

Doctrine of Water Baptism

Introduction:

1. Water baptism was important and a valid ordinance for the early church; in c. AD 56 the Scriptures go mysteriously silent concerning "water baptism."

1.1 It was quite common up until AD 56 to believe in Christ, then get baptized in water and then tongues would fall upon the believer.

1.2 This all appeared to change as New Testament scriptures were written, pastor teachers were ordained, trained and assigned.

1.3 Let me give you a quick categorical analysis of water baptism.

The Concept of Water baptism:

1. After 56 AD there is no mention of water baptism in the Scripture.

2. Prior to 56 AD there is record of many believers receiving water baptism.

Acts 8:36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? ...

Acts 8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

3. Water baptism in the early Church Age was a ritual to remind the early church of Christ's work on the cross, the need to become more like Him in time, the coming of the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of our Lord and the imminent bodily resurrection of all church age saints at the Rapture.

Acts 1:5 "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence."

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1Co 15:29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

4. Baptism with water today makes the one baptized no better or worse for the experience.

5. The last mention of water baptism in Scripture can be found in Paul's first letter to the Church at Corinth in 1Co 1:14-17 and 1Co 15:29.

1Co 1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;
1Co 1:15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.
1Co 1:16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.
1Co 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

6. As you can see Paul puts very little priority on baptism; it was in the early Church as it is today a cause of controversy.

7. Water baptism summary:

7.1 Water baptism is last mentioned in AD 56. There were numerous books of the Bible written after AD 56 like 1st Timothy, 2nd Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, Jude, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, 1st Peter, 2nd Peter, 1John, 2nd John, 3rd John and Revelation. Water baptism vanished after AD 56 with Paul's negative comment "I thank God I did not baptize any of you."

7.2 The last record is one of dissension; it was apparently causing factions and divisions among the brethren.

7.3 Water baptism divided the early church even as it does today.

7.4 Joh 3:5 is today misinterpreted by certain denominations to make water baptism a condition precedent for salvation "... except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." The water in John 3:5 is the amniotic fluid surrounding the fetus and the being born of the spirit is the "rebirth which occurs" at point of faith in Christ.

7.5 Water is often used as a metaphor in Scripture, e.g. as the Word in Joh 7:37; and the Holy Spirit in Joh 7:38.

Joh 7:37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink."

Joh 7:38 "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

8. Water baptism is often an act of evil when the person being baptized lacks understanding of its history and true meaning.