

Baptism

Key Verse

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28:19

Basic Biblical Understanding

Generally speaking, people are quick to place faith in Jesus (in repentance) but they are slow to profess faith in Jesus (through baptism). There are many reasons for the delay, but a primary reason is confusion. Baptism is often shrouded in confusion and misunderstanding.

Baptism can be confusing because every church and every denomination are different. Some people are baptized as infants, others as adults. Some people are sprinkled, others are immersed. Some churches teach that baptism saves, while other churches teach that baptism is a symbol. Regardless of the differences, when a person understands New Testament baptism, much of the confusion is clarified.

The word ‘baptize’ (‘baptizo’ in Greek) means to wash, dip, immerse, sink, or even drown. In the New Testament, disciples of Jesus are commanded to be baptized after they have repented of their sins by placing faith in Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38). The pattern of the New Testament is that baptism consistently occurs after salvation and by immersion.

There are three main reasons that disciples are instructed to be baptized: obedience, Gospel symbolism, and identification. Baptism is the first step of obedience after salvation. Jesus commands His followers to be baptized (Matthew 28:19). Baptism symbolizes Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:4). Through baptism, a disciple declares the Gospel message to those who are present. Finally, disciples of Jesus identify with Jesus through baptism. Baptism publicly declares, “Jesus is my Savior. He died on the cross for my sins; He rose from the dead so that I could have life. I identify with Jesus.”

The only prerequisite for baptism is repentance by faith. Baptism is not reserved for really “holy” people. Baptism is not reserved for those who have been Christians for years. Baptism is a step of obedience so that every disciple of Christ publicly declares the Gospel and personally identifies with their Savior.

Verses (ask God to show you how they apply to your life)

- “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Galatians 3:27
- “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day were added about three thousand souls.” Acts 2:41

Helpful Questions and Application

1. If you have repented of your sins by placing faith in Christ, what’s holding you back from identifying with Jesus through baptism? List your reasons and take them to God in prayer.
2. If you’re still confused about baptism, consult a pastor, mentor, or mature Christian friend. Take the first step by contacting them and asking for clarification. Make sure that the answers you receive can be found in Scripture.

Additional Resources

Scripture references: Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12, 38; Acts 9:18; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12–13

Baptism video: [The Purpose of Baptism](#)