

Ready for Baptism

Baptism is clearly part of God's plan for salvation (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-6; 1 Peter 3:20-21). However, when is a person ready to be baptized?

When one realizes he is lost – The first people to be baptized were convicted of murdering the Son of God (Acts 2:36-37). They were truly, “poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3) and they realized their sin had separated them from God (Isa. 59:1-2; Luke 15:13). Baptism is the loving, obedient response of people who acknowledge they are lost (1 Pet. 3:21).

When one realizes Jesus is our only hope – Jesus Christ came to save sinners (1 Tim. 1:15; Luke 19:10). Since He is both God and man, He is the only Way back to God (John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5-6). His blood was shed to purchase us from sin (1 Pet. 1:19; Acts 20:28). Prior to baptism, we are taught that we must confess Him with our mouths (Romans 10:9-10). He truly is our only hope!

When one appreciates what baptism does – Acts 2:38 says that baptism is *for* (Greek: *eis* – “unto, for the purpose of”) remission of sins. Baptism is the point at which one is buried with Christ, is raised with Christ, and puts on Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27). Additionally, baptism is the point at which God adds a person to His church (Acts 2:47). In a very real way, baptism is the door through which one enters a relationship with God and His people.

When one is ready to leave sin behind – Prior to baptism, people in the New Testament were commanded to repent (Acts 2:38). Nobody is ready to be baptized until they are ready to, “die to sin” (Rom. 6:1-2), an attitude which says, “I do not want to sin in any way, anymore.” This includes sins like adultery (Matt. 19:9), lust (Matt. 5:28-29), lying and gossip (Eph. 4:25-29), greed (Col. 3:5), and the like (cf. Gal. 5:19-21). Sin is to be left behind at the point of baptism; this is the essence of repentance.

When one wants to be part of God's family – Baptism brings great blessing to one's life (Acts 2:38-39), and it also incurs a great responsibility. A Christian is responsible to love his brothers and sisters in Christ (Acts 2:42; John 13:34-35). A Christian is responsible to assemble with the body of Christ (Heb. 10:25), and to do his part to edify (build up) the family of God (Eph. 4:11-16; Heb. 3:12-13).

When one is willing to be faithful until death – When a person is baptized, he is making an intentional commitment to follow God all the days of his life (1 John 1:7; Rev. 2:10). The Christian life finds its expression in following the example of Jesus (Luke 9:23; John 13:15) and in loving, faithful obedience to Him (John 14:15; Gal. 5:6). No one is ready to be baptized who cannot confidently sing, “I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back.”

Thank God that He provides a way for the lost to be right with Him again!

--JB