

So, You Want
To Be

Baptized?



Artist's impression of the
baptism of Jesus by John

So, You Want To Be Baptized

God wants you to be baptized. This booklet is aimed at helping you with this godly thing you want to do and to help you understand its importance in your walk with God.

Baptism in the beginning.

When the apostles started to baptize believers in Jesus name it was because Jesus had told them to do just that.

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” (Matthew 28:19)*

*“He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is **baptized** will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:15, 16)*

Baptism isn't all there is to the gospel. However it is a significant part of obeying the gospel. To discount baptism is like saying the marriage ceremony is unimportant to the marriage. Tell that to the bride. You won't get too far. It's the same with baptism. Try to tell God it is unimportant when He invented it, commissioned it, submitted to it in Jesus and commanded His preachers to preach it.

Getting baptized is a whole lot more than getting wet. Some have thought that the water of baptism has some power to forgive sins. Even some churches have taught this. No, the power in baptism is not in the water, it is in Jesus.

God puts it this way, *“and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-- not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience towards God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” (1 Peter 3:21)*. The power of baptism is not in the washing action of the water, it is in your trust in the resurrection of Jesus. That leads to the first question that you should consider before you are baptized.

Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?

When God raised Jesus from the dead it was to prove He was the Son of God. *“and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 1:4).* How does the resurrection of Jesus prove that Jesus is God’s Son?

This leads to the next question.....

Do you believe in Jesus?

Believing in Jesus is more than just believing He exists. God puts it this way. *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that **he exists** and that **he rewards** those who earnestly seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6).* Believing in Jesus means putting your trust in Him to take care of you. In this life we have to choose whom we can trust.

- Do you believe that God in Christ exists? _____
- Do you believe God rewards seekers? _____
- Who will you trust to save you and give you the abundant life (John 10:10)? _____

This leads to yet another question for some.

What’s the problem with sin?

Sin is disobeying God. *“Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.” (James 4:17, see also Romans 1:28-32).* Sin has a serious spiritual consequence. It separates us from God. *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23).* *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23).* When we work for someone we are paid a wage. Our work earns us our wages. Sin is like that. It earns us death and a place a long way short of God’s glory. God is your father and He

doesn't want you to be separated from Him. He wants to help you with this problem.

Can you earn the forgiveness of your sins?

In your study of God's word you are going to realize that you can't work hard enough or long enough to earn the forgiveness of your sins. Salvation, the result of the forgiveness of our sins, is *"not by works, so that no one can boast."* (Ephesians 2:9). God says, *"He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,"* (Titus 3:5).

Is this where Jesus comes into my salvation?

Yes. He pays the penalty for our sins. He did it once for everyone when He died on the cross. *"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."* (1 John 4:10). "Atoning" means "making amends". Jesus' sacrifice is the payment for our sins. He decided to pay the penalty for our sins. *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!"* (Romans 5:8, 9). And why did He do this? _____

If I can't earn my salvation, is there nothing I can do to receive the forgiveness that Jesus earned?

Oh yes there is something for you to do. The important thing here is to find out what God wants us to do, not what human traditions and people want us to do. When the gospel was first preached the crowd asked this same question. *"When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?""* (Acts 2:37). In their hearts they believed in Jesus and they were told to do two things.

Repent of their sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus.

Why not open your Bible now and read it for yourself in Acts 2:38.

And so we have come back to your original desire to be baptized. There is a lot more to it than a religious ritual. In fact it has deep spiritual significance.

Baptism is a symbolic participation of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. God says, *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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.”* (Romans 6:3, 4. That’s why the baptism of the gospel is an immersion in water. We symbolically reenact the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus as we are lowered into the water and raised up out of it. Some have tried to change baptism to a sprinkling of water but when that happens we submit to a human tradition and we lose all the power of symbolism that baptism is supposed to have as a burial. This leads to another question

What happens when I am baptized as a believer in Jesus?

- You receive the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38, 22:16, Colossians 2:12-13).
- You receive in your body and heart the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 1:13-14)
- You enter the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), the church (Ephesians 1:22-23).
- You are raised with Christ (Colossians 2:12).

Baptism sounds important. Is it the most important part of being saved?

It is obviously important, otherwise Jesus wouldn’t have submitted to it (Matthew 3:13-17). However it is not the most important part of the process of being saved. The death of Jesus on the cross and God’s acceptance of that as a complete payment for our sins is the most important part. Without that our faith, repentance and baptism would have no power. Being saved is a process. You first need to hear the word of God. Once

you have done that you need to decide if you believe the message of Jesus. Then you need to decide if you are going to trust in Jesus and obey Him. You then need to decide to turn (repent) from your sin. You then need to decide to allow someone to baptize you in Jesus' name.

Where are you in that process? Wherever you are, I urge you to keep on moving through the process. God has the answers to your questions at every point in the process. Ask and you will receive.

God has been looking for you for a long time. No matter what you did He did not stop seeking you. He has never stopped waiting for you to seek Him. Don't stop seeking. You will find. God is not very far from you. He never has been.

How do I know if I am ready to be baptized?

According to God's word (the only authority in a question like this) you are ready to be baptized if you

- Believe in Jesus as the Son of God who can save you. Mark 16:15-16
- Are repenting of (turning from) your sins. Acts 2:38
- Are willing to confess your faith in Christ. Romans 10:9
- Will ask someone to baptize you today. Acts 8:36

You mean I don't have to be perfect to be baptized?

That's exactly right. In fact the only people who are to be baptized are those who are sinners, those whose life is far from perfect. Baptism is your way of saying to God that you are a sinner and that you cannot get rid of the sin. If you will through faith in Jesus and repentance come to Him, He will welcome you into His baptism.

I was baptized when I was a baby. What about that?

Your parents did their best for you and they thought that having you baptized with water as an infant was what God wanted.

However you are an adult now and you have listened to God for yourself. You have learned that baptism has to be preceded by faith in Christ. Babies cannot believe in Jesus. Therefore baptism is not for them.

When should I get baptized?

The decision is yours and yours alone. No one can believe for you or repent for you or be baptized for you. Once you, in your heart and mind, decide to be baptized into Christ, call the church (619-299-6812) and we will arrange for a time for your baptism. It can even be today!

Do I have to get baptized in front of the whole church?

No. Some people are scared by crowds or are just shy. Your baptism can be at any time. It doesn't need to be at a service. However, let me recommend a baptism before the whole church. It is a great thing to be welcomed into Christ by a group of fellow believers.

Baptism is the beginning, not the end.

Baptism is like a wedding ceremony. The wedding is the beginning of the marriage. Baptism is the beginning of your walk with Jesus. God has many things planned for you but when it comes to today He says, *"I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."* (2 Corinthians 6:2b).