A guide to BAPISM



What is water baptism?



It is wonderful that you want to be baptised. Water baptism is a special occasion in the life of every believer – it speaks about the amazing reality of what Christ accomplished when he died and rose again, taking the punishment for our sin (spiritual death) and giving us a brand new start (eternal life). It is for that

reason that many people describe water baptism as 'an outward sign of an inner grace' - i.e. that it is a visible, outward picture of what Christ has already done in our hearts.

The English word 'baptism' comes from the Greek word 'baptizo,' which literally means to dip-into, immerse or submerge. The word baptise is used a number of times in the Bible for different things:

- **Baptism of suffering** Mark 10:38 (being immersed into a time of suffering)
- Baptism in the Holy Spirit Luke 3:16
 (being immersed into the power & presence of the Spirit)
- Baptism into the Body of Christ 1 Corinthians 12:13 (being immersed by the Holy Spirit into the universal Church family)
- **Baptism into Christ** Galatians 3:27 (being immersed into the very life of Jesus i.e. our salvation)

The importance of water baptism

Some people question whether baptism is necessary. Here are a couple of reasons why baptism is important:

- Jesus was baptised (to fulfil all righteousness) Matt 3:13
- The apostles taught it as normal practice for believers Acts 2:38; Acts 19:1-5

What does water baptism symbolise?

Baptism is deeply symbolic. Here are the three main realities that baptism represents:

- 1. Being made clean (having a bath!)
- 2. The beginning of a new life (death & resurrection!)
- 3. Putting on new clothes (the new you!)

1. Being made clean (having a bath!)



Nobody enjoys being dirty. When we have a bath, our bodies are washed from the sweat and dirt that builds up over the course of a day. If it is a hot day, or if we have been doing a job that makes us unusually dirty, we may have more than one bath a day!

In Acts 22:16, just after Saul had become a Christian, a man called Ananias said to him:

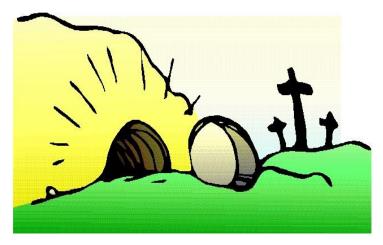
"...what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptised and wash your sins away, calling on his name."

In other words, when a person calls on the name of Jesus for salvation, it means that their sins are washed away – that they are made clean on the inside. Baptism is therefore an outward washing that symbolises the inward washing.

2. The beginning of a new life (death & resurrection!)

This is perhaps the most powerful picture. In Romans 6:4, the Apostle Paul says this about baptism:

'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**.'



In other words, just as Jesus died on the cross and was buried...and then was raised to life again, baptism symbolises the end of our old life and the beginning of our new life in Christ. In this way, baptism identifies us closely with our Lord and is a dramatic picture of new life.

Paul tells the Christians at Corinth that everyone who is a Christian is a 'new creation...the old has gone and the new has come.' (2 Cor 5:17)

That is what baptism so powerfully symbolises. **Death and Resurrection.**

3. Putting on new clothes (the new you!)

Finally, in Galatians 3:27, Paul speaks about baptism like this: '...all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.'

Although this reference to baptism could be referring to the moment of salvation, the imagery is powerful and still very relevant to when a person is baptised in water.





Imagine being so poor that you lived wearing rags for clothes – then one day someone gives you a cheque for a million pounds! Would you still walk around in rags? Of course not! That is the picture here. Paul is saying that baptism is like taking off your filthy sin-stained rags (the life you used to live away from God) and putting on Christ. It is a picture of being made new and living as a child of the King.

'You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to **put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to **put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.' (Ephesians 4:22-24)