

Water Baptism

This resource is designed to provide a basic understanding of what baptism is and to help prepare for water baptism.

Baptism Enjoined (called for):

Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-16; John 3:5; Acts 2:37-39; Acts 10:48

Significance:

It's a Public Symbol

Water baptism is our public symbol that we are Jesus'. In the Old Testament, the Jews had circumcision as their physical act to signify that they belonged to God – but only men were circumcised. This relationship with Christ is our public symbol for all who confess Jesus as Lord, and believe that He has been raised from the dead. Galatians 3:27 says, "...for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." And Colossians 2:11-12 says, "In 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, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead."

It Represents the Washing away of Spiritual Bondage like the Red Sea

Additionally, the waters of baptism remind us of how the Israelites walked through the Red Sea on dry land, with water on both sides. I Corinthians 10:1-2 says, "For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The water washed over the Egyptians and ensured freedom from physical bondage for the Israelites. The waters of baptism are like that, reminding us of our freedom from spiritual bondage.

Our Sin is Buried and We are Raised New with Christ

Romans 6:1-5 says,

"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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.

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection."

When we go under the waters of baptism, we liken ourselves to dying to sin, just as Jesus died and was buried. And just as Jesus was resurrected to new life, our coming out of the water is a symbol of our new life in Christ.

It Represents the Washing Away of Sin like the Flood

The flood of Noah's day washed the sinfulness of the earth away. In the same way, baptism is a picture of sin being washed away from us. Peter wrote in I Peter 3:21 says, "...and this water

symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge [or response] of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ...”

Examples:

Acts 2:41 Acts 16:15
Acts 8:12 Acts 16:33
Acts 8:38 Acts 18:8
Acts 9:18 Acts 19:5

Questions for Discussion:

1. Have you ever been baptized? If not, why? If so, when? Why did you get baptized? Does baptism mean anything different to you now than it did then?
2. Is it necessary to be baptized to be saved? Why or why not?
3. What role does baptism play in the life of the believer?
4. If a Christian has not been baptized and tells you that it is unnecessary for salvation, how would you respond?

When you want to be baptized:

Please be prepared to share a short testimonial of how you came to place your faith in Christ and why you want to be baptized.