

Baptism

Baptism is an essential part of a Christian's conversion. The Bible speaks of a few specific actions that occur in the process of moving from a state of "death" to a state of "life" in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 6:1-2 even refers to baptism as one of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. Yet many Christians misunderstand the role and purpose of baptism. What does the Bible say about baptism? Why is baptism so important in a Christian's life?

As you go through this Bible Study, we encourage you to read each of the verses from your own Bible and even write them down, if you like. It is so important to know what the Word of God says on the topic of baptism, and we encourage you to believe what you read.

1. In what context does the Bible speak of the need for baptism?

Mark 16:15-16

Matthew 28:19-20

Notes: The word "baptism" comes from the Greek word 'baptizo' which means "to immerse".

Points to Ponder: How important is it to be baptized? What belief leads you to be baptized?

2. In addition to belief, what other action is required to be baptized?

Acts 2:36-39

Points to Ponder: What does it mean to repent? What is the remission of sins? What impact does God's forgiveness have on your life? Who is being offered the opportunity for baptism?

3. In what way does the teaching of baptism relate to Israel's deliverance from Egypt?

1 Corinthians 10:1-2

Points to Ponder: What does it mean to be baptized into Moses? In what way did Moses act as a savior to Israel?

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What did baptism provide for Israel?

Hebrews 11:29

Exodus 14:10-31

Points to Ponder: Israel was delivered from bondage. In a similar way, your life was in bondage prior to knowing Jesus Christ. In what ways have you been delivered from bondage? In what ways do you still need to be delivered from bondage? Complete freedom and liberty from bondage only comes when you are immersed in the baptism of Jesus Christ.

5. What happens when we are baptized in a spirit of belief and repentance?

Romans 6:1-11

Points to Ponder: What level of commitment is tied to being baptized into Jesus' death? What affect should baptism have in your life?

6. How will the effects of baptism manifest themselves in your life?

Galatians 3:27

Points to Ponder: Just like Israel's former life in Egypt "died" when they passed through the Red Sea, we count our former life of sin "dead" at baptism, and put on Jesus Christ.

7. How do we put on Jesus Christ through baptism?

Galatians 2:20

Luke 9:23-24

Points to Ponder: Baptism is more than a symbol, it is the practice of living your life for Christ. We are immersed into Jesus Christ's death through baptism, and we are immersed into His life by the Spirit. In what ways may you be trying to reserve a portion of your life, not fully giving yourself to Christ, not being fully immersed into the baptism and death of Christ?

8. What happens when you are baptized, yet don't make the commitment to give your life to Jesus Christ?

1 Corinthians 10:1-11

Points to Ponder: Without the commitment of repentance and belief when you are baptized, the works of bondage through unbelief will appear in your life. A slave can be physically free from bondage but still live with mental/spiritual bondage. In the same way, Israel was freed from bondage when they left Egypt, but sadly, Egypt did not leave the people's minds, so they were effectively still in bondage. Are there ways of the world that still dominate your thinking and actions today, that cause you to still be in bondage? What are they and what actions can be taken to overcome them?

9. What are the various types of baptisms found in the Bible?

Matthew 3:11-12

Points to Ponder: Who is the one "mightier" than John who baptizes you with the Holy Spirit and fire?

10. What is water baptism, and how is it accomplished?

Acts 19:3-6

Matthew 3:16

Acts 8:35-39

Points to Ponder: Were the baptism of John and Baptist and the baptism in the name of the Lord the same? There are two types of water baptism. John the Baptist's ministry was a baptism of repentance, but after Jesus Christ was resurrected, there is a baptism in the name of Jesus (in connection with the baptism of the Holy Spirit – see next question). Notice that in both types of water baptism, it is performed in water with full immersion.

11. What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Acts 8:14-17

John 1:33

Acts 1:5, 8

Points to Ponder: The baptism of the Holy Spirit also includes the physical act of water baptism. Notice the importance of the laying on of hands in connection with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Who is the author of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

12.

Does the baptism of the Holy Spirit always follow water baptism?

Acts 10:44-48

Acts 11:15-16

Points to Ponder: Even though they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit first, were these new converts still to be baptized in water? This event recorded in the Book of Acts is fascinating, because while many people had received the Holy Spirit, water baptism was still commanded. This command to be baptized in water reinforces its essential part in the conversion process.

13. What is the baptism of fire?

Matthew 3:11-12

1 Corinthians 3:10-17

Matthew 13:40-43

Points to Ponder: When does the baptism of fire take place? At our Lord's second coming, our works will go through a type of baptism, being tested by fire to reveal the substance of the works. Are the works that we perform of our own strength and will, or are they the works of God performed through us? In what ways does the baptism by fire affect those who reject Christ? In what ways is the baptism of fire compare to the baptism of water? In what ways does it differ?

14. What is the ultimate fulfillment of the baptism of fire?

2 Peter 3:7-13

What is the purpose of the baptism of fire? What is God's desired result from the baptism of fire? What result does God want to see in your life after you are baptized?

15. How does the story of Noah and the ark relate to baptism?

1 Peter 3:18-21

Points to Ponder: During the flood, all wickedness was destroyed, and righteous Noah and his family were saved! In what ways does this "baptism" compare to being personally baptized in water?

16. At what age is it appropriate to be baptized?

1 Corinthians 7:14

Points to Ponder: What things must a person be capable of doing before they are baptized? Are the children of believers considered "lost" if they have not yet been baptized?

Notes: The scriptures tell us that a person must hear the gospel message and subsequently repent before they are baptized. Therefore, that person must be old enough to understand the gospel and know what it means to repent in order to have a valid baptism. 1 Corinthians 7:14 relates to this question because children of believers are considered holy in God's sight. Yet there comes a point when the child becomes an adult, and are accountable to God directly (the "age of responsibility").

Interestingly, there is a belief among many Christians that if a child dies prior to being baptized, they are condemned to hell, which is why so many churches practice infant baptism by the sprinkling of water on the baby's head. Neither this belief nor the practice is supported in the Scriptures.

17. What standing do we have in God by virtue of being baptized?

Colossians 2:11-12

Points to Ponder: In ancient Israel's time, a person had to be physically circumcised to be part of the house of Israel. Today, God says that there is a "circumcision made without hands," which is accomplished through belief, repentance and baptism.

18. When we are baptized, in whose name is this performed?

Matthew 28:19-20

Acts 19:4-6

Points to Ponder: When we are baptized into the name of God, it comes by His authority, and we become partakers of the benefits that God provides for His children.

19.

What is the significance of being baptized into His name?

Romans 8:1-17

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

John 1:12-13

Ephesians 3:14-19

Points to Ponder: What is your standing in Christ once you believe, repent and are baptized? How intimate of a relationship did God intend for you to enjoy with Him? In what ways is your appreciation of this relationship demonstrated in your life? How are you living as a child of God, bearing His name?

Summary: Baptism is one of the fundamental teachings of Christianity, one of the basic doctrines of faith in Jesus. Jesus taught that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved. More than just a symbol, it is a way of life, a commitment immersed in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus gave His life for us and in turn asks that we would give our lives to follow Him and to receive the adoption of God's Spirit by which we become the children of God. All Christians who are baptized and have the Spirit of God are part of a special family through this adoption. It is by one Spirit that we are baptized into one Body, the Body of Christ. Old things have passed away and all things have become new.