



Instructions on Water Baptism

Congratulations on your decision to trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior! You now have the privilege of publicly identifying with Him through water baptism. Parents, if your child is being baptized, please walk him or her through this information.

Water Baptism is a public declaration of your personal faith in Jesus. The Greek word for baptism is "*baptizo*" and it means, "to immerse." This immersing identified the believer with Jesus in a radical way. The word "baptism" was used in ancient times to describe what cloth dyers did. If a cloth dyer had a piece of white cloth and they wanted it to become a red cloth, they would dip it or immerse it in red dye. By dipping the cloth, it would become identified with the color red.

We know that Jesus was baptized, that is, immersed publicly in water, for the purpose of identifying with the message and ministry of John the Baptist (Luke 3:21-22). John's baptism of Jesus Christ "*fulfilled all righteousness*" (Matthew 3:13-17). This means that it was the right thing to do. It is necessary to note that Jesus' baptism didn't "save" Him; it simply identified Him. It is crucial to note that water baptism does not save us. It is faith in Jesus that saves us from our sins (Luke 23:39-43). Therefore, baptism is not essential for salvation, however, it is very important since it publicly identifies believers with the One who saved them.

The early church incorporated water baptism as the first public act of identification with being a follower and disciple of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:41). By being immersed or dipped into the water, disciples of Jesus identify with several things such as:

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

The gospel means "good news." The good news is that out of love for us, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins so that we could be forgiven (Colossians 1:14) and made right with God (2 Corinthians 5:21). When people put their faith in Jesus to save them from the penalty of sin, they receive the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23).

According to 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, the gospel encompasses the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That person, who made a personal, spiritual decision, should then get baptized out of obedience to Jesus as a public declaration of their faith in Him. By going into the water they identify with Jesus' death. By going under the water they identify with Jesus' burial in the tomb. By coming out of the water they identify with the resurrection of Jesus from the grave.

New Life in Christ

Romans 6:1-4 tells us that we died with Christ and were raised to walk in a new lifestyle. We are new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17) with a new walk (Galatians 5:16). We walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7) and we walk as Jesus walked, following Him as His disciples (1 John 2:6). Water baptism signifies the seriousness of breaking from one's old lifestyle and committing one's life to Jesus. To get baptized in the early church era was a major commitment because Christians were often persecuted or even killed because of their profession. This is still true in some parts of the world today. Publicly following Christ can be very costly.

The Triune God

Jesus commanded His followers to make disciples of Him from every nation on earth. They were to baptize these disciples "*in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*" (Matthew 28:19-20). The Jews were the first recipients of the gospel (Romans 1:16), and as such, they were known for being monotheists, that is they worshipped one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). We must keep in mind that Jesus was handed over by the Jews to be crucified because they considered His claims to be the Son of God as blasphemous (John 19:7). By saying that He was God's Son, Jesus revealed that God is one in essence, yet also plural in

Person (John 10:33, 36). This mysterious concept is called the "trinity." The Father and the Spirit were present at Jesus' baptism, proving that God is plural in His oneness (Matthew 3:13-17).

The Local Church

Have you ever noticed that a person cannot baptize himself or herself? Someone else must baptize the person, and this is a sign of the community, encouragement, and accountability that comes from the local church. In the New Testament, wherever people professed faith in Christ and were baptized, they assimilated into local assemblies of believers (Acts 2:41). The local church provided love, discipleship, covering, family, and support for the newly baptized believer, which was and still is very vital. The baptized people now had pastors and leaders to teach them, and brothers and sisters in the faith to encourage them.

A Great Illustration of Baptism!

A wedding ring is a symbol that shows everyone that a person is married. The ring doesn't make that person married because technically, the vows accomplish that. The ring simply identifies that person as being married. If a spouse doesn't wear his or her ring that doesn't mean they aren't married anymore, but it does cause one to question if they are ashamed of the one they are married to.

Baptism is like a spiritual wedding ring because it doesn't make you saved, but it does show everyone that you are saved! We are in love with Jesus and we are not ashamed or afraid to make a public declaration through water baptism!

Rededication and Re-baptism:

Nowhere in the Bible is a Christian forbidden from being re-baptized. Since baptism is a powerful symbol that has a lot of meaning, value, and emotional connection with it, a believer in Jesus is free to choose to get re-baptized as a way of renewing or rededicating his or her commitment to Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:17).

Because some children were baptized at young ages, many of them didn't fully grasp the significance of that moment. Therefore, as they get older and gain more understanding, many of them desire to get baptized again. Some people get re-baptized as a sign of their repentance from a season of wandering or backsliding, and finally, many believers who are fortunate to travel to the Holy Land make it a point to get re-baptized in the Jordan River as a ceremonial gesture because Jesus was baptized there.