

BAPTISM

Baptism is perhaps the most important symbolic event in life. It shows God and others that you sincerely believe in Jesus and desire to follow Him. It's a physical symbol that shows our inner commitment to Jesus; much like a wedding ring symbolizes marriage, or a handshake 'seals the deal.' Sadly, baptism is a very controversial issue within Christianity, with opposing ideas about what it means, when & how it should be done, and whether or not it's absolutely necessary. The purpose of this sheet is not to explain a particular doctrine we consider to be "correct," but simply to help you discover what the Bible actually says about baptism so that you can be more confident and purposeful about your own response.

ORIGIN: In the original language of the New Testament (Greek), the definition of the word 'baptism' is to 'dip' or 'dunk'. In Jesus' time, it was common practice for people to be baptized in a lake/river to demonstrate love & devotion to God.

JESUS' BAPTISM: Read the story of Jesus' baptism by 'John the Baptizer' in Matthew 3:13-17.

SCRIPTURES ABOUT BAPTISM:

Here are a few of the scriptures that teach us about baptism, please read and record insightful thoughts & key words:

Galatians 3:26-27

Romans 6:1-11

Matthew 28:18-20

Acts 2:38

1 Peter 3:21

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM:

1. "Is baptism essential for salvation?"

No. We are 'saved' when we sincerely call on the Lord and turn our lives over to His care. When we ask Jesus to come into our lives and forgive our sins, He does just that. Salvation is a free gift of God. Sometimes, people want to get baptized to ensure that they go to heaven when they die – as if it were some type of 'heaven insurance.' This is not a right motivation. A better reason is to demonstrate to God and others that you've decided to follow Jesus.

2. "What if I was baptized as a small child or baby? Does that count?"

No. There is no mention in the Bible about the practice of baptizing small children. The Bible teaches baptism as the response of a person's decision to follow Jesus. Babies & small children are too young to know God and put their trust in Jesus. It certainly isn't harmful, and it can be a beautiful and meaningful ceremony for families; but it's not the same as being baptized as a believer. If you were baptized as a small child, we recommend you be baptized as a believer.

3. "I don't want to be in front of lots of people, can I be baptized at a different time?"

Yes. You may be baptized in front of a small group of friends and family. Any time.

4. "Can someone other than a pastor or priest baptize me?"

Certainly! If you have a family member or friend who is already a baptized follower of Jesus, he/she can do this for you!

5. "Where do I get baptized?"

The location for your baptism is totally up to you. You can be baptized in a Church baptistery, a river, the ocean, a pool or hot tub, etc. The important thing is WHAT you are doing and WHY you are doing it, not where it happens.

6. "What do I need to bring?"

For your baptism, please wear a modest bathing suit & dark colored shirt (white shirts are see-through when wet). Please also bring a towel and a change of clothes...and have someone take pictures!

7. "What's stopping you?"

If you haven't been baptized, please pray and consider making arrangements as soon as possible!