

## The Significance and Duty of Baptism

### 1. The Crowds Who Heard John the Baptist Submitted to his Baptizing, Matthew 3:1-6 (page 886)

John the Baptist employed a Jewish tradition that used baptism as a symbol of cleansing—washing away the old in order to bring in the new. Converts to Judaism were baptized as a sign of their new identity as Jews.

### 2. Jesus Regarded Baptism as Important for His Followers,

#### A. John's baptism was important to Jesus. (Matthew 21:23-27 page 907) By referring to their non-participation in John's baptism, Jesus confronted the Jewish leaders with their unbelief.

Jesus' test question revealed His high regard for the significance of baptism.

#### B. Jesus led His own disciples in baptizing by having them do it. (John 3:22, 4:1-2).

#### C. Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize all new converts to Christianity (Matthew 28:19-20 page 918).

Baptism is one of the first acts of obedience Jesus calls His followers to do.

Baptism is **not** a **work** that qualifies you for salvation. It **is** a step of obedient faith for anyone who has been saved.

### 3. Baptism Dramatizes Key Theological Realities.

#### A. Baptism dramatizes new life in a relationship with God (Romans 6:1-5 page 1039).

This new life comes through God joining you to the resurrection life of Jesus Christ.

Union with Christ is a legal status that God grants to you at the moment of salvation.

Going into the water at baptism illustrates being joined with Jesus' great work of sacrificial death and resurrection—**union with Christ**. It symbolizes death to the old life under the mastery of sin and resurrection to a new life under the mastery of a loving Savior.

#### B. Baptism dramatizes entrance into Jesus' church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13 page 1058).

Since the beginning of the church, baptism has been the universal rite of public initiation into the church.

The "baptism of the Holy Spirit" joins every believer with the *Body of Jesus Christ*. This baptism is a spiritual work done by the Holy Spirit.

It happens at the moment of salvation and gives you a spiritual connection with all of God's redeemed people throughout the history of the Church.

#### C. Baptism dramatizes cleansing from sin (1 Peter 3:18-22 page 1115).

Baptism is a ritual **pledge** before God of your desire to maintain a clear conscience with Him.

It is a personal pledge. No one can make it or keep it for you.

## Conclusion

In the eyes of Jesus baptism is just as important as communion.

What conscientious, properly taught Christian would say to Jesus, "I don't think communion is necessary"?

Baptism is **not** necessary for salvation, but certainly is necessary for your fellowship with the Lord and identification with His redeemed people.

The example of the Royal Official from Ethiopia, (Acts 8:26—39 page 1011).

Why would this man have requested baptism?

Because he wanted to be identified with all the Jews in Jerusalem being publicly baptized as new followers of Jesus

It is never wrong nor should anyone feel the least bit of shame if you have only recently come to understand your need to be baptized as your own public identification with Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

*<sup>21</sup> The one who has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me. And the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father. I also will love him and will reveal Myself to him."*