



Transformation Church & Ministries

Baptism Handout

Do you agree with God that you are a sinner? Romans 3:23 says that... "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." You must confess to God you are a sinner; you must confess with all your heart that Jesus died and was resurrected for your salvation.

When you do this you have the special privilege of publicly identifying yourself as a citizen of heaven through the act of water baptism.

Baptism is a command and a most important step in the Christian life. It is not for the unbeliever, it is for **BELIEVERS ONLY** (Acts 8:12).

Believers should be baptized because: Jesus APPROVED it (Matthew 3:15) Jesus COMMANDED it (Matthew 28:18, Acts 2:38) Jesus SUBMITTED to it (Matthew 3:12-17) God the Father REJOICED in it (Matt. 3:17) The early church PRACTICED it (John 4:1-3; Acts 8:26-39; 9:17, 18; 22:16)

When you have surrendered your life and allegiance to Christ as savior and Lord, you have the wonderful privilege of entering into the act of believer's baptism.

The Privilege of Baptism

Baptism, like a wedding ceremony, is not to be entered into carelessly or indifferently. Like marriage, it is to be entered into with joy, but also with reverence and understanding. The one being baptized is pledging his/her eternal fidelity to God by making a statement

of identification and a declaration of regeneration.

For this reason it is important that born again Christians understand the purpose and importance of water baptism. Our English word "baptism" comes from the Greek baptizo. We will always find that the word baptizo means to "submerge" or to "immerse."

The biblical model for baptism is by immersion. But what is the significance of baptism? What is its purpose, and why is it important? The origins of biblical baptism go back as far as the giving of the Old Testament law (Lev. 15:16). It was a ritual of purification. As centuries went by it was included in many areas of the Jewish life that were not included in the Old Testament law; and yet it remained a visible illustration of identifying with the desire to be pure before God.

The History of Baptism

When John the Baptist came on the scene preaching baptism of repentance, the act of baptism was not something new to the Jews. But rather than being a ritual cleansing it was a public demonstration that the one being baptized had repented of his sins; in other words, the individual was identifying himself as one who had deliberately sinned against God and man but now he was returning to godliness. In Matthew chapter 3 we read that a great many people came to John, "and were confessing their sins."

· (717) 831-8171 ·

· change@transformationcm.com ·

· Pastor, Eric A. Birden Jr. ·



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John the Baptist was preaching that the kingdom of heaven was at hand; his ministry of baptism was a public act of identifying with and repenting from sins and identifying with their coming King.

Jesus & Baptism

We read in Matthew 3 that before Jesus began His public ministry, He came to John to be baptized. John knew that Jesus was the King, the Son of God, the perfect Lamb of God; why would Jesus need to be baptized? He was without sin! But Jesus was identifying Himself with sinners. Those people who came with repentant hearts to be baptized recognized that, according to the Old Testament Law, they deserved to die because they had violated God's Law.

But Jesus took His place with them in baptism as a public statement that He was ready to go down into death for them. Jesus was sinless, He didn't need to repent, but He was to "fulfill all righteousness" by bearing the curse of the law for those who did. His baptism was a shadow (a prophetic statement) of a far more solemn and agonizing immersion which He would yet undergo. In three short years He would go to be hung on a cross and be immersed into agony, pain and humiliation of crucifixion; but the greatest agony of all, being plunged into the penalty for the sins of all the world. Billows of judgment and the wrath of God rolled over Him as He took your place and mine.

He identified with the sins of people and prepared them for His more solemn immersion. Historically, the Israelites used baptism as an act of identifying with a desire to be pure before God. The Jews who believed the preaching of John the Baptist were baptized as an act of identifying with their sins, repenting from them, and preparing themselves for their King.

Through baptism Jesus identified with the sins of the people. Baptism is an act of identifying with something. In the case of born again Christians it is identifying with Christ. It is a public statement that we claim Jesus Christ as our King and our Savior. It is a public demonstration that we identify with His death, burial and resurrection. With the Apostle Paul we say, "**I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.**" (Galatians 2:20)

Not only does baptism identify the born-again Christian with Christ his King but it is a picture of something that has happened in the person's life. At some time in that individual's life he or she has said,

"I am a sinner; I deserve God's wrath because I have sinned against God. I need a savior. I believe that Jesus was crucified for my sins, He was buried and resurrected for my salvation. I want Jesus as my Savior and Lord."

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Romans 10:9,10 says that: **"if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. for with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation."**

Baptism is an act reserved for those who recognized a need for a savior, and because they believe Jesus died for their sins and rose again to provide eternal life, they have asked Christ to be their Lord and Savior.

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