



### ARE YOU READY FOR BAPTISM?

Many people want to know when they or their children should be baptized. Because of its significance, such consideration should not be taken lightly. The following questions are meant to help individuals determine if they are ready for baptism:

- ▶ Do I believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross to pay the penalty for my sin?
- ▶ Do I believe that He was raised from the dead, defeated death, and now lives to give new life to all who trust in Him?
- ▶ Have I experienced the inward reality depicted in baptism's outward symbolism? Is my old life gone? Has my life changed because of Jesus?
- ▶ Do I believe that baptism will help me gain God's favor, be forgiven of my sin, or go to heaven when I die?
- ▶ Am I ready to publicly profess my faith in Christ and my decision to follow Him as my Savior and King?
- ▶ Do I understand the commitment of entering into the church, the covenant community of God's family? Am I ready to give myself to the church through prayer and service?

Think about these questions. If you believe you are ready to be baptized, contact one of the pastors and be prepared to discuss your answers with him. Do not be anxious about your answers. These questions are not a test; they are simply meant to stimulate conversation about the issue.



### BAPTISM AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP (FROM FBCMB'S STATEMENT OF FAITH)

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer into water, symbolizing our participation by faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is an outward display of an inward change (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12).

Christ commands all believers to be baptized as a sign of giving themselves up to Christ and His Body, the Church, to walk in newness of life in the Spirit (Matthew 28:18-29; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:4-6).

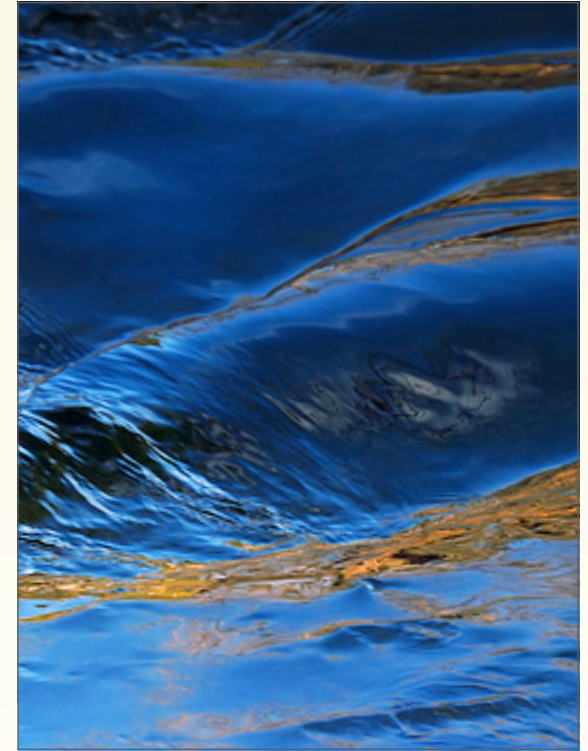
As such, it is a prerequisite to church membership (Acts 2:41, 8:12, 10:48).

By Pastor Jake Porter



# BAPTISM

## A PICTURE OF NEW BIRTH



### ✿ A COVENANT PROMISE ✿

When two people enter into the covenant of marriage, they often stand in a church before a minister, and because of their love for one another, they make a vow to love, honor, and obey until parted by death. Baptism is much the same. In baptism, one enters into a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ, uniting with Him and His family, and pledging to love, honor and obey - not just until death do them part, but for all time and all eternity.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## WHAT IS DONE AT A BAPTISM?

Baptisms are a time of testimony, when friends, family and church members are invited to witness a person's public profession of faith in and commitment to Christ as Lord. The baptismal candidate stands in the water with the minister, is usually given an opportunity to give testimony or answer questions regarding faith, and then is submerged in the water.

## IS BAPTISM NECESSARY FOR SALVATION?

No. The New Testament pattern shows that repentance and belief precede baptism (Acts 8:12, 16:14, 18:8). Also, the Bible teaches in many places that salvation is a gift and not the result of any human effort (Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:27-28; 2 Tim. 1:9, etc.).

Some who claim that baptism is necessary for salvation point to Mark 16:15. Notice, however, that this verse teaches that salvation comes from belief and baptism, but condemnation comes only through disbelief. This means that in the mind of the New Testament writers, baptism would naturally follow belief that saves. But lack of baptism does not warrant condemnation.

The other verse often used to claim baptism's necessity for salvation is 1 Peter 3:21. But notice here that baptism's "saving" is not about removal of dirt from a body; it is the response of a good conscience toward God - one already clean before Him.

## WHAT DOES BAPTISM SYMBOLIZE?

Baptism is symbolic of the salvation experience, which is one reason why only those who believe should undergo baptism. Romans 6 teaches that baptism is an act which "identifies" us with Christ. Just as Jesus died and was buried, so we are lowered under the water. This is a picture of our old life apart from Christ being dead and buried. Then, just as Christ rose from the grave, so we are raised from the water as a symbol of the new life we now walk with Christ. Baptism symbolizes our new birth.

Baptism is also a symbol of our entrance into the New Covenant. Not only does this mean that we are united to Christ, but we are also brought into the Church, the community of believers who share God as their Father.

## IS INFANT BAPTISM THE SAME THING AS BELIEVER'S BAPTISM?

Since baptism is a testimony of an individual's saving faith and an act of personal obedience to Christ, an infant with no understanding of the Gospel should not be baptized. Romans Catholics believe that baptism is necessary for the removal of original sin, which is contrary to our understanding of the symbolic nature of baptism. Presbyterians teach that God's covenant relationship is extended to the children of believers, therefore believers' children should be baptized and brought into the faith community. Baptists often view infant baptism

as a type of parent dedication, which can be an important part of a child's faith journey. It is not, however, a valid substitute for believer's baptism.



## WHY DOES BAPTISM REQUIRE IMMERSION?

Our English word is simply a transliteration of the Greek word "baptizo," which literally mean "to immerse." When the King James Version was being translated, rather than write "immerse" and face questions about the practice of sprinkling, a new English word - "baptize" - was created. So the command to be baptized is literally a command to be submerged under water. This is significant because of baptism's symbolism of death, burial, and resurrection, as discussed above.



## THE HISTORY OF BAPTISM

*The New Testament shows that during the time of the early church, baptism was observed by those who were converted to Christianity. But within three hundred years after the life of Jesus, churches had developed the practice of infant baptism. Their reasoning was that babies should be baptized to break the bond of original sin.*

*Infant baptism was the standard practice of the church until 1525, when a group of believers seeking to conform the church strictly to the New Testament pattern began to "re-baptize" adults upon their profession of faith in Christ as Lord. For this they were named "Anabaptists," or "re-baptizers."*

*Around the same time, a movement began among believers in England to separate from the Church of England to form a more pure church. When these Separatists encountered the teaching of the Anabaptists in 1611, the first "Baptist" church was formed. By 1644, Baptist churches were teaching believer's baptism by immersion as the entry point to church membership.*

