

you will not have as dramatic an experience as Jesus, it is quite possible that Father God would be declaring the same confirming word to you as you declare your commitment to Him through water baptism.

What About Being Re-Baptized?

I want to conclude this study by dealing with two important issues having to do with water baptism. The first issue centers around a concern by many Christians as to whether or not they should be baptized again, being that they had been baptized as an older child or an adult years before. If they had not really come to a saving faith and conversion before their previous baptism, then I would encourage them to be baptized again. This time, the baptism will carry with it the reality and understanding of their new life in Christ.

What About Infant Baptism?

The second issue is that of infant baptism. With all due respect to those who teach this doctrine, there are strong reasons to question this teaching. First of all, there is no biblical basis for infant baptism in the teachings of scripture or by example. Second, the scriptural command to be baptized is based upon conditions, such as repent and believe, which requires acknowledge and understanding of sin, personal accountability, and the message of salvation through Christ. Infants or little children lack the knowledge and understanding to repent and believe. Third, the idea that parents or another person can believe in behalf of an infant is not biblical. Fourth, the example of Jesus, the disciples, and the early church indicate in scripture that the method of water baptism was by immersion and that it was an adult experience. Finally, the teaching that one can become a child of God through infant baptism is a spiritual deception. Just think of all the people who are or have been deceived into thinking that they are Christians without really knowing the truth.

Experience Water Baptism

In conclusion, we want to strongly encourage you to fulfill the command of Jesus to be baptized in water. The experience of water baptism will be both a strong statement of your commitment to Christ and a confirming truth concerning what God has done for you through Christ. We look forward to God's great work in your life through this next step of water baptism.

Have You BEEN Baptized Since You Believed?

KNOW THE TRUTH



"...AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE."

Pastor Lynn Kern

An Invitation

You are invited to express your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior through water baptism. This study is intended to give you a basis for understanding the spiritual significance of water baptism and to encourage your participation in it.

A Command, not a suggestion

Water baptism is one of the two specific commands Jesus told the church to observe. "Go *therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*" (Matthew 28:19) The other was communion. These powerful statements of faith were to be expressed by all believers as public evidence of their commitment to Christ. Even the Apostle Peter strongly encouraged baptism as part of the conversion experience. "*Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins;...*" (Acts 2:38)

Practice In The Church

Water baptism was a regular practice in the early church of the New Testament. New believers were often baptized the very day they were converted. "*So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day three thousand souls.*" (Acts 2:41) Notice the importance of water baptism in the history of the church in these scripture passages from the book of Acts:

"...*Then Peter answered, 'Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?'* And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 10:46b-48a)

"*And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.'* And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he (the jailer) took them (Paul & Silas) that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he (the jailer) was baptized, he and

all his household." (Acts 16:31-33)

"*And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.*" (Acts 18:8)

Outward Sign Of An Inward Act

Water baptism has simply been defined as an "outward sign of an inward act." This is a Christian's testimony before God and man that they have, by faith: believed in Christ's atoning death for their sin and punishment; repented (turned from sin) and trusted Christ to be their Lord and Savior; and that they have begun to follow God as their heavenly Father. This outward, physical experience of being baptized in water offers the believer an opportunity to publicly declare the inward, spiritual work of God in their Christian lives.

Getting The Picture

Though water baptism is generally understood to be a declaration of faith in Christ, it is also a picture for the believer of what God has done for them. There are at least three spiritual truths pictured for the Christian which are confirmed through the experience of water baptism. These truths are important for the success of your Christian life. That is why God wants you to establish these truths with a memorable, significant experience like water baptism.

Being Raised To New Life

First, water baptism is a picture of your identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. According to Romans 6:4, "*Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*" The Apostle Paul teaches that when we come to a saving faith in Christ, our old sinful life is declared dead with Christ. Death to our old way of living is needed in order to follow the new life God has for us. Water baptism is a picture of the burial of that old sinful life. As we go down in the water of baptism, we declare that

burial. Then, as we come up, out of the water, we declare our new life in Christ, like Christ's resurrected life. What a wonderful picture God wants us to see about our new life.

Being Cleansed Of All Sin

Second, water baptism is a picture of spiritual cleansing through the blood of Jesus Christ. "*And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.*" (Acts 22:16) The believer is declared forgiven and cleansed (washed clean). In 1 John 1:7, we read that "*...the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.*" The real cleansing of our sin comes through the blood that Jesus shed for us. Yet, water baptism is a picture of that cleansing. It is as though you are washed clean from all sin and failure in the waters of baptism. What a wonderful picture God has given us in order for us to live free from the guilt of our past.

Being God's Special Child

Third, there is a picture of the believer's special position in Christ through water baptism. In 1 Peter 3:18-21, Peter declares that water baptism is a picture of the believer's relationship with God that of being set apart as God's special child. As Noah and his family were separated from the evil people of that day through water (the flood), so the believer is set apart from those people of today who will face God's judgment. As a believer, you are no longer under God's condemnation and judgment; but instead, you are His "special" child. (See Romans 8:1 & 1 Peter 2:9,10) Water baptism is a wonderful declaration of God's special commitment to us as His child.

Having The Blessing Of God

When Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan river, the scripture records that "...a voice came out of heaven, "*Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased.*" (Luke 3:22) God the Father spoke a confirming word of importance and value on His Son during this event. Though