

## Chapter III: Water Baptism

### Contents

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| A.What Is Baptism?           | 2 |
| B.Why Must We Be Baptised?   | 2 |
| C.Who Must Be Baptised?      | 3 |
| D.When Must We Be Baptised?  | 3 |
| E.Where Must We Be Baptised? | 3 |
| F.Who Can Baptise?           | 3 |
| G.How Are We Baptised?       | 3 |
| II. Summary                  | 4 |

## Chapter III: Water Baptism

*"Look, here is water. Wily shouldn't! I be baptized?" (AC 8:36b)*

### **A. What Is Baptism?**

#### **A.1. Outward Symbol**

Baptism is the outward and visible symbol of an inward and unseen, rebirth. At conversion we are "baptised into Christ" (Gal 3:27), signifying a spiritual baptism into the body of Christ. Water baptism graphically depicts what has happened to a person who has become a Christian. As they go down under the water they depict Christ's death and their own death to self. As they come up out of the water they depict Christ's resurrection and their own rising to a new life (Ro 6:1-14).

In the Old Testament the crossing of the Red Sea was a type of baptism through which the Israelites were cut off from Egypt and slavery (1 Co 10:2, 1Pe 3:21).

#### **A.2. Public Confession**

Baptism is a public confession of a private commitment. In many cases it is only when Christians are baptised that persecution becomes heavy, because of the public nature of this confession of faith.

### **B. Why Must We Be Baptised?**

#### **B.1. Obedience**

Jesus commanded it: "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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Mt 28:19-20a)

#### **B.2. Jesus' Example**

Jesus set the example by being baptised by John (Mt 3:13-17). When John the Baptist tried to deter Jesus from being baptised he replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."

- Baptism indicated He was consecrated to God and "officially" approved by Him (seen in the Holy Spirit's descent, and the Father's words of affirmation).
- At Jesus' baptism, John publicly declared Him to be the Messiah.
- Jesus identified with man's sin although He had no need to repent Himself.
- His baptism was an example to His followers.

### **B.3. The Early Church's Example**

- The first converts in Jerusalem (Ac 2:37-41).
- The Samaritans (Ac 8:12-13).
- The Ethiopian eunuch (Ac 8:36-38).
- Paul (Ac 9:17, Ac 22:16).
- Cornelius and his household (Ac 10:33-48).
- Lydia and her household (Ac 16:13-15).
- The Philippian jailer (Ac 16:31-34).
- Crispus and other Corinthians (Ac 18:8).

It is important to understand that baptism doesn't save anyone, but for those who repent and believe it is outward obedience necessary for proving inward repentance.

### **C. Who Must Be Baptised?**

All believers must be baptised: It is not infant baptism or adult baptism, but believers' baptism. Only believers can be baptised. Baptism is the symbol of existing change, not the cause of change.

#### **C.1. What About Infant Baptism?**

Babies cannot repent. Jesus was not baptised as an infant. He was dedicated to the Lord in Lk 2:22. Children who are old enough to understand the gospel and able to exercise personal faith can be baptised. This can happen at a very young age because the gospel is simple enough for a child to understand. Backsliders who return to Christ should not be "re-baptised" as baptism is a once-for-all act, just as being born again is not a recurring event.

### **D. When Must We Be Baptised?**

Upon conversion. In the early church people were baptised as soon as they believed. On the day of Pentecost, "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." Paul was baptised as soon as he believed. Conversion and baptism were almost simultaneous in the early church, often happening on the same day.

### **E. Where Must We Be Baptised?**

Anywhere! We don't need baptismal fonts etc.. The nearest water after conversion will do. See, for example, Ac 8:38-40.

### **F. Who Can Baptise?**

Any believer may baptise. It does not need to be an elder or leader. Philip, who baptised the Ethiopian eunuch, was an evangelist.

### **G. How Are We Baptised?**

#### **G.1. By Immersion**

We baptise by immersion not by sprinkling (Ac 8:38-39). Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptised him. "When they came up out of the water." (Ac 8:39a)

#### **G.2. Into The Name Of The Father, Son And Holy Spirit**

We baptise into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:18, Gal 3:27). The emphasis was that this is Christian baptism, not Jewish, pagan or John's baptism.

### **H. Summary**

In conclusion, baptism is a simple act of obedience to the revealed word of God. It invites God's blessing and establishes us on a godly foundation. "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." (Ac 7:24)

### **Additional notes on water baptism**

#### **Water baptism?**

What is the significance of baptism?

Have you ever thought about getting water baptised but have too many questions still unanswered?

In these notes we would love to help you understand a little bit more about this important, next step in your journey of following Jesus.

#### **Why should I think about getting baptised?**

##### **1. We follow the example of Christ:**

In order to understand the reason for being water baptised, it is important to carefully consider what the Bible says about it... Jesus himself was baptised. He was not a sinner, yet he humbled himself in obedience to identify with us and give us an example to follow.

*At this time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. The moment he came out of the water, he saw the sky split open and God's Spirit, looking like a dove, come down on him. Along with the Spirit, a voice: "You are my Son, chosen and marked by my love, pride of my life." Mark 1:9 MSG*

**2. It is an Act of Obedience:**

Water baptism is an act of faith and obedience to the commands of Christ.

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

**3. It is a Public Declaration:**

Baptism declares that you are a follower of Jesus Christ. It is a public confession of your faith in, and commitment to, Jesus Christ. It is the next step after salvation through repentance and faith and is an important foundation for the Christian life.

*Then he said, “Go into the world. Go everywhere and announce the Message of God’s good news to one and all. Whoever believes and is baptized is saved; whoever refuses to believe is damned.”* [Mark 16:16 MSG](#)

**4. What does it mean when I get baptised?**

➤ **You move from Spiritual Death to Spiritual Life:**

Baptism is a symbol of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection. Our entrance into the water during baptism identifies us with Christ’s death on the cross, His burial in the tomb, and His resurrection from the dead.

*“Going under the water was a burial of your old life; coming up out of it was a resurrection, God raising you from the dead as he did Christ. When you were stuck in your old sin-dead life, you were incapable of responding to God. God brought you alive—right along with Christ! Think of it! All sins forgiven, the slate wiped clean, that old arrest warrant cancelled and nailed to Christ’s cross.”* [Colossians 2:12-14 MSG](#)

➤ **You get a Brand-New Life:**

It is a symbol of your new life as a Christian. We bury the ‘old life’, and we rise to walk in a ‘new life’.

Baptism is like a wedding ring, it is the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart, a commitment that has to be followed through and lived out on a daily basis.

✚ ***Here is one simple way to explain baptism:***

Baptism is a symbol, a sign, a poster, a wedding ring. It's meant to show the world that that you love, trust, and have put your hope in Christ.

✚ ***It's like a wedding ring...***

Let's say I'm not married right now, but if I put a wedding ring on my finger, would that make me married? No, of course not. Similarly, I can be baptized in a church, but that doesn't make me a true believer in Christ. Imagine that I really was married, though. My wife/husband and I really did go through the marriage ceremony, but I just didn't have my ring on my finger. Would that mean I wasn't married? No, of course I would still be married. Similarly, I can be a believer in Christ, but not baptized, and my sins are still paid for and forgiven by God. But imagine that I truly was married and I really, really loved my wife/husband. Would I wear my wedding ring? Of course! I would love my wife/husband and want the whole world to know it! In the same way, if I have trusted Christ to save me from sin, and He is the lord and joy of my life, then I'll want everyone to know about it. So, baptism is a symbol, a sign, a poster, a wedding ring and statement to everyone who sees it that I have trusted Christ for my salvation, and I'm committed to living for Him.

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2*

*Corinthians 5:17*

*"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*

✚ **Baptism does not make you a believer; it shows that you already are one! Baptism does not 'save' you; only your faith in Christ does that.**

*"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*

➤ **A Blessed Life:**

In baptism, the believer has the triune name of the triune God placed upon them, 'Father', 'Son' & 'Holy

Spirit'. The name of the Lord Jesus Christ is the name of the Godhead (one God in three persons). The Gospels tell us to baptise believers *"into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit"*, [Matthew 28:19](#).

Baptism confirms our position 'in Christ' and affirms/supports the blessings of the Father on us as his children.

➤ **A New family:**

Baptism also connects us to the 'body of Christ', his people in the earth. In baptism there is a real sense of being joined with other believers, not just participating in an individual act of our own spiritual journey.

*"For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body"* [1 Corinthians 12:12-13](#)

➤ **How am I, or how are we, to be baptised?**

As per the example of Jesus – by being immersed in water – by being dipped under water. The word "baptise" comes from the Greek word "baptize" which means "to immerse or dip under water".

*"As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water."* [Matthew 3:16](#).

Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion under water. The book of Acts shows us that this was the norm for every believer.

*"then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water"* [Acts 8:38,39](#).

➤ **Who should be baptised?**

Every person who has made the decision to believe in Christ. When Paul writes to the believers in Rome, he assumes that all of them have been baptized ([Romans 6](#)). The one requirement for baptism is belief in Christ!

*"Those who accepted his message were baptised"* [Acts 2:41](#).

*"But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women."* [Acts 8:12](#).

We believe in baptising children when they are old enough to understand what it means and make a personal declaration of belief in Jesus Christ. (Usually, the age of 12 years old is a good gauge.) (*Water baptism is not the same as 'dedicating an infant'*)

➤ **When are we to be baptised?**

Believers in the New Testament were baptised on the same day. As soon as a person decides to believe in Christ, he can be, and is encouraged to be baptised.

*"Those who accepted his message were baptised." Acts 2:41.*

*"Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they travelled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him." Acts 8:35-39.*

**Baptism speaks primarily of a personal, public identification with Jesus Christ.**

1. It means we have turned from the old life of sin to a new life in Jesus Christ.
2. It means we are publicly identifying with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
3. It means we are openly joining, cooperating and participating with the other millions of believers who believe in Jesus Christ.

***Purpose & Importance.***

It originated with John the Baptist and is actually what earned him the title *"The Baptist"* John was widely known for baptizing people in the river Jordan and Jesus Himself was water baptized by John at the beginning of his ministry ([Luke 3:21](#)).

**Why should I consider getting baptized? Following Christ:**

In order to understand the reason for being water baptized, it is important to carefully consider what the Bible says about it. Jesus himself was baptized, although He was not a sinner, yet he humbled himself in obedience to identify with us and give us an example to follow.

*"At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan." ([Mark 1:9](#))*

**Important: Water Baptism is An Act of Obedience:**

Water baptism is an act of faith and **obedience** to the **commands of Christ**. On water baptism one of the principal passages, which establishes it as a doctrine is [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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

This passage establishes **water baptism as a commandment from Jesus himself**, and it is the principal reason why water baptism remains important for us today.

Since Jesus left a final command for us to be baptized (as disciples) and to baptize others (to make them disciples), there is nothing stopping us doing the right thing and obeying His instruction for us on this matter. Baptism demonstrates our love for Jesus, *"If you love me, keep my commands."* ([John 14:15](#)).

The apostles and the early church made sure to keep the commandment of water baptism. Several passages in Acts describe the apostles immediately baptizing nearly everyone who accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

[Acts 8:5-13](#); v12. *"But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."*

[Acts 9:10-18](#); v18 *"...He got up and was baptized."*

[Acts 10:34-48](#); v48 *"So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."*

[Acts 16:13-15](#); v15 *"When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home."*

[Acts 16:30-33](#); v30 *He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household. "Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized."*

[Acts 18:8](#); *"Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized."*

We do not save ourselves; God saves you through the work of Christ. It is God's will for everyone, that we express our love and trust of God by being Water

Baptized. It is a command of God and a public demonstration and a declaration of the work our Lord has already accomplished within us.

### Final Note:

This issue is our number one question we get. Some people are looking for answers, and a few want to debate the point over and over.

I would encourage anyone reading this that has not got water baptized to do the command of God and make that public demonstration and declaration of what Jesus has done for you.

There is no excuse to not doing it. Whether you are shy, having no church you attend, etc. Any Spirit filled pastor will make sure you understand it correctly and help you get water baptized - as long as you have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour.

There's no valid biblical reason why you should not be baptized.

If you need help finding someone to baptise you, you can contact Victory Church, Cradock and we'll help you.

### In Summary:

1. Water baptism is a demonstration of our obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Water baptism is a symbol (*like a wedding ring*) to identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.
3. Water baptism is a public declaration (*it's an expression of what you believe*) of our promise not to continue walking in sin.
4. Water baptism is a practical demonstration of our spiritual reality and a personal testimony that we have passed from the old life of sin to the new life in Christ.
5. Baptism connects us to the wider Body of Christ.

We must be careful not to let the significance of baptism be lost on us or simply consider it a mere tradition of Christianity. There is a deep symbolism to the core of our faith embedded in water baptism, and everyone who engages in it must be first made aware of its purpose and importance in scripture.

Baptism is not a rite of purification for Christians. For spiritual cleansing, we look to Jesus alone. Instead, baptism is a way to demonstrate the spiritual reality that Jesus has already accomplished through his work at the cross.

### What does the Bible say about infant baptism?

There is much confusion about baptism in the various Christian denominations. However, this is not a result of the Bible presenting a confusing message on baptism. The Bible is abundantly clear of what baptism is, who it is for, and what it accomplishes. In the Bible, only believers who had placed their faith in Christ were baptized - as a public testimony of their faith and identification with Him ([Acts 2:38](#); [Romans 6:3-4](#)). Water baptism by immersion is a step of obedience after faith in Christ. It is a proclamation of faith in Christ, a statement of submission to Him, and an identification with His death, burial, and resurrection.

With this in view, infant baptism is not a Biblical practice. An infant cannot place his or her faith in Christ. An infant cannot make a conscious decision to obey Christ. An infant cannot understand what water baptism symbolizes. The Bible does not record any infants being baptized. Infant baptism is the origin of the sprinkling and pouring methods of baptism - as it is unwise and unsafe to immerse an infant under water. Even the method of infant baptism fails to agree with the Bible. How does pouring or sprinkling illustrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Many Christians who practice infant baptism do so because they understand infant baptism as the new covenant equivalent of circumcision. In this view, just as circumcision joined a Hebrew to the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, so baptism joined a person to the New Covenant of salvation through Jesus Christ. This view is unbiblical. The New Testament nowhere describes baptism as the New Covenant replacement for Old Covenant circumcision. The New Testament nowhere describes baptism as a sign of the New Covenant. It is faith in Jesus Christ that enables a person to enjoy the blessings of the New Covenant ([1 Corinthians 11:25](#); [2 Corinthians 3:6](#); [Hebrews 9:15](#)).

Baptism does not save a person. It does not matter if you were baptized by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling - if you have not first trusted in Christ for salvation, baptism (no matter the method) is meaningless and useless. Water baptism by immersion is a step of obedience to be done after salvation as a public profession of faith in Christ and identification with Him. Infant baptism does not fit the Biblical definition of baptism or the Biblical method of baptism. If Christian parents wish to dedicate their child to Christ, then a baby dedication service is entirely appropriate. However, even if infants are dedicated to the Lord, when they grow up, they will still have to make a personal decision to believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved.