

Baptism

Why Be Baptized?

Identity - Baptism is an immersion in water that identifies a believer with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-8). This new person then, by the power of the Spirit, seeks to have the new life of Christ reproduced in his/her life. All "of you who are baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Baptism brings us into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), not just one local church. We are baptized into Christ, not into a particular church.

Unity - We seek to keep the unity the early church experienced, expressed in Ephesians 4:4, "There is one body and one Spirit just as you were called to one hope when you were called one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." Baptism is a unifying experience, which is experienced in our trusting obedience.

Promises - When combined with faith and repentance, we have promises directly connected to the covenant sign of baptism: Forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), Washing away of sin (Acts 22:16; Ephesians 5:26), Salvation and a clean conscience (1 Peter 3:21).

Assurance - Baptism, when combined with faith and repentance, is a sign of the assurance of our salvation. We can know for certain that we have responded by faith to God's desires. Jesus

offered us a new covenant or "commitment" and we enjoy the blessings of the new covenant made through Christ.

Hebrews 10:22" ...let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, because we have been made free from a guilty conscience, and our bodies have been washed with pure water."

Obedience - Jesus commanded it as a part of the discipling of everyone: "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" (Matthew 28:19).

Commonly Asked Questions:

Why immersion? The Word "Baptize" Means "Immerse or submerge". The New Testament was written in the Greek language. If you were to check any Greek dictionary or lexicon, you would find that "baptize" is always translated as "immerse," "dip," or "plunge." There are other Greek words for "sprinkle" (rantizo) and "pour" (cheo), but these words are never used. Instead, the Bible always uses the specific word "immerse" (baptizo)[John 3:23, Matthew 3:16, Acts 8:38-39].

Why not infants? We have special times each year when parents may publicly dedicate themselves to raising their children to know God, but we believe the necessary steps of faith expected of each disciple of Jesus must be offered by the individual's personal decision (Acts 16:14, John 3, Col. 2:11-12).

Is Baptism necessary for salvation? Salvation is only by grace through faith in Jesus (Eph. 2:8). The waters of baptism do not contain any special properties that save us. However, baptism is a sign of our covenantal relationship with Christ and the benefits of that relationship (Rom. 6:3-8, Col. 2:11-12). We believe that God can save anyone he chooses in any way that he chooses, but the Bible shows us that the normal and expected first step in following Jesus as Lord comes in baptism (Acts 2:38). If we want the assurance of salvation, we should do whatever He says to do to be saved.