

Baptism

The original Greek word that is used in the Bible for baptism word is ‘baptizo’; it generally means “immerse” or “wash” (often with the idea of covering something in water or liquid).

It’s a Public Confession of Your Faith in God

Matthew 28:18-20- And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and *make disciples* of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age

It Displays a picture of Jesus’ Death and Resurrection

Romans 6:3-4- Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

1 Peter 3:21-22- Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him

It Demonstrates Repentance (Turning Away) from Sin

Colossians 2:11-13- In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses

Acts 2:38- Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 6:11- You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

It Identifies you with the Christian Family/Community

Galatians 3:25-27- Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for *in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God*, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13- In one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

It matches the practice of Jesus and the earliest Christians

Mark 1:9-10 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

Acts 8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

What about that part in 1 Peter 3:21 that says “Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you”?

Here’s an explanation from the Tyndale Commentary that is helpful:

Baptism corresponds to escaping through water in that the water of baptism is in some ways a counterpart to the waters of the flood. For if, as is nearly certain, baptism when Peter wrote was by immersion (going completely under the water—note how incongruous the mention of ‘removal of dirt from the body’ would be if Peter thought that only a few drops of water were sprinkled on the head), then going down into the waters of baptism was a vivid symbol of going down into the grave in death. (Compare with Romans 6:4 - ‘we were buried therefore with him by baptism into death’.)

Baptism thus shows us clearly that in one sense we have ‘died’ and ‘been raised’ again, but in another sense we emerge from the waters knowing that we are still alive and have passed through the waters of God’s judgment unharmed. As Noah fled into the ark, so we flee to Christ, and in him we escape judgment.

But what does Peter mean by “now saves you”? Baptism saves you not as a removal of dirt from the body (i.e. not as an outward, physical act which washes dirt from the body—that is not the part which saves you), but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience (i.e. as an inward, spiritual transaction between God and the individual, a transaction symbolized by the outward ceremony of baptism). We could paraphrase, ‘Baptism now saves you—not the outward physical ceremony of baptism but the inward spiritual reality which baptism represents.’ Thus Peter guards against any ‘magical’ view of baptism which would attribute saving power to the physical ceremony itself.

Why is baptism public?

As Jesus calls people to follow him, this call is not simply to a private life of personal faith; but it is a call to faith lived publicly and lived as part of the people of God. The Christian life is public and corporate; in addition, our growth in discipleship is largely public and corporate.

Keeping in mind the dangers in Matthew 6 of drawing attention to oneself, the public nature of baptism is not meant to display the greatness of the person being baptized, but instead focuses on the power of God at work in the person’s life.

Additionally, Jesus said in Matthew 10:32-33, “So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.” Since this is how we hope to live and speak for Him, we want the beginning step of a person’s discipleship journey to be “before men.”

Moreover, a person’s act of public baptism not only impacts that individual, but also impacts those in the congregation who observe a picture of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Through His death and resurrection, sin and death are defeated!