

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

What Does It Mean To Be Part Of A Church?, Part 4

1. What Is The Meaning Of Baptism?

- **Literally** – Baptism means “to dip”, “to immerse”, or “to sink.”
- **Symbolically** – Baptism is symbolic of “identification”.

Type Of Baptism	Scripture	Identification
<i>Israel’s Baptism into Moses</i>	1 Corinthians 10:2	Identified with Moses & Deliverance
<i>John The Baptist’s Baptism</i>	Matthew 3:6,11	Identified with Repentance of Sin
<i>Jesus’ Baptism</i>	Matthew 3:13-16	Identified sinners who would receive Christ’s righteousness & forgiveness
<i>Holy Spirit’s Baptism</i>	1 Corinthians 12:13	Identifies with the Body of Christ at Salvation (Church)
<i>Believer’s Baptism</i>	Acts 2:41; 8:36-38	Identifies with Christ’s Death, Burial & Resurrection after Salvation

2. What Are The Seven Baptisms In The Bible And What Do They Mean?

- a. Baptism Into Moses (1 Cor 10:2) – Israel identified with their spiritual leader (Moses) and his deliverance (victory)
- b. John The Baptist’s Baptism (Mt 3:6,11; Mk 1:4-5; Jn 1:22-28; Acts 18:24-25) – Identified with need to repent of sin and trust in coming Savior
- c. Jesus’ Baptism (Mt 3:13-17; Isa 53:11) – The Messiah identified with sinners who would obtain His righteousness and forgiveness
- d. Fire Baptism (Mt 3:11-12) – Sinners will be judged by fire
- e. Baptism of the Cross (Mk 10:37-40) – Jesus’ suffering on the cross for the penalty of man’s sins
- f. Holy Spirit Baptism (1 Cor 12:13) – At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit places the believer in the Body of Christ.
- g. Believer’s Baptism (Acts 2:41; 8:36-38) – After salvation, we identify with Christ’s death, burial and resurrection.

3. What Is The Message Of Baptism?

- **An Identification With Christ** – Romans 6 depicts how a the immersion of a believer is a picture of Jesus’ death (vv. 3,5), burial (v.4) and resurrection (vv. 4,5,8)
- **A Public Testimony** – A believer’s baptism a testimony to the world, family, friends and church that he/she has put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

4. What Is The Relationship Between Baptism And Salvation?

- a. **Baptism Is Not A Prerequisite For Salvation** - Salvation is a prerequisite for baptism (Acts 8:36-38). Salvation is by the grace of God through faith alone, not by works like baptism (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

- Salvation is totally God's work, not man's work in any way. (Eph 2:8-9)
- Baptism is distinguished from the Gospel. (1 Cor 1:17)
- In the New Testament, individuals were baptized after they were saved. (Acts 8:36-38; 10:45-48)
- If someone sincerely had faith in Christ as his/her Savior but didn't have the opportunity to be baptized, would they still go to heaven? Yes. (Lk 23:42-43)

b. *Why Do Some People Believe That Baptism Is A Requirement For Salvation?*

- They do not distinguish spirit baptism and water (or believer's) baptism.
- Misunderstanding passages that refer to the Holy Spirit's work of baptism with the concept that man must be water baptized for salvation (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:7; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12)
- They do not interpret passages in a consistent manner with the rest of Scripture.

5. Why Do Some Churches Baptize Babies?

- *Baptism Is Not For Infants*
- *Infant Baptism Is Not In The Bible*

6. What Is The Relationship Between Baptism And The Believer?

- ***Baptism Is An Act Of Obedience To God's Command*** - Acts 2:38 contains the Apostle Peter's command "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for [as a result of] the remission of sins.*" Matthew 28:18-20 commands the disciples to baptize others.
- ***Baptism Is A Testimony Of Our Faith In Christ*** - Scripture consistently places the testimony of baptism after the event of faith in Christ (Acts 2:41; 8:12; 9:17-18; 10:47-48; 16:30-34; 18:8; 19:1-7; Galatians 3:26-27).

7. How Should Baptism Be Done?

- **Immersion** best depicts the literal meaning of the word. *Baptizo* literally means "to dip". There are other specific Greek words for "pouring" (*ekcheo*) and "sprinkling" (*rhantizo*), but they are never used in the New Testament to refer to the practice of believer's baptism.
- **Immersion** best represents the examples of baptism in the Scriptures. Immersion was done by John the Baptist (John 3:23), Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:9-10) and Philip the Evangelist (Acts 8:38-39).
- **Immersion** best symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3-8).
- **Immersion** best represents the practice in the early church. In early Christian writings, *The Shepherd of Hermas* (100 AD) says "So they go down into the water dead, and they come up alive." *The Letter of Barnabas* (130 AD) describes baptism as "the water bath." The earliest reference to any other mode of baptism is 150 AD (*The Didache*).

8. What Shall I Do If I Want To Be Baptized At Fellowship Bible Church?

- Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior
- Understanding the purpose of the believer's baptism
- Process: Form, Interview, Testimony

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1. What Is The Meaning Of Baptism?

- **Literally** – Baptism means “to dip”, “to immerse”, or “to sink.” The New Testament word is *baptizo* which was used of dipping a cloth into dye, dipping a pitcher into water, or dipping an object into wax. (Luke 16:24; John 13:26; Revelation 19:13)
- **Symbolically** – Baptism is symbolic of “**identification**”.

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2. What Are The Seven Baptisms In The Bible And What Do They Mean?

a. **Baptism Into Moses (1 Cor 10:2) – Israel identified with their spiritual leader (Moses) and his deliverance (victory)**

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were **baptized into Moses** in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

- Baptism = identification
- Ie/ Water baptism = identifies us with Christ’s death, burial and resurrection
- Israel was symbolically baptized with the surrounding waters
- They passed through the waters (parting of the Red Sea) and were saved (from Egypt)
- They were all identified with the victory God gave to Moses and through Moses
- In Christ, we are identified with a victorious Savior

b. **John The Baptist’s Baptism (Mt 3:6,11; Mk 1:4-5; Jn 1:22-28; Acts 18:24-25) – Identified with need to repent of sin and trust in coming Savior**

- Those baptized by John repented of their sin and put their faith in the coming Savior who would take away their sin

Matthew 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Mark 1:4-5 4 John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

John 1:22-28 [22] So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" [23] He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." [24] (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) [25] They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" [26] John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, [27] even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." [28] These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

- John's baptism wasn't sufficient for salvation.
- Apollos preached John's baptism but didn't know the fulfillment through Jesus' death and resurrection.

Acts 18:24-25 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.

c. Jesus' Baptism (Mt 3:13-17; Isa 53:11) – The Messiah identified with sinners who would obtain His righteousness and forgiveness

Matthew 3:13-17 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan 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?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

- "Jesus' baptism also showed that He identified with sinners. His baptism symbolized the sinners' baptism into the righteousness of Christ, dying with Him and rising free from sin and able to walk in the newness of life. His perfect righteousness would fulfill all the requirements of the Law for sinners who could never hope to do so on their own. When John hesitated to baptize the sinless Son of God, Jesus replied that it was proper to 'fulfill all righteousness' (Matthew 3:15). By this He alluded to the righteousness that He provides to all who come to Him to exchange their sin for His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21)." (<http://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-baptized.html>)

Isaiah 53:11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear

their iniquities.

- John Piper: "Evidently Jesus saw his life as the fulfillment of all righteousness. And the fact that participating in a baptism of repentance even though he had no sins to repent of is part of that shows that the righteousness he wanted to fulfill was the righteousness required not of himself, but of every sinful man. Jesus had read Isaiah 53. Indeed, Isaiah 53 was his life mission. And here is what he read in verse 11: 'By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous.' The righteous one will cause many to be counted righteous."
(<http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/why-was-jesus-baptized>)

d. Fire Baptism (Mt 3:11-12) – Sinners will be judged by fire

Matthew 3:11-12 11 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

- Jesus not only came to be the Savior, but the Judge
- Fire represents judgment

John 5:22 The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,

e. Baptism of the Cross (Mk 10:37-40) – Jesus' suffering on the cross for the penalty of man's sins

Mark 10:38-40 38 Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" 39 And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, 40 but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

- Jesus uses "baptism" as a metaphor for his suffering on the cross and how James and John will also suffer for the sake of Christ

f. Holy Spirit Baptism (1 Cor 12:13) – At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit places the believer in the Body of Christ.

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.

Orthodox Positions Defined:

- "The baptism is that divine operation of God's Spirit which places the believer in Christ, in His mystical body, the church, and which makes him one with all other believers in Christ. The baptism; makes them one in the life of the Son of God Himself, sharing His common

salvation, hope, and destiny.” (Merrill Unger, *The Baptism & Gifts Of The Holy Spirit*, p. 21)

- “Using the figure of the human body as representing the church, individual believers are revealed to be joined to this living church by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is, then, the work of the Holy Spirit forming and adding to the living unity of the church.” (John Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 140)
- “The baptism of the Spirit is that which establishes both the place and the relationship of the believer in Christ and in the body of Christ which is composed of all true believers. Baptism is, therefore, positional in that all believers have this position of being in Christ and in the body of Christ, and relational in that, being in this situation, a new relationship is established both to Christ and to all others who are in Christ.” (John Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit At Work Today*, p. 22)
- “The Holy Spirit, who takes all things out of Christ...gives them unto us. Objectively, the whole Church is in Him [Christ], and is born out of Him as the Head. It is not a mechanism, in which the parts precede the whole, but an organism, in which the whole is prior to the parts. The parts come forth out of Christ through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, and then continue in living relationship with Him.” (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 449)
- “The time when true believers become identified with Jesus Christ and placed into His body....The distinguishing feature of baptism is that we are placed into another realm, a new family: the body of Christ, the family of God.” (Tony Evans, *The Promise*, p. 37)
- “The Holy Spirit places us or introduces us as believers into the Body of which Christ is the Living Head.” (Theodore Epp, *The Other Comforter*, p. 69)

g. Believer’s Baptism (Acts 2:41; 8:36-38) – After salvation, we identify with Christ’s death, burial and resurrection.

Acts 2:41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

Acts 8:36-38 And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

3. What Is The Message Of Baptism?

- *A bride and groom wear wedding rings as public testimonies to identify themselves as married. The rings are not essential to be married, but is declarative of it. Similarly, the believer’s baptism is like a wedding ring – not a requirement for salvation, but a public testimony of salvation.*

- **An Identification With Christ** – Romans 6 depicts how a the immersion of a believer is a picture of Jesus' death (vv. 3,5), burial (v.4) and resurrection (vv. 4,5,8)
- **A Public Testimony** – A believer's baptism a testimony to the world, family, friends and church that he/she has put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

4. What Is The Relationship Between Baptism And Salvation?

a. **Baptism Is Not A Prerequisite For Salvation** - Salvation is a prerequisite for baptism (Acts 8:36-38). Salvation is by the grace of God through faith alone, not by works like baptism (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

- **Salvation is totally God's work, not man's work in any way.**

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

- **Baptism is distinguished from the Gospel.**

1 Corinthians 1:17 "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect."

- **In the New Testament, individuals were baptized after they were saved.**

Acts 8:36-38 "And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe...and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him."

Acts 10:45-48 "And those...who believed were astonished...Then Peter answered, 'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days."

** Also refer to Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38,41; 8:12-13; 9:17-18; 16:30-34; 18:8; 19:1-7*

- **If someone sincerely had faith in Christ as his/her Savior but didn't have the opportunity to be baptized, would they still go to heaven? Yes.**

Luke 23:42-43 "Then he (the thief on the cross) said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'"

b. **Why Do Some People Believe That Baptism Is A Requirement For Salvation?**

- **They do not distinguish spirit baptism and water (or believer's) baptism.**

Understanding The Difference Between Spirit Baptism & Water Baptism

Spiritual Baptism	Water Baptism
Holy Spirit's Work	Man's Work
At Salvation	After Salvation
Internal Identification In Christ	Visible Identification With Christ
Necessary For Salvation	Testimonial To Salvation
Spiritual Renovation	External Emblem

Romans 6:3-8 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. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

- Spiritual Baptism Immerses Us Into Christ Death (3-4a)
 - Immerse = consume
 - When we accept Christ as our Savior – we our totally consumed by His death
- Spiritual Baptism Identifies Us With Christ Resurrection (4b-5)
 - power over sin – not habitual sinners anymore
 - "walk" = walk about – in every aspect of our life
 - newness in life
- **Misunderstanding passages that refer to the Holy Spirit's work of baptism with the concept that man must be water baptized for salvation** (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:7; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12)
- **They do no interpret passages in a consistent manner with the rest of Scripture.**

Passage	Inconsistent Interpretation	Consistent Interpretation
Acts 2:38	baptized for (<i>for the purpose of</i>) salvation	baptized for (<i>on the basis of</i>) salvation
Mark 16:15-16	belief + baptism = salvation	emphasis that belief is necessary for salvation and non-belief is basis for condemnation – baptism mentioned only as an external symbol
Acts 22:6	baptize = washing away of sin	grammatical construction connects "wash away sins" to "calling on his name"
1 Peter 3:21	water immersion removes dirt from flesh	Peter refers to believer being immersed in Christ's death & resurrection

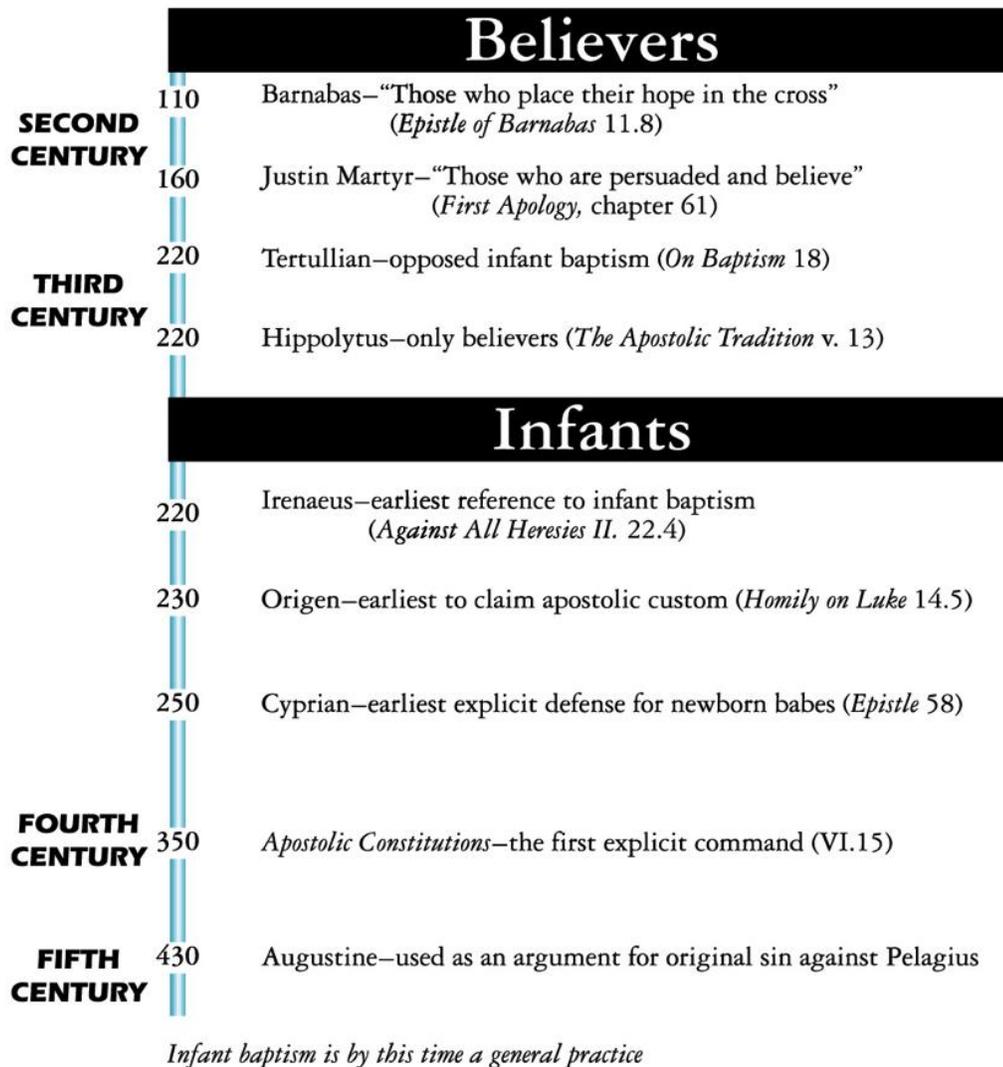
John 3:5	"born of water" = salvation by baptism	water = physical birth, Word of God or another analogy to the Holy Spirit
Titus 3:5	"washing of regeneration" = baptism	washing – done by HS through the Word of God, not water; besides this verse says: "not by works of righteousness which we have don"

5. Why Do Some Churches Baptize Babies?

- ***Baptism Is Not For Infants*** - Since infants are unable to comprehend the gospel of grace or place their faith in Christ, baptism would have no meaning for them. Some denominations see infant baptism as bestowing God's grace on them, but this is not a scriptural teaching. Others see infant baptism as a symbol of the parents dedication of the child to God. FBC has Baby Dedication Services when the parents dedicate themselves and their child to the Lord in a public declaration and prayer, but we do not practice infant baptism.
 - The Roman Catholics believe that babies who die without being christened or baptized go to "the Limbo of the Innocent" where a child will live without suffering, but also without God
 - Infant baptism originated when the Roman Catholic Church wanted to make everyone a Christian, even from birth, by baptizing them into the Catholic Church and putting them under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church
 - Reformed Churches and other Protestant Denominations (Presbyterians, Lutherans, Anglicans & Episcopalians) adopted this practice with the twist that the baptized baby becomes a member of the "covenant people" and is later confirmed during "Confirmation" by reciting the church's catechism.
 - Reformed Theology does not distinguish the Church and Israel, thus baptism is the new symbol of identification in the Church as circumcision was for Israel. Israel circumcised infant males at 8 days old according to the covenant made with Abraham. If this was intended for boys, what about for girls?
 - The Anabaptist (*ana* = again) was a movement that arose countering the false teaching of infant baptism and rebaptizing genuine believers and were greatly persecuted by both Catholic and Protestant churches
- ***Infant Baptism Is Not In The Bible***
 - German theologian, Schleiermacher: "All traces of infant baptism which have been asserted to be found in the New Testament, must first be inserted there."
 - Lutheran professor, Curt Allen: "There is no definite proof of the practice until after the 3rd century."
 - Some proponents of infant baptism will cite Matthew 18:3 "Except you become as a little child, you can't enter the kingdom." But the audience is not babies, but adults, who need to have a childlike faith.
 - Proponents of infant baptism will cite how whole families believed and were baptized (Cornelius' household in Acts 10; Philippian jailer's household in Acts 16; Crispus' household in Acts 18; Lydia and Stephanas as well). Those scripture say they "heard" and "believed." But can infants "hear" (comprehend) and "believe"?

- 1 Corinthians 1 says of Stephanas' household who believed and were baptized, then were devoted to ministering to the saints. Could babies do that too?

Baptism in the Early Church



6. What Is The Relationship Between Baptism And The Believer?

- **Baptism Is An Act Of Obedience To God's Command** - Acts 2:38 contains the Apostle Peter's command "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for [as a result of] the remission of sins." Matthew 28:18-20 commands the disciples to baptize others.
 - Ultradispensationalists (ie/ E.W. Bullinger), the Salvation Army and the Quakers deny the relevance of baptism in the life of believers today
- **Baptism Is A Testimony Of Our Faith In Christ** - Scripture consistently places the testimony of baptism after the event of faith in Christ (Acts 2:41; 8:12; 9:17-18; 10:47-48; 16:30-34; 18:8; 19:1-7; Galatians 3:26-27).

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8. What Shall I Do If I Want To Be Baptized At Fellowship Bible Church?

a. Prerequisites:

- Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior
- Understanding the purpose of the believer’s baptism

b. Preliminaries:

- Inform one of the pastors of your desire to be baptized or sign up on the bulletin board for one of the scheduled baptismal services.
- Fill out the baptismal questionnaire available in the church foyer. We can send you one at your request.
- Attend a baptismal candidate meeting or meet with one of the pastors. At this meeting, you will be instructed on the biblical teaching of baptism and asked to share how you came to faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior. Please feel free to ask whatever questions you have about salvation, baptism and the spiritual life.
- When the pastor(s) finds that you are confident about your salvation and your understanding about baptism, you will be approved for baptism and a baptismal service will be set up at your convenience.

c. Preparation:

- At the baptismal service, you will be asked to bring an extra change of clothes and a towel.
- You will share your testimony of your salvation and your spiritual life in Christ to the congregation. If you wish, the pastor can read it for you.

- At the time of the immersion, you will place one hand on your other bicep, pinch your nose with your free hand, and bend your knees as the pastor bends you backwards into the water.
- Please wear appropriate attire into the baptismal tank, paying attention to avoid translucence when your clothes are wet.