



B A P T I S M

According to the Bible

The Lord Jesus Christ said, “All authority have been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

- Please note:
1. Jesus has universal authority, therefore He is to be obeyed.
 2. The purpose of salvation is to make disciples (disciplined, submissive followers of Jesus Christ the Lord)
 3. Disciples of Christ are to demonstrate their allegiance to Him by **baptism** and obedience to the teachings of scripture.

Are you absolutely certain that you have received the Lord Jesus Christ into your life as personal Savior (*John 1:12*)? Since this is the most crucial decision you will ever make, surely you remember when you turned to Jesus with a repentant heart about sin and faith in Him to forgive! If you are not certain that this has taken place in your life, why not pray now for the salvation only the Lord Jesus can give (*John 3:16, 14:6; Romans 6:23*)? Salvation must precede **baptism** (*Acts 8:36-37*)!

Baptism is a dramatic and picturesque way of pledging your allegiance to the Lord Jesus and committing yourself (body, soul and spirit - *1 Thessalonians 5:23*) to His service. It is an important step of discipleship for all who truly have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ (*Acts 16:31-34*).

Baptism (which means to immerse completely under water) has a beautiful, double symbolism for the disciple of Christ:

1. It symbolizes the content of one’s faith in the gospel message (*1 Corinthians 15:3-4*) - the death of Christ on the cross for our sins and His subsequent burial (immersion under the water); and Christ’s miraculous resurrection from the dead (up out of the water). In **baptism**, the believer is personally identifying with Christ’s saving work for him or her.
2. It symbolizes the change of one’s life because of the indwelling Savior (*Colossians 1:27*) - when the Lord Jesus enters our heart, our life is never the same: The old pre-Christ life is dead and buried (pictured in immersion), and a new, holy nature has given us ability to walk in newness of life (*Romans 6:17*). **Baptism** is also a funeral service for the old life which is to be left behind forevermore (*Colossians 2:11-12*).

Now that you know the serious commitment that **baptism** is, can you be baptized with a heart that truly wants to live a dedicated Christian life?

The Lord Jesus was baptized when He was on earth (*John 1:29-34*). His **baptism** showed publicly His total commitment to do the will of God. It also publicly identified Him as the Savior sent from God. When Christians are baptized they, too, publicly show that they belong to Christ and are intent on doing God's will. Following Jesus' **baptism**, God the Father spoke from heaven saying, "*This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased*" (*Matthew 3:17*). This was before Christ had done any preaching or miracles - God commended Christ for His humility and submission in being baptized. Christians in any age may be sure that God feels the same way toward all disciples who obey in the ordinance of **baptism**.

Finally, we should remember that **baptism** is just the beginning of a disciples' life of learning, growing, and obeying "*all things*" (*Matthew 28:20*). Following the Lord Jesus' **baptism**, He underwent a time of testing (*Matthew 4:1-11*), from which He emerged victorious and strengthened. This, too, is the normal path of Christ's disciples. Having come through trials victoriously, the Lord began His public ministry of evangelism and discipleship (*Matthew 4:12-25*). Every baptized, growing disciple of Christ should follow his/her Master's footsteps of active involvement in ministry. Following your **baptism**, is it your goal to discover your spiritual gifts and abilities and use them to glorify God? What are some specific areas of service that you can get involved with in continuing to back up your **baptism** commitment with "good works" for the Lord (*Ephesians 2:10, Titus 3:14, etc.*)?

Do you have any questions about **baptism**?

Since **baptism** is your opportunity to show what you believe, it would be good to use this occasion to also tell those present how you became a follower of Christ. It is important to know how to relate your "testimony" to others in an organized and simple manner. The attached paper is to help you organize your thoughts and the events involved in bringing you to know and love the Lord Jesus. Please fill out clearly, rehearse it and on the day of your **baptism**, be ready to tell the people present your story. It is also a good thing to invite many friends and family members to this service. Who knows? By God's grace they may come to salvation, making it a day of rejoicing for everyone (*Luke 15:10*). If you need help or have any questions come to mind, just call me.

Praising God for your allegiance to Him,

Tom Larmore

Pastor

