⁶

In recognizing the importance of baptism in the Bible, it is just as important to understand correctly the meaning and purpose of it. The answers to three important questions help us understand what the Bible teaches about baptism.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

It is important that the right person be baptized. The Scriptures are clear that only those who have trusted Christ as personal Savior are eligible for baptism. When the Ethiopian man asked Philip if he could be baptized, Philip said "if you believe with all your heart, you may."⁷ After Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, ". . . those who gladly received his word were baptized."⁸

Every time the Bible speaks of one

being baptized, it is following their trusting in Christ as Savior. This is why we do not baptize infants, since babies cannot understand what it means to be saved, and, therefore, cannot express faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So the right person to be baptized is the one who is trusting Jesus Christ for salvation from sin.

HOW SHOULD ONE BE BAPTIZED?

The word "baptize" means "to dip". In the account of Philip and the Ethiopian man, they both went down into the water, Philip baptized him, and they came up out of the water.⁹ Jesus came up out of the water after He was baptized.¹⁰ We teach that the Bible method of baptism is to be completely "dipped" or "immersed" in water, then brought up out of the water. This method of baptism is often referred to as "baptism by immersion".

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

The reason that only believers should be baptized and that they should be baptized by immersion, becomes clear when we understand the meaning of baptism.

Baptism publicly identifies a person with Jesus Christ. Peter asked the Jews that trusted Christ on the Day of Pentecost to be baptized in order to make that commitment public. He said that because God had forgiven their sin they should be baptized.¹¹

Baptism is a picture of salvation through Christ. The death, burial and resurrection of Christ is pictured by a

person being taken down into the water and then being raised up out of the water. The Apostle Paul said, in addition, that baptism is a picture of the believer dying to and burying the old life of sin and being resurrected to a new life in Christ.¹²

Baptism has no meaning for anyone who has not trusted Christ as Savior. They have not buried the old life and been raised to a new life, and they cannot honestly say that they have identified with Christ.

Also, the picture of the death, burial and resurrection can only be portrayed by immersion. The picture loses its meaning if any other method is used.

THE REASON FOR BAPTISM

Why should one desire to be baptized? Simply because God has commanded it and we ought to be eager to do anything that God would ask us to do if we are truly His children. We ought also to be eager to publicly associate ourselves with Christ since we are now one of His disciples or followers. If you are genuinely trusting Christ for the forgiveness of sin, will you obediently and publicly associate yourself with Him through baptism? Jesus said "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven."¹³