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Baptism

Since the beginning of Christianity, baptism has been an essential part of a Christian's spiritual journey and life as a follower of the faith. The very first baptisms took place in the Jordan River, carried out in the Bible by John the Baptist, who was quickly followed by Jesus. Jesus gave his followers the directive to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). A Christian's first act of obedience is baptism, which is a proclamation to the world that they put their faith in Jesus Christ. It is an indication of the believer's will to support the Christian community and follow Jesus. A believer is received into the Church by baptism, and they are also metaphorically buried and risen with Christ. Baptism is another indication of a person's confidence in God's atoning capacity to forgive all sins. A Christian's baptism is a significant milestone in their life, and each religion has its own unique celebrations for it. Baptism serves to both welcome one into the Christian religion and to publicly announce one's trust in Jesus Christ. In many Protestant denominations, baptism is an ordinance whereas it is a sacrament in the Catholic Church. What occurs during baptism, why Christians celebrate it, and the distinctions between a sacrament and an ordinance will all be covered in this article.

Why Christians Celebrate Baptism

Christians celebrate baptism because it is an important milestone in their lives. Baptism denotes one's public profession of faith in Jesus Christ and represents their incorporation into the

family of God (Thabiti & Duncan, 2011). In addition to this, it serves as a constant remembrance of the vows we commit to God by accepting the Christian religion. Repentance is a prerequisite for participation in the ordinance of baptism, which is a manner of demonstrating one's willingness to follow Jesus. Additionally, it is a representation of one's deliverance from sin and rebirth in Christ. John the Baptist baptized Jesus according to the Bible, and Jesus gave his followers the instruction to follow suit. As instructed in Matthew 28:19, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The command that Jesus issues to his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel and baptize those who believe it is known as the Great Commission. Reminding people of Jesus' death and resurrection is another purpose of baptism. A person is symbolically raised to new life in Christ and raised to death to their old life when they are baptized. This serves as a reminder of the central events in the Christian faith—Jesus' death on the cross and his subsequent resurrection.

Many Christians see baptism as the outward expression of an inside reality. It serves as both a physical representation as well as a manifestation of the believer's trust in Jesus Christ of their spiritual rebirth. The act of baptism serves as a representation of the believer's incorporation into the family of God as well as a reminder of their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. Christians also see baptism as a symbol of their unity. By means of baptism, Christians bond their lives to both Christ and their fellow believers. Christians unite their brothers and sisters in Christ when they undergo baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. The acts of worship and service are ways that the Christian community expresses this unity by embracing a shared life and common faith.

A believer's commitment to follow Jesus and to live in the Christian community is shown via baptism, a powerful act of faith. It serves as both a reminder of the believer's baptism into Christ's death and resurrection and a picture of the believer's spiritual rebirth (Bible Study Tool, n.d). A believer joins the Christian family and unites their lives with Christ's and that of other believers by receiving baptism. Baptism is a potent representation of a person's confidence in God's atoning capacity to forgive all sins. For these reasons, Christians honor baptism as a crucial rite of their religion.

What Happens During Baptism

While all forms of baptism entail submersion in a body of water, the ritual's specifics vary by faith. Immersion in water is a common symbol in Christian baptism, representing the washing away of sins (Allison R. Gregg, n.d). Some forms of Christian baptism include sprinkling the baptized with water to represent the washing away of sins. The individual getting baptized is welcome to share a public profession of faith. A vocal or written profession of faith in Jesus Christ may serve this purpose. Oftentimes, the baptized individual will also get some kind of certificate or token commemorating the event. This is a manner of showing respect for the ceremony and the vows made before God.

Sacrament vs. Ordinance

Baptism has been at the heart of heated argument and controversy from the beginning of recorded history about whether it is a sacrament or an ordinance. Baptism is considered a sacrament by some, who believe that it confers God's grace on the one who receives it. These folks are the "pro" side of things. Those who follow the teachings of the Eastern Orthodox Church or the Catholic Church are likely to have this belief since they consider baptism to be a sacrament (Challies, 2004). Contrarily, there are many who see baptism as a religious rite that

shows one's dedication to a certain faith. This belief is common among members of the Protestant and the Baptist Churches, who see baptism as an ordinance (Challies, 2004).

To answer the question of whether baptism is a sacrament or an ordinance, it is essential to have a solid understanding of the distinctions that exist between the two. One who partakes in a sacrament believes that doing so will bring them closer to God. A sacrament is a symbolic act that testifies to God's grace (Hicks, 2014). Many different faiths and denominations observe sacraments. Ordinances, on the other hand, are religious observances that serve as public declarations of religion. You may hold a ceremony or ritual like this in public or in private. One performs an ordinance not so much to gain favor as to demonstrate their commitment to the faith they claim to be practicing (Hicks, 2014). Both interpretations of baptism may be correct. It is correct that baptism is an outward sign of a within commitment to one's beliefs. In the same time, it is also true that baptism is a sacrament, and that many people believe it may help its recipients earn God's favor. Therefore, baptism may be seen as both a sacrament and an ordinance at the same time (Challies, 2004). The question of whether baptism is a sacrament, or an ordinance boils down to one of point of view in the ongoing dispute. Both distinct understandings of the Bible are valid and worthy of careful consideration (Challies, 2004). It is up to the person in question to choose which point of view serves them the most effectively. A person's commitment to their religion is shown via the rite of baptism, which is universally acknowledged as a spiritually significant and potent rite.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is essential to keep in mind that the sacrament of baptism is commemorated in several different ways throughout the many Christian traditions. A Christian must take this initial step of obedience since it is a public confession of their faith in Jesus Christ and the beginning of the Christian life. Baptism is the act that officially initiates a person into the Church and identifies them as followers of Christ. Baptism is one of the primary ways in which followers of Christ express their faith in the saving power of God. It is a symbol of the believer's adoption into the family of God and a continual reminder of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Baptism, which is a public expression of Christians' common faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, acts as a symbol that brings Christians together. The nature of baptism and whether it should be considered a sacrament, or an ordinance is a topic of ongoing debate, and everyone is responsible for reaching their own conclusion on which definition of baptism is consistent with their set of core beliefs. Based on several Biblical texts shown on the Bible, as well as Jesus' testimonies at the beginning of his ministries, I strongly agree that baptism as an ordinance. The important and crucial event of baptism demonstrates a person's loyalty to his or her faith.

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