

Baptism

Baptism of Jesus

The scripture records “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:13-16 NIV.

Jesus placed enough importance on baptism that He walked over 60 miles to the lower Jordan River to be baptized by John, the Baptist. The mind of man cannot grasp why Jesus, the sinless Son of God, needed to “fulfill all righteousness” as Matthew 3:15 states. The most we can probably state is that He ultimately demonstrated submission to the Father. Only in eternity will we full know why the totally sinless and righteous man, Jesus, regarded baptism as absolutely essential for Himself. It is clear that Jesus set the example for all believers throughout the ages to follow Him down into the water. The person who follows the steps to

salvation should thrill with excitement that he has the same opportunity to give pleasure to the heavenly Father by his obedience.

The fact that Jesus was baptized by John showed He supported the message of repentance, which John was teaching. John’s baptism was simply a baptism of repentance – affirming that one must turn from their own will to follow God’s will. In Acts 19: 4,5 the apostle Paul taught the “disciples” in Ephesus that John’s baptism was not enough for one who would be a Christ follower. They needed to be “baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Blessings of Baptism

The blessings of baptism supported (taught) by scripture:

1. Salvation *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” Mark 16:16 NIV*
2. Sins Forgiven *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven.” Acts 2:38a NIV “Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away calling on his name.” Act 22:16b NIV*
3. Gift of the Holy Spirit *“And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” Acts 2:38b NIV*

4. Clothed with Christ/Become Son of God *“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Galatians 3:26,27 NIV*

5. Dead to Sin/New Life/Raised with Christ *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” Romans 6:3,4 NIV The Greek word for baptism is “baptizo” which means to dip in or under. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ modeled this for believers as he went into the Jordan to be baptized by John, the Baptist.*

6. Made alive in Christ (Colossians 2:11-15) *“God made you alive with Christ” Colossians 2:13b NIV*

7. Given a good conscience/assurance 1Peter 3:21 NIV states *“baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God.”* This same passage in verse 20b speaks of Noah and his family being saved *“through water and that this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also.”* We, as believers in Jesus Christ, openly acknowledge our allegiance to Him as we confess our belief in Him and are baptized.

Jesus’ Commission

Matthew 28:16-20 and Mark 16:15-20 record the last instructions of Jesus to the disciples after His resurrection. Jesus tells them to go, preach the

good news, make disciples of all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything he commanded. To this day these admonitions remain relevant for all followers of Jesus Christ. Believer's baptism includes the concept of repentance, but goes much further. Beginning in Acts 2 we see the significance of the Great Commission's wording: *"into the name of."* This is an entering into the family of God. Jesus' death and life cover us. His righteousness is promised to all those who come into Him, and only to those who do so.

*A*cts 22:15 NIV records Ananias, a devout observer of the law and highly respected by the Jews as he said to the newly converted Paul (Saul of Tarsus), *"And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized, and wash your sins away, calling on his name."* The same refrain echoes today to anyone who has heard the word of salvation, believed the word of salvation, repented of his/her sins and confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. If in Christian baptism we have blessings directly associated with this act of submission, how much more should we not simply follow the walk of our master. Simply trust Jesus and obey Him.

What are you waiting for?

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