

2

The First Act

The first act of every believer is the act of obedience. Obedience is the mark of one who is truly saved. Jesus said, "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46)

Baptism

The order from the Great Commission is Go, Baptize, Teach. It may seem strange that baptism is second in the order, yet the reason for that is clear. Baptism is an act of obedience, and not dependent on anything else. Also, the Bible teaches that every believer was baptized, except the thief who was nailed on the cross, and that they were baptized the same day as their conversion.

Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.'

~ Acts 2:38,41

Baptism and its translation

First we must understand why baptism was performed the same day as their conversion. The reason for this is found in the definition of baptism. The word baptize is what is known as "transliteration" as opposed to a "translation". For example the French word "serviette" is understood as an English word with the same meaning. This is a transliteration, simply bringing a word into English and using it as an English word. However, if we were to translate the word "serviette" we would have the word "napkin".

Baptism is a transliteration of the Greek word "baptizo", if we were to translate it the English word would be "immerse". And so to "baptize" is to "immerse". This is important as it reveals the Biblical mode. It is also important as it reveals the picture.

Some churches baptize by pouring or sprinkling, however, they are completely

different Greek words for these words, not the term "baptizo". And as we will see they can not by that mode achieve the purpose of what baptism is for.

Baptism plays no role in your salvation, though it was considered as part of the same event. For it is written, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Notice, repentance and baptism are at the same time and only the failure to repent will cause us to be condemned.

Why is baptism so important?

The importance lies in the mode and the picture it reveals.

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 6:4

It is a picture of what Christ has done for you. When you are immersed, you stand, then go under the water, and finally come up out of the water, as a picture of Christ living, dying, and rising again for you. This picture is not given by pouring or sprinkling, and since baptism does not add to your salvation, then the obedience is in the identifying picture of the resurrection of Jesus.

Definition: Baptism then is the act of obeying the Lord by identifying with Him in what He has done for you. It is your opportunity to show others, in a practical way, your testimony of what Christ has done in your life, and to reveal your identity with Him.

Who should be baptized?

Acts 10:47 - *Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."*

1 Peter 3:21 - *and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also --not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

Colossians 2:12 - *having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

Ephesians 4:5 - *one Lord, one faith, one baptism;*

Galatians 3:27 - *for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

