

## **“BAPTISM”**

In ancient times, slaves were often baptized after they were sold to announce to the community that they now had a new master. The early Christians adopted the practice after Jesus commanded it to be done (Matthew 28:18-20) to symbolize their new life in Him and to identify with His death, burial, and resurrection. Like a wedding ceremony, it is an outward demonstration of our inward love and symbolizes our death to the old life (going under water) and resurrection to a new one (rising up out of it). (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Colossians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4)

### **Who should be baptized?**

According to the Scripture, every person who has believed in Jesus Christ should be baptized after their conversion. (Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12-13; Acts 9:18)

### **Why be baptized?**

It is an opportunity to obey the Lord Jesus' command (Matthew 28:18-20), to imitate His example (Luke 3:21), and to “witness” to others that you are now a Christian (Acts 2:41).

### **When should we be baptized?**

The example that we see in the New Testament is always immediately after someone had believed in Christ. (Acts 2:41; Acts 8:36-39; Acts 9:18)

### **How should we be baptized?**

The mode was always by immersion (the Greek word “baptizo” is consistently translated “to dip or immerse”), which demonstrates our death and burial by going under the water. Rising up out of it is also a vivid picture of our new life in Christ. The practice of sprinkling was a tradition that developed later on, as was infant baptism, and is not supported anywhere in the Bible. (Matthew 3:16; Acts 8:38-39; Matthew 15:1-6)

### **Does baptism have anything to do with salvation?**

No. We are saved by grace alone, through faith, and salvation is a free gift of God that cannot be earned by any good works. Baptism is symbolic and simply an act of obedience to Christ. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

### **Do I have to say or do anything special?**

It's really up to you. Most people take the opportunity to share something about how they came to Christ, both as a witness to anyone watching who does not know Christ and as an encouragement to fellow believers. We encourage you to share your faith story since baptism only happens once and everyone enjoys hearing how God worked in your life, but it is not required. We also suggest wearing a modest swimsuit and a T-shirt.

### **Why immersion (wasn't my baptism as a baby enough)?**

The example in the New Testament was always by immersion after salvation. Baptism is the best representation of our death (burial under the water) to our old way of life and our resurrection (coming up out of it) to a new life in Christ. Any "baptism rite" prior to your decision to receive Christ for salvation wouldn't be true baptism since you could not reason a choice as an infant. True baptism always took place after salvation was decided and never involved sprinkling.

### **Do only pastors do the baptizing?**

No. There aren't any Bible verses that indicate only pastors should baptize. As a matter of fact, in Matthew 28:18-20 (the Great Commission passage), Jesus commanded everyone to go and make disciples, baptize them in His name, and teach them to do all of His commands. This is a cyclical passage, which allows us to obey baptism in two ways; namely that we can be baptized, and then have the opportunity to obey again and again by baptizing others as well (in order to "do all His commands"). Usually someone who was instrumental in your salvation or spiritual growth would baptize you.

### **Are there any restrictions on where (pools, lakes, rivers, oceans, bathtubs)?**

Apparently not, as Acts 8 demonstrates with the Ethiopian eunuch being baptized as soon as he saw "some water." It seems that the first century believers were baptized wherever there was enough water to do so and obeyed as quickly as they could find water.

If you'd like to be baptized, we ask that you contact a leader or pastor first to discuss details and answer any other questions.



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