



Baptism at Fellowship

What is baptism? Why be baptized? The following explains the basic concepts associated with baptism.

What does it mean? Some believe the act of baptism saves them from hell. Others believe infant baptism removes original sin and therefore giving access to Heaven. It must be understood that nothing that one does can save remove sin. If that were so, Jesus would not have died for the sins of the world. The opposite is true. One must be saved before they are baptized. Baptism proclaims your faith – it does not constitute it.

How do I find salvation if not through baptism? Salvation comes as a gift from God as a result of surrendering your life to Jesus. By placing yourself under the authority of Jesus, you give him complete control. That means that it is no longer your will but His. God's Word, the Bible, is where you discover what God's will is. When the Bible tells people to repent of their sins, believe in Jesus, confess him publicly as Lord and Savior and be baptized – those who are submitted to God do it. Giving your life to Jesus is more than just saying a prayer but it starts there. Give your life to him and ask him to come into your heart, seek his forgiveness for your sins and sinfulness and then confess him to others.

If salvation comes without being baptized, then why do it? The reason is because God commands it. Acts 2:38 says, "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." All believers are to be baptized. Even Jesus was baptized and afterward God said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Matthew 3:17. Therefore, it is first an act of obedience.

What does it symbolize? If you have given your life to Jesus, now you are ready to be baptized. The symbolism is rich. Jesus descended to earth, died, was buried, resurrected and then ascended to Heaven. When you are baptized, you descend into the water symbolizing dying to your self, being buried in the water, and being resurrected from the water and now will ascend to heaven when Jesus calls you home. Baptism publicly identifies you with Jesus Christ. It outwardly proclaims what has happen on the inside.

What then does infant baptism accomplish? Since baptism symbolizes the choice of giving your life to Jesus, infant baptism poses a problem. How can an infant or a child understand all that salvation and baptism represents? It is hard to determine when a child is old enough to make the decision to follow Jesus, but until that point Jesus said, "...the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14). Parents must wrestle with this and make their own judgment as to when their child is ready. Baptizing an infant does not hurt anything unless you allow it to take the place of a decision. Some believe that infant baptism reserves a place for them in heaven. How can this be? The child has made no proclamation of faith. At best it proclaims only the parent's faith. Thus infant baptism poses only one danger – giving a false sense of eternal security.



What happens if an infant or a child dies before they are baptized? Ultimately only God knows. But until the child is old enough to make the choice, God's grace is extended to them. So, if the worst happens, they are swept into the loving arms of Jesus. This is referred to as the "age of innocence." Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" -- John 14:6. When a child passes the age of innocence, a positive decision to follow Jesus is critical.

How am I baptized? Which is right - total immersion or sprinkling? Total immersion is deeply imbedded into Jewish culture. Before and after Jesus, total immersion was the only way it was done. There are no references to sprinkling in the entire Bible. We believe then that total immersion is the best model. Since neither the water nor the method saves you, in special circumstances someone may be sprinkled. It is done publicly to facilitate the proclamation aspects of it. Typically baptisms are done during one of our weekend worship times by a discipler, small group leader, parent, elder, pastor or a strong believer who attends Fellowship.

Good reasons NOT to be baptized! Do not be baptized if you have not given your life to Jesus. It would be a mockery of Jesus to be baptized not having accepted Him as your Lord and Savior. That would be saying, "Jesus, I want to appear as a Christian, but I do not want to follow you." Never be baptized because you are made to feel guilty or to please anyone but God. Never be baptized to become a member of a church -- the Bible does not equate baptism with church membership.

If you have further questions or comments, contact someone on staff at Fellowship Church, 2301 Valley Loop Drive, Springfield, OH, 45504, 937-322-5381.



Baptism Study

1. Read Mark 16:15-16. According to this, I must _____ the Gospel before I am baptized.
2. Read Acts 2:37-38. Peter had just finished preaching and the people wanted to obey.
 - a. What two things did he tell them to do in verse 38?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - b. What two things did they receive?
 - 1.
 - 2.
3. Read Acts 2:41, 8:26-39, 16:29-34. According to these, when were new believers baptized?
 - a. As infants?
 - b. After a 12-week class?
 - c. Soon?
4. Read Galatians 3:27
 - a. When a person is baptized he or she is clothed with _____?
5. Read Romans 6:1-7
 - a. In verse 3 - All who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His _____?
 - b. In verse 4 - We were _____ with Him (Jesus) through _____ into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a _____.
 - c. In verse 5 - Since we have been united with Christ in His death, we will also be united with Him in His _____.
6. Read Matthew 3:13-17. According to verse 15, Jesus was baptized in order to fulfill _____?
7. Read I Peter 3:13-22. In verse 21 we see that we receive the pledge of a _____ toward God.



Baptism Order of Service

- Following communion a pastor will begin an introduction to baptism.

Salvation is a gift from God that comes as the result of surrendering your life to Jesus - placing yourself under the authority of Jesus - giving Him complete control of your life. His will, not yours, is to guide and direct the progress of your life.

The Bible instructs us to repent of our sins, believe in Jesus, confess Him publicly as Lord and Savior and be baptized - those who are submitted to God do just that. All believers are instructed to be obedient in baptism. Even Jesus was baptized in obedience to the Heavenly Father. Baptism, then, is an act of obedience symbolizing one's totally surrendered life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus descended to earth, died, was buried, resurrected, and then ascended to Heaven. When a believer is baptized he descends into the water where he symbolically dies to his old self and is buried; then, he is lifted from the water - symbolically resurrected - to later ascend to heaven when Jesus calls him home.

Baptism publicly identifies one with Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior. It is an outward proclamation of an inward transformation from one's old life into a new life in Christ.

- When the pastor begins the introduction, this is the cue for the candidate and the one baptizing him/her to come up on the platform between the pastor and the baptistry and face the congregation. (Note: SNL - following the second song, Sunday morning - following communion.)
(Please note: At Fellowship we encourage you to ask your First Steps discipler, your small group leader, or a strong believer who attends Fellowship to baptize you. If you need assistance, speak with one of the pastors.)
- The pastor will pray on behalf of all those being baptized, thanking God for their salvation and their act of obedience in being baptized, and will ask God to fill them and to empower them with the Holy Spirit.
- Following the prayer, a pastor will speak briefly with each candidate, asking them one of the three questions listed below. Candidates should be prepared with 1 to 3 simple sentences in response. Pray over your response. God will give you the words. Your family and friends that need Jesus will be listening intently. (You may pick the question you would like to answer.)
 - What brought you to Jesus?
(Example: My life was a mess and God touched my heart through a sermon. I've never been the same since. It is wonderful!)
 - Why do you want to be baptized?
(Example: I want everyone to know that Jesus is my Lord, and I'll do anything He asks of me!)
 - What is the major change in your life since coming to Jesus?
(Example: For the first time in my life I have peace - or joy, or... - you fill in the blank... I never knew it would be this good.)



Fill out the attached card: indicate the question, and write the answer you will be sharing. Give to the pastor when you meet prior to baptism.

- The baptizer and candidate will then enter the water and face the congregation. The baptizer introduces himself/herself, shares a sentence explaining his/her relationship to the candidate and then asks, “Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?”, to which the candidate responds, “Yes”. (These words are taped on the baptistry.)
- The baptizer then says, “Because of your confession of faith, I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” and then baptizes them. (These words are taped on the baptistry.)
- Both then leave through the door behind the baptistry and proceed to the restroom to change and rejoin the service. As they are leaving the pastor talks with the next candidate. This process continues until all are baptized.
- Following the Sunday services there will be a reception to greet those who were baptized along with their families and friends.
(Note: Pastor, at the end of the service be sure to dismiss those who were baptized to go to the reception area before the congregation is dismissed.)

When and where to meet: With the pastor at the Get Involved Center 15 minutes prior to the service. Seating for you and your guests will be reserved in front of the baptistry. Be in your seats at the beginning of the service. Baptism will follow the second song and communion.

What to wear: Jeans or dark heavy pants; shirts and undershirts should be worn. Modestly is essential. Footwear: barefoot, flips, sandals, old tennis shoes may be worn into the baptistry. Be dressed and ready prior to the service.

What to bring: a towel and a full change of clothes, hairdryer, etc. There will be a reception in your honor following the worship service.

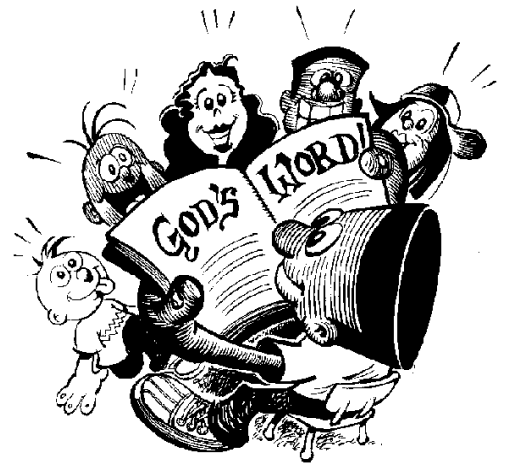
10 invitations

You will be given ten invitations to send to your unchurched relatives and friends. Please pray over these as you send them. Our prayer is that through your baptism some of those who love you the most will be touched by God. Don't take this lightly. It could make an eternal difference in their lives!



Baptism Study for Children

1. Open your Bible and read Mark 16:15 & 16.
 - a. According to this, what must you do before you are baptized?



2. Read Acts 2:37 & 38. What two things did Peter tell the people he wanted them to do. Verse 38 will give you the answer.

What two things did they receive?

3. Read Acts 2:41. According to this scripture, when the new believers baptized?
 - a. after eating dinner
 - b. before eating a Chocolate Sundae
 - c. soon



4. Read Galatians 3:27. When is a person is baptized he or she is clothed with who?