

LET'S TALK ABOUT BAPTISM

TALK TO YOUR **KIDS**

A CHRISTIAN
PARENTS GUIDE
TO HELP
YOU NAVIGATE
TOUGH SUBJECTS
WITH YOUR KIDS



Let's Talk About Baptism

A Message from Watersprings Family Ministries

Have you ever watched a water baptism at church and wondered why we do that? Why do we take people who say they believe in Jesus, and then put them under water for a few seconds and then pull them back up? And why do people come out of that water with great big smiles on their faces? Do they like being soaking wet? Does that make them “better” Christians? Just what is this water baptism thing all about?



What Is Baptism?

To explain water baptism, we have to talk about the word itself and then we have to talk about who it is for. First, let's talk about the word itself: baptism. When the Bible uses the word "baptism," it is describing the act of "baptizing." The word "baptize" comes from the Greek word "baptizō." The act of baptizing is called baptism and it comes from another Greek word, "baptisma." Both Greek words, baptizō and baptisma, mean essentially the same thing: to dip repeatedly, to completely immerse, or to overwhelm. This is why many Christian churches prefer to practice what they call "total immersion baptism." That is where the person performing the baptism takes the one who is being baptized completely under the water - total immersion - and then brings them back up again, out of the water.

The word baptizō was used to describe a vessel that had been dipped and cleansed, or a ship that sank in the ocean, or of people who had drowned. It was also used in the textile or cloth industry. When a piece of cloth or a bolt of material needed to be a different color, it would be dipped or immersed repeatedly into a vat of the proper dye until it was overwhelmed with the new color. When an inspector determined that the cloth had been completely dyed through-and-through or overwhelmed, they would declare it as being "baptizo." It was completely converted to a new color; a new identity.

So, all of these ideas are related to water baptism for believers in Jesus Christ. When a believer in Jesus is baptized, they are saying, “I am all in. I have been cleansed. I have been overwhelmed by Jesus and I want to be a new person, through-and-through.”

In Romans 6, the Bible says that when a person is baptized, they are declaring their belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Therefore we were buried in 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. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.

(Romans 6:4-5)

So, the idea of total immersion baptism is that when one is standing in the water, they are identifying with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. When they go down into the water, they are identifying with His death and burial. When they come up out of the water, they are identifying with His resurrection. It is as if they are saying, “I know and believe that Jesus did this for me, so I want to die to myself and rise up to walk in the newness of life I have found in Him. I want to be a new person, through-and-through. Baptizō!”

Who Should Be Baptized?

The very last thing Jesus said to His disciples before ascending into Heaven was, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

(Matthew 28:19-20)

So, it seems clear that Jesus meant for baptism to be for those who have made the decision to follow Him; to be His disciples.

When John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing in the Jordan River, he called for confession of sin and repentance before he would baptize anyone, (Matthew 3). When the apostle Peter was preaching the gospel, he said, “Repent and be baptized,” (Acts 2:38). A few verses later it says, “Those who gladly received his word were baptized,” (2:41). When Philip the deacon was preaching in Samaria, it was after they “believed in the name of Jesus Christ” that the people were baptized, “both men and women,” (Acts 8:12).

When we put all of this together, it is clear that Jesus meant for anyone who would confess and repent of their sin, and put their trust in His death, burial, and resurrection for salvation, and who would desire to be identified with Him and be His disciple (follower), should be baptized.



***Repent
and
be
baptized.***

(Acts 2:38)

Why Should a Disciple Be Baptized?

The overwhelming majority of Scriptures dealing with salvation say nothing whatsoever about baptism. In fact, the apostle Paul makes it clear that salvation has nothing to do with baptism, and vice versa. In Ephesians 2:8 & 9, Paul writes, “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.” There is no work – not even baptism – that can add one thing to the grace of God. Paul also wrote, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect,” (1 Corinthians 1:17). Notice, he made a clear distinction between baptism and the preaching of the gospel.

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So, why be baptized? The answer to that question is quite simple: obedience. Jesus said that we who choose to follow Him and lose our identity in Him should be baptized.

The act of baptism itself does not save a person. It is like the person who is entering into salvation is putting their signature on the contract. When a person receives the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:12), they are entering into a covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ. All of the promises of that covenant relationship come from God, through Christ. It is a covenant of grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). You can do nothing to earn salvation or to earn God's grace. By definition, grace is God's unearned favor. Baptism is merely an outward sign that one has been changed on the inside. Overwhelmed. New identity.

You do not have to be baptized to be saved, but you do have to be baptized.

Maybe that sounds confusing, but it is really meant just to help us think it through thoroughly. Think of it this way, when a parent says to their child, “You have to be home by 9:00 tonight,” that child has to be home by 9:00. Now, if the child is not home by the prescribed time, are they still the child of that parent? Of course they are! But they did not do what they were told, and so there is a conflict. There is now an issue of broken trust or of not meeting their responsibility. The next time they expect their parent to trust them, there will likely be some hesitation. They are still the child of that parent, but they may not be experiencing the full orb of the blessing they might otherwise have known.

So, too, with baptism. The last thing Jesus said before His ascension was, “Make disciples and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” (Matthew 28:19). Seems like it must have been important to Him since it was His parting statement. And while you do not have to be baptized to be saved, it makes sense that if you want to truly be His disciple, you would want to obey His command to be baptized.

If I Was Baptized as an Infant, Should I Be Re-baptized?

Believe it or not, this is a very common question. The apostle Peter probably gave the best insight to respond to this question. Referring to baptism, he wrote that it is “not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” (1 Peter 3:21). In other words, while it will do nothing to remove your sin, it will give a good conscience. And since we have already determined that baptism is for those who have confessed and repented of sin, one might ask, “Did I confess and repent of sin when I was an infant?” That is not very likely. No doubt, many parents go through the sacrament of baptism for their infant child in order to dedicate their newborn to the Lord, and that is commendable. But when a person comes to that place where they make their own decision to be a follower of Christ, it is important to mark that decision by “signing off on it,” so-to-speak, through believer’s baptism.

Being baptized will not remove your sin, it will give a good conscience.

If I Have Backslidden and Recommitted My Life to Christ, Should I Be Re-baptized?

Again, this is a matter of personal conviction and of having a good conscience toward God. Certainly, there may be several times in one's life where you will find yourself drawing closer to Christ than you were previously. One does not need to be re-baptized every time they find themselves drawing nearer to Him or making a re-commitment of their life to Him. You may recall when Jesus was about to wash the feet of the disciples just before the last supper, (John 13). When He came to Peter, Peter balked at the idea of Jesus washing his feet. Jesus said, "If I do not wash your feet, you have no part with Me." Peter's response to that was, "Then not just my feet, but all of me, from my head to my feet." (Sounds like baptism, doesn't it?) But Jesus responded, "The one who has already been completely bathed only needs to have his feet washed."

While there is much going on culturally in that conversation, there is much for us to consider as well. Peter was clearly equating total cleansing with being in covenant – having part – with Jesus. Thus, he suggested a total, head-to-foot cleansing. But Jesus said it was not necessary. "Peter," in a sense, "your body is clean. You've just been walking in dirty streets in your sandals. Let's just wash off the dust of the world from where you've been walking. A total washing is not necessary."

If you find yourself coming back to the Lord after having walked around in the world for a while, you do not necessarily need to be re-baptized. If you choose to do so, for a clear conscience toward God, that is up to you. So, you may think you need to be re-baptized, but you may just need to come to the Table of the Lord, take the bread and the cup, and let your Lord Jesus wash the dirt from your feet.

To learn more about the Table of the Lord, see our booklet, “Let’s Talk About Communion.”

If you would like to be baptized in obedience to the Lord, contact the church office or watch the bulletin for our next scheduled baptism.

There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

(1 Peter 3:21)

A note to parents from Watersprings Family Ministries

Thank you for taking on the exciting opportunity & responsibility to teach your kids about Jesus! With your help teaching and ministering our Savior's message to another generation.

*We understand there are many tough subjects & hope our **Talk To Your Kids Series** will strengthen & educate you for the task ahead.*

All these and other resources can be found at Watersprings Church at 4250 S 25th E, Idaho Falls, ID 83404, online at watersprings.net or call (208) 524-4747



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