

BAPTISM

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism is a symbol—or picture—acted out in an open and public manner. It is an outward picture of what has spiritually taken place on the inside when you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Baptism Symbolizes:

- Our salvation
- Christ's death, burial, and resurrection
- Our inner cleansing from sin
- Our release from judgement and death
- Our new life in Christ
- Our entrance into the body of Christ: the Church

BASIC STUDY

What words or phrases in **Romans 6:3-5** show a connection between a believer and Christ's death, burial, and resurrection? (*Note: Look closely; there are at least two in each verse*)

In Romans 6:3-5, Paul talks about the death of Jesus. According to **1 Peter 2:24**, what did Jesus do with our sins when He died on the cross?

Also in **1 Peter 2:24**, what is the outcome Jesus expects in our lives as a result of His death?

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WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED & WHY?

Baptism is for believers only, and it is for all believers. Every person who has accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior is commanded to show allegiance to Christ through baptism. This was so obvious to the early church that we repeatedly read in the Bible that people “believed and were baptized.”

It is up to believers to declare their desire to be baptized. No one else should make that decision for them.

BASIC STUDY

Read **Matthew 28:18-20**

What was the first thing Jesus told His followers to do?

(Note: A “disciple” is someone who, through faith, professes Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior)

What are two parts of making disciples?

So who should be baptized and why?

Read **Acts 2:41**. What is the example in this verse for those who trust in Jesus for salvation?

What about **Acts 8:12**? Which happened first: belief or baptism?

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WHEN SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

It is clear that only believers should be baptized, but when should this event occur? Many people feel that baptism should follow a time of spiritual growth in the new believer's life, but there is nothing in the Bible to indicate this to be desirable. In fact, the pattern in the early church was that people were baptized very soon after they come to Jesus. It is safe to say then, that as soon as a believer recognizes baptism as a command to be obeyed and understands the basics of what they are doing, they are ready for baptism.

It may be that you have already undergone a ceremony called "baptism" before you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, but now realize that this event did not satisfy the teachings of God's Word. If that's the case, you should be baptized as a believer according to the standards of Scripture, since the first "baptism" will no longer allow for a clear conscience before God.

BASIC STUDY

According to **Acts 2:41**, how long did it take people to be baptized after Peter's sermon?

According to **Acts 16:33**, how long did the Philippian jailer and his family want to be baptized?

According to **Acts 8:35-38**, how long did it take the Ethiopian eunuch to be baptized after finding water?

Read the following passages on baptism. What happened before the people were baptized?

Acts 2:41

Acts 8:35-36

Acts 8:12

Acts 18:8

So when should you be baptized?

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HOW SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

According to the Bible, during New Testament times people were always immersed in water during baptism. Since immersion was practiced then, that is what we practice and require today. There are at least four reasons for that:

1. In the Bible, the word that is translated “baptize” originally meant “dip” or “immerse” in the Greek language (the language in which the New Testament was written). Actually, “baptize” is not a translation of the Greek word, it is the English way of saying “baptizo” (the Greek word for “immerse”).
2. There are other words for “sprinkle” and “pour” in the Greek language, but none of them are used to refer to baptism. Only “baptizo” (meaning “immerse”) is used to refer to baptism.
3. Neither the biblical evidence, nor sources outside the Bible from New Testament times, indicate “baptizo” means anything other than “immerse.”
4. Scripture implies that baptism is a symbol of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5); and immersion best expresses it:
 - Going down into the water symbolizes death
 - Going under the water symbolizes burial
 - Coming up out of the water symbolizes life

BASIC STUDY

Read **John 3:23**. Why did John the Baptist baptize at Aenon, near Salem?

Which of the following methods require plenty of water?

Sprinkling

Pouring

Immersing

According to **Mark 1:9-10**, where was Jesus baptized? In verse 10, how is that described with respect to the water?

What does that tell you about the baptism of Jesus?

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“I DON'T THINK I'M READY.”

If you have received Christ and want to follow Him, there isn't anything else to get ready. You are ready as soon as you know you have a responsibility to fulfill before God, and understand what you're doing.

Have you received Christ? Do you want to follow His commands and examples? Do you understand baptism?

“I HAVE SOME AREAS IN MY LIFE THAT I WANT TO SEE CHANGED.”

In every case of baptism recorded in the Bible, it seems people were baptized first before they had a chance to get their life in order. God will bless your obedience by giving you the strength to change in other areas.

Are you ready to be obedient in baptism and trust God for the rest?

“I'M AFRAID OF SPEAKING IN FRONT OF PEOPLE.”

Peter sank when he took his eyes off Jesus. Put all your fears in God's hands. He will take care of you. Read **Matthew 14:28-33**. If Christ expected Peter to take such a step of faith, what do you think He requires of you?

Do you trust God with your life? Have you given your fears to Him? If not, now would be a good time to write a prayer to God, telling Him you're scared, asking for His help to overcome your fears, and committing to trust His goodness no matter what.
