

WHY WATER BAPTISM IS IMPORTANT

A father and mother were being baptized in water. Their little son proudly announced, “Mom and Dad are going to be *advertised*.” His word choice was close: All believers who obey this command of Christ advertise their Christian faith.

The Assemblies of God believes that the ordinance of water baptism is for believers – not for infants or for unbelievers.

Jesus himself was baptized in the Jordan, declaring, “It is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Matthew 3:15 (NIV).

1. Biblical method. The word *baptize* is found 74 times in the New Testament. It means “to dip” or “to immerse.” Eight words are used in the Greek New Testament to describe the application of liquids – words meaning “sprinkle” or “pour.” Only the word meaning “immerse” is used for water baptism.

...for baptism water is required Acts 8:36 *As they traveled ... they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?"*

...much water is needed John 3:23 *John baptized near Aenon because there was plenty of water.*

...both the candidate and the administrator go down into the water Acts 8:38 *Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water.*

...in baptism the candidate is buried Romans 6:4 *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death.*

...then the candidate comes up out of the water Acts 8:39 *They came up out of the water. Matthew 3:16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water.*

2. Biblical formula. Matthew 28:19 *Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

P.C. Nelson comments, “We are not left to speculate on the proper formula, ‘into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.’ The American Revised, as well as Worrell’s translation, has *into*, instead of *in*, and this is the correct translation from the Greek. *Into* fellowship with the name of the Holy Trinity. And we do this in the name of (by the authority and command of) Jesus Christ.”

3. Biblical meaning. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 *In baptism, the gospel is proclaimed: Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, he was buried, and he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

...baptism shows the Lord’s death, as the work of Christ on Calvary **and the Resurrection** is recited. Cleansing from sin is symbolized.

...baptism portrays one’s conversion 2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

...baptism declares our hope Jesus said, John 14:19 *Because I live, you also will live.*

4. Who can be baptized? The sinner must first repent and believe Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38. In every instance the test is individual faith. Philip told the eunuch: Acts 8:37 (Worrell) *If you believe with all your heart, you may.*

Children, until they come to the age of accountability, are not expected to exercise saving faith. An infant can’t repent and can’t be converted.

5. When should baptism occur? A Christian must obey the command of Christ. Prompt obedience will strengthen his or her conscience.

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F.F. Bruce, a New Testament scholar, states that “the idea of an unbaptized Christian is simply not entertained in the New Testament.” Baptism, he says, ought to be the “first of all outwardly duties” of the new Christian.

The Ethiopian official was baptized immediately (Acts 8:36-38). Paul was baptized by Ananias within hours after conversion (Acts 9:18). Cornelius and his household full of friends obeyed the Lord in baptism the day that saving faith came (Acts 10:47-48). Lydia and her^{at} household were baptized shortly after conversion (Acts 16:14-15). The Philippian jailer and his household were baptized that same hour (Acts 16:33).

In the face of such overwhelming evidence, how can we postpone baptism after conversion? Peter preached, Acts 2:38 *"Repent, and be baptized."*

Baptism proclaims to family, friends, and the world that I belong to Christ. I declare my allegiance publicly.



Believers
Baptism

“According to the Scriptures”

Mark 16:16

Acts 10:47-48

Romans 6:4

Jesus said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew 28:19

Christ all the way. I testify that I am dead to the world and living for God. Baptism pledges me to the clean, upright way of living. “... even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). Baptism is my pledge to God that I will serve Him because He has done so much for me.

4. **Baptism witnesses to my new relationship with God.** It proclaims to family, friends, and the world that I belong to Christ. I declare my allegiance publicly. I look back upon my baptism as one looks back upon a marriage. I remember my vows. I must not violate my covenant. Baptism is a constant reminder of my privileges and responsibilities. I belong entirely to Christ. Baptism is a sign instituted by Christ himself. It can never be an option; it is a must.

**By being
baptized
I show
love for
my Savior**

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Baptism is one of the primary commands of Jesus in His Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). The apostles Peter and Paul obeyed and understood His instructions. They baptized new converts and taught baptism as a foundation of Christian life.

Men and women need a picture to tell them the good news. NO picture developed by skillful marketing agencies could be more direct in message, or more truthful in content, than this picture authorized by the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. **Baptism signifies belief.** Salvation comes by faith and *before* baptism. In this way I let the public see what I believe, “That Christ died for our sins, that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). I show that faith when I am immersed. Baptism is my expression of faith.
2. **Baptism demonstrates repentance from a past way of life.** Water baptism is the clear line of demarcation between the old and new life of the Christian. Repentance includes willingness to give up goals and ambitions contrary to God’s will as clearly expressed in the Bible. It means death to self – an end of going the way of sin. Paul says that immersion in water is a kind of burial of the past way of thinking and acting: “... therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death” (Romans 6:4). Baptism is a drowning of my old way of life.
3. **Baptism declares total commitment to a new way of life.** By being baptized I show love for my Savior. I exemplify my willingness to follow