

Hednesford Pentecostal Church

Christian Baptism



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1. WHAT DOES BAPTISE MEAN?

Originally, the word 'baptize' found in the Bible, was not an English word at all, but it is transliteration of the New Testament Greek word '*baptizo*'. The meaning of this Greek word is "to cause something to be dipped into a fluid and to take it out again." *Baptizo* is the compound causative form of the simpler root word *bapto*, which when used in the New Testament is translated as "to dip", meaning to cover wholly with a fluid. For example:

Luke 16:24 "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may **dip** the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

John 13:26 Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have **dipped** it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

Rev 19:13 He was clothed with a robe **dipped** in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

So why didn't the King James version translate *baptizo* if the meaning was so well understood? Simply the reason was political. King James did not want to upset the Bishops of the Church of England, and so instructed that nothing in the new translation which was to bear his name should cause offence. Certain Greek words were therefore Anglicised, including baptism and bishop (meaning overseer).

Mat 3:11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Many later English translations have followed the King James version's example and used the prepositions 'with' or 'by' when talking of water baptism or the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But in the Greek the preposition 'in' is used. That is the original says baptised in water or baptised in the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament clearly indicates that Christian baptism requires the dipping or full immersion in water. This was certainly the manner in which people were baptised at that time.

Mat 3:16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

As Jesus emerged from underneath the surface of the water, the subsequent events happened.

2. JOHN'S BAPTISM

The ministry of John the Baptist preceded Jesus' own ministry, and prepared the people's heart for the coming of the Messiah.

Luke 3:16 John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

John's ministry and message focused on the need for people to repent, receive forgiveness and to show the genuineness of their repentance by bearing the fruit of a changed life style. The recipients of John's message had to publicly demonstrate their personal repentance by being baptised, which was an outward sign of an inward act.



Mark 1:4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

However John's baptism is not recognised as being the same as Christian baptism, as demonstrated by Paul's experience in Ephesus

Acts 19:1-5 ... Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples {2} he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." {3} And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." {4} Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." {5} When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The disciples at Ephesus turned out to be disciples of John, and not of Jesus, and although they had undergone John's baptism of repentance, they were baptised again to become disciples of Jesus Christ. Christian baptism means more than just the outward expression of an inward repentance.

3. WHY SHOULD A CHRISTIAN BE BAPTIZED?

The simple answer is that Jesus commanded that every disciple should be baptised.

Mat 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, {20} "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

If someone states that they are submitted to Lordship of Christ, then it is reasonable to expect them to make every effort to carry out His commands. It is strange then, that many who proclaim to be followers of Jesus argue so vehemently against obedience to this simple and straight forward command.

Stranger still when we consider that Jesus, the spotless and sinless Son of God, as our mediator, representative and sin-bearer, humbled Himself and was baptised by John. Jesus was happy to be identified as the "friend of sinners". In humbling Himself and being baptised He set a standard that His disciples should follow.

Mat 3:13-15 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. {14} And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" {15} But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

A disciple of Jesus should also desire to "fulfil all righteousness". Peter compares baptism with Noah's ark, and says that baptism is the "answer of a good conscience toward God".

1 Pet 3:21 There is also an antitype which now saves us; baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,



4. WHAT DOES CHRISTIAN BAPTISM DO OR SIGNIFY?

4.1. A PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION OF REPENTANCE AND THE REMISSION OF SIN

We have seen that John's baptism was for the remission of sins. But the Christian baptism is far more powerful and significant, although it includes the public confession of the need of forgiveness and of a Saviour.

To become a Christian we have to recognise that we are a sinner who does not meet God's standard of holiness, that we are in need of forgiveness and salvation from sin's power and consequence. Baptism is the expression of agreement with God's verdict that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Col 1:13-14 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, {14} in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

It is not the waters of baptism that wash away sin's stains, but the precious blood of Jesus. Many have borne testimony, however, that having being obedient to Jesus instruction to be baptised, they have felt cleaner.

When we became a Christian we were delivered from Satan's kingdom of darkness and conveyed into Jesus' Kingdom of light. Some people have experienced deliverance from demonic strongholds during their water baptism. Other people have been baptised in the Holy Spirit as they come out of the waters. Whatever our experience, obedience to Jesus commands always brings blessing.

4.2. A PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION OF BELIEF AND DISCIPLESHIP

Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. {16} "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

Christian baptism is often called Believer's baptism, since it is for those who have previously believed upon the Lord Jesus Christ. To become a Christian, one has to repent of one's sins, believe in and submit to the Lord Jesus Christ and give confession of one's belief.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Rom 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Christian baptism is part of that public confession. An infant cannot undergo Christian baptism since a baby cannot understand, repent or demonstrably accept Christ as Saviour.

4.3. A NEW RELATIONSHIP

Mat 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them **in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,**

Rom 6:3 Or do you not know that as many of us as **were baptized into Christ Jesus** were baptized into His death?

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ have put on Christ.**



When a Christian is baptised he is baptised into Christ. In baptism we bear witness that as a believer, God the Father has become our Father and that the Holy Spirit dwells within us. The believer is one with his Saviour and is said to be "in Christ". This term occurs frequently in the Epistles and refers to the believer's position and privilege in being joined to Christ.

Rom 8:1-2 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are **in Christ Jesus**, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. {2} For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Christ**,

Baptism is a profession of this joining together with Christ, and it represents a submission to Jesus Lordship.

4.4. A NEW LIFE AND A NEW START

Rom 6:3-6 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? {4} Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk **in newness of life**. {5} For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, {6} knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

Baptism is an outward demonstration of the inward experience of being raised to new life through the atoning work of Jesus. We are confessing that as disciples we are taking up our cross and following Jesus (Matt 16:24), that we are considering ourselves to be dead to sin and self, and we are recognising that as Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of God, that we have been raised with Him - becoming a new creation.

Col 2:12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Before we accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour, sin had mastery over our lives. Our repentance and remorse in themselves could not deliver us from the sin's power. Neither could good works or a legalistic codes deliver us. Our cry was that of Paul:

Rom 7:24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

But when we became a Christian our old sinful nature was crucified with Christ and died, and sin no longer had mastery of us. A dead alcoholic no longer has any cravings for drink, a dead murderer no longer has power to kill. Sin has no power over dead men. Not only have we died, we have also been born again, receiving a new life as we were raised with Christ.

The submersing in the waters of baptism signifies dying with Christ. The complete covering with the waters signifies being buried with Him, and the coming out of the waters signifies being raised with Christ from the dead.

4.5. A RECOGNITION OF THE CHURCH THE BODY OF CHRIST

1 Cor 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.



When we are baptised we are recognising Jesus' lordship over our life and surrendering to His purpose for our life. We are also recognising that as believers we are all members of His church, which is also mysteriously His body. In committing ourselves to Him, we are committing ourselves to His body - other believers.

The church is God's idea and is His vehicle for bringing salvation to the world. In giving ourselves to God, we give ourselves to the church to serve the Great Commission and each other.

Heb 10:23-25. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. {24} And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, {25} not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

There are those who claim to love God and claim to have a close relationship and a warm fellowship with Him, but at the same time they "forsake the gathering together" in direct contradiction to the command, purpose and principle of the New Testament. Jesus said that it is those who keep His commandments that love Him (John 14:21), if we say we love and yet we willing ignore His commandments, then we deceive ourselves.

5. CONDITIONS FOR BAPTISM

There are pre-conditions for someone being water baptised.

- The candidate must have repented of their sin, asking God to forgive them for Jesus' sake (Acts 2:38).
- The candidate must believe in the Trinity of the Godhead (Matt 28:19) and they must believe that Jesus the Son of God, died for their sins, was buried and rose again from the dead.
- The candidate must recognise and accept that they are submitting their life to God's Lordship. Life is full of choices, and the disciple of Jesus should always seek to choose and do His will.
- The candidate must **understand** these basics fundamental truths. Some people will genuinely raise a hand at an appeal, when they have heard a single gospel message. Such a person would only be eligible for baptism, after they had received some basic tuition.
- The candidate must be willing to make a public confession of their faith. The minimum of which would be their affirming that they do believe when presented with a confession of faith. For example they would respond to certain questions with something like "I do".

6. CONCLUSION

Acts 22:16 'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'