

Baptism is a vital expression of Christian faith, symbolizing a believer's commitment to follow Jesus Christ. It represents the death to an old life of sin and rebirth into a new life with Him. While baptism is not a means of salvation, it is an important act of obedience and a public declaration of faith for those who have repented and trusted in Jesus.

**1. Why get baptized?** Jesus told us to do it. So it is an act of obedience. Since we as believers call Jesus 'Lord', it's only reasonable that we should want to obey His commands. And that applies to both of us disciples who baptize people and for those disciples who get baptized.

The Bible says to... 1. Repent & be baptized 2. Believe & be baptized 3. Receive & be baptized  
So, once a person trusts Christ as their Savior, the next step should be water baptism.

## 2. What is baptism?

1. **Act of Obedience**, response to being saved by Jesus
2. **A Public Testimony**, a public act to identify with Jesus, a public witness or testimony to acknowledge what God has done. Baptism is an outward expression of an inward change for someone who has received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
3. **Our Spiritual Identification**, it's a statement of your identification with Jesus in death, burial, and resurrection. In Romans 6:3-4 it says, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore, we are buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” So, through baptism, we identify symbolically with the death, burial, going under the water and then with the resurrection of Jesus Christ coming up out of the water. So it's a picture of us dying to our old way of life and rising into our new life with Jesus Christ.

## 3. What doesn't baptism do?

1. **Baptism cannot save you and doesn't make you a Christian.**
  - a. In Romans 10:9-10, “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
  - b. Ephesians 2:8-9 says “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Therefore, the act of baptism cannot save us, only our trust in Jesus.
2. **Baptism cannot cleanse from sin.**
  - a. The cleansing of sins takes place when we believe and accept Christ and ask Him to cleanse our sins. Baptism may witness to our cleaning, but the water itself is powerless to cleanse from sin.
  - b. 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
3. **Baptism cannot free us from sinful habits.**
  - a. Baptism alone will not automatically free us from a sinful lifestyle, only true repentance from sin and our dependence upon the Holy Spirit will. However, it does tell others that you have willingly submitted your life to the process of spiritual growth and change through the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. **Baptism is not a proof of salvation.**

- a. The thief on the cross next to Jesus was never baptized, but was saved. If baptism could save, wouldn't we then run around frantically baptizing people? Salvation comes to us when we believe in Jesus. If you're not born-again, all you're going to do is get wet.
- b. It is also wrong to think that a person is not saved until they are baptized. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:17 "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel - not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power." So we are saved the moment we trust Christ.
- c. Some try to use Mark 16:16 which says "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" however It does not say not believe and not baptized are condemned. So the condition is on belief, not baptism. Baptism is not a proof of salvation.

**4. Who should be baptized?** Anyone who has repented of their sins (turn from sin and turn to God), believe in the gospel of Jesus, thus receiving the Holy Spirit. So, the only requirement for a person to be baptized is that he or she believes in Jesus Christ and understands what baptism represents.

Baptism is only for those who have received Christ as Savior. It is not for unbelievers. All the accounts in Scripture have believers being baptized. An unbeliever who is baptized does not receive anything from the Lord.

There is no biblical prohibition against a Christian being baptized more than once. For instance, if you were baptized as a baby or child, and later opened your heart to a relationship with God, and now have a clean conscience before Him, then you are encouraged to take this step. If you've already been baptized as an adult Christian, you don't need to be re-baptized over and over again.

We discourage very little children as it can scare them of the water and often this is when parents push them to do it. We don't want it to be a negative experience. The biblical model for infants and children is always that of a baby dedication, never baptism. (We do baby dedications & plan on one soon for little Caleb)

At some point when kids are older or when they desire to be baptized, we encourage parents to ask them questions on when and how they gave their lives to Jesus and then explain the Gospel message. Jesus said not to forbid the little children and to allow for them to come to Him. So, children need to make the choice on their own and when they fully understand baptism. Kids should not be forced to be baptized.

**5. When get baptized?** As soon as you can, to be obedient to the command of Jesus. If you have trusted Christ as your Savior, then you should be baptized. While this act, in and of itself, will not save you, it will be done as an outward sign of an inward change.

**6. Where be baptized?** Anywhere there is enough water.

**7. How a baptism is done with water?** There are three main methods on how to be baptized with water:

1. Immersion, wherein a person is completely lowered under the water.
2. Pouring, where water is ladled or poured over the person's head and body.
3. Sprinkling, in which the person is lightly sprinkled.

The word "baptize" is taken from the Greek word "*baptizo*" meaning: to immerse or submerge, to overflow or cover with water, it was used of when describing a ship that sank to the bottom of the ocean or when a cloth was immersed in a dye and changed completely.

In John 3, we are told John baptized in the Jordan River because there was enough water there. In Acts 8 we are told the Ethiopian eunuch believed the Gospel Philip told him and wanted to be baptized and they found enough water and went into the water and came out of the water. Therefore, we practice baptism by immersion for those who have been born again through faith in Jesus Christ.

Now some passages in Acts say people were baptized in the name of Jesus, this means in the manner of Jesus. So which is the right way? Jesus name only or the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Well, we have to go back to what Jesus told us on how to baptize. Better to go with a clear command and stick with what Jesus says.

Some divide on the method of baptism, but a servant of the Lord must not quarrel. So we want to let the Lord deal with their hearts. But we don't go around and say we are the full-immersion baptizers, it's not worth dividing the body of Christ over and won't matter for all eternity. Better to be wrong and full of grace on minor differences, than right and full of pride. God is looking at our heart and blesses our obedience to Him.

**8. What is said when getting baptized?** We will ask you when you gave your life to Christ, and how long ago. Then either we will share it with the group or, if you're comfortable, have you share a brief overview of your testimony. Then we will say, "Because of your decision to follow Jesus, and to be obedient to Him. I now baptize you in the name of the Father, name of the Son, and the Holy Spirit." (Bend your knees as you go backwards in the water)

### **9. What to wear when getting baptized?**

I suggest wearing shorts or pants or modest swimwear with a dark tee-shirt. Please make sure that your clothing is dark-colored and will not be seen through when wet. We don't want to stumble someone else and want to draw attention to Christ, not us. If you are getting baptized, you will want to bring a change of clothes, a towel, and a plastic bag for your wet clothes. Guys tell the guys if they need to change, Gals ask the Gals.

### **Q & A:**

#### **Q. Why was Jesus baptized?**

A. As an example of obedience. Jesus said it was to fulfill all righteousness in Matthew 3. So He had no sin to repent of and simply gave us an example of obedience to follow.

#### **Q. Do I need to be baptized again if I was baptized as a baby?**

A. Yes, I think so. Because baptism is an outward showing of what has already taken place in the heart of someone who has received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Therefore, we believe this would not be possible as an infant. So those who have been baptized as an infant had no knowledge to repent of our sins (turn from sin and turn to God), believe in the gospel of Jesus, and receive the Holy Spirit.

#### **Q. What about 1 Corth. 15 and the baptism of the dead?**

A. It doesn't allow for you to save someone who is already dead, no such thing as baptism for the dead like cults teach, 1 Corth. 15 is talking about seeing the sacrifice of others who became a martyr and being cut to the heart to follow their example and be saved and then baptized.