

# Water Baptism

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Sooner or later, as a new Christian, you will hear about baptism. So, we want to discuss baptism in order that you will know what it's about and that you will understand the significance of it.

Often there can be unspoken questions in the minds of people when they are presented with the challenge of being baptised in water, such as:

- ◆ Do I really have to be baptised?
- ◆ What difference does it make anyway?
- ◆ Just as I thought, rules and regulations!
- ◆ I don't know if I really want to.
- ◆ Do I feel anything?
- ◆ My parents had me christened. Do I have to be baptised?
- ◆ It's so old-fashioned.
- ◆ I'm not ready; give me time.
- ◆ I'm following the Lord OK. Why be baptised?
- ◆ I'm too young.
- ◆ I'm too old.
- ◆ I don't know enough about the Bible.
- ◆ Do I have to wear funny clothes?
- ◆ It will be so embarrassing etc.

## 1) WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Water Baptism is a believer's is completely immersed under water by another believer then raised again. It is simply a physical act expressing a spiritual truth.

The literal meaning of the original Greek Bible word "Baptizo" from which we get the English term "to baptise" is to dip, to plunge, to immerse.

By definition and usage the word means:

**To put into or under water so as to entirely immerse or submerge.**

Baptism is NOT sprinkling or christening. Baptism uses ordinary water with NO additives plus it has had NO incantations or special blessings prayed over it.

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## 2) WATER BAPTISM PRACTISED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Water baptism was a common practise in the New Testament. John baptised many people and it was always for repentance. No wonder John was reluctant to baptise Jesus, because He had no sin to repent of. Jesus requested John to do so in order to fulfil all righteousness.

Acts 2:41	3000 gladly received his word, were baptised.
Acts 8:12	They believed the good news and were baptised.
Acts 8:35-38	The Ethiopian believed and was baptised.
Acts 9:18	Saul, 3 days after his conversion was baptised.
Acts 10:43-48	Believed the message of forgiveness, were baptised.
Acts 16:14-15	Lydia, whose heart the Lord had opened was baptised.
Acts 16:30-34	Jailor and his household believed and were baptised.
Acts 18:8	Crispus, the Synagogue Ruler, believed and was baptised.

Water baptism was for people old enough to understand and believe in the Gospel they had heard, and repent of their sin. The individual had to do this for themselves, making it impossible for a baby to do. This also excludes sprinkling of babies with water.

## 3) DOES BAPTISM SAVE ME?

The answer is **NO!**

The Bible says:

*“But if we are living in the light of God’s presence, just as Christ does, then we have wonderful fellowship and joy with each other, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin.”* 1 John 1:7

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.”* Ephesians 2:8-9

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## 4) WHY SHOULD A PERSON BE WATER BAPTISED?

### a. IT IS A COMMAND OF JESUS CHRIST

*“Therefore, go and make disciples in all the nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* Matthew 28:19

### b. IT IS THE PLEDGE OF A GOOD CONSCIOUS TOWARDS GOD

*“In baptism we show that we have been saved from death and doom by the resurrection of Christ; not because our bodies are washed clean by the water, but because in being baptised we are turning to God and asking Him to cleanse our hearts from sin.”* 1 Peter 3:21

### c. BECAUSE JESUS HIMSELF WAS BAPTISED (Matthew 3:13-17)

*“After his baptism, as soon as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God coming down in the form of a dove. And a voice from heaven said, ‘this is my beloved Son and I am wonderfully pleased with him’.”* Matthew 3:16-17

### d. IT WAS A FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH OF THE EARLY CHURCH

*“And those who believed Peter were baptised - about 3,000 in all.”*

Acts 2:41

*“... then immediately he and all his family were baptised.”*

Acts 16:33

The normal pattern in the New Testament was Baptism took place as soon as possible after a person received Christ as Saviour and Lord. In many instances Baptism was entered into immediately after profession of faith.

### e. WATER BAPTISM SYMBOLISES WASHING OR CLEANSING

*“And now, why delay? Go and be baptised, and be cleansed from your sins, calling on the Name of the Lord.”*

Acts 22:16

This is only a symbol. We are washed clean by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 1:5) and we are cleansed by the Word of God (John 15:3).

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## f. IT'S AN OUTWARD CONFESSION OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED WITHIN

It expresses our identification with Jesus. (Romans 6:1-11)

## 5) IS WATER BAPTISM NECESSARY?

**Yes!** It certainly is if we desire to obey our Lord. Jesus commanded the disciples (which we believers are) to baptise in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). The Apostle Peter, God's messenger, commanded people to repent and be baptised (Acts 2:38). Jesus Himself set the example in order to fulfil all righteousness by being baptised in water (Matthew 3:16). Not only should we be baptised in water because we are commanded to, but because it pleases our Lord to see us obeying out of love for Him (a correct motive).

Baptism does not make us a Christian but marks us out as a Christian. We need to be baptised publicly as the early Christians were. This will show that we have repented of our sin, received the Lord Jesus into our lives, and show publicly our allegiance to Him.

When we go beneath the water of baptism we are acknowledging that we have repented of our sinful life, made a mental decision to be finished with the old lifestyle (died to self and sin), and with God's help live a life that will please Him.

Read Romans 6:3-6. Paul tells of the spiritual transaction that takes place in our lives when we become Christians. Water Baptism is a public demonstration of what we have experienced spiritually as shown in Romans 6:3-6.

Nowhere does the Bible literally teach that a believer must be baptised before permission is given to partake of the communion.

## 6) HOW DOES A PERSON QUALIFY FOR WATER BAPTISM?

First, we must have repented of our sins and received forgiveness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Acts 3:19	Repent and turn to God
Acts 16:31	Believe in the Lord Jesus to be saved
Acts 10:47-48	Receive the Holy Spirit

It is interesting to note in 1 Corinthians 12:13 that all believers have been baptised by the Spirit into one body. In fact, Romans 8:9 makes it clear that if we do not have the Spirit we do not belong to Christ, therefore, to belong to Christ we must receive the Holy Spirit.

In other words, a person needs to believe in the Lord Jesus to be baptised by the Holy Spirit, which in turn qualifies that person to be baptised in water. To receive Christ is exactly the same as believing in Him (John 1:12).

In the New Testament the words "believe in", means to put our wholehearted trust in unconditional surrender. It is an action that takes place. We decide to put our wholehearted trust in the one we had believed about. In a moment of time we were transferred from being a child of Satan to a child of God. We were given eternal life and can never perish (John 10:28). Sealed with the Spirit of God as a guarantee of ownership (Ephesians 1:13).

REMEMBER that in one day about 3000 believers proved their love for Christ by being baptised (Acts 2:41).

## 5) THE METHOD OF BAPTISM

Water baptism in the New Testament was always in accordance with the true Greek meaning of the word "Baptizo", meaning to dip, to plunge, to immerse in water. It is noticeable that there was always much water needed for a person to be baptised.

John	3:23	...much water...
Acts	8:38	...went down into the water..
Acts	8:39	...came up out of the water...
Matthew	3:16	Jesus came up out of the water.

In the New Testament, at least two people were always involved, the candidate for baptism

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and the baptiser. The candidate was put beneath the water by someone qualified to do so.  
John baptised Jesus in the river Jordan (Matthew 3:13)

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**Do you qualify according to the scriptures?** If so, you are a new person in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17). So, be baptised publicly in water. Christ will be glorified and your life will be blessed.

## ASSIGNMENT:

### Memorise:

**Matthew 28:19-20** *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

## NOTES: