

A Believer's Baptism in Water

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and 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

What is baptism? Greek word: *Baptizmo*, which literally means to “dip under, to immerse or to dunk.” It is when someone, on their own volition, chooses to publically testify that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Savior. As they stand in the water, they are forgiven and cleansed by the Lord. A person’s baptism does not save them but is a powerful symbol of Christ’s redeeming work for all to see.

Inductive Study with a Mentor

Scripture	Questions to wrestle through together as you read!
John the Baptist- John 3:1-11	What was John’s message? What was necessary for those that believed his message? Who did John confront and why?
Samaritan Revival- Acts 8:1-13	What evidence did the people see of God moving that confirmed Phillip’s message about Christ? Who was Simon? Did he and other people that believed the message about Jesus being the promised Messiah, get baptized in water?
Cornelius’ House- Acts 10:34-48	Did Peter preach the full Gospel about Jesus? What surprised the Jewish Christian brothers that came with Peter? Even though they received the Spirit, did Peter still urge them as followers to immersed in water?
Paul’s Instruction- Romans 6:1-7	What would Paul say to a Christian that willingly continues to walk in a sinful lifestyle? How does Paul symbolize this truth? Is it a true statement that baptism is a public funeral the person who you were before Christ?

Natural Events in the life of a person the follows Christ – Salvation, Water Baptism and Baptism in the Spirit.¹

Salvation- This occurs when a person confesses with their mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and believes in their heart that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9, John 1:12). This initial conversion always precedes baptism (or identifying with the Christian body). At this point the person has their spirit regenerated by the Holy Spirit that comes into this willing vessel to dwell. This is the only requirement necessary to be identified with Christ as one of His children and be counted as a Christian. If they die before water baptism they have all the same promises given to any other child of God and will spend eternity with the Lord. (Ex- thief on the cross)

Water Baptism- Is the outward expression of a person’s inward testimony. Every person mentioned in the New Testament as becoming a follower of Christ were

¹ Detailed description of these events are found in Ernest Gentile’s book *The Glorious Disturbance*.

baptized in water shortly after their profession of faith. (3000 converts @ Pentecost: Acts 2:41, Samaritans responding to Phillip's message of salvation 8:12, the Ethiopian Eunuch 8:38, the apostle Saul/Paul 9:18, Cornelius and his family 10:47-48, Lydia and her household 16:15, the Philippian jailer and his family 16:33, and the Ephesian disciples 19:5)²

Baptism in the Spirit- Until Cornelius' house the Church considered the first two experiences (salvation and water baptism) essential before they could be empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Lord clarified for the Church at Cornelius' house in Acts 10-11 that the only precursor for the Lord's empowerment was salvation. This did not diminish the role of the act of immersion in water in the early Church because they continued to baptize people as soon as they were saved. If you are not yet empowered by the Holy Spirit like the 120 at Pentecost or Cornelius' house seek Him with all your heart and He promises to baptize you (Luke 11:5-13). Without this event in a Christian's life they lack the necessary power to carry out the Great Commission to the fullest in their lives.

Questions we find in the Church today

I was baptized as a child. Do I need to be baptized again now that I know Christ?

Many God-fearing parents go to a traditional church when their children are young and are encouraged to baptize their children. As an act of faith they give that child to a pastor (or priest), they are sprinkled and prayer is offered. There is no biblical precedent for this act to be considered a baptism. It is more appropriate to refer to this as the child's dedication like in Luke 2:22-38 where Simeon and the prophetess Anna dedicated the Jesus eight days after His birth. No water, just prayer and prophetic words. If you were baptized as a child, thank your parents for committing you to the Lord, yet convey your desire to be baptized now that you are a Christian in keeping with the biblical pattern of salvation with baptism in water to follow.

I received water baptism as a Christian young person.... but fell away... and now I am back with Christ. Should I be baptized again?

Children that at a young age meet the Lord, commonly through their parents, are baptized in water through immersion with the biblical understanding that they have a personal relationship with Jesus. After the baptism they make choices and live a life that is consistent with the devil's desires. At some point the conviction of God brings them to a place of repentance and recommitment to Christ. At this point they want to publicly declare their allegiance to Jesus Christ. "Should they be baptized again?" What we recommend to this general situation is that the person reaffirms their faith publicly, confesses sin and commits themselves to a local church family. This does not need to be accompanied with baptism because the believer's baptism they received was valid. Just like any other person

² Passages taken from an article written by Pastor M. Wayne Benson in Enrichment Journal in the Spring of 2000. The article is entitled "The urgency of water baptism."

wallowing in sin, confession of that sin is the gate to freedom. Baptism is to identify with Jesus as Lord and Savior and that took place shortly after they placed their trust in Him as a young person and there is no need for re-baptism. On the other hand, if due to peer pressure or parental expectation, yet without a relationship with Jesus get baptized; they should be baptized as an act of their will, in confessing Christ publically, for the first time as a follower of Christ.

In what “formula” should I be baptized? This is becoming less and less of an issue in the modern Church. That said, in communities throughout the nation, there are churches cause confusion on this doctrinal point. Before someone is baptized, the pastor declares, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.” This is referred to in theological circles as the “Trinitarian” formula. A possible conflict comes, when a new believer reads passages like Acts 8:16. In passages like this people were baptized in the “name of Jesus.” The question comes in the mind of the new Christian, “Is that different from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?” *No!* Another way of translating this passage in Acts is “baptized into the authority of Christ.” In whose authority did Christ come? How did He send them out? The Father sent them, with faith in the Christ, through the power of the Spirit. With this understanding we baptize confidently with the traditional Trinitarian formula as we read in Matthew 28:19-20 of Father, Son and Spirit.

Baptism at Grays Harbor Foursquare Church

Who: We offer the opportunity to be water baptized to anyone who declares that they have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They do not have to be a member of the church but we strongly encourage them to be plugged into a Christian church to grow in their faith.

Where: We prefer to do this in a congregational setting, so that fellow Christians can celebrate God being active in their local church. It also adds a level of accountability in the discipleship process.

What will it look like? The pastors (or possibly other people that were used by the Lord bringing them to faith) will join together at the front of the congregation to baptize you in water.

- #1 Share why you want to be baptized and testify to what Jesus has done in your life
- #2 Pastoral Team and leaders will pray over you
- #3 You will be immersed completely in water and raised in the newness of life
- #4 Live a life worthy of praise before your Lord and King