



Water Baptism

What Is Water Baptism?

Water baptism is not a personal choice, but a command for believers. Jesus established water baptism as an ordinance when He gave the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16).

Water baptism is a public, outward testimony that indicates a personal, inward faith. It gives evidence of the inner change that has already occurred in the believer's life when he or she was "born again" through faith in Jesus Christ.

Baptism identifies the believer with the message of the gospel, the Person of Jesus Christ, and other believers. It associates the believer with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and signifies the believer's death to the old life and his or her resurrection as a new creation in Christ (Romans 6:1-8; Colossians 2:12).

Why We Should Be Baptized

We are to be baptized because Jesus Christ commanded it (Matthew 28:19), and because we love the Lord. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Throughout the book of Acts, we read how the early church gave importance to water baptism (2:41; 8:12, 38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 19:3-5).

Who Should Be Baptized?

All born-again believers in Jesus Christ—and only believers—should be baptized (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:12, 36-38; 16:31-33; 18:8).

Should Infants and Children Be Baptized?

After Peter spoke at Pentecost, "those who gladly received his word [in its entirety] were baptized" (Acts 2:41). In the New Testament, every instance in which a person was baptized and his or her identity was given, that person was an adult. In light of Scripture, infant baptism must be ruled out, because infants cannot receive the Word of God and understand it. However, infants are to be dedicated to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:26-28). Children may be baptized if they receive and understand God's Word.



In Whose Name Should We Be Baptized?

As part of the Great Commission, Jesus instructed the disciples to baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

Is Water Baptism Necessary for Salvation?

The Bible clearly teaches that we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8–9) and according to God's mercy (Titus 3:5). The thief on the cross next to Jesus had no time to be baptized; yet Jesus promised that he would be with Him in Paradise that day (Luke 23:43). The Bible contains no record of Jesus baptizing anyone—a strange omission if baptism was essential for salvation. The Apostle Paul declared, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel . . ." (1 Corinthians 1:17). This clearly indicates that salvation is a response of faith to the gospel—not the act of baptism. Therefore, water baptism is not an act of salvation, but an act of obedience.

The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit

What Is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs when the Spirit of God comes upon a believer. The Holy Spirit fills the believer's mind with a genuine understanding of truth, takes possession of the believer's abilities, and imparts gifts that qualify the believer for service in the body of Christ.

The Holy Spirit also speaks to the hearts of unbelievers, showing them their need for salvation (John 16:7–11). When a person accepts Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord, the Holy Spirit dwells inside him or her (John 14:15–17; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:13). But believers also need the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5–8).

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you . . .
—Jesus, Son of God

Is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit for Everyone?

To do God's work, we need God's power. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is for all who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, and who are children of God through Him (Act 2:38–39).



Why We Need the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is to empower believers for service, witness, spiritual warfare, and boldness in their testimonies (Acts 1:8; 4:19-20, 29-31; 6:8-10; 1 Corinthians 2:4).

Jesus commanded the disciples not to begin the work to which He called them until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:48-49; Acts 1:4, 8). When the apostles met other believers in Christ, they at once asked whether the believers had received the Holy Spirit. If not, they made sure they received Him (Acts 8:14-16; 19:1-5).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an absolute necessity in every Christian's life for the service to which God has called us.

How to Receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Jesus said, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13). God fulfills His promises in a variety of ways, and no two human beings are alike in how they receive spiritual things.

The New Testament tells us that some believers received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the moment of their conversion, such as Cornelius and his family (Acts 10). Others, such as the believers in Ephesus, received it at a later time (Acts 19:1-5). We should never limit God by our own expectations. He is sovereign and will work in whatever way He chooses.