

WHAT IS BAPTISM?



An introduction to what the Bible teaches about water baptism.

*"We exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ Jesus
in Piqua, Miami County, and the world,
until Christ is all and in all."*



OBJECTIVES



We will answer the following:

// What is baptism?

// What does baptism mean?

// How should baptism be performed?

// Who should be baptized?

// When should a person get baptized?



WHAT IS BAPTISM?



// OPENING

- Read Romans 6:3-11
- Read Colossians 2:11-14

// WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Simply put, water baptism is:

“...an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ for believers to visibly express their union with Christ in His death and resurrection by being immersed into water as a symbol of their new life in Christ.”

// WHAT DOES BAPTISM MEAN?

Baptism is symbolic of several things:

- Baptism expresses a believer’s union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. In this way, it is a visible presentation of the gospel! Jesus died, went into the grave, and came out three days later. In the baptism ceremony, the regenerate man/woman goes under the water and comes back out.
- Baptism also expresses purification from sin. Just as water washes off dirt, the water of baptism symbolizes the believer being cleansed from the pollution of sin. Scripture makes it clear that baptism symbolizes spiritual cleansing and purification.¹
- Baptism speaks of the new birth. When a believer goes down into the water it is a picture of doing down into the grave and being buried. Coming up out of the water is a picture of being raised with Christ to walk in newness of life. Colossians 2:12, “**having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.**”

¹ Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:4ff; 1Cor. 6:11; Tit. 3:5; Heb. 10:22; 1Pet. 3:21; Rev. 1:5

Baptism is a beautiful picture of the gospel. It reminds us that by God's mercy and grace, we have passed through the waters of judgment, died and been raised with Christ, had our sins washed away, been given newness of life, and guaranteed an eternal resurrection in glory.

NOTES:

// HOW IS BAPTISM PERFORMED?

The Greek word *baptizō* means “to plunge, dip, immerse” in water. When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan river, Mark 1:10 says, “**He came up out of the water**”. For these reasons and because what is being symbolized in our union with Christ in His death and resurrection, we believe the proper mode of water baptism is by immersion. The whole of the Trinity is involved in baptism. Jesus told us in Matthew 28:19 to baptize “**in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**”.

NOTES:

// WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

We believe water baptism is reserved for those who have repented of their sins, professed faith in Jesus Christ, and shown evidence of His Lordship in their life. We believe baptism should be administered only to those who give a profession of faith in Jesus Christ.² We do not believe baptism is a meritorious event, meaning it does not merit salvation or God's grace.³ The act of baptism does not save, but it is an act of obedience to the commandment of the Lord.

NOTES:

² This is known as “credo-baptism” or “believer's baptism”. It is distinct from the paedobaptist or “infant baptism” position.

³ The Roman Catholic Church teaches baptism is necessary for salvation and causes regeneration.

// WHEN SHOULD A PERSON GET BAPTIZED?

The New Testament shows that a baptism followed a person's conversion. Acts 2:41, "**Those who received [Peter's] word were baptized.**" These believers received Peter's preaching, meaning they trusted in the gospel and were baptized thereafter. We see a similar pattern in Acts 8:12, "**But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.**" Therefore, we think it is generally best for a believer to be baptized soon after they become a Christian.

While the Bible teaches that a person should be a believer before he/she gets baptized, the Bible does not provide an age. Children should be old enough to give a believable profession of faith. When parents notice convincing evidence of conviction of sin, repentance, genuine spiritual life in Christ, as well as some degree of understanding of the gospel, baptism may be appropriate. This requires careful oversight of the local church and good biblical teaching in the home.

NOTES:

// ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

:: *Baptism: Three Views* by David F Wells & Sinclair Ferguson

:: *Understanding Baptism* by Jonathan Lehmann

:: *Going Public: Why Baptism is Required for Church Membership* by Bobby Jamieson

:: *What is Baptism?* by RC Sproul