

Answers to your questions
about

baptism in

Water

WHAT IS WATER BAPTISM?

The English word "baptise" comes from the Greek word "baptizo", which means to dip, immerse, make fully wet, or submerge - that is, to put right under, or completely cover with, a liquid.

The Greeks used this word when they spoke of dyeing a piece of cloth (that is, it would be completely immersed in, or covered with, the coloured liquid).

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water as an act of obedience to the command of Jesus Christ. In baptism the believer shares with Jesus in His death, burial and mighty resurrection.



WHY SHOULD WE BE BAPTISED?

1. Baptism is a command...

Baptism is a clear command of God, to be obeyed by all who believe in His Son Jesus Christ (Matthew 28: 19,20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, Acts 10:48, 22:16) .

2. We are to follow Jesus' example...

Jesus' first public act before He began His ministry on this earth was to be baptised in the Jordan River, and this pleased His Heavenly Father. (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34).

He who was holy and righteous had no personal need to be baptised, but He did so to set an example to be followed by all who wished to be His disciples .

3. It is an outward working of our repentance and faith...

Baptism is a righteous act (Matthew 3:15). It is the Biblical way to show our true repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus. (Acts 2:38,41) .

Believing in Christ produces an inward change in our hearts. Being baptised in water is an outward act of obedience, in which we testify of (declare openly) the change that has taken place in our hearts.

4. It allows us to share in Jesus' death, burial and resurrection...

Through baptism, God has opened for us a way to share in what Jesus has done on our behalf through His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:1-11).

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTISED?

The bible makes it clear that those who should be baptised are:

1. Those who have repented of their sin (Acts 2:38).

Peter tells his listeners in Acts chapter two to "repent and be baptised for the forgiveness of sins." Baptism is a public profession of this repentance.

2. Those who are saved by faith in Jesus

Those who have heard the gospel, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and received His salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36, 37; 16:14, 15; 18:8).

3. Those who are disciples of Jesus

Those people of all nations who have become disciples of Christ and are being taught the Word of God (Matthew 28:19).

Babies and very small children are not able to:

- Be taught the way of salvation;
- Believe on Christ;
- Repent of their sins.

The Bible verses in points 1 to 3 clearly show that only those who are able to understand and do all of these things are to be baptised.

WHEN SHOULD WE BE BAPTISED?

We should be baptised as soon as possible after becoming a believer! In New Testament times, those who believed and received Jesus Christ were baptised in water AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

- Acts 2:41... The same day
- Acts 8:12... When they believed... both men and women were baptised
- Acts 8:35-38... The man of Ethiopia was baptised immediately after believing on Jesus Christ
- Acts 10:44-48... When the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius believed, Peter commanded them to be baptised immediately
- Acts 16:33..."Immediately he was baptised,"

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BAPTISED?

1. It means that we are separated from sin

Jesus Christ came to make the way for our sins to be remitted - that is for us to be separated, or loosed, from our sins. ("Remission" means releasing, or forgiveness.)

In the days of the New Testament, the person who repented of his or her sins was then baptised in water straight away. This is the reason that some Bible verses say that both repentance and baptism are the means of receiving forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).



The water of baptism itself does not wash away our sins. Our sins are forgiven because of our faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 10:43), and it is the Blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from sin (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7).

When we repent of our sin and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, we are then baptised in water to show our faith in what He has done for us. We are baptised because our sins are forgiven.

Our separation from sin is shown in 1 Peter 3:20,21. Noah and his family were separated by the flood from their old life and world, and came through it to start a new life. (Genesis chapter 6 - 8). This is a picture of the water of baptism now. When we believe in the work

of Christ and follow Him in baptism. we are separated from our old ways, and our old life of sin and defeat, and we have a new start in a new way, with a new power working in us!

Baptism is "the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Peter 3:21). Through the cleansing of Christ's blood our conscience is made "good". We then strongly desire to be obedient to God and demonstrate what we believe is ours through the resurrection of Christ, so we willingly follow the Lord in the act of baptism.

2. It means that we share with Christ in all that he has done

A person buried in a grave is separated from life in this world. In the same way, when we are baptised we can believe God's promise that we are separated, (or cut off) from a life of sin, to rise again to a new life of faith, love and victory.

- We share in Christ's death! (Romans 6:3,6) When we come
- to baptism we declare, that we are dead to the things of this world.
- We share in Christ's burial! (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2: 12) When we are immersed in water we show our belief in the finish (burial) of the old life.
- We share in Christ's resurrection! (Romans 6:4,5; Colossians 2: 12,13) When we are raised up out of the water we show our faith in the operation of God, making us alive in Christ.
- We share in Christ's victory over sin! (Romans 6:6-11). We now serve Christ in a new life of righteousness and victory, made possible by God's power at work in us.



NOTE: We are baptised into the life of the Lord Jesus Christ — not into church membership.

3. It means we “put on Christ”

"As many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ". (Galatians 3:27). To "put on" is a word, which also means "to enter into, or get into." It is used of clothing that is put on (for example "the best robe" - Luke 15:22 - and "armour" - Ephesians 6: 11), and also of such things as "the new man" (Ephesians 4:24), "new qualities" (Colossians 3: 12), and "immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:53).

So in baptism we are clothed with Christ, or enter into His life. J.B. Phillips translates Galatians 3:27 as "All of you who were baptised 'into' Christ have put on the family likeness of Christ." The Good News Bible reads, "You were baptised into union with Christ, and now you are clothed, so to speak,

HOW SHOULD WE BE BAPTISED?

The original meaning of the word "baptise" shows that it is to be by full immersion - that is, by putting the believer completely under the water.

John baptised the people in a place where there was much water (John 3:23). In Acts 8:36-39 it is clear that both Philip and the man he was baptizing;

- Had to come to the water (v 36)
- Went down into the water (v 38)
- Came up out of the water (v 39)

Jesus also came up out of the water (Mark 1:10). This Greek word used for "coming up" out of the water (Mark 1:10 and Acts 8:39) is the same word as the one used for the fish that Peter caught that came up out of the water (Matthew 17:27).

Only full immersion properly symbolizes burial and resurrection (Romans 6:4,5).

The Bible makes it clear that baptism is to be by full immersion in water, and not by sprinkling or pouring water onto a person.

WHAT SHAL WE SAY TO THESE THINGS?

The first thing Jesus Himself did as He began His public ministry was to be baptised in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:13-17). The last commandment Jesus gave to his disciples was to go and teach all nations and baptise all those who would believe (Matthew 28: 19). Jesus says, "If you love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15), and "You are my friends if you do whatever I command you." (John 15:14).

In the first sermon preached in the Christian church, those who believed were told to be baptised (Acts 2:38).

The Book of Acts records the baptism of great numbers of believers in the days of the early church (Acts 2:41; 8:12; 8:36-39; 9:17-19; 10:48; 16:14,15; 16:33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16).

Let us faithfully fulfil the word of God by being baptised in water immediately, and by encouraging others to do the same!

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