

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

Baptism

The Greek root word, *baptizein*, means to plunge, immerse or sink.

Water purification rituals were very common among ancient Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Greeks, Hittites & Hebrews. Mostly these would involve hand or foot washings. Jews practiced a special kind of once-for-all whole body water cleansing that was administered only to Gentiles who wanted to convert to Judaism. This, together with male circumcision, was necessary to be fully converted to Judaism.

John the Baptist took this and demanded everyone (Jew or gentile) be baptized to get ready for the coming kingdom. He completely left out circumcision. The Jewish leaders were offended because:

1. John was not 'refined'...Matt 3:4
2. They saw no need to be baptized as they were already of the 'chosen' race.
3. John didn't preach circumcision also.
4. John insulted them....Matt 3:7-12

Baptism is like a wedding ring...it is a symbol that you are married (or believe in Christ, have become a believer). But a symbol is not the substance. Being baptized doesn't make you a Christian anymore than wearing a ring on your 3rd finger makes you married.

FAQ's:

1. **What is baptism signifying?** Romans 6:1-14....when we go under the water, we are dying to our old way of life, our sins, our independence from God. We have been crucified with Christ. The water is symbolic of God, the Holy Spirit cleansing us....Titus 3:4-7. When we arise out of the water, we are arising to a new life in Christ, having been cleansed & indwelt with Him. We are being resurrected with Christ. We have now been crucified & resurrected spiritually.

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Romans 6:4

2. Why should I be baptized?

- A. Because it is being obedient to Jesus....Matt 28:19,20
- B. Because it announces to the world that you are a Christ-follower.

3. How should we be baptized? No one particular method (immersion, sprinkling, poured) is mandated, though we believe immersion best signifies it.

4. Do you have to be baptized to be in relationship to God? NO! Baptism is only a symbol of our relationship to God. You are still married even if you don't exchange wedding rings.

5. Who should be baptized? Only people who believe/receive in Jesus....Acts 2:37,38 8:12 10:47,48....Matt 28:19,20.

6. Who can baptize? Any Christ-follower. John the Baptist had no recognized degree or authority, except that he believed in the real God.

7. What about infant baptism?

- A. There are no examples of infants being baptized in the New Testament.
- B. Since baptism is symbolic of inviting Christ into your life, infants cannot make this decision. There are no scriptural examples of parents making this decision for them. God has children but no grandchildren.
- C. Infant baptists see a connection between the Jewish rite of circumcision (done as an infant) & baptism. The Bible nowhere makes this connection. The only place where circumcision & baptism are mentioned together is in Col 2:11,12. Even there, Paul specifically states that the circumcision he's talking about is not done by men, but by God.

8. Then what happens to infants who die? While the Bible is not specific, we believe that it infers they go to heaven....2Sam 12:23.

Many churches DEDICATE children to the Lord based upon the following scriptures....Mark 10:13-16....1Sam 1:19-2:10