



BAPTISM – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is baptism?

- Baptism is an act of obedience to Jesus and helps us obey the other commands of Jesus.
- Baptism is a public symbol of your salvation experience – being dead in sin and receiving life in Christ, being cleansed of sin, having a new identity as a child of God. It is a public witness to your commitment to Jesus as Savior and Lord.
- Baptism is a rite of passage and a declaration of who we worship, who we belong to, who we follow and who we love – Jesus.
- Baptism is the immersion in water of a follower of Jesus in the name of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Baptism is a command or an “ordinance” for every Christian. Jesus himself was baptized and commanded his followers to be also.

What are the important Bible passages on baptism?

- Matthew 28:18-20 – “¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Jesus’ final command was that his followers would share the good news of salvation, make new followers, and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit.
- Mark 1:9-11 – “⁹At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” Jesus himself was baptized as a thirty year old man at the beginning of his public ministry.
- Colossians 2:12 – “¹¹In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹²having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.” Baptism is an outward sign of the inward change Christ has made.
- Acts 16:29-33 – “²⁹The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” ³²Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.” Salvation comes from God through faith in Christ. Baptism came after the family had believed and were saved, and then they were immediately baptized. They did not have to wait a period of time.
- Acts 10:44-48 – “⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷“Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” ⁴⁸So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.” Baptism comes after salvation. It is not required to be saved. Notice that they were filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and praising God – all evidence that they were already saved. Then they were baptized.

Who should be baptized? When and where?

Everyone who believes in Jesus as their savior, follows him as their Lord, and trusts the Bible as their guide. We want to identify with Jesus! In Scripture, baptism always occurs after conversion and often occurs immediately after conversion. Baptism is the starting line, not the finish line of our faith. All churches teach that baptism is a prerequisite to becoming a member of a local church. Some churches teach that only local churches can perform baptisms while others teach that any believer can baptize others. Talk with your local church to set up your baptism.

Does baptism make me a Christian? Must I be baptized to be saved?

No. Baptism is a symbol of a change that has already occurred in your life. It is like a wedding ring; wearing the ring does not make you married; it symbolizes a relationship that you already have. It is a public witness to your relationship with your spouse. Likewise, baptism doesn’t make you a Christian, but tells others that you, in fact, are a Christian. You do not have to be baptized to be saved, but those who are saved will want to be baptized!

What if I was baptized as an infant or before I became a Christian?

Since baptism is commanded for Believers, if you have not been baptized since trusting Christ as your savior then you should consider being baptized. Many people worry that it will be disrespectful to their parents if they are re-baptized. However, it is actually a strong affirmation to your parents. They baptized you as an infant because they wanted you to someday follow Christ. And now you want to follow Christ. Also, baptism isn’t for the Christian who has “arrived” at spiritual maturity but for the believer who is ready to start the process of Christian growth.

Questions to consider:

- What insights about baptism has this teaching given you? What questions has it raised?
- Why do you think it is important for a believer to be baptized?
- Have you been baptized as a believer by immersion? What is stopping you?