

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

When you are baptised you will be identifying with Christ's sacrificial and substitutionary death, burial and resurrection. It is an outward demonstration of what has already taken place inwardly.

The Key is IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST

Baptism is a picture of what has already taken place within us. Going into the water is acknowledging Jesus on the cross, and His death for us.

Going under the water symbolises Jesus' burial in the tomb.

Coming up out of the water symbolises Jesus' resurrection from the domination of death.

Baptism is like a burial. The old life is left behind, the new life rises up and the Christian walks in newness of life.

Read Romans 6:3-11

The early church understood water baptism to symbolise the death and burial of the old way of life, followed by resurrection to a new life with Christ. If we think of our old sinful life as now being dead and buried we have a powerful motive to resist sin. Not wanting the ugly old life to come back to power again, we can consciously choose to treat it as if it were dead. We can enjoy our new life in Christ because we have joined with Him in this death and resurrection. Our life of sin died with Him when we confessed our sin, repented from sin, and committed our lives to Jesus Christ.

Baptism is not the means by which we receive forgiveness of sin and enter into a vital relationship with Jesus. Rather it is a public demonstration and witness that we have accepted by faith that which God has made available for us through His Son and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

BAPTISM AND COMMITMENT TO THE LOCAL CHURCH

- Read Acts 2:40-47

When you are baptised it is also very important for you to make a commitment to the church family which you are part of. This allows you to grow and mature in your faith, and you are also able to encourage and build others up in their faith.

We all need each other as we reach out for Jesus Christ into the community and the world that we live in.

You are encouraged to discuss this church commitment with our Pastor.

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BELIEVERS BAPTISM



TRANSFORMED THROUGH FOLLOWING CHRIST

WHAT IS BELIEVER'S BAPTISM?

Believer's baptism is such an integral part of Christian initiation that the New Testament presumes that a commitment to follow Jesus will be followed more or less immediately by being baptised in water.

The 3,000 who believed God's Word were baptised.
(Acts 2:37-41)

The man from Ethiopia was baptised.
(Acts 8:26-39)

The jailer and his family were baptised.
(Acts 16:25-33)

Believer's baptism has been described as "the outward expression of an inner commitment to follow Jesus".

When we are baptised we follow Jesus' example to follow. At the very beginning of His public ministry Jesus was baptised by John in the Jordan River. (Matthew 3:13-17) He did this in obedience to the will of God the Father.

It is also an act of obedience to Jesus. Jesus commanded it - "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". (Matthew 28:16-20)

The apostle Peter commanded it - "Repent and be baptised..." (Acts 2:38)

We are not baptised in order to receive the salvation Jesus offers, but rather as a sign of our commitment to Him, of following His example, and of obedience to Him.

HOW SHOULD I BE BAPTISED?

The word "baptism" is the English form of the Greek word "baptizo" which means "to immerse, to dip, to plunge, to submerge". The Greeks used the word "baptizo" for such things as the dying of a garment by dipping it into dye, or the drawing of wine from a bowl by plunging a cup into the bowl.

The word "baptism" means to "put under, immerse or submerge, to plunge" Biblically, believer's baptism is therefore a baptism by full immersion in water.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTISED?

Biblically, baptism is for those who have made their own decision and commitment to believe in and follow Jesus Christ. If you have made a decision to follow Jesus and have not been baptised as a believer, then baptism is definitely for you.

WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTISED?

From all the examples in the New Testament believer's baptism should follow very soon after belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour and as Lord.

The test is not spiritual maturity - but belief.

The test is not physical age - but belief. The test is not approval of family or friends - but belief.

The test is not the passing of a certain amount of time since commitment to Jesus - but belief.

The test is not that your friends or peers are being baptised - but rather your own personal belief.

It follows repentance.

It follows belief.

It follows commitment to Jesus.

Baptism is not a sign that you are good enough or mature enough. Rather it is a sign that you have begun a whole new life journey of faith and commitment to Jesus Christ.

Peter replied,

"Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ....

Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."

Acts 2:38,41