

Baptism

(September 5, 2006)

Last week, our final caller was cut off due to time constraints but he had a question about baptism and salvation.

Is baptism necessary for salvation?
If not, why did Jesus get baptized?

Before we get into it, it's very important to remember that . . .

1. We must take the Bible as a whole, not pull pieces out and build a whole doctrine around it.

a. For example: If the Bible states that God is a spirit in twenty different places, but it also describes Him in anthropomorphic terms (like "the hands of God" or "God smiles upon us") we must then understand God in terms of being a spirit and that the Jews explained Him using terms we could understand. The mistake would be discounting the Word calling Him a spirit so we could build upon verses that describe Him using familiar anthropomorphic terms.

2. So understanding this, let's FIRST look at the Bible and what it says about salvation.

We know several MUSTS and IF'S when it comes to salvation. I'll mention a few.:

John 3:3 *We **must** be born again.*

John 14:6 *No man comes to the Father but by Jesus.*

Romans 10:9 *That **if** thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession*

is made unto salvation.

John 3:14-15

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Now some will try and say that baptism is a must to salvation. That it is frankly part and parcel of spiritual rebirth.

Bruce McConkie, noted LDS theologian said, “the second birth begins when men are legally baptized in water by a legal administrator.” Mormon Doctrine page 84.

By legal administrator, McConkie means someone who is LDS.

Listen to this quote by Orson Pratt regarding authority to baptize:

Let me take a moment and present the biblical reasons Latter-day Saints believe that baptism is needed to remit sin AND to be eligible for heaven.

In Acts 2:38 it says:

“Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Now I mentioned that the Bible is clear on what is necessary for salvation, so how should this verse be taken in light of the word as a whole?

The key to this verse is the Greek.

“Repent and be baptized every one or you in the name of Jesus Christ FOR the remission of sins . . .”

In the Greek, “for” is eis, a preposition that can indicate causality (in order to attain) OR it is a resultant preposition (because of).

So let's read this verse with a causal preposition.

Now let's read it with the preposition being resultant.

**In Acts 2:38, the preposition is (da,da,da,dahhhh)
RESULTANT**

And so the verse could read:

**“Repent and be baptized every one of you BECAUSE
OF (or as a result of) the remission of sins!”**

This is why we get baptized my friends! Because we have been forgiven, NOT to get forgiven!

Now another verse LDS like to use to prove Baptism is necessary to be saved is:

1st Peter 3:21 ¶ The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:
Ro 10:10; Eph 5:26; Tit 3:5; 1Pe 1:3

Another is:

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Because of these verses, the LDS and even some Christian religions have made baptism “a must” to salvation even though there are a number of verses (like Romans 10:10) that speak of being saved without any association to it.

Again, the Bible must be taken as a whole. And as a whole, we have verses that describe what people must do to be saved which don't include baptism.

What role does baptism have in the Christian life?
Is it important?

As a real clarifying moment, let me say that baptism plays the same role in the salvation of a person as

circumcision did with the Children of Israel!

Get it?

The best way to understand baptism is in terms of “identification.”

The Bible speaks of wet baptisms, dry baptisms, and even damp baptisms.

Jesus spoke of baptism as being identified with suffering.

First Corinthians speaks of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The Children of Israel were baptized unto Moses (1st Corinthians 10:2) when they crossed the Red Sea on dry ground?!

Believers are baptized in identification with the death and burial and the Body of Christ.

To Christians, baptism is an action believers take who desire to publicly be identified with Jesus Christ.

Well, say the religiously inclined, well say almost every LDS missionary who comes to your door hoping to convince you that you must not only be baptized but you must be baptized by them,

“Why was Jesus baptized if it isn’t mandatory to salvation?”

This is usually the second stronghold errant believers or Latter-day Saints turn to when trying to make baptism essential to salvation – because Jesus was baptized.

“Why was Jesus baptized?” To this I ask, “Why was He circumcised? Was circumcision, or was circumcision mandatory to salvation?”

The problem is organized religion has taken the beauty and power of baptism and applied and used it to their benefit, NOT to the benefit of the believer.

They act as if the actual baptism cleanses sin. They act as if a water ordinance is an imperative to live with God instead of presenting baptism as the beautiful expression of faith and as the identifier that it is.

Did circumcision in and of itself have any power? NO! But it was a faithful act of “willing identification” that occurred.

Religions have not only made baptism MANDATORY for salvation, they have used it as a method of “joining” their respective Church!

Both applications fail to embrace the Biblical meaning of Baptism and both reasons smack of a means to “control and corral” believers into their own special little system of faith.

So why was Jesus baptized?

Just as there is a baptism of the Holy Spirit, and a baptism even unto Moses (1st Corinthians 10:2), there was a baptism of John the Baptist – which was a baptism unto repentance.

John's baptism was NOT a Christian baptism, nor was the baptisms that were practiced by the disciples previous to our Lord's crucifixion . . . Christian baptisms.

Till the crucifixion and resurrection, the New Testament economy did not exist. John's baptism bound its subjects to repentance, and not to the faith of Christ.

John's baptism was not administered in the name of the Trinity, and remember, AND THIS IS IMPORTANT, those whom John baptized were rebaptized by Paul (see Acts 18:24; 19:7).

Are you with me so far?

Now was this baptism of John's an empty ordinance that Jesus participated in? Never.

And here is reason #1 that Jesus was baptized: it was the initiatory ordinance of the Christian dispensation.

Now, as Christ had submitted to circumcision, which was the initiatory ordinance of the Mosaic dispensation, it was necessary that he should submit to baptism, which was instituted by no less an authority, and was the introduction to his own dispensation of eternal mercy and truth.

"Christ was circumcised, and observed all the other ordinances of the law of Moses, but not with a view to his own justification; but to fulfill the dispensation committed to him by the Lord, the God and Creator of all things."

Isn't that a good reason for Jesus being baptized?

But Jesus was also baptized for other necessary and important accounts.

First,

Our Lord represented the final and last high priest, and was to be the high priest forever over the house of God. (if you doubt this, read Hebrews).

Every high priest was initiated into his office by washing and anointing. So was Christ: and hence he was baptized, washed, and anointed by what? By the Holy Ghost.

Thus he fulfilled the righteous ordinance of his initiation into the office of high priest, and thus was prepared to make an atonement once and for all for the sins of mankind.

At this ordinance it seems Jesus received the Holy Spirit.

Once John had baptized Jesus, he accomplished his mission and decreased so the Lord could increase.

In this respect, Jesus "fulfilled all righteousness" (plêrôsai pâsan dikaiosunên).

In another respect, "fulfilling all righteousness" also meant fulfilling prophecy.

Jesus let John the Baptist baptize Him to fulfill the

grand design of the end and beginning of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations and to support or affirm John the Baptists ministry as referred to Malachi.

Remember?

Malachi 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall *prepare the way before me*:

In the Gospel of John we read the fulfillment of the Malachi reference:

John 1:29 ¶ The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

When John baptized the Lord, God, or “He who sent Him out to baptize,” had told Him “Upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptize with the Holy Ghost.”

In other words, God told John the Baptist to look for the sign of the Holy Ghost descending to know who the Messiah was.

Therefore, another reason Jesus was baptized of John was so John could identify Him with the true Messiah through seeing the Spirit descending.

Bottom-line, however, Jesus being baptized has nothing to do with it being mandatory for YOUR

salvation.

There are just far too many instances, references, and scriptural explanations of what it takes to be saved that exclude baptism.

***But . . .* let me say this: I love the Lord's commandment to be baptized. And I think it is certainly a command of God for every Christian.**

With it comes a power and a peace that is otherworldly, one I never expected prior to my ascent unto His death.

I learned a great personal lesson about the importance of true (and not ritualistic) baptism not more than four months ago.

(Tell story)

I love to see Churches that baptize without it being tied to becoming a member of that Church.

I love to see pastors baptizing faith-filled believers into the Body of Christ and not into some rigid organization.

In fact, I challenge all Latter-day Saints, if they really love Jesus, to get baptized as a public profession of faith and a willingness to follow Jesus and Jesus alone!

Call your local pastor, or any true believing Christian, and ask them to baptize you as a profession of your true love and faith in Jesus. You can have it done anywhere you would like.

What have you to fear? Certainly not the Lord. He will delight in your coming to Him in this way.

And let me tell you, you'll experience Him in ways that defy will defy R-E-L-I-G-I-O-N.

Why was Jesus baptized?

In the obvious and simple, Jesus was baptized because baptism is good and baptism is of God. It is something God expects those who follow His Son to do because baptism is good for us.

	<p>Why wouldn't Jesus get baptized? He expects His followers to do it, of course He is going to set the example.</p> <p>But in the complex, there are always many more reasons behind what Jesus did and making doctrine out of a partial understanding of it is NEVER a good thing to do.</p> <p>Alright . . .</p>
Other questions and comments we've received as of late.	
CALLER	"If I was born a homosexual aren't I damned from birth from no choice of my own?"
CALLER	"Shawn, did you experience a lot of guilt when you left the Church?"
EMAIL	<p>"On one of your shows you said you still sin yet you claim to be born-again. The following scripture says that if you are born-again you can't sin.</p> <p><i>1st JOHN 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.</i></p> <p>How do you account for your still sinning. Doesn't seem like your rebirth has done you much good.</p>
EMAIL	"If it wasn't for the Mormon church you wouldn't know half of what you know, you would be unemployed, and you would be a pot smoking alcoholic – which you probably are anyway. Why can't you just leave the Church AND leave it alone? You prove you are NOT a true Christian by the way you attack another religion."