

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT BAPTISM

Baptism has been a custom of the Christian Church since its beginning, and it is practiced at this church. Here are some of the questions that people ask in regard to this very important and significant ordinance.

Q: What is Baptism?

A: Christian Water Baptism is a rich and beautiful public ceremony in which a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ is immersed under and raised from water by another person.

[The word "baptism" is also used to refer to an Old Testament ceremony (Heb. 6:2, 9:10), John's baptism (Matt.3:6, 11, 20:22-23, 21:25), and Spirit baptism (Matt.3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, Acts 1:5, 11:16, Rom.6:3-4, 1 Cor.12:13, Gal.3:27, Eph.4:5, Col.2:12). But the focus of this sheet is Christian water baptism.]

Q: Where did Baptism originate, and why do we practice baptism?

A: It originated with Christ Himself. Jesus was baptized (Matthew 3:13-17), and He commanded His Disciples to baptize everyone else who would become His disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). The Disciples followed Jesus' instructions and baptized all who became followers of Jesus (Acts 2:38,41; 8:12,38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15,33; 18:8).

Q: What does Baptism mean?

A: Baptism provides a symbolic testimony of many things. It declares: "I believe in the Triune God of the Bible and I have become a follower of Jesus Christ" (Matthew 28:19-20); "I have repented of my sins and I have been forgiven" (Acts 2:38); "My sins have been washed away" (Acts 22:16); "I have spiritually died to the world and been raised to live a new life with Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:1-4); "I have a cleansed conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).

Q: Does Baptism save a person?

A: No. It is very important to understand that baptism does not save a person; it only symbolizes that a person has been saved. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ, and not by any good works (Ephesians 2:8-9). We are saved by His mercy, not because of righteous things we have done (Titus 3:5). We are saved by believing in Jesus Christ as the sinless Son of God who died on the cross and was raised from the dead so that we would not have to perish, but could have eternal life (John 3:16). We are saved by hearing and believing the Gospel, not by being baptized (1 Corinthians 1:13-18).

Q: Why was Jesus baptized, since He was never a sinner?

A: John the Baptist wondered the same thing (Matthew 3:14). Jesus said it was to "fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). By being baptized like sinners are, Jesus identified Himself with sinners, and He set the example for everyone after Him to follow.

Q: Is this the same thing as "Infant Baptism"?

A: Many churches practice Infant Baptism. They do so, because:

1. They feel that New Testament Baptism is the equivalent to Old Testament Circumcision;
2. They feel that the Bible's reference to "household" baptisms implies infant baptism;
3. There are references in early church history to infant baptism.

Nevertheless, while we love and respect our brethren who believe in and practice infant baptism, we believe it is not the same as Believer's baptism, because:

1. Circumcision was for males only, but baptism is for both male and female believers.

2. Infant baptism reflects a decision by the parents, but the baptism that the Great Commission commands and that the Apostles practiced comes after an individual makes a conscious

and personal decision to be a follower of Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:38, 8:12, 36-38, 9:18, 16:14-15, 31-34, 18:8). 3. Church history and tradition are helpful and instructive, but they can never be considered the final determining factors in matters of theology; that authority rests solely with the Word of God.

Q: Aren't there other methods of Believer's Baptism?

A: Yes, many churches baptize by Sprinkling (Aspersion) or by pouring (Affusion). We practice baptism by Immersion because:

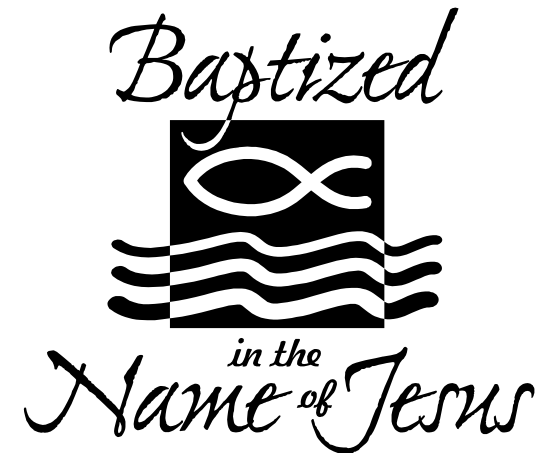
1. Immersion is most consistent with the literal meaning of the Greek word "Baptizo" (to dip or immerse), from which our English word is transliterated; 2. Immersion was the practice of the New Testament, evidenced by the fact that people went to be baptized where water was sufficient for immersion (Matthew 3:6, Acts 8:34-40); 3. Immersion best portrays the concepts of death and resurrection and total identification with Christ that Baptism is intended to portray (Romans 6:1-4).

Q: Who should be baptized?

A: Everyone who has become a follower of Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19-20). It is a responsibility to fulfill, but much more than that, it is a privilege to follow the Lord's example, and to pledge our allegiance to Him through this dramatic, symbolic ceremony of Baptism.

Remember, the most important issue is your salvation. There is no ceremony or ritual or religious activity in the world that can save you from your sin. If you have not repented of your sin and committed your life to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, we urge you to do so today!

If you have other questions about Baptism, or if you are a Christian and are ready to follow and obey the Lord in Baptism, please contact the Pastor or one of the Elders.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

ABOUT BAPTISM