

A Bible Study on Believer's Baptism

Water Baptism is a means of public identification.

- John's baptisms publicly identified the Jewish participants with their sinfulness and need of repentance in view of coming judgment (Matt 3:6, 11; Mark 1:3-5)
- Jesus' baptism represented His public identification with our humanity -- the willing identification of the sinless Son of God with the sinful people He came to save (Matt 3:15)
- Believer's baptism in the name of Jesus Christ represents a person's public identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 6:1-6)
- Believer's baptism publicly associates one with all others who have been united to Christ by faith (Acts 2:41-42, 1 Cor 12:13)
- Paul and Jesus both baptized very little since it wasn't necessary for belief in the gospel, nor about a cult identification with the individual performing the baptism (John 4:2, 1 Cor 1:13-17)

Water Baptism is intended to be a visual symbol of an inward reality.

- Symbolizing that the one who believes in Christ's death & burial (into the water) and resurrection (out of the water) of the believer in Christ
- It is the demonstrator of real faith exercised in the first act of obedience to the Lordship of Christ (Acts 8:26-40; 16:27-34)
- It is a demonstration of the fact that our sins have been forgiven and remitted, just like all other acts of obedience are likewise a demonstration of our salvation (Acts 2:38)
- It is a necessary part of Christian discipleship (Matt 28:18-20)
- It does not cleanse or wash away sins (Jn 15:3, 1 Peter 3:21, 1 Jn 1:7)
- It does not save or merit forgiveness (Luke 18:13-14; 1 Cor 1:13-17)
- It does not bestow the Spirit of God (Acts 8:15-17)

Water Baptism is intended to be a one-time act of obedience for the believer

- As it symbolizes our one-time and eternal union with the one-time death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord (Eph 4:4-5)
- It is to be an immediate and inseparable indicator of salvation, since belief produces obedience and joy. (Jn 14:15; Acts 8:39)

Not all religious ceremonies with water are a biblical baptism

- Biblical (genuine) baptism publicly identifies the believer to be in a spiritual union with Jesus by faith
- When a person experiences immersion prior to, or contrary to, personal faith in Jesus Christ, it is right for them to be re-baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:1-7)
- When a believer experiences baptism prior to having a mature understanding of its meaning or significance, it is not necessary for them to be re-baptized (Heb 6:1-3)
- When a believer is restored from back-sliding, it is not necessary for them to be re-baptized (1 Jn 1:9)
- When a believer experiences baptism via a different mode (other than immersion), the Bible does not require them to be re-baptized
- Any who would desire to be re-baptized should be "fully persuaded in their own mind", as this is ultimately a matter of conscience to be taken seriously (Rom 14:5, 23)

When should children who profess faith in Christ pursue believer's baptism?

Helpful introduction to different positions - <http://www.challies.com/articles/at-what-age-should-we-baptize>

- **Encouraging young believing children to pursue baptism:**

<http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/should-we-baptize-small-children-yes>

<http://rockhillcc.org/blog/when-should-my-child-be-baptized/>

- **Encouraging young believing children to wait for baptism:**

<http://www.challies.com/articles/when-should-my-children-be-baptized>

<http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevinwax/2011/02/21/should-we-baptize-small-children/>