

My Baptism Questions

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In this short study, there are some important baptism questions that you should be able to answer, so you can understand the importance and significance of your Christian baptism.

1. Who should be baptized?



Answer: Only those who have placed personal belief or faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for their salvation should be baptized.

Acts 8:12

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

Acts 18:8

“And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.”

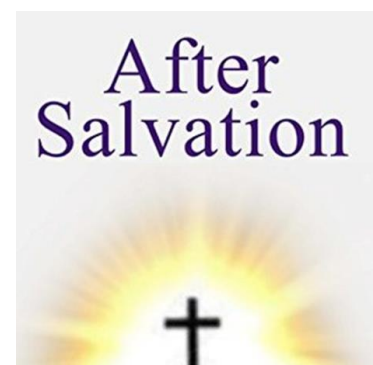
Acts 16:31

“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

Have you believed in Jesus Christ for your salvation? When were you saved? If you don't know an exact time, are you sure that your faith is resting only in Jesus Christ for your salvation? This is what is important.

2. When should I be baptized?

Answer: After I am saved. Baptism FOLLOWS salvation. Baptism is not part of salvation. Only Christ's sacrificial death and blood saves us (1 John 1:7) - not the waters of baptism. I should be baptized AFTER I am saved, understanding that Jesus Christ has already saved me, and that I am now ready to serve Jesus as my Lord and Master and become a follower of His.



Acts 2:41

“Then they that gladly **received his word** (believed in the Gospel message of salvation) **were baptized**: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.”

Acts 8:36-38

“And as they went on *their way*, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is water*; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If **thou believest with all thine heart**, thou mayest (be baptized). And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (*I express my faith in Jesus Christ for my salvation*). And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; **and he baptized him.**”

3. How should I be baptized?



Answer: I should be baptized by immersion. This means to take a person under the water completely. It refers to momentarily lowering a person completely under the water, then raising him up.

Acts 8:38 reveals the mode of baptism (submersion): “And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”

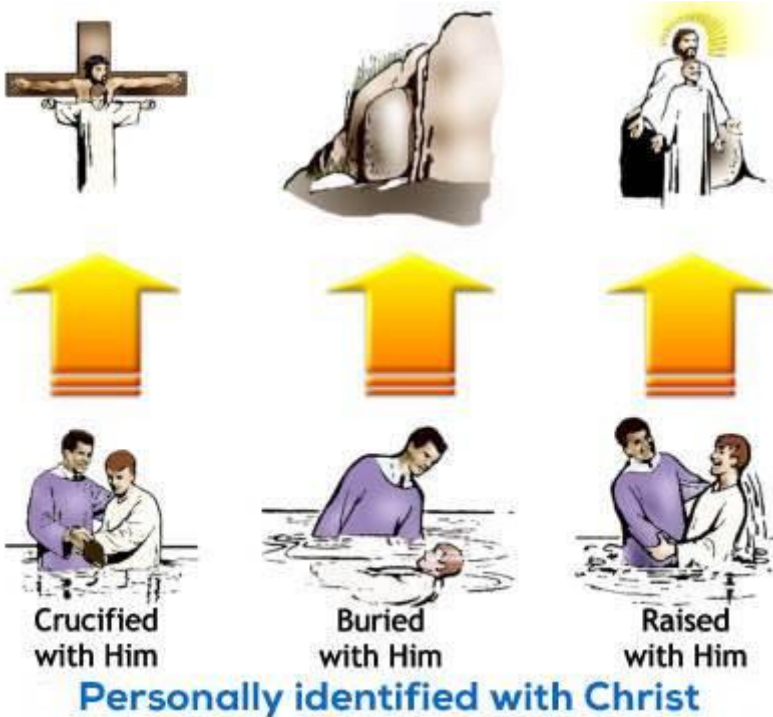
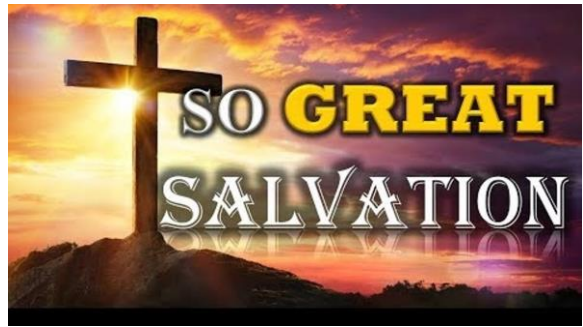
Romans chapter 6 indicates that baptism is my submersion for the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit baptizes (spiritually immerses) us into Christ (Rom. 6:3) which means we share a union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. This union with Christ results in our new birth and new life of sanctification. **Only immersion pictures death, burial, and resurrection with Christ.** Sprinkling or pouring could never represent our spiritual baptism or immersion in Jesus Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection unto newness of life.

4. What is the picture of baptism?

A picture is worth a thousand words! There are two pictures that your baptism portrays.

➤ The picture of our forgiveness and salvation

Your water baptism does NOT save you; however, it does PICTURE your cleansing from sin, salvation, and new birth in Christ. The true spiritual baptism that took place at the time of our salvation was the baptism (immersion) of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) which occurred when we were “baptized into Jesus Christ” (Gal. 3:27).



This means that when we express faith in Christ the Holy Spirit joins (unites) us to Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection through bringing us into a spiritual union with Jesus Christ. This union results in us becoming spiritually alive with Jesus Christ - “alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:11). Elsewhere the Bible says we are “quickened together with him” or made spiritual alive (born again) through sharing Christ’s resurrection life (Col. 2:13). Through the operation of the Holy Spirit’s baptism into Christ’s saving

work through His death, burial, and resurrection, we have been given new, regenerating life, but also forgiveness of all our sins (“forgiven you all trespasses” – Col. 2:13).

Romans 6:3 declares how the Holy Spirit has baptized or placed us “in Christ” (a spiritual location where we receive all of Christ’s saving benefits), and our water baptism represents this wonderful saving transaction. This is why believers, who were joined to Christ, were baptized in water (Acts 2:41, 47; 11:24). Their water baptism was a picture of their saving union and new life that they had received with Jesus Christ.

In Romans chapter six, Paul explains Holy Spirit baptism (uniting us to Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection) which is a picture of water baptism, and which represents our cleansing, salvation, and new life in Christ. We must be spiritually immersed in Christ

(joined to the saving merits of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection) by the baptism of the Holy Spirit before we can be saved.

Our water baptism pictures a person's inner washing or cleansing from sin, which occurs at the time of their salvation, through their *identification* with Christ's saving work ("wash away thy sins" - Acts 22:16). Of course, water cannot wash away sin, only the blood of Jesus Christ can do this (1 John 1:7). However, our water baptism becomes the *picture and testimonial* of the forgiveness or washing away of our sins. At our water baptism we are portraying the picture that all of our sins have been washed away because of Christ's death on the cross, who bore the penalty for sins, in order to provide complete forgiveness in God's sight for every sin we commit (past, present, and future).

1 Corinthians 6:11 explains our forgiveness in terms of cleansing:

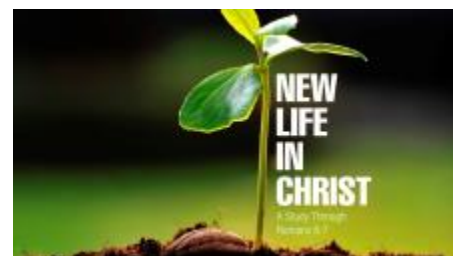
"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Elsewhere, we are also told that the picture of baptism tells the story of our salvation, through Jesus Christ. Peter said that Christ died on the cross to save us ("the just for the unjust" - 1 Pet. 3:18). He then says that our water baptism pictures how Christ was immersed with God's wrath on the cross in order to save us ("**The like figure [picture] whereunto even baptism doth also now save us**" - 1 Pet. 3:21). Please do not misunderstand that the Bible is teaching here. **Baptism does NOT save us, but the PICTURE of what baptism represents, does save us. It is actually the baptism (immersion) of Christ in God's judgment that saves us.** Peter is teaching us that our water baptism portrays the picture of how Christ died on the cross and was baptized or immersed with God's judgment and wrath in our place. Jesus was baptized with God's judgment (Matthew 20:22; Luke 12:50) so we do not have to be judged (John 3:18).

Our baptism beautifully portrays the spiritual washing (forgiveness) and salvation we have received through Jesus Christ who was baptized with God's judgment on our behalf. Therefore, baptism becomes the outward symbol of God's inner work of forgiveness and salvation.

➤ **The picture of sanctification (holiness and new life)**

The Bible also teaches that my water baptism pictures how I share or participate in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection through spiritual identification, so I can experience a new way of life. Christ defeated sin and provided victory for us through His death and resurrection, so we can live a sanctified or holy life before God.



When I am **taken underneath the water**, and become completely buried by the water, it pictures my death and burial with Jesus Christ, which results in my death and burial to the old way of living.



Romans 6:6 indicates our death to the old way of life: “Knowing this, that our old man is **crucified** with *him (the old person we used to be under the power of sin)*, that the body of sin might be destroyed (*sin ruling and enslaving our body*), that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

Romans 6:3-4 further explains how this victory occurred: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptized** into Jesus Christ (*at the time of salvation by the Holy Spirit*) were **baptized** into his **death**?” Therefore we are **buried** with him by **baptism** into death: that like as Christ was **raised** up from the dead by the glory of the Father, **even so we also should walk in newness** of life.”

Water baptism also portrays how the Holy Spirit has baptized or immersed us in union with Jesus Christ (sharing Christ’s death, burial, and life) so we can live differently and possess a new way of life. Our water baptism also represents this sanctifying or life-changing transaction.

In summary, from a practical standpoint, baptism by immersion pictures DEATH to the old man we used to be before we were saved, the BURIAL or doing away of the old life, and the RESURRECTION of a new life to be lived for the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism was a public testimony of a person’s faith in Christ. In a practical way, it was a specific sign and visual demonstration of dying to the old life and rising to walk in newness of life.



When **I come out of the water** it portrays the picture of my resurrection with Christ which resulted in me possessing a new birth and life. I can now depend upon Christ’s resurrection power for victory (“the power of his resurrection” – Phil. 3:10). Romans 6:5 says, “**we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.**” This means that when we are raised out of the water it pictures

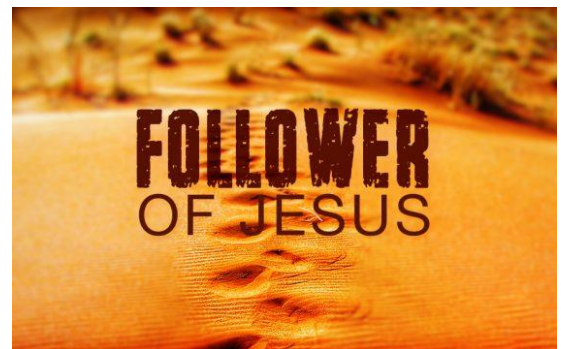
how we share Christ's resurrection life. We are risen with Christ and share His life, nature, and power to live victoriously. Romans 6:8: "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."

Through Jesus Christ, we have experienced a death to the old way of life and can now live by Christ's resurrection power. We can now "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). This is what our baptism represents. **When I'm baptized, I am telling others, that I no longer want to live under sin's power. Instead of living a rebellious life, I now want to rely on Christ's resurrection power and live a holy life.**

5. Why must I be baptized?

Answer: In obedience to the Lord's command. This command is to become a disciple or follower of Jesus Christ.

Since Jesus provided victory for me, I must now surrender my life to Him and live for Christ completely and forever. I am to be baptized to demonstrate that I want to become a disciple or follower of Jesus Christ.



Matthew 28:19-20

"Go ye therefore, and teach (make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Christian baptism is a ceremony by which a new believer publicly declares himself to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why becoming a disciple and baptism is linked together in the Great Commission. Jesus commanded that Christians should be baptized in order to demonstrate that they want to become His followers. What baptism signifies is *identification* with Christ and a willingness to follow Him.

Baptism has the meaning of identification and when you are baptized in the authoritative name of someone you are identifying yourself with that individual. My baptism demonstrates that I am ready and willing to become a follower (disciple) of Jesus Christ and be taught from the Bible how to follow Jesus' teachings ("Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" - Matthew 28:20).

Christ's call to discipleship, or what it means to follow Christ, must be understood prior to our baptism, since entering the waters of baptism portrays our desire to follow Christ.

Jesus said in Luke 9:23:

"And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

Jesus also said in Luke 14:26-27:

"If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

Discipleship involves four life-changing truths:

- **Surrender** (Luke 9:23 - "**deny himself**") – denying ourselves of our own personal goals, dreams, sins, and surrendering our lives totally and completely to Christ. When I'm baptized, I am conveying the message to Christ and others, that I am fully surrendered to do His will and follow Him.
- **Superiority** (Luke 14:26 – "**hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and own self**"). This does not mean to hate our relatives in a bad or unethical way. Jesus is speaking about *a priority of love*. This means we are to possess a superior love for Jesus Christ, above all else, and before anybody else. When I'm baptized, I am conveying the message to Christ and others, that I love Him more than anything else, and above everyone else in life.
- **Sacrifice** (Luke 9:23 - "**take up his cross**"). The cross speaks of personal sacrifice. It's a sacrifice that will cost us something in life – our time, talents, treasure and even torment (agony, suffering) for the cause of Christ (2 Timothy 3:12). It may cost us some friends. The cross may involve the pathway of rejection, shame, suffering, poverty, loneliness, betrayal, denial, hated insults, persecution, mental agony, and even death for Christ's sake. When I'm baptized, I am conveying the message to Christ and others that I want to sacrifice my life for Him.

There are two examples given of the cross-life (a sacrificial life).

- a. **A contractor** – I must prepare for building and consider the *cost* of discipleship (Luke 14:28-29).
- b. **A conqueror** (military leader) – I must prepare for battle and consider the *consequences* of following Christ (Luke 14:31).

Following Jesus Christ may not always be easy (John 15:18; 16:33), but it is our privilege to do so because He gave His own life for us.

Romans 14:8

“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.”

Water baptism portrays our heart's desire to follow Christ at all cost and in spite of the consequences we might face for taking a stand for Jesus Christ and what is right.

“Must Jesus bear the cross alone
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for everyone,
And there's a cross for me.”

- **Submission** - “**follow me**” (Luke 9:23) and “**come after me**” (Luke 14:27). These words speak about submissive obedience. Submission means I am willing to obey Christ in every area of my life. When I'm baptized, I am conveying to Christ and others that I want to become an obedient follower of His.

Jesus said in John 14:15:

“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

The call of Christ to discipleship is one of obedience and the first public act of our willingness to obey Christ is our baptism. Our baptism is a public confession of our desire to break with the past (old way of living) and live a new way of life. It demonstrates our willingness to become a disciple or follower of Christ. **If we are going to become a follower of Christ, we need to begin by obeying His first command!** Baptism should be the first mark of obedience that leads to a whole life of obedience and commitment to the Lord.

When the believer submits to the ordinance of baptism, he is publicly testifying that his desire is to obey the Lord in every area of his life. Those who were baptized were *identifying* with the Lord Jesus Christ, and by this outward ceremony, they were demonstrating their willingness to take up their cross and follow Jesus Christ, as He taught and commanded in the gospel accounts.

Are you saved and willing to take up your cross and follow Jesus Christ? Are you ready to live a new way of life? If so, you are ready to be baptized. The first step of obedience to

Christ is your baptism. If your heart's desire is to follow Christ's command, then set up a time with your pastor, so he can baptize you.

The words below should express your heart's desire as you enter the waters of baptism.

"I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
No turning back, no turning back.

The world behind me, the cross before me;
The world behind me, the cross before me;
The world behind me, the cross before me;
No turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, still I will follow;
Though none go with me, still I will follow;
Though none go with me, still I will follow;
No turning back, no turning back."