

Any lexicon (Greek dictionary) will give the primary meaning of the Greek word "baptizo" as, "to place into", "to immerse", or "to dip into". The words of several historians and theologians echo this truth:

Martin Luther - "Baptism is a Greek word and may be translated immersion. I would have those who are to be baptized to be altogether dipped into the water".

John Calvin - the founder of Presbyterianism: "The word baptize signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the primitive church."

John Wesley - the father of Methodism, declares in his writings, referring to Romans 6:3-5, "Buried with Him", alluding to the ancient manner of baptism by immersion.

Dean Stanley - an Episcopalian, writes in his book, Christian Institution, p. 17, "For thirteen centuries, the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament and which is the very meaning of the word "baptizo" - that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into water."

The significance of baptism as a symbol of our identification in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, is best portrayed by immersion. However, we must be careful not to make the mode more important than the truth it symbolizes. Even though immersion best symbolizes our identification with Christ, certain physical limitations of a person might make other modes necessary.

Why Should a Believer be Baptized?

- Baptism is an act of obedience to our Lord's command (Matthew 28:19). The early church never knew of any unbaptized believers. Every person who received Jesus Christ as Savior was baptized.
- Baptism is an "outward expression of an inward reality." It is a public declaration of one's desire and commitment to follow Jesus Christ
- Baptism is a memorial, pointing to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When a person is baptized, we are reminded of the tremendous cost of our salvation (I Peter 1:18- 21).

When Being Baptized at the International Baptist Church of Budapest . . .

We ask that you make it a special time by doing the following:

- Be sure of your own spiritual condition. Ask yourself, "Have I come to a place in my spiritual life where I know for certain that I have eternal life through faith in Christ?", "Is it my desire to be a committed follower of Jesus Christ, no matter what the cost?"
- Attend the Baptism Class prior to your baptismal service.
- Invite your family and friends, especially your non-Christian friends, to witness your baptism.



**Knowing Christ
Growing in Christ
Showing Christ**



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**Believer's
Baptism**

Introduction

The Bible has much to say concerning the ordinance of Baptism. And, yet, with all the information and instruction provided within Scripture, there still seems to be a tremendous amount of confusion centered around the doctrine of baptism.

For instance, there are those who believe that baptism is necessary for salvation, that one does not have all of salvation "intact" unless the ordinance of water baptism has been followed. Others would say that baptism is not necessary at all. It is merely an old ritual that is unnecessary for our day and age.

There are many who have questions concerning Baptism, such as:

"Who should be baptized?"

"When should a person be baptized?"

"What about children and infants - should they be baptized?"

As you can see, there are many areas that could cause division and confusion among believers. Ironically, the doctrine of baptism was given to the church as an ordinance to show unity among its peoples. Yet this doctrine often shows more disunity among Christians than unity. Baptism was given to the church to show separation from the world, but now baptism often demonstrates separation among the churches.

This brochure is designed to introduce you to the subject of baptism and answer some of the basic questions concerning the ordinance of baptism. Our purpose is not to argue different denominational teachings on baptism, but instead, to present our understanding of the Bible's teaching on the subject. We trust that this brochure will be useful in your study of baptism.

The Origin of Believer's Baptism

Jesus commanded His followers shortly before His ascension, "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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Therefore, we see that Believer's Baptism was instituted by Jesus Himself. It is one of the two ordinances that Jesus left for the church to observe until His return, the other being the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:23-29).

We find baptism to be the precise practice of the apostles throughout the New Testament. Peter challenges the people of Jerusalem to "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38). Philip, in Samaria, along with the Ethiopian eunuch, practiced baptism following conversion (Acts 8:12-13, 35-39). Paul and the Philippian jailer, along with believers in Corinth, practiced baptism (Acts 16:27-33; 18:8).

The Significance of Believer's Baptism

The ordinance of baptism is a symbol of the believer's identification with Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:1-14; Colossians 2:12). Some express this as "an outward expression of an inward reality." In Believer's Baptism, you are literally proclaiming that:

- You were in Christ when Christ was judged for sin.
- You were buried with Christ and have buried your old way of life.
- You have been raised in newness of life in Him.

Who Should Be Baptized?

The Bible teaches that only believers are to be baptized. Every example of baptism in the New Testament is of a person who had accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior (Acts 2:41; 8:12-13, 35-39; 10:47-48; 16:27-33; 18:8).

Some may ask, "How old should a child be before being baptized?" The Bible does not set a specific age for baptism. The only requirement is that a person knows Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. We believe all Christians should follow the invitation to be baptized as soon as possible after their acceptance of Christ.

Some may ask, "What about infant baptism?" Several things need to be mentioned:

- There is no Scripture that would support this practice.
- In fact, the Scripture's teaching on Baptism contradicts this practice. -The requirement for baptism is always personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. -The significance of baptism focuses on identification with Jesus Christ.
- Infant baptism may result in confusion.
- It may provide a person with a false sense of security concerning their salvation, and it may encourage a child to put off faith in Christ.

However, Scriptures do give examples of infant and child dedication (I Samuel 1:28; Luke 2:22). The purpose of dedicating children is found in the purpose of the parents. Rightly understood, the ceremony is really one of parental dedication. The parents are pledging themselves to obey the command of Paul to "not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). This ceremony is meaningless unless parents dedicate themselves, as well as their child, to God.

How Should a Person Be Baptized?

There are three common modes of baptism:

1. Sprinkling
2. Pouring
3. Immersion

Much confusion would be eliminated if the original word from the Greek text, "baptizo", was translated instead of transliterated. When a word is translated, a word is chosen in the language of the people, which has an equivalent meaning. This was not done in the case of this word, "baptize". In order to avoid a conflict with church dogma, the translators of the King James version of the Bible transliterated the word, that is, they merely took the letters of the Greek and put them into the English sound equivalents. Therefore, the word was never actually translated in the King James text.