

New Believer's Guide



Water Baptism Basic Truths

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” Peter 3:18

What is water baptism?

Water baptism is an outward showing, a public profession, and a symbol of a person's identification with the person and work of Jesus Christ. This includes His life, death on the cross, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

Full immersion in water (baptism) was in practise for hundreds of years prior to the time Jesus walked upon this earth. Pagans and Jews alike conducted ritual full immersion baptism of new converts. So, when John the Baptist came on the scene, people did identify with water baptism.

Baptism into the body of Christ:

Water baptism is only an outward token of what has already taken place spiritually, in a person's life. What has already taken place spiritually? John the Baptist's ministry was one of (1) confession of sins, (2) repentance of sins, and (3) all for the need we have to be forgiven of our sins. John the Baptist said *"I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptist you with the Holy Spirit."* Mark 1:8

Then John the Baptist baptized Jesus the Christ. Jesus was and is sinless. So then, why was Jesus baptized? He was baptized for your sake and mind, as an example of what is right. He demonstrated our need for spiritual baptism into the body of Christ (the Church). When Jesus came to be baptized by John the Baptist, John was reluctant and *Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to **fulfil all righteousness.**"* Then he [John] allowed him. Matthew 3:15

"To fulfil all righteousness" is the equivalent to Jesus setting the example for us. We are to be baptized spiritually into His body, the Church, and we are to be baptized in water as an outward demonstration of our need for the forgiveness of sins.

Why should a person be baptized?

Baptism is a commandment of the Lord, and is also confirmed and commanded by the Apostles in scripture. Therefore, baptism for the disciple of Jesus Christ should not be considered optional.

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

*Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

*Acts 2:41 Then those who gladly received his word were **baptized**; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.*

*Mark 16:16 "He who believes and is **baptized** will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*

*Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were **baptized**.*

As Jesus was baptized, as an example for our sake, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him as a dove in bodily form. I believe this is a picture of our need for the indwelling and power of the Holy Spirit in our lives

Why do we need the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

There are at least six reasons.

1. The Holy spirit helps us to Pray

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Romans 8:26

2. The Holy Spirit strengthens us

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, Ephesians 3:16

3. The Holy Spirit is The Comforter and He comforts us

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:26

4. The Holy Spirit teaches us

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:26

5. The Holy Spirit leads us

Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. Mark 1:12

Immediately following Jesus' baptism, He was driven [led] into the wilderness and was tested. So too we are led and are tested by the Lord.

6. The Holy Spirit protects us

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. 1John 4:4

Why is a person baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

When John baptized Jesus, we see the presence of all three persons of the trinity of God; the **Son** Jesus was being baptized, the voice from heaven was heard from the **Father**, and the **Holy Spirit** appeared as a dove descending in bodily form.

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:16-17

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

When should a person be baptized?

A disciple of Jesus should be baptised after confessing one's sin, repenting [turning away] of that sin, and professing faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. The action of believing includes repentance of sin. *"Repent and be baptized..." Acts 2:38.* Repentance must first take place, then baptism.

What about infant baptism?

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

An infant does not yet possess the moral or mental faculties to repent and is not yet aware of sin. Repentance of sin is required first, and then baptism. Therefore, it is not Biblical to baptize infants.

However, a child who has acknowledged and repented of sin, and who professes faith in Jesus Christ for forgiveness and salvation, should be baptized when the desire to be baptized is expressed by the child. There is no age requirement or limitation in the Bible; only that one must first repent from sin, and believe.

Sprinkled or fully immersed?

The word 'baptism' means to be completely immersed. The idea is to take a cloth and dip (submerge) it in ink dye until all of the fabric has been completely saturated with dye, every fibre. Immersion is the New Testament biblical example of baptism. But, because it is a symbol of our belief in Him, most importantly is what has already taken place in the heart. Namely, realization that one is a sinner, the need to be saved, repentance, and belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. So then, sprinkling, dunking, or whatever means is available, will do. The Biblical example is full immersion, so this is our preference when available.

If a person has not been baptized, is this person still saved? (Will they go to heaven?)

Since salvation is based on simply 'believing' the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then if a person believes, the answer is "YES!", that person is saved from sin, and will spend eternity with the Lord in heaven. Again, believing includes confession and repentance of sin.

As Jesus was being crucified, one of the thieves being crucified next to Jesus turned to the Lord and asked to be remembered. Jesus turned to Him and said, "Today, you will be with me in Paradise." The thief could not physically get down from the cross to be baptized. Instead he died before being baptized. This is a perfect example, that whilst baptism is commanded, baptism is not a requirement of salvation.

How many times must a person be baptized?

Just as salvation [spiritual baptism into the body of Christ] is a 'one-time' event, so also is baptism, because it is representative of salvation/belief that has already occurred. By the way, water baptism is not another baptism; it is only an outward demonstration of the spiritual baptism, which has already taken place.

For one who had been baptized as an infant, or may have been baptized prior to true repentance and belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and has subsequently confessed Jesus as Saviour and Lord, often times there is a desire to be baptized again, citing the insignificance of infant baptism.

Remember that the Lord looks upon the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). Therefore, if you participated in water baptism before true conversion, and desire to be water baptized again, the Lord understands. Obviously, water baptism is to take place after conversion.

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