

Further reading about baptism



Want to know more of what the Bible has to say about baptism? Here are some places you can go to see what

the Bible says as well as read some exciting stories of people being baptized:

- Acts 2:36-47
- Acts 8:26-39
- Acts 10:44-48
- Acts 18:7-11
- Galatians 3:26-29
- Colossians 2:11-14
- 1 Peter 3:21-22

Question:

Does it matter who baptizes you?

Nowhere does the Bible give qualifications for who does the baptizing. Paul was actually thankful he didn't baptize some folks because they would make too much of the fact that it was him.

Occasionally spouses will take turns baptizing each other and frequently parents baptize their own children.

Good & bad reasons to be baptized

So, why be baptized?

Because you believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Son of God and Lord of life – and you're not afraid to say it out loud (see Romans 10:9-10).

Because you are ready, in faith, to receive the new and abundant life that Jesus freely offers us (see John 10:10).

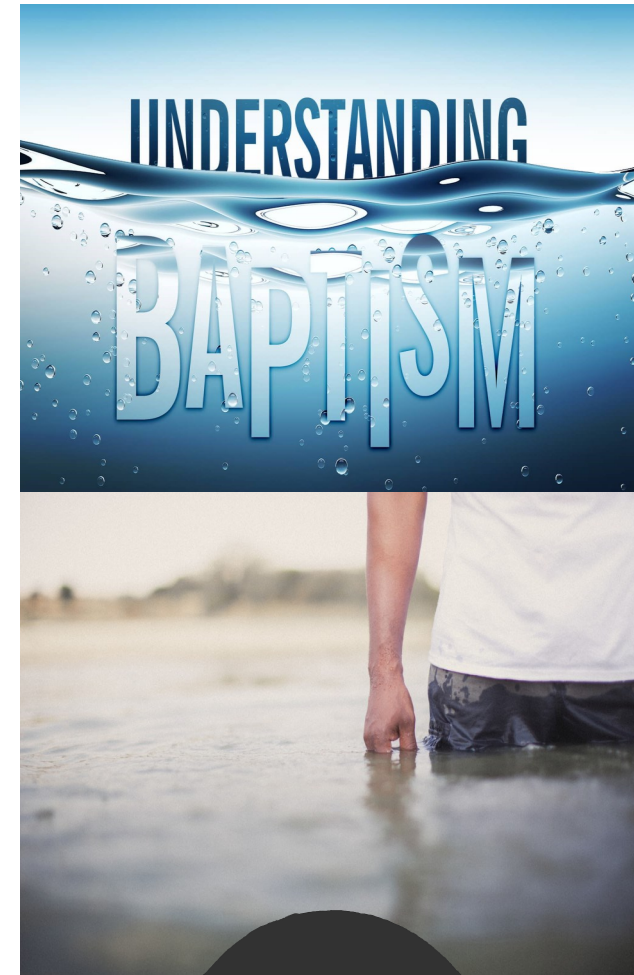
Because you believe that you have been completely forgiven by the Father because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. In baptism you are saying "Yes" to what Jesus has done for you. That's why some people call baptism the "believer's wedding ceremony." When you are baptized you are saying, "I do" to Jesus so other people can see and hear that you belong with him now – that he is yours and you are his.

What's a bad reason to be baptized?

Because your friends are being baptized and it's sort of a popular or expected thing to do.

Paul said that if he were still trying to please people, he wouldn't be a servant of Jesus. Baptism is not about pleasing other people – even your parents. It's about pleasing God and saying "yes" to Jesus.

Or as an attempt to somehow "earn" salvation. Salvation is God's gift to you, received by trusting him, not by virtue of performing any ritualistic act—including baptism (see Ephesians 2:1-10).



Why baptism?

So what exactly is the point of baptism?

Why do we do it?

Why is it so important?

There's been a lot of talk over the years among believers about baptism and there are many sincere but differing views about it among Christians.

Here's a quick summary of where the practice of baptism came from. Among the Jewish people, before Jesus came into the world, it was seen as very important from the teaching of God's Law through Moses that they be pure when they came before God in the tabernacle or temple. God provided a huge "pool" in the middle of the temple courtyard for the priests to wash themselves before they entered to worship.

In Jesus' day, there were many large pools around the temple where Jewish people coming to worship would immerse and cleanse themselves so they could approach God. When people outside the nation of Israel decided they wanted to serve the one true God of Israel, they would be taken to such pools and "baptized" or immersed in the water — often up to seven times. It was a way of cleansing themselves, but also of saying they were beginning a new life as part of God's people Israel. They were even given a new, Jewish name. In a real way they were beginning a whole new life.

Right before Jesus began his work, John the "Baptist" (he was called that because he was always baptizing or immersing people into the Jordan River) came to

prepare the people for Jesus. He called them to repent or change their ways and then to be baptized to show they were forgiven, clean and ready for the coming Messiah.

Jesus himself was baptized by John, as he said, "to fulfill all righteousness" (in other words, it was the right thing to do before his Father). As he taught people and gained followers, he baptized people too, just like John did.

Jesus commands baptism

After Jesus was crucified, buried and then raised back to life, he appeared to his remaining disciples. Matthew tells us what he said and did. It's what we call the "great commission" in Matthew 28.16-20:

Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted! Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

New Living Translation

Jesus intended baptism to simply be a part of how people became his followers. It was how they started a new life serving God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Paul explains baptism

Paul was one of the followers of Jesus who devoted his life to carrying out Jesus "great commission. He traveled all over the world of

his day making disciples of Jesus — and he baptized them too, just like Jesus said. Paul explains the meaning of baptism in his letter to believers in the city of Rome. You can find it in Romans 6.1-5:

Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

New Living Translation

So what do we do? Keep on sinning so God can keep on forgiving? I should hope not! If we've left the country where sin is sovereign, how can we still live in our old house there? Or didn't you realize we packed up and left there for good? That is what happened in baptism. When we went under the water, we left the old country of sin behind; when we came up out of the water, we entered into the new country of grace—a new life in a new land!

The Message Bible

Paul's teaching about baptism is pretty clear. When we are baptized it's as if our old way of life were dying with Jesus right there on the cross. Then we are "buried" in the water, and come up from the water, just like Jesus came out of the tomb, to live a "new life in a new land"!

It's a new beginning for us as people devoted to following Jesus.