

I. Believer's Baptism

II. Selected Scriptures - NCBC, November 4, 2018

Believer's baptism is the public initiation of Christian discipleship by which the believer is immersed in water in God's Name as a visual symbol of an inward reality. Mt 28:18-20

- A means of public identification
 - John's baptism identifies with repentance
 - III. Mt 3:6-11; Mk 1:4-8; Lk 7:28-30; Jn 1:24-34
 - Jesus' baptism identifies with humanity
 - IV. Mt 3:15; Mk 10:38-39; Lk 12:50
 - Believer's baptism identifies with Jesus' death and resurrection
 - V. Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Col 2:11-12
 - Believer's baptism identifies with Jesus' church
 - VI. 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-29; Eph 4:5
- VII.
 - A visible picture of spiritual realities
 - Repentance – Acts 2:38; 11:16-18
 - Faith – Acts 8:12-13; 18:8; 22:16; 1 Pet 3:21
 - Receiving God's Spirit – Acts 2:38; 8:12-17; 10:44-48; 11:16-18
 - Cleansing or Forgiveness – Acts 2:38, 22:16; 1 Cor 6:11; Eph 5:22-33; Tit 3:5
 - Discipleship or Commitment – Mt 28:18-20; Jn 4:1-2; 1 Cor 1:13-17
 - Death to sin – Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:11-12
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- VIII.
 - Practical Considerations
 - Not all religious ceremonies with water are a biblical baptism – Acts 19:1-7
 - Church membership qualifies you to baptize – Mt 28:18-20
 - There may be good reasons to delay the baptism of young children – Mt 21:28-32; Mk 4:16-17

Opening Announcements:

- First Prayer Service this Weds 6:45p

<<O Lord My Rock and My Redeemer>>



Our God is a strong refuge and Savior for all who trust in Him – whether in Pakistan or Nigeria or Mackinaw IL. Because our God is a Rock and Redeemer.



If you don't have a Bible with you this morning, simply raise your hand so we may give you a Bible. This morning we are going to turn our attention to what the Scripture teaches us about Believer's Baptism – so we

will be looking at many different Scriptures together this morning and you will want to keep your Bible open.

Our first scripture will come from Jesus' great commission – found in **Matthew chapter 28**. So please open your Bibles to **Matthew chapter 28**.

Next week we will start our preaching series on New Castle's top 5 favorite psalms. Thanks to all of you who submitted your favorites this week.



But today, it is very strategic to consider believer's baptism on this day of prayer for the persecuted church. For believer's baptism goes public with your love for Jesus in a world that hates Jesus. It's like putting on a Bear's jersey and walking onto Lambeau field. Believer's baptism is not cute and cuddly. It's never convenient nor glamorous. It's not for babies. Biblical baptism is the worshipful response of sin-hardened souls who have been rescued by God's amazing grace and set free to really love Jesus more than anything in this world!

So as we approach this study, please pray with me now.

Let's Pray.

Is it possible that baptism has become the discarded jewel in the American church? Many consider baptism as optional, and it's not uncommon to meet faithful Christians who have never been baptized. Many Christian traditions don't practice believer's baptism at all in their preference for infant baptism or confirmation. I wonder what's motivated our shift in thinking about baptism as American Christians?

In 1993 a study by the Southern Baptist Convention found only 40 percent of baptisms in their cooperating churches were "first time" baptisms of new converts.¹ Interestingly, other studies discovered a significant trend of decrease in the median age of people getting baptized. In other words – in churches that practice believer's baptism – those who are getting baptized are much younger today than those 100 years ago.²

For our brothers and sisters living in Muslim- or Hindu- or Buddhist-majority cultures – there is a real cost associated with believer's baptism. Although a private faith in Jesus may be tolerated – a public baptism as a follower of Christ brings shame on the families – and hence great persecution and suffering for those being baptized.

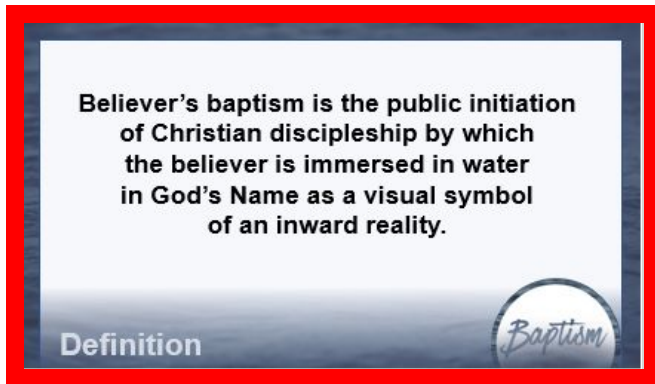
Baptism is not an insignificant matter for a Christian. We need God's Word to guide our understanding and practice of this biblical command of our Lord.

So let's start our study with a comprehensive definition of

¹ 1993 study referenced in *Believer's Baptism*, Schreiner

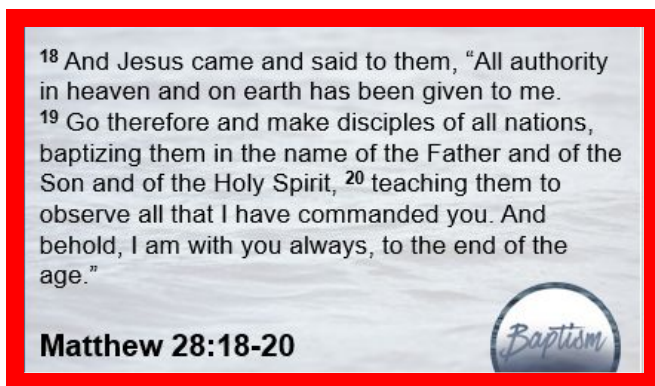
² *Believer's Baptism*, Thomas Schreiner: 345.

believer's baptism:



Believer's baptism is the public initiation of Christian discipleship by which the believer is immersed in water in God's Name as a visual symbol of an inward reality.

It's a lengthy definition I know, but each phrase is helpful to our understanding, and will be further unpacked in our study. Let's begin by considering Jesus' great commission from **Matthew 28, verses 18-20**:



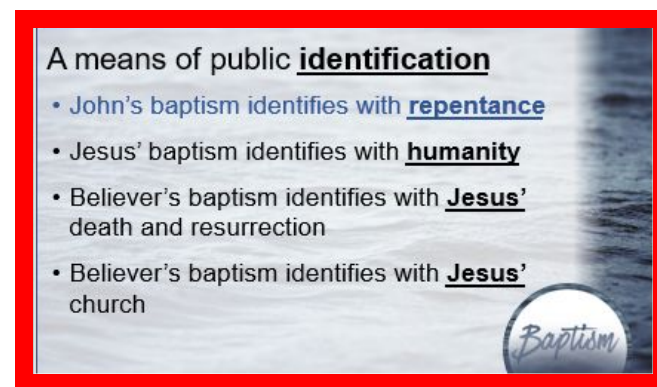
Bracketed by Jesus' authority and presence, the great

commission has 1 key verb – to make disciples of all nations. This verb is attached to three explanatory participles – describing the manner or means of how Jesus is commanding us to make disciples.

Literally **verse 19** begins, *While you are going therefore, 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.*

Jesus commands His followers to make more disciples by going, baptizing, and teaching. So *baptizing* is connected to making disciples. It is the public initiation of Christian discipleship by which the believer is immersed in water in God's Name – or you might say – in a commitment of loyalty and allegiance to the Master they are following – as a visual symbol of an inward reality.

It's important to realize that in the New Testament, water baptism has always been,



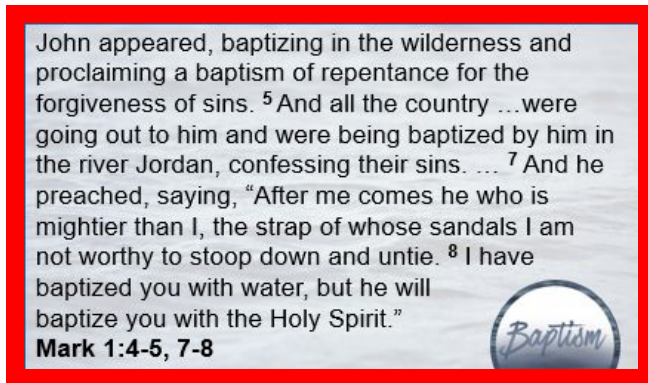
A means of public identification

There are three different kinds of water baptism

described in the New Testament. First is John's baptism – referring to the baptisms performed by John the Baptist and his disciples before the cross. Second, Jesus' own baptism deserves separate consideration with all of its Messianic significance. And third, believer's baptism. All three kinds of water baptisms are means of public identification.

First, **John's baptism identifies with repentance**

Look with me at **Mark chapter 1**, starting in **verse 4**,



John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Now don't miss the historical significance of this. The Jews believed that they were righteous and clean because they were physical descendants of Abraham. For Jews to have to be baptized was unheard of in John's day! A one-time washing might only be required for Gentiles who were converting to Judaism – to symbolically demonstrate their repentance and desire to

be cleansed by God. But here's John the Baptizer – calling Jews to repent for sins! John's baptism publicly identified each of the participants as sinners in need of forgiveness – and thereby was preparing Israel for the arrival of their Messiah – the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit!³

John's baptism publicly identified someone as a sinner in repentance. So how should we understand the fact that Jesus asked John to baptize him?



Well, **Jesus' baptism publicly identifies Jesus with the humanity** He came to represent and save.

In **Matthew 3:13**,

³ Mt 3:6-11; Lk 7:28-30; Jn 1:24-34, especially verse 31.

¹³ Then Jesus came ... to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. **Matthew 3:15**

⁵⁰ I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! **Luke 12:50**



Jesus came...to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?

In other words, John knew Jesus didn't need to publicly identify with repentance! Jesus never sinned!⁴

But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

Matthew's gospel has a significant theme on righteousness. And so Jesus submits Himself to a water baptism so that He can publicly identify Himself with sinful Israel and point ahead to the cross.

It's interesting that in **Luke 12** and **Mark 10** Jesus also refers to the cross as a baptism. Obviously the cross is not a wet baptism – but Jesus viewed the persecution which resulted in His crucifixion as a flood of God's judgment that He would submerge Himself under in order

⁴ 1 Peter 2:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 3:5
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to bring about the righteousness of the redeemed.⁵

A means of public identification

- John's baptism identifies with repentance
- Jesus' baptism identifies with humanity
- Believer's baptism identifies with Jesus' death and resurrection
- Believer's baptism identifies with Jesus' church



So all this to say that Jesus' own baptism identified Him with humanity, and our sin which would require His substitutionary death on the cross to accomplish the righteousness of all who would believe on Him.

The third distinct kind of water baptism in the New Testament is believer's baptism. The dipping of new Christians in water as a public beginning to their following of Christ. And from the Scriptures, we first observe that **Believer's baptism identifies the Christian with Jesus' death and resurrection.**

In short, you could say baptism publicly identifies the believer with Jesus.

⁵ C.f. 1 Peter 3:20-21

³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ 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.

Romans 6:3-4

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Galatians 3:27



A means of public identification

- John's baptism identifies with repentance
- Jesus' baptism identifies with humanity
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- Believer's baptism identifies with Jesus' church



Believer's baptism identifies the believer with Jesus' church.

Consider these verses from the apostle Paul,

For 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.

1 Corinthians 12:13

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Galatians 3:27

one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
Ephesians 4:5



In **Galatians 3:27**, Paul writes, *as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*. In **Romans 6 verse 3**, *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.*⁶

Believer's baptism publicly associates a person with the death of Jesus for his/her sins – and the resurrection of Jesus for his/her eternal life. And further, Believer's baptism also publicly associates the participant with all others who have been united to Christ's death and resurrection by faith.

You might say it this way,

1 Corinthians 12:13 - *For 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.* And then **Ephesians 4** lists baptism as one of the seven means of unity for the church.


And as we shall see in a minute, Paul didn't see a great

⁶ C.f. Col 2:11-12
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separation between water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To the New Testament writers in the early days of the church – there wasn't the delay between receiving the Spirit and being immersed in the waters of baptism that is so common today. In the apostolic age -when someone became saved it was indisputably obvious and supernatural! Often they would begin speaking in tongues, and proclaiming the Gospel to others – and so for Paul it would have been unimaginable for him to ever consider the possibility of an unbaptized Christian. All those who were baptized by the Spirit, were baptized via water in a public initiation of their discipleship. So while Spirit Baptism and Water Baptism are indeed two different realities, all of the New Testament writers assume that both happen together – and therefore do not see the need to clarify between water and Spirit baptism when referring to baptism in the New Testament.

A means of public **identification**

- John's baptism identifies with **repentance**
- Jesus' baptism identifies with **humanity**
- Believer's baptism identifies with **Jesus'** death and resurrection
- Believer's baptism identifies with **Jesus'** church



So then, we've learned that water baptism in the New Testament is always a means of public identification.

Now let's consider in more detail how believer's baptism

specifically is,

A visible **picture** of spiritual realities

- **Repentance**
- **Faith**
- Receiving God's **Spirit**
- **Cleansing** or Forgiveness
- **Discipleship** or Commitment
- **Death** to sin
- **Raised** to life




A visible **picture** of spiritual realities

Baptism is more than a means of public identification with Christ. It is a profoundly rich visual symbol of invisible inward realities.

First consider how believer's baptism is a picture of **Repentance** and **Faith** – the two Gospel twins.

And 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. **Acts 2:38**

But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³ Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip... **Acts 8:12-13**



In **Acts 2:38** Peter preaches at the first Pentecost,

“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.

Notice loved ones, this is a Gospel command. In this verse repentance, baptism, forgiveness of sins, and receiving the Holy Spirit are all inseparably joined together into one experience. The grammar is clear. Peter would never envision someone who repented with faith in Jesus’ name, who wasn’t forgiven, or who wouldn’t receive God’s Spirit, or who wouldn’t also be baptized. Baptism isn’t the same as repentance and faith – but it pictures it.

Because as the Christian is immersed in water in the name of Jesus, he or she is picturing the death which sin demands. It’s a picture of repentance – acknowledging I’m a sinner – but it’s also a picture of my faith – as my baptism demonstrates my obedience to God’s command as an expression of my faith!

So don’t get confused by **Acts 2:38** – baptism doesn’t give you forgiveness. You are saved and forgiven by grace alone through faith in Christ alone. But believer’s baptism pictures or demonstrates the faith and repentance of the Christian.

By the way, that’s why faith in Christ always precedes believer’s baptism in Scripture. Baptism doesn’t produce faith. Believer’s baptism is the first obedience of faith in the New Testament Scriptures.

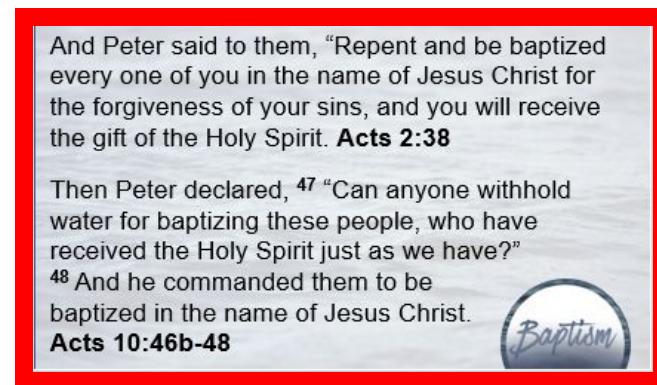
I find it interesting that in Acts, repentance, faith, and

believer’s baptism are all portrayed as resulting in,



Receiving God’s Spirit

Yet we know that believer’s baptism doesn’t bestow or grant God’s Spirit – because in,



Acts 10, Cornelius and his family received the Spirit prior to being immersed in believer’s baptism. So baptism doesn’t give you God’s Spirit – but water baptism is the outward symbol of the inward Spirit baptism that occurs the moment God causes you to be born again and opens

your heart to repentance and faith in Christ!

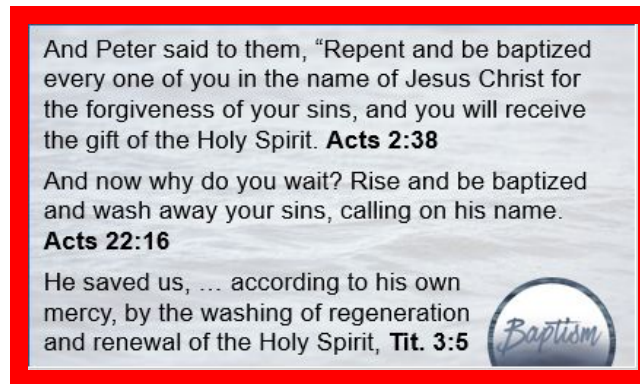
And of course, believer's baptism is also a visible picture



of our spiritual **Cleansing or Forgiveness**

1 Peter 3:21 is clear – Baptism doesn't save us by a physical removal of dirt from the baptism.... but as an appeal to God believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ – we receive forgiveness and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin!⁷

Just like we see in **Acts 22:16**,



Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

Ananias commanded the newly converted Paul to call on God's name – to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins – and express that saving faith with the obedience of baptism.

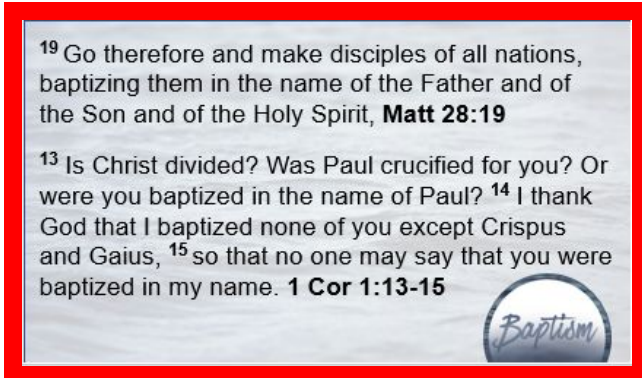
Believer's baptism is a visual symbol of the washing of regeneration that God does in the human heart.

But believer's baptism is also a picture of,



Discipleship or Commitment

We've already seen the direct link between baptism and discipleship from Jesus' commands in the Great Commission.



By definition, a disciple is a Christ-follower who has been baptized and is being taught to obey all that Christ has taught us. To be baptized in God's name is to declare your allegiance to obey God's Gospel and live as His disciple.

But look now at **1 Corinthians 1**. Paul was admonishing the divisive Corinthians. He understood that to be baptized in someone's name was an expression of allegiance and loyalty to follow that person and their teaching. But Paul didn't want disciples of Paul! He was making disciples of Christ. Christ can't be divided. Your baptism is a picture of your allegiance to the death – or cross – of Christ and His ensuing resurrection.

Like we've already mentioned,



Believer's baptism is a picture of the believer's **Death to sin** and being **Raised to life**

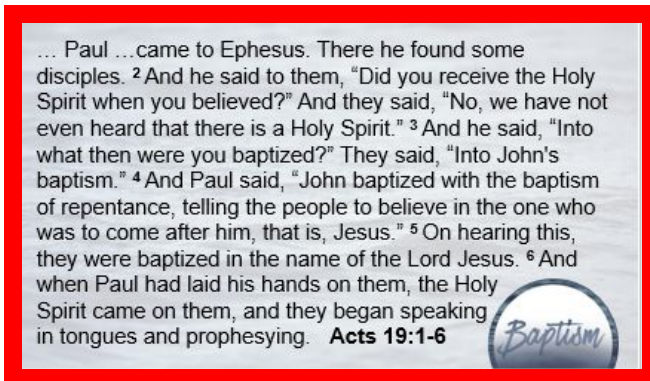
When you go into the water, you are picturing your union in Christ with God's judgment for your sin. And when you come out of the water – you picture your resurrection union with the eternal Christ – who forever lives to make intercession for you!

So now let's quickly consider some practical implications of what we've learned from our quick study so far.



First, we must realize that Not all religious ceremonies with water are a biblical baptism

Any religious ceremony with water prior to your reception of the Holy Spirit in your salvation cannot publicly identify you with Christ or picture spiritual realities that are still non-existent for you.



This is why in **Acts 19**, when Paul found 12 Ephesians who had received a baptism of repentance, but had not yet received the Holy Spirit - Paul preached the gospel of saving faith to them. And upon their salvation, Paul then

baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Church – baptism is not the New Covenant sign of the Christian. The reception of the Holy Spirit is the only fail-proof indication of salvation.⁸



Therefore, if you have experienced a religious ceremony with water prior to receiving the Holy Spirit – you have not yet obeyed the Lord’s command to publicly identify with Him in believer’s baptism.

Secondly, based on Jesus’ Great Commission in **Matthew 28**, which was given to not just the apostles but to all of His disciples in this church age – it seems appropriate to suggest that **Church membership qualifies you to baptize**. The Scriptures teach the priesthood of all believers.⁹

All disciples are called to be disciple-makers. And to make disciples means that while you are going through

⁸ Roman 8:9, 14-17; Galatians 4:6; 1 John 3:24. C.f. Colossians 2:11-12 where Paul compares believer’s baptism to *spiritual circumcision*, not physical circumcision – which was the sign of the old covenant.

⁹ 1 Peter 2:5-9; 1 Timothy 2:5

life, you are baptizing others in God's name, and teaching them to observe all that God has commanded. Because baptism publicly identifies us with Jesus' church – it makes sense for baptisms to normally happen in a church context, and be performed by those who are formal representatives of the church.



And finally, I want to just note that **there may be good reasons to delay the baptism of young children**

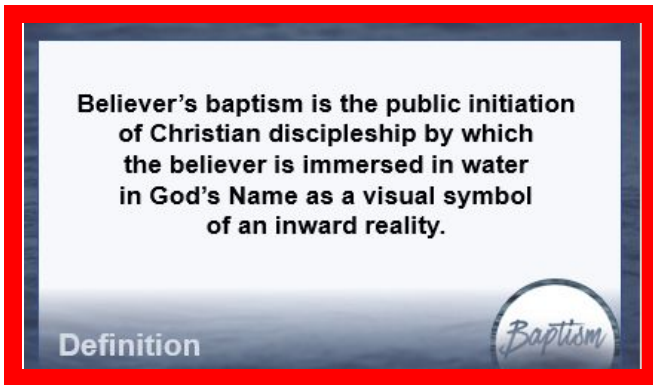
In the Scriptures, we see baptism immediately follows saving faith as its first demonstration of obedience. However no where in Scripture do we see infants or young children being baptized. Even in those passages that refer to entire households being saved¹⁰ – those who are saved immediately respond in faith, speak in tongues, and rejoice with joy over their salvation, etc. These are the responses of souls who have the maturity to understand and comprehend their reception of the Holy Spirit...so it would be ill-advised to use these passages as support for infant baptism.

¹⁰ Acts 10:2, 24, 44-48; 11:14; 16:16, 32-33; 18:8
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Here at New Castle Bible Church – we defer to parent's wisdom and conscience to discern when their young child may be ready to go public with their commitment for Christ – apart from all influences of their parents or peers. While we have no doubt that God may indeed save a soul at a very young age – the public and social implications of believer's baptism seem to suggest that it may be wise to listen to Jesus' parables which teach that true faith always bears fruit over time. Time can be a very helpful test to faith.¹¹ And since believer's baptism is a public witness of our union to Christ in the community – we appreciate those who encourage their children to wait for a level of social maturity that is able to maintain certainty of their salvation in the face of opposition. Obviously Christian parents of children who profess faith in Christ are in the best position to discern this, and so our pastors most often defer to the parent's wisdom in the timing of children's baptisms.

Now, there's a whole lot more I wanted to teach you about Believer's Baptism that time did not allow me to say this morning. So please consult the recommended resources on the back of your notes page this morning. I'd highly recommend both the web links and the three recommended books for your further study and joy.

¹¹ Matthew 21:28-32; Mark 4:16-17



In summary, **Believer's baptism is the public initiation of Christian discipleship by which the believer is immersed in water in God's Name as a visual symbol of an inward reality.**

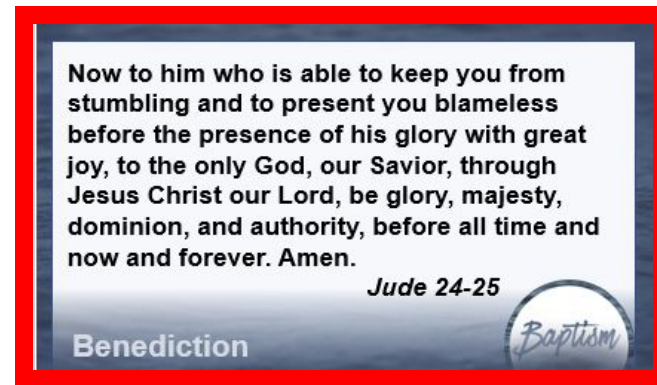
The Scriptures have much to teach us about this important one-time initiation rite for all of Christ's followers. May God help us to align our beliefs and our practices to His life-giving word, as we continue to make disciples together by His grace, for His glory!



Let's Pray.

<<All I Have is Christ (1st Service Only)>>

Let's pray our Benediction now as we are dismissed,



Benediction

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. Jude 24-25



Recommended Resources on Believer's Baptism:

- Matthew 3:1-16; 11:11-12; 14:1-8; 16:14; 17:13; 21:25; 28:16-20
- Mark 1:4-9; 6:14, 24-25; 7:13; 8:28; 10:38-39; 11:30
- Luke 3:1-22; 7:18-35; 9:19; 12:50; 20:24
- John 1:25-33; 3:22-4:3; 10:40-41
- Acts 1:5, 22; 2:38, 41; 8:12-13, 16, 36, 38; 9:18; 10:37, 47-48; 11:16; 13:24; 16:15, 33; 18:8, 25; 19:3-5; 22:16
- Romans 6:3-4
- 1 Corinthians 1:13-17; 6:11; 10:2; 12:13; 15:29
- Galatians 3:27
- Ephesians 4:5; 5:26
- Colossians 2:11-12
- Titus 3:5
- 1 Peter 3:21

IX.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dc7QFDMJzro> - John MacArthur sermon on Baptism
- <https://www.challies.com/articles/at-what-age-should-we-baptize/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-baptism.html>

X.

- *Believer's Baptism*, Thomas Schreiner & Shawn Wright
- *A Biblical Critique of Infant Baptism*, Matt Waymeyer
- *Baptism: The Believer's First Obedience*, Larry Dyer

XI.

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Read Matthew 28:18-20. Note the main verb of Jesus' command is to "make disciples," and it is explained by the three participles "go" (better translated "while you are going"), "baptizing," and "teaching." To whom then does Jesus' presence give the authority to baptize His disciples?
2. Read Acts 19:1-7. Whenever someone experiences a baptism prior to, or contrary to, personal faith in Jesus Christ, what should they do?
3. Reads Acts 2:38, 41. Is baptism required for salvation? Explain, using Luke 23:42-43, Acts 9:17-18 and 10:44-48, and 1 Peter 3:21 in your explanation. If baptism is not the fail-safe marker of salvation (c.f. Acts 19:1-7), then what is? (c.f. Romans 8:9, 14-17; Galatians 4:6; 1 John 3:24)
4. Throughout Acts we don't see any delay between belief and baptism. In Paul's writings he clearly assumes that all believers have already been baptized. Do you believe there are times when it might be wise to delay baptism after a profession of faith? In what circumstances? Explain.
5. Read Acts 10:2, 24, 44-48. What clues are in the text that tells us why 11:14 is not a proof text for infant baptism?
6. Have you taken baptism as seriously as God does? What's one thing you've learned personally from this study? Is there any belief or action that you need to change in view of what the Scriptures teach about the baptism of believers?