

BAPTISM: WHAT IS THE BIG DEAL?

WHY BE BAPTIZED?

To follow the example set by Jesus himself, "Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.' Then John consented." (Matthew 3:13-16)

To obey Christ's command, "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)

To publicly acknowledge my personal faith in Jesus Christ, "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." (Acts 2:41)

To express my love for Christ and His Word, "You are my friends if you do what I command." (John 15:14)

CONCLUSION: While salvation is a free gift of God's grace alone, the credibility of one's salvation is demonstrated by obedience. Taking the step of baptism demonstrates our obedience to Christ and His Word.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

The Bible teaches that every individual who puts his or her trust in Christ for salvation should be baptized. The Bible has many examples of this teaching. The people who heard Peter's first sermon asked, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37) He answered: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." (vs. 38) Their response: "Those who accepted His message were baptized..." (vs. 41)

In the book of Acts, numerous other examples of baptism of believers are given. For example: "But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed, and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere..." (Acts 8:12-13)

"...many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized." (Acts 18:8)

CONCLUSION: These biblical examples indicate that the person who has first repented of sin and believed in Christ should then be baptized. One must first be a believer in Christ to be eligible for baptism.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

Baptism is an outward symbol of one's identification with Christ's death, burial and resurrection. The lowering of an individual into the water symbolizes his or her identification with Christ in His death and burial. Similarly, raising that person from the water symbolizes his or her identification with Christ in His resurrection and new life.

"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We are 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 6:3-5)

CONCLUSION: Baptism is an outward expression of an inward experience that has already taken place through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

Because Jesus was baptized in that manner. "As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him." (Matthew 3:16)

Because it is the only method practiced in scripture. "And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8:38-39)

"As Jesus was coming up out of the water, He saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove." (Mark 1:10)

"Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptized." (John 3:23)

Because it is the literal meaning of the word baptize. The English word "baptize" is a transliteration of the Greek word "baptizo" which, if translated, means "to immerse or to dip under."

CONCLUSION: Even though other churches practice different methods of baptism which were introduced after scripture was written, we at West Noblesville Community Church feel it is in the best interest for the individual as well as the church to uphold the straight forward teaching and example of scripture.

SHOULD I BE RE-BAPTIZED?

That depends upon the significance of your first "baptism". If you had actually trusted Christ prior to being baptized, there is no need to ever be re-baptized as a sort of second commitment to Him (i.e. "This time I really mean it!"). But if your first "baptism" was as an infant, you were unable to personally declare your trust in Christ at that time. You should then seriously consider baptism now as a believer. This would not only be beneficial for you but also for those loved ones who will see you take your stand for Christ.

WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

As soon as possible! The Bible indicates that baptism is one of the first steps a new believer takes. "As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?' And he ordered the chariot to stop. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him." (Acts 8:36-38)

It's not unusual, however, for someone to discover the importance of baptism several years after professing faith in Christ. This person should make plans to be baptized at the first opportunity.

CAN MY FAMILY BE BAPTIZED TOGETHER?

Yes, there are many examples of whole families being baptized together, if each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation. We encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment.

HOW CAN I BE BAPTIZED?

It's actually very simple. Informational classes and one-on-one appointments are scheduled periodically for those interested in baptism. This enables you to not only learn more about baptism, but also provides an opportunity to share with others in a comfortable setting how you came to begin a personal relationship with Christ. Baptismal services are held at various times throughout the year.

We look forward to being contacted by many who want to take this public stand for Christ. You can do this by calling the church office (317-773-6359).

WHAT HAPPENS AT A BAPTISMAL SERVICE?

Pastor Jeff will open with prayer and explain to your friends and family the meaning and significance of baptism. You will enter into the water and the pastor will ask you three questions:

- Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior?
- When did that take place in your life?
- Do you understand that baptism is an outward symbol of that inward commitment you made in your heart?

Then Pastor Jeff will slowly lower you into the water and raise you up again.

Don't be surprised when people clap at your baptism. It is a very happy experience for any Christian when someone publicly identifies themselves as a follower of Christ. After everyone has been baptized, Pastor Jeff will close in a prayer of commitment for you.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BEING BAPTIZED

- Invite as many friends and family members as possible.
- Bring a towel, and a hair dryer (if desired).
- We encourage women to wear a swim suit under a pair of baggy shorts and a T-shirt.
- We encourage men to wear baggy shorts and a T-shirt.
- You will be able to change in the restrooms/other designated room.
- Don't forget your camera or camcorder.