

Can I Be Baptized?

By Rocky Randall

“Can I be baptized?” There is a [1]story of a man in the Bible who asked a preacher this question. The preacher, Phillip, had just shown him from the Bible the Gospel of Jesus Christ (the Gospel is the “good news” about eternal life through Jesus). It so happened that they were near a body of water; and after hearing this good news and understanding who Jesus was and what He had done for him, the man asked “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”

The preacher's answer was simple: “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” To this the man answered “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,” and the preacher baptized him there in the water. From this one story, we can learn a few things about baptism:

[1] Acts 9:34-38

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

1. You must know you are saved and on your way to heaven before you are baptized.

After Jesus' resurrection from the dead and His ascension up into heaven, we see His disciples (particularly Peter) preaching to thousands of people about Jesus. The Bible [2]says that after they received what Peter taught them about Jesus, they were baptized. There are many other examples of this pattern, and we have clear evidence that baptism is something that is to be done only after someone puts their faith in Christ and receives Him as their Savior.

This is why Baptists don't accept some baptisms as true baptisms. The baptism of babies, for example, cannot meet this requirement because a baby does not understand who Jesus is nor could they have called on Him to save them. There are also times that a person will officially “receive Christ” for the first time and think that their baptism before their true salvation is sufficient. However, this would actually make their first baptism invalid because it didn't serve its proper purpose. That is what I want to discuss next.

[2] Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

2. Baptism is a confirmation that you understand you are saved and you want to identify yourself as a “born-again” Christian

In order to be “born-again,” a person must realize that their “[3]old man” is dead. Spiritually, they must be raised from the dead, and that is what water baptism pictures. It is a picture of us being baptized (immersed) into Christ. We are

letting everyone know that we have been born-again, and therefore we have been symbolically “buried” in the likeness of His death, and just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too are raised with Him to walk in “newness of life.” We have been made a “[4] new creature” in Christ. Spiritually, we have become a “new man.” This leads me to another point.

[3] Romans 6:3-7

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

[4] 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

3. Water baptism is NOT part of your salvation!

Many people falsely believe that if they are not baptized then they are not saved. In the story above, the preacher's main concern was that the man believed in Jesus with all his heart, as

long as he made a profession that he indeed believed what the Bible said about Jesus, he was free to identify with Christ in Baptism. There are plenty of examples in the Bible of people being saved and not being baptized.

One of the best examples of this is the [5]thief that hung on a cross next to Jesus' cross. He got saved on the cross and never had an opportunity to be baptized, yet Jesus still promised he would be in Paradise.

[5]Luke23:42-43

42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

4. Water baptism is by immersion, not sprinkling or pouring

By now, this should be clear; but in case it is misunderstood I want to point out a couple things. First of all, as mentioned above, baptism is a picture of a burial. When we die, we go into the tomb or into the grave, we don't have dirt sprinkled on us. If we are "buried with Him," that means we should be immersed in order to complete the picture.

Besides that, most of the examples of baptism in the Bible specifically mention a body of water and that they go "into" and "out of" the water. We see that in the original story above, they "go down both into the water." Jesus also, after He was baptized, "went up straightway out of the water" (**Matthew 3:16**).

So, what doth hinder YOU to be baptized, my friend? If you have put your faith in Jesus Christ and called on Him to save you, baptism is the number one step you must take in following Him. You can definitely be saved and never get baptized, but if you are going to be a disciple, and you want to follow Jesus, you should ask a preacher to baptize you! If you have already been baptized, but you know you weren't born-again when you got baptized, I suggest that you get re-baptized because the first time wasn't legitimate.

IOLA BAPTIST TEMPLE

What About Baptism?