

The Importance of Baptism

The view of most evangelical Christian scholars is that salvation is by grace through faith alone. This is especially indicated by [Ephesians 2:8-9](#), [John 3:16](#), [1 John 5:1](#). It is important to understand that baptism is a result of salvation, not a cause.

There are different baptism methods. They may include the sprinkling of water over the head of the professing believer or the total immersion of the person under water (Greek: “Baptismo” = to immerse). However, the procedure is not as important as the individual’s understanding and motivation to seek baptism.

Some cite [Mark 16:16](#) as their proof text that baptism is necessary for salvation, but they only quote the first half of the verse and typically leave out the second half, which indicates the necessity of belief as being the prerequisite to the salvation issue.

The way to resolve most problems pertaining to the issue of baptism is to look at the whole of Scripture. When we do, we find that there is absolutely nothing we can do as humans to earn salvation. [Romans 6:23](#) tells us that salvation is a “free gift.” Free means that there is nothing we can do to deserve it. On the other hand, baptism is something we choose to do. If baptism or any other human work or activity (such as going to church regularly, going on a pilgrimage or visiting a “holy site”) contributed to our salvation, we could boast that we did something and contributed to our salvation. However, Scripture says that no one should boast before God [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) .

We come to Christ through grace by faith, and our public baptism brings glory and honor to God. Baptism is an act of obedience, not to obtain salvation, but because of it — because we love Him and want to obey Him. The motivation to pursue baptism should originate from a desire to show to the world an outward demonstration of the person’s decision as well as the inward work the Holy Spirit has already begun in us. An unsaved person would not likely want to be baptized, because he would not have the Holy Spirit indwelling him to prompt his desire to follow Christ in obedience (unless a sect or cult group has erroneously taught him or her otherwise.) The fact that one even wants to be baptized (being assured that only faith alone in Jesus Christ saves) is evidence that the Holy Spirit already indwells that person, a result of being born of the Spirit by faith alone.

In the book of Acts, baptism is typically the outward response to coming to faith. It was seen as part of a process which includes: 1) hearing (or reading about) the gospel, 2) being convicted and led by the Holy Spirit to confess one’s sins (Greek: “Homologeo” = to agree with, to speak the same), 3) coming to faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, 4) beginning the progress of growth (which includes repenting from known sin), 5) joining a group of believers or church fellowship, and 6) being baptized. The last two parts are where there are different opinions among believers or churches.

Where some churches differ with what has been stated above chiefly centers on whether a person is saved if they have not been baptized (or if they have not been baptized the “right” way). In our understanding a person is saved when they put their faith in Christ. Of course, we all want them to join a church which exalts Christ and be baptized.