

BAPTISM: MEANING

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Baptism is for personal identification with Jesus Christ. In consequence of identity with Christ, God forgives sin, gives the Holy Spirit, and make us member in the body of Christ.

“baptism eis/en/epi Christ”

“being in Christ”

“putting on Christ

Values of the identification approach to baptism

Helps makes sense of certain things that happen in scripture

Gives a framework for dealing with issues not addressed in scripture by direct commandment, apostolic president, or necessary inference

1. Makes sense of Jesus’ being baptized by John
2. Makes sense of John’s disciples being baptized into Christ
3. Avoids the appearance of salvation by works
4. An unimmersed believer does not have to view himself as lost before accepting being baptized. In baptism a person is identifying with Christ, and God gives whatever results appropriate to the situation.

Saved Jews being baptized by John

Disciples of John being baptized into Christ

A minister does not need to think or say to the paedobaptist that he is or is not in a saved condition with God. The paedobaptist does not need to decide whether he is or is not in a saved condition.

Just because a minister now says to someone that he needs to be baptized as an “adult” does not mean that person is now responsible for the truth of the matter. That person does not have any reason ahead of the case to believe that the truth is what the new minister is telling him.

5. Shows why Jesus could be baptized by John
6. Answers the problem of the age of accountability
7. Provides a framework that makes it sensible to say that we may not be the only Christians, but we are Christians only
8. Provides a framework for thinking about the unevangelized before, at, or after the time of Christ.

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