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Preface

This little book is not intended to be an in-depth treatment on the subject of baptism. I am working on the assumption that the people using this material hold firm, biblical convictions about the ordinance of believer's baptism. Nor are any new or profound insights to be found within these pages. Indeed, I have drawn upon a wide variety of sources that I have, in effect, collated and adapted.

Most particularly I am indebted to the work of Victor Jack and his booklet, *Believe and Be Baptised* which was a great aid in completing Part Three.

This series of studies is basically meant as a practical aid to ministers, youth workers, and new believers. I have written it with the intention of it being used as a 'Four Part' study course leading up to baptism.

Part One focuses on why you should be getting baptised in the first place and will, I hope, serve either as a timely reminder of what you may already know or as a help in clarifying your thinking about baptism.

Part Two gives you an opportunity to assess whether you are really ready to take the big step of getting baptised.

Part Three explains what it means to be baptised 'into Christ' as well as covering some practical considerations. It offers some helpful hints on how to give a personal testimony when you are baptised (if that should be the practice in your particular church).

Part Four is probably the most important section of the book. It discusses how you as a believer are to persevere in the faith, and offers suggestions on how you can best resist the attacks of the devil. It also discusses the importance of Bible reading, 'Quiet Times', fellowship, communion, and public/corporate prayer. There is also a small section that suggests ways in which believers can overcome temptation.

Finally every section comes complete with seven days of 'Quiet Time' reading notes connected to the whole theme of baptism. These are intended to both focus your mind and to encourage you to get into the habit of having a daily devotional.

Introduction

Next to becoming a Christian being baptised as a believer is one of the most important things that will happen to you. It is certainly not an 'optional extra' to the Christian life but the next step in a life of obedience as you grow in the Christian faith. In some ways being baptised is like getting married.

1. You are making a public declaration of your love for the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. You are leaving your old way of life behind and pledging yourself to live your life for God rather than against God.
3. Your baptism says that you now have a new master the Lord Jesus Christ, and that you now belong to him completely. In a sense you are now 'spoken for', for in baptism he claims you as his own.
4. Your relationship to other people and the way you live your life will never be the same again.

What Baptism is

Chapter 29 of the Baptist Confession of Faith 1689¹ states:

1. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be to the party baptized, a sign of his/her fellowship with him, in his death and resurrection; of him/her being engrafted into him;² of remission of sins;³ and of his/her giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.⁴
2. Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance.⁵
3. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptised, in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.⁶
4. Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance.⁷

Baptism is also a testimony of your own personal Christian experience. Indeed, it has often been described as ‘an outward, physical sign of an inward spiritual experience. It is a declaration of your own spiritual state.’ More importantly, it is a sign and a seal of God’s grace in your life.

What Baptism is not

Baptism is not equivalent to salvation. Being baptised does not make you a Christian in and of itself. You become a Christian by being ‘born again’.⁸

Part One

Why should we bother anyway?

Is baptism all that important? After all it cannot save us, so therefore we cannot lose our salvation by not being baptised. Just look at the thief on the cross in Luke 23:43. He didn't get baptised, so why should we? *Look up the following verses and complete the sentence in your own words*

1. Matthew 3: 13; Luke 3:21

We should be baptised because ...

2. Matthew 28:19

We should be baptised because ...

3. Acts 2:38; 2:41; 8:12; 8:36; 10:48; 16:33

We should be baptised because ...

4. Matthew 3:6; Romans 6:4

We should be baptised because it is a sign of our ...

Note: Our sin is often described in Scripture as a 'stain', so when we are forgiven for our sins it is often referred to as a 'washing' (Isaiah 1:16-18; Acts 2'.2:16).

5. Matthew 28:19

We should be baptised because it shows people that we are a ...

Note: Being baptised does not make you a member of the Baptist demomination, or of any denomination for that matter. It simply declares that you are a disciple / follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4

We should be baptised because it marks the end of our _____ self and the start of a _____ and better life.

Note: More than this, baptism is our promise to live this new and better life on a daily basis. Martin Luther's Small Catechism states: 'Baptism signifies that the old Adam in us is to be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance, and perish with all sins and evil lusts, and that the new man should daily come forth again and rise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever'.

7. 1 Corinthians 15: 3-6

We should be baptised because we are making a personal statement of faith about the Lord Jesus Christ. *These facts are:*

1. That he _____ for our sins according to the Scriptures (verse 3b)
2. That he was _____, that he was _____ on the third day according to the Scriptures (verse 4)

We know that these facts are true because the risen Lord Jesus Christ appeared to

- 1 . (Verse 5a)
2. (Verse 5b)
3. (Verse 6a)

For personal Bible study

Summary

As we have seen there are a number of reasons why we should get baptised.

1. Baptism is a command given in the New Testament by the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, Jesus himself was baptised by John the Baptist in the River Jordan.
2. The early disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ taught and practised baptism.
3. Being baptised indicates that not only are you a follower of Jesus but that you are committed to a life of obedience to God.

Note: When we step into the water to be baptised we are basically saying to people, 'my life is not my own any more. It belongs to God'. Stephen Gaukroger puts it like this:

'Being a Christian involves obedience and loyalty. Giving your life to Christ is not a casual decision to be taken lightly; it's not just about having a nice feeling inside. When we become Christians we enlist in God's army: He becomes our supreme commander and we give up the right to run our own lives. He says, "Be baptised", and so we must obey that order. .. We may not like or understand the commander's orders, but if the army is to be effective in fighting the enemy, all the troops must obey Him.'