

BAPTISM

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism comes from the Greek word 'baptizo' which means to be covered wholly, fully whelmed or completely immersed. In the Old Testament God required the Priest to wash themselves before entering the Holy of Holies. Exodus 30:20 states, "*when they (the Priest) enter the tent (the Tabernacle) of meeting they shall wash with water, that they may not die; or when they approach the altar to minister.*" Thus baptism was necessary as a form of ceremonial cleansing and preparation by the Priest prior to entering into the presence of God. In other words, God was making it clear to man that nothing unclean or unholy could be in His presence.

Therefore, when God Himself came to earth (in the person of Jesus Christ) 1500 years later, John the Baptist cried out to all, "*Make ready the way of the Lord, make his path straight.*" "*For John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea was going out to him... and they were being baptized by Him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.*"

1 Corinthians 6:11 states that by believing in Jesus Christ as the One who died in your place, no matter how bad you might have been in the past (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9,10), "*you were washed, ... sanctified ... and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.*" Colossians 2:13,14 puts it this way, "*He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*" Romans 6:3-5 "*Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized unto Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.*"

WHO THEN SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Since baptism signifies in an outward way what has taken place inwardly it would be meaningless to baptize an infant or anyone who hasn't made a genuine decision to believe and follow Jesus Christ. In Luke 3:16, John the Baptist says, "*I baptize with water but He [Jesus] shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*" In other words, only Jesus can really make you clean and that can only happen if you believe.

"Then those who had received His word were baptized." Acts 2:41. "*When they believed ... they were baptized."* Acts 8:12 "*And Crispus believed in the Lord... and was baptized."* Acts 18:8 "*For you are all sons of God through faith [belief] in Christ*

Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Galatians 3:26,27

WHY SHOULD A BELIEVER BE BAPTIZED?

If baptism is a way of demonstrating outwardly what has taken place inwardly and if it is only those who cleanse themselves inwardly by believing in Jesus Christ and receiving Him as Lord (Master) and Savior (One who rescues), then baptism is a way of telling the world and confessing openly to those we know that we have chosen to follow Christ. *"If you confess [open acknowledgment] with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."* Romans 10:9 NOTE: We serve a risen Savior. Christ states, *"Everyone who shall confess me before men, I will confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven."* Matthew 10:32,33 Paul said, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes."* Romans 1:16

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