BAPTISM

What the Bible Teaches and Instructions For Your Baptism

CROSSROADS
BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

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and

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Crossroads Bible Fellowship

Version 1.01

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WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES

1. Why you should be baptized?

Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded it.

Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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." (Matthew 28:18-20)

The New Testament Church practiced it.

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. (Acts 2:41)

The Apostles taught it.

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

It demonstrates that you really do believe and obey the Lord.

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

We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands. (1 John 2:3)

2. What does baptism illustrate?

We identify with Christ's death and resurrection.

Going into the water symbolizes identity with the death and burial of Christ. Coming up out of the water symbolizes identification with Christ's resurrection. (See Romans 6:3-5 above)

For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ. (Colossians 2:12)

We have become new people through faith in Christ.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

3. Who should be baptized?

Every person who has trusted Christ for salvation should be baptized as his or her "first step" of obedience as a follower of Jesus Christ.

> *Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.* (Acts 2:41)

> *Simon himself believed and was baptized…* (Acts 8:13)

What about children? There is no biblical basis for baptizing infants. In every recorded instance in scripture, those who were baptized were old enough to have personal faith in Jesus Christ.

With children, we wait until they are old enough to believe and understand for themselves the true meaning of baptism. This may vary from child to child so we don't have a pre-determined age. Parents are encouraged to discuss this with the elders.

> *They (Paul and Silas) replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."… then immediately he and all his family were baptized…he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family."* (Acts 16:31-34)

(At Crossroads, we do have opportunities for parents to dedicate their children to the Lord and publicly commit to raising them in the ways of the Lord. This is not baptism and it is not something the Bible specifically teaches. Rather, it is simply a custom that some have adopted to give public expression to their desires for a godly household. In no way should this be confused with or replace believer's baptism).

5. How should we be baptized?

The word for baptism in the original language (*baptizo*) means, "to dip, immerse"[1]. Scripture teaches that baptism is an immersion of the person completely into water.

> *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)

> *As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water.* (Matthew 3:16)

[1] *A Greek Lexicon of New Testament Greek and Other Early Christian Literature, by Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich.*

6. When should you be baptized?

As soon as you have believed!

Those who accepted his message were baptized … that day. (Acts 2:41)

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?" Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. (Acts 8:36-38)

7. Is baptism necessary for going to heaven?

Baptism is not required to go to heaven nor does it help. Only faith is required in order to go to heaven. Baptism is like a wedding ring—an outward symbol of the inward reality. Baptism is the outward symbol of conversion. It is simply a public testimony of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

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)

8. What if I have already been baptized?

If you were baptized before you became a believer (for example, as an infant), we recommend that you be baptized again. Baptism is an expression of an individual's own faith, not that of the parents. By being baptized now you are reflecting your desire to be baptized in the same way the scripture teaches.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR BAPTISM

We are happy that you desire to be baptized as thousands of others have been throughout the centuries. You are joining that great crowd of believers who have stood up to be counted as followers of Jesus Christ. This will be a positive and joyful time for you, and also for other Christians who celebrate with you!

1. Interview

Upon your request to be baptized, one of the elders of Crossroads will meet with you for a number of reasons:

a. Give you an opportunity to discuss the reality of your faith in Christ.
b. Verify that you understand the meaning of baptism.
c. Explain the process of baptism at Crossroads
d. Answer any questions you may have.

2. Prior to the baptism

a. Please arrive about 30 minutes before the service begins. Someone will familiarize you with the baptism procedure prior to the ceremony.

b. Clothing: For men we suggest wearing slacks or shorts with a simple shirt. Many go in with bare feet. For women, we suggest a swimsuit with shorts and a top. We can also provide a modesty robe, under which you can wear a swimsuit. There will be a place to change.

c. Bring a change of clothes and a towel. Afterward, you will be meeting people.

3. The baptism

a. The baptism service will begin with brief time of singing. Someone will then explain the meaning of salvation and the significance of baptism.

b. The officiator (the one who will baptize you) will enter the water first and introduce each person one by one. When you are introduced, then you will enter the water and stand by him.

c. If you would like to share a brief testimony, that would be welcomed and you will be given the opportunity to do so at this time. We suggest in preparation you read chapter 12 "Personal Testimony" in the **Basic Christian Training** workbook. Remember the purpose is to tell of God's story in your life. Don't defame a religion or your background—instead proclaim the difference your relationship with Christ has made in your life.

d. When you are ready and in place, you will be asked publicly if you have received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. After you give your reply, the officiator will gently lower you into the water and help you back up. Then you will leave the water, dry off and watch the others being baptized.

4. Other information

a. Make sure to invite relatives, friends and associates to attend. Even unbelievers will see this as an important event in your life and will most likely attend at your invitation.

b. There will most likely be a meal or a reception time afterwards, so plan on staying for fellowship and introducing your visitors to others.

c. The baptism may take place in a baptismal tank in a church building or it may be out of doors at a lake or swimming pool. You will know this ahead of time.

d. You will be receiving a baptismal certificate to commemorate this experience.