

WHAT IS WATER BAPTISM?

The word "to baptise" in Greek is "baptizo" which means "to immerse, cause to be dipped, to submerge, to overwhelm". It was a term used by dyers of cloth. To baptise something in water means to put it under the water. So, in the Biblical sense, to baptise a person in water literally means to put that person right under the water.



WHY BAPTISE IN THIS WAY?

Water baptism for the Christian identifies our death, burial and resurrection with Christ. "Therefore we were 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." Romans 6:4.

It is clear that the tradition of sprinkling people or pouring water on them does not show this meaning of burial / submerging. Only immersion in water shows a burial. The practice of water baptism appears in the New Testament with the appearance of John the Baptist. "John came baptising in the wilderness and preaching a baptism for the remission of sins. And all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." (Mark 1:4,5)

John taught repentance for the cancelling of sins. Those who received his teaching had to repent (being heartfelt sorry & turning from sin), confess their sins (Mark 1:5) and "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Luke 3:7,8). There had to be a change of heart before John would baptise the people coming to him.

Christian baptism is a decision to follow Jesus Christ and to be His disciple. (Matthew 28:19). Jesus although he hadn't sinned, was baptised as an adult "to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). By being baptised you are dying to the deeds and lusts of the body and all that is old, to let the past be buried and to rise up into the new life given by God. It is a physical act & spiritual change.



WHO IS WATER BAPTISM FOR?

Baptism is for all Christians who have repented of their sin and believe with all their heart Jesus Christ is Lord. Here's an example of how it worked out in Acts: "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptised?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him." (Acts 8:36-38).

Nowhere in the book of Acts is it recorded that people were made to wait a certain time before they were allowed to be baptised. Wholehearted faith, genuine repentance and the intention to live for Jesus was all that was required. Jesus said "He who believes and is baptised shall be saved." (Mark 16:16). No promise is made to those who are baptised without believing.

I WAS BAPTISED AS A BABY - DO I NEED TO BE BAPTISED?

The short answer is "Yes". Many people are "baptised" as babies by sprinkling or christening in the Catholic, Anglican and Reformed traditions. However, there is no example anywhere in the Bible of babies being baptised. A baby cannot believe the gospel, cannot repent, cannot confess sins. He or she is not yet responsible for their actions, and God, who is infinitely just, does not condemn to damnation babies who die. Jesus said "Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 19:14). Innocent babies and very small children belong to God. "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 18:10).

DO I NEED TO BE A CHRISTIAN /BORN AGAIN?

Yes - Peter, having preached the gospel to the people, was asked, "What must be do?" He responded: "Repent, and let one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38). Repent means to turn around (that is turn away 180 degrees from your life of sin) and walk with God. You have to be sick of sinning and have a heartfelt desire to change. It has to come before baptism. When we have Faith



in Jesus and repent this is when our sins are forgiven.

Faith / Repentance -> Baptism-> Filled with Holy Spirit

The same thing can be seen in all the following passages from the book of Acts:

Acts 8:12,13: The conversion of the Samaritans.

Acts 8:37 The eunuch; Acts 9, Acts The conversion of 10:44-48: The conversion of Cornelius, his and close friends. below); Acts The conversion of Philippian jailor and his household; Acts 19:1-6 The Ephesian disciples.



Ethiopian 22:8,16 Saul Acts conversion relatives (see 16:31-34 the

With Cornelius, we can know that these people believed the message of Peter about Jesus, since God poured the Holy Spirit out on them. These people, especially Cornelius were already God-fearing people and obviously God had prepared their hearts to receive the Holy Spirit. Other Jewish believers recognised what God did as proving that these Romans had been granted "repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). It is clear from this passage that someone who is genuinely baptised in the Holy Spirit should also be water-baptised. The order of baptisms is unimportant - just for both to be done as soon as possible so you can advance in your Christian life!

WHAT DOES WATER BAPTISM MEAN?

It is a death, burial and resurrection. Romans 6:4 says "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." Colossians 2:12 says "having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." It means death to the old nature, the old ways, habits and lifestyle. Burial of all these things. A new life in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is what baptism is about. It is identification with Jesus Christ. "...and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also— not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" 1 Peter 3:21. You can use your baptism daily to overcome temptation. You can say "The 'old me' might have done that, but that is dead and buried under the water, and it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in

me." Baptism gives you the power to overcome the struggle against sin. No wonder the devil wants to whisper "you are not ready yet..." as he knows it means a cutting off of the past and a power to live the new life.

There are many pictures of baptism in the Old Testament e.g. when Moses and the people crossed through the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:1,2), and were delivered from the slavery of Egypt. The Christian who follows Jesus' lead and chooses water baptism will find themselves in a real way delivered from the power of the world, with a new foundation on which to build their Christian life.



RESPONSE FORM

Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

I have repented and asked Jesus to be my Lord and Saviour. I understand the next step for me is to be baptised in water. Please include me in the next Baptism Service.

I WANT TO BE BAPTISED

Please hand in the response form to Tim or Allison. One of them will contact you to finalise any details and chat through any questions you may have. We are delighted you have made this decision and know it will prove to be a foundation in your Christian life.

On the day you will need:

Jogging bottoms

Thick T shirt

Swimsuit (or underwear)

Towel and carrier bag.

At the venue you can get changed into the above, and after you have dried off get changed back into your regular clothes.

There are good, separate Male and Female changing facilities.

STILL GOT QUESTIONS?

Baptism often throws up questions. Read through the passages above and let God speak to you. Why not come and talk with the leadership team, who can help you with this important decision.

Exploring WATER BAPTISM - Finding Answers From God's Word

Destiny
CHURCH/NORTH EAST