

Christian Baptism; the bottom line

- 1) Baptism by water in the Name of all three Persons of the Trinity is one of the two ordinances of the Christian faith, the other being celebrating the Lord's Table (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25). An ordinance is defined as a direct command by Jesus Christ to all New Testament believers.
- 2) Water Baptism is not necessary for salvation (Luke 23:43). However, it should follow salvation (Acts 2:38-39, 16:14-15, 16:31-33, 18:18). It is an outward expression of the inward reality (the redeemed state) that has already taken place in the heart, mind, and soul of the believer. Since babies and young children cannot experience this reality, we reject the validity of infant baptism. However, we are honored to publicly dedicate children to the Lord (Matthew 19:13-15).
- 3) Baptism serves as a spiritual identification with Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5). It also represents newness of life in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:15-17).
- 4) Baptism also identifies the Christian with all other true believers throughout the world (Ephesians 4:4-6).
- 5) The word 'baptism' comes from the Greek 'bapto' or 'baptizo', words which were used over eighty times in the New Testament. The term signifies identification with or immersion in something. There are three types of baptism in the Bible (Matthew 3:11). Water baptism is what we are dealing with here. Holy Spirit baptism is a one-time event which takes place at the moment of belief unto salvation (Ephesians 1:13-14). Baptism by fire is the identification with the judgment of hellfire for those who reject God's gracious salvation offered in Christ Jesus (Isaiah 66:24; Matthew 25:41; Mark 9:43-48).
- 6) Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or complete immersion. Complete immersion is the preferred method because it best signifies identification with Christ, but any of the three constitute a valid baptism, as long as the baptizee is a believer. We will not re-baptize people who were already baptized as adult professing Christians because we do not agree with the method used, because that devalues the sanctifying act of obedience which purpose was to glorify God. The most important thing is the identification and act of obedience, not the method used.
- 7) Baptism is a one-time event. It never needs to be repeated unless a prior baptism was done following a false confession of salvation in Christ.
- 8) It is the mandate of the church to administer this ordinance (Matthew 28:19). If you are interested in being baptized, we will sit down with you and when you are sure you understand all these things, we will baptize you with water.