

BAPTISM...

WHY?

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

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BAPTISM... WHY? : WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

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SCRIPTURES USED BY PERMISSION *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, ©1984.

Clark Tanner, *What About Biblical Baptism?* (Beaverton Christian Church), brochure.

Alan Ahlgrim, *Questions and Answers on Baptism*, (Christian Standard, Standard Publishing Co. January 30, 1994) page (99) 11.

A GUIDE BOOK TO HELP YOU MAKE A DECISION CONCERNING BAPTISM

If you have received this booklet, it must mean that you are interested in Baptism. The purpose of this little tool is to give you some scriptural background and help you to have a solid biblical reason for taking this step in your spiritual walk.

For those of us who are a part of the Christian Churches, and who have taken Christ to be our Lord and Savior, baptism is a very dear and sacred part of our spiritual development. It is my hope that it will also become the same for you.

FROM THE PASTOR

I am often asked about the importance of baptism. It is my desire that this brochure will help clarify the Biblical teaching about baptism.



Total immersion is baptism as taught in the Bible. Baptism pictures for the believer the reality of one's death to the old life, one's burial, and one's resurrection to the new life in Christ. The physical act of going under the water and coming up again is an outward visible testimony of one's faith in God.

Now the real question... Is it really important? The answer... **YES!** The Lord commands it and not to do it is to be disobedient. For a believer, this is not an option. We have no right to say no! The Bible teaches that once a person **Hears** the Good News, **Believes** the Good News, **Repents** of his/her sin and **Confesses** Christ, the next step is baptism by immersion.

If you are a believer who has not been baptized (immersed), we would welcome the opportunity to share in your baptism. We refuse to impose upon people more than the

Word of God asks to be a Christian or to require less than the Word states.

Jesus gave us the example and we must follow!

John Leffler, Pastor

LET'S MAKE SURE WE ARE ON THE SAME PAGE...

You will find that we use the terms “*Baptism*” and “*Immersion*” interchangeably since they mean the same thing.

The following scriptures are most of the verses you will find the word ***Baptism*** in the New Testament. I would encourage you to:

1. Look through these verses in this guide
2. Get your Bible and look up several of the sections and read the context around the verse. Why? Because you will then get the picture of what was happening at the event. This will give you a much more clear understanding.

3. Write down questions that come to mind as you read through these verses and bring them back to the one who gave you this guide.

Just so we are all on the same page: To find an address in your Bible you need to understand a little about how your Bible is divided up.

- The Bible is divided up into Two Testaments or Covenants: Old Testament and New Testament. There are 39 in the Old Testament and 27 Books in the New Testament.
- The Scriptures that we are going to be using in this guide will only be in the New Testament (the last 2/3rd of your Bible).
- Let's take the first Biblical citation or Address and break down its parts:

“*Matthew 3:6 (NIV)*”

- the First part ***Matthew*** 3:6 (NIV) refers to the Book in the Bible. (You can find this book in the Table of Contents at the beginning of your Bible.
- the Second part ***Matthew 3***:6 (NIV) refers to the Chapter in the book. This will be

the large numbers in the book. You will probably find 2 or 3 Chapters per page.

- The Third part of the address Matthew 3:6 (NIV) is telling you the verse. The advantage of having verses is that it makes it easier to find exactly where you want to be in a certain book/letter.
- The Last part Matthew 3:6 (NIV) in this particular cases is an abbreviation for *New International Version* of the Bible. There are a number of versions that are perfectly fine to use. For example:
 - NLT – New Living Translation
 - KJV – King James Version
 - ESV – English Standard Version
 - RSV – Revised Standard Version
 - Msg. – The Message (is a paraphrase Bible)These are just a few examples. There are many other very worthy translations.

One last note: The words in the Bible text that is in **red** are words that Jesus would have spoken.

Matthew 3:6 (NIV)

⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

Matthew 3:7 (NIV) *John Baptizes Jesus*

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

Matthew 3:11 (NIV)

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Matthew 3:13-15 (NIV)

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ Jesus replied, “**Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.**” Then John consented.

Matthew 28:19 (NIV) *Jesus’ Commission to the Believers*

¹⁹ **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,**

Mark 1:4-5,8-9 (NIV) *John Baptizes Jesus*

⁴ And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and

preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
⁵The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁸I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” ⁹At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

Mark 16:16 (NIV)

¹⁶ **Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.**

Luke 3:3,12, 16, 21 (NIV) John's Baptism

³He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

¹²Tax collectors also came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”

¹⁶John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

²¹When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened

John the Baptist's Explanation of Baptism

John 1:25 (NIV)

²⁵... “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

John 1:26 (NIV)

²⁶“I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know.

John 1:28 (NIV)

²⁸This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

John 1:31 (NIV)

³¹I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”

John 1:33 (NIV)

³³I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, “The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.”

John 3:22 (NIV)

²²After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized.

John 3:23 (NIV)

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

John 3:26 (NIV)

²⁶ They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.”

John 4:1 (NIV)

¹ The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John,

John 4:2 (NIV)

² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.

John 10:40 (NIV)

⁴⁰ Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days. Here he stayed

Acts 1:5 (NIV)

⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 2:38 (NIV)

³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:41 (NIV)

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

Acts 8:36 (NIV)

³⁶ 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?”

Acts 8:38 (NIV)

³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

Acts 9:18 (NIV)

¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,

Acts 10:47, 48 (NIV)

⁴⁷ “Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Acts 11:16 (NIV)

¹⁶ Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’

Acts 13:24 (NIV)

²⁴ Before the coming of Jesus, John (the Baptist) preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel.

Acts 16:33 (NIV)

³³ At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.

Acts 18:8 (NIV)

⁸ Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

Acts 19:5 (NIV)

⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 22:16 (NIV)

¹⁶ **And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'**

1 Corinthians 12:13 (NIV)

¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Colossians 2:12 (NIV)

¹² **having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.**

LETS GO A LITTLE DEEPER...

HOW WAS BAPTISM PERFORMED ORIGINALLY?

Bible Baptism is immersion. Matthew 3:16, Acts 8:26-39, John 3:23

Jesus was immersed. (Matthew 3:13-16)

Even scholars from churches which accept other modes than immersion will concede that immersion was original and that sprinkling and pouring were the concessions of man. It was never authorized or practiced by the Apostles or Christ.

Every denomination, Protestant and Catholic will accept immersion as valid Christian baptism.

Other forms did not come into practice until much later. It was not until 1311 that pouring or sprinkling were accepted as forms of baptism. No Biblical statement can be cited to grant to any person or church the right to alter apostolic practice with regard to baptism. The true

meaning of baptism cannot be visualized or portrayed in any form other than immersion.

WHO IS A PROPER CANDIDATE FOR BAPTISM?

- Those who **hear** the gospel. Acts 18:8
- Those who **believe** in Christ. Mark 16:16
- Those who **repent** of sin. Acts 2:38
- Those who **confess** Christ with their mouths. Romans 10:9
- Thus infants are **not** proper subjects for baptism

WHAT CHRISTIAN BAPTISM IS...

- Christian baptism is immersion in water in submission to the authority of Jesus Christ. It is an act of obedience which commits one to a life of obedience.
- Christian baptism is a command to be obeyed. Matthew 28:18-20.

- Christian baptism symbolizes the cleansing from sin, a washing away of the old life. Acts 22:16
- Christian baptism symbolizes the new birth by which one becomes a new creature in Christ. It symbolizes the beginning of the new life. John 3:1-4; 1 Peter 3:21; 2 Corinthians 5:17.
- Christian baptism is the act which initiates the Christian in fellowship. Acts 2:36-41; 1 Corinthians 12:13
- Christian baptism symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and also of the Christian, the new convert. Romans 6:3-10; Colossians 2:12.

WHAT CHRISTIAN BAPTISM IS NOT.

- It is not a guarantee of heaven. If there is no faith and repentance, water baptism is nothing but getting wet.
- It is not proof to the congregation of the genuineness of a convert's faith. It is only proof to God who knows the heart and motives of the person.

WHY SHOULD A PERSON BE BAPTIZED?

- He is commanded to by his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:18-20.
- It is the appeal to God for a clear conscience. 1 Peter 3:21.
- To demonstrate openly his obedience and his willingness to come under the lordship of Christ. 1 John 2:4.
- Jesus was baptized himself to “**Fulfill all righteousness.**” Matthew 3:15
- We have no grounds on which to claim exemption from any divine requirement.
- Obedience resulting from love is our main motive.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE BAPTIZED...

You need to call any of our pastors and set up an appointment. Baptisms can be arranged for any Sunday service Give us call today!

SOME KEY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT BAPTISM.

Q: Can a person be a Christian and not be baptized?

A: To say “yes” is to say more than the Bible says (Mark 16:16) To say “no” is to presume to be God Once a person has said “yes” to Jesus as Savior AND Lord he has forfeited all rights to say “no” to any of Christ’s commands. Baptism is one of these commands.

Q: Why do we require a person to be a baptized believer in order to be a member of Castle Rock Christian Church?

A: Because in all the Biblical examples we have, this was the patter of the early church. We do not believe that

we would be following the Scripture if we allowed less than that.

Q: How soon should a person be baptized once he has received Christ?

A: The pattern in the book of Acts was “**immediately.**”

If you have additional questions, please contact one of our Pastors or Elders and we would be happy to talk with you.

Additional Q & A

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON BAPTISM ¹

Q: What does the word “baptism” really mean?

A: It comes from the Greek word, baptize, which means “to dip,” “immerse,” “sink,” “overwhelm,” or “plunge.”

Q: Who should be baptized?

¹ This comes from an article written several years ago (1994) by Alan Ahlgim, a Christian Church pastor with the Rocky Mountain Christian Church in Lon. It was originally published in the *Christian Standard*, Standard Publishing Co.

A: Only those who have been taught and have decided to become “disciples” or followers of Christ should be baptized. According to Jesus, baptism is to follow instruction. Then, once we are baptized we must continue to be taught. “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” (Matthew 28:19, 20).

Q: Should young children be baptized?

A: That depends. Prior to the age of twelve, most children have difficulty with abstract concepts. In order for anyone to be a proper candidate for baptism they must:

1. Understand and believe in the existence of God. “Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).
2. Understand that sin is rebelling against God. “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins” (James 4:17).
3. Understand that repentance, or a turning from self and sin, must accompany baptism. “Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the

forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

Q: Is it possible to receive the forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit apart from water baptism?

A: When the disciples were once confused about who could be saved, Jesus said, “With God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). God is the only one capable of forgiving sin and giving His Spirit. He can do it at any time or in any way that He chooses; however, the Scripture clearly associates these gifts with baptism.

Q: Does that mean that baptism is something more than a symbol of salvation?

A: Yes. Our baptism is a connecting point with Jesus Christ. The Scripture tells us that you were “buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead” (Colossians 2:12). It has been said that faith is the means of our salvation, but baptism is the time or occasion.

Q: Is baptism some sort of “work” and therefore a contradiction of “grace”?

A: No. Baptism is not a human work at all. The candidate merely closes his eyes, holds his breath, and trusts another

believer to lower him in water and then raise him up. In a human sense the only “work” being done is by the one doing the lowering and the raising. In a spiritual sense the only one working is God. He has promised special blessings to those who are baptized.

Theologian Jack Cottrell has said, “There is absolutely no contradiction between grace and baptism for salvation. In fact, baptism for salvation is one of the purest expressions of grace you will ever find . . . Baptism is not a work of man; it is a work of God.

Q: What about those who are fervent believers and yet have not been immersed? Are they lost?

A: Once again, only God can answer ultimate questions like that. Certainly it is not our intention to even suggest that all who have not been immersed are separated from the Lord. However, neither is it our intention to suggest that those who have not been immersed have been fully responsive to the Lord. At the very least we would encourage all who claim to be disciples of Christ to follow His command in Matthew 28:19 and to be baptized for the assurance of the blessings that He has promised.

Q: If a person is ready to confess Jesus as his Lord and repent of his sin, when should baptism take place?

A: As soon as possible. In the New Testament there was a sense of urgency about baptism. Those who were making a commitment of life to Christ wanted to be baptized in order to begin again and to receive the blessings of salvation. For example, when Paul and Silas were asked by their jailer, “Men, what must I do to be saved?” they had an immediate response. 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 family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them, and the whole family was filled with joy, because they had come to believe in God” (Acts 16:31-34).

Q: If God knows our hearts, isn’t that enough? Why the emphasis on a physical action for spiritual results?

A: The two cannot be neatly separated. For example, the physical act of disobedience brought spiritual consequences in the garden. In addition, the physical birth, death and resurrection of Jesus himself brings the greatest spiritual consequences to us. Why should we be surprised then, that a physical response (such as baptism) would have great spiritual consequences (such as forgiveness of sins, gift of the Holy Spirit, salvation)? Honest faith always results in

appropriate action. In fact, Scripture says that faith without actions is dead (James 2:17).

Q: So you’re saying that baptism is related to salvation?

A: Yes. Years ago Alexander Campbell² explained it with a simple story like this. *A ship is sinking and a father hears the cries of the men on board. He sends his son in a small boat to rescue the sailors. The son rows out and calls the dying men, “Hold on, grasp the oar. I will pull you into the boat.”*

The sailors hear. They believe the son can help them. They obey his instructions and grasp the oar held by the son. They are saved.

Now, what saved the men? The father who saw and had mercy? The instructions to the son? The small boat? The shouts? The oars? The belief of the men? The grasping? What would you like to leave out? Obviously all had some part in the person’s salvation. Even so, we

² Alexander Campbell was one of the key figures in the 2nd Great Awakening (some 200 years ago) in our country to start looking at bringing people back to the Biblical pattern of living through living out what the Bible says and practicing those patterns. It was Alexander and his father Thomas along with Barton Stone and others who started what we now call the “Christian Churches.”

do not want to minimize or exclude anything that God has associated with our salvation.

**THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE FOR
YOU TO WRITE OUT YOUR
QUESTIONS OR “LEARNINGS” AS
YOU STUDY THE TOPIC OF BAPTISM**

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