

Five Reasons Why You Should Not Be Baptized

Introduction. Most people, when hearing that you belong to a church of Christ, know that one of the major points of contention between us and the religious world is the subject of baptism. They believe that we “wear out” the subject from the pulpit and in Bible classes.

While I do not believe this criticism is universally true, it does remind us to slow down and make sure that when we talk about baptism that we really and truly understand the need, the desire, and the command. With this in mind, we will look at five reasons that one should not be baptized.

I. You Should Not Be Baptized Because Someone Wants You To

- A. In Acts 8:29, Philip had been directed by the Holy Spirit to the eunuch and began studying Isaiah 53 with him.
- B. There is a very obvious implication when the text says that he preached Christ to him. Teaching Christ produced this man’s understanding of baptism. As they came to water, the eunuch said, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” Philip answered that if he believed with all his heart he could be baptized (Acts 8:37).
- C. Philip spoke about the emotional heart because it is where belief, repentance, and confession are found (Romans 6:17). Only you can manifest belief and then follow it with the other works of justification. We naturally want to please the people we love and respect, but your parent, spouse, or friend cannot be baptized for you, nor should you do it just because they want you to. Baptism opens the door for new levels of service and faithfulness, and that is a decision only you can make and stick to.

II. You Should Not Be Baptized Based On Your Age

- A. There are many who believe in infant baptism, but this is a false doctrine. The Bible clearly states that we choose to follow the path of salvation (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8). An infant cannot choose what they are going to do.
- B. Some think there is an age in which a person should be baptized. The “key” age seems to be around 12. Some believe that this specific age is correct because of the story told of Jesus at age 12 in Luke 2:42.
 1. But to say that there is an age that one must consider baptism is not really a scriptural thought. The real issue is an awareness of sin (Romans 7:9).
 2. Some people mature much faster and some much slower than others. A lot of Christians are baptized at a young age, and there are no regrets because it was understood that baptism was for the remission of sins, as well as a command of Christ that was to be obeyed.
- C. On the other end of the spectrum, it is never too late to obey Christ’s gospel. Jesus speaks a great parable in Matthew 20:1-16, in which the master of the vineyard gives the reward that was offered as pay to all that came to labor, regardless of how long they had been hired. We would do well to remember this in effort to bring souls to Christ, young and old alike.

III. You Should Not Be Baptized Because Of False Doctrine

- A. Luke said in Acts that there were those that Paul had met that did not even understand for what they had been baptized (19:3-5), and the same is true today.
- B. One should not be baptized to show they are already saved.
 - 1. The denominationalist says that water baptism is the outward sign of repentance and forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness is through faith in Christ, not through the act of baptism. To the denominational world, water baptism is the vivid symbol of the changed life of one who has a conscience at peace with God through faith in Christ.
 - 2. However, 1 Peter 3:21 says that baptism saves; it is not merely an outward sign of an inward grace. Acts 22:16 says that it washes away our sins. Galatians 3:27 says that it puts us “into Christ”. Romans 6:3-4 demonstrates that baptism mimics the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.
- C. One should not be baptized to become a member of a particular church.
 - 1. We do not become a member of a local body of Christians by being baptized. We are baptized for the remission of our sins, and the Lord adds us to His church (Acts 2:38, 47).
 - 2. We are not voted into a particular church based on the other members’ evaluation of our “testimony”. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, we are baptized into the universal body of Christ, and then we identify with local saints (Acts 9:26-28). But we should not want to be baptized just as an entry into the church. We should want to be baptized into Jesus’ blood and in obedience to God's will.

IV. You Should Not Be Baptized If You Are Not Willing To Change

- A. Baptism requires a change (Romans 6:7) — a change in life, a change in thinking, a change in heart (Ezekiel 18:31). Repentance is a turning away, a burial of the old man of sin as Paul puts it (Colossians 2:11-12).
- B. Unless one realizes the depth of the removal of sin, there is no way to understand the power of forgiveness found in baptism.
 - 1. Imagine that you had been living your life carrying a 40-pound anvil tied to your left leg. Every time you stepped forward, you now had to drag that anvil a few feet in order to get anywhere.
 - 2. Think of sin as this anvil. As you find yourself walking along a level path, this task may not seem impossible; however, what happens when you get to a set of steps, or better yet, a huge fallen tree in your path? How are you going to lift that anvil to get to where you want to go?
- C. When we make that wonderful choice to follow Jesus, our lives change. They have to change. Simply put, as the Bible states, we die to ourself (Galatians 2:20; 5:24) and allow Christ to live in us (Galatians 3:27). If you are not willing or ready to change, you should not be baptized, but study more and find the commitment required of you.

V. You Should Not Be Baptized If You Think It Alone Will Get You To Heaven

- A. Many of us have witnessed the new birth as mentioned in Romans 6:3-4 (cp. Titus 3:5). One is now a new creature, a babe in Christ, a new and cleansed living soul, dead to sin, and living to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

- B. God instructs us to keep on growing spiritually (1 Corinthians 15:58; Colossians 1:23; 2 Peter 3:18). We cannot stop with baptism alone. Remember, fighting “the good fight of faith” is a marathon, not a sprint (Hebrews 12:1-2; cp. 1 Timothy 6:12). We have to do all we can to live a faithful, Christlike life that is evident in influence and example (cp. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

Conclusion. This list is not inclusive of all reasons that one should not be baptized; however, they are important reasons one has to think about when they are thinking of obeying the gospel of Christ.

We close with one incredible reason to be baptized. We should be baptized because there will be no eternity in Heaven without baptism for the remission of sins. There is not another chance for a “thief on the cross” scenario, nor another opportunity to meet John the Baptist who baptized for repentance until the baptism of Christ. If you have not obeyed the gospel, putting on Christ in baptism by being washed in His blood, please know that God desires for men everywhere to be saved, and is longsuffering that not one precious soul should die eternally lost. All we have to do is be obedient to Him.

I am deeply indebted to Joey Ferrell for the use of his material.