

BAPTISM

- I. Is water baptism necessary? Necessary for what?
- A. To win God's favor or earn acceptance? NO.
 - 1. Rom. 4:2-5 - "not justified by works"
 - 2. Rom. 11:6 - "if on basis of works, grace is no longer grace."
 - B. For spiritual regeneration or salvation? NO
 - 1. John 3:5 - "unless one is born of water and Spirit cannot enter kingdom of God"
 - 2. Some interpret "water" to mean "water-baptism," but best interpreted as physical birth when "water breaks."
 - C. To become a Christian? NO
 - 1. A Christian is one in whom Christ dwells spiritually.
 - 2. Rom. 8:9 - "If anyone does not have Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."
 - D. To be part of the Church of Jesus Christ? NO
 - 1. Some churches require baptism to be part of their organization.
 - 2. I Cor. 12:13 - "We have all into one Body been baptized in one Spirit"
 - E. For personal obedience before God?
 - 1. Matt. 28:19 - "Go and make disciples, baptizing them..."
 - 2. Acts 2:38 - "Let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."
 - 3. I Peter 3:21 - "baptism is an appeal to God for a good conscience."
- II. What is the purpose of water baptism?
- A. NOT an initiation rite for church membership.
 - B. NOT an ecclesiastical ritual with sacramental or saving significance.
 - C. External act to signify an internal reality.
 - 1. Public proclamation of what has transpired spiritually.
 - 2. Pictorialization of how Spirit of Christ has overwhelmed spirit.
 - 3. Pictorialization of death, burial and resurrection
 - a. Rom. 6:3,4 - "buried with Him in baptism...raised up..."
 - b. Col. 2:12 - "buried with Him in baptism...raised up..."
- III. Who are the candidates for water baptism?
- A. Should infants be baptized? Paedo-baptism.
 - 1. Acts 16:15,33 - "baptism of their households"
 - 2. Not conclusive whether this included infants.
 - B. Prior responses of those being baptized
 - 1. Acts 2:38 - "Repent...and be baptized..."
 - 2. Acts 2:41 - "those who received the word were baptized"
 - 3. Acts 8:12 - "believed the good news and were baptized"
 - 4. Acts 10:47 - "received the Holy Spirit"
 - 5. Matt. 28:19 - "make disciples, baptizing them"
 - C. Must avoid man-made criteria
 - 1. Repentance from all unchristian behaviors.
 - 2. Believe all the doctrines of the church.
 - 3. Receive Holy Spirit with certain evidences. (ex. tongues)
 - 4. Particular conformity to behavioral patterns of "spirituality"

IV. How should water baptism be performed?

- A. Greek words, *bapto*, *baptizo*, *baptizmos*
 - 1. Indicated direct action of dipping, submerging or immersing.
 - 2. Also used with figurative meaning "to overwhelm."
 - a. I Cor. 10:2 - "Moses overwhelmed in the cloud"
 - b. Plato "overwhelmed with questions."
 - c. Luke 12:50 - "Jesus overwhelmed in suffering and death"
- B. Mode of baptism.
 - 1. Important thing is spiritual reality being signified.
 - 2. Various modes can illustrate the "overwhelming" of one's spirit by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

V. What if a believer is not baptized in water?

- A. Water baptism is not a necessary requirement for, nor does it convey or effect, regeneration, forgiveness of sins, justification or salvation. It is not the means whereby one becomes a Christian, and therefore does not determine one's eternal destiny.
- B. If a Christian is avoiding the prompting of the Spirit of Christ to be obedient in Christian baptism, perhaps because it is inconvenient or humiliating, they might need to remember that it was inconvenient and humiliating for Jesus Christ to be overwhelmed in death on a cross, and part of Christian identification is identifying with His humiliation.