

Calvary Chapel Santa Cruz

Water Baptism

Baptism is not a personal choice, but a command for believers. Jesus established water baptism as an ordinance when He gave the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16).

What Is Water Baptism?

The word “*baptize*” itself means “*to immerse, to dip, to wash or to dunk.*” Therefore, baptism is the act of immersing, dipping, washing, or dunking someone. In the N.T. context, it means to immerse a person in water.

Water baptism is a public, outward testimony that indicates a personal, inward faith. It gives evidence of the inner change that has already occurred in the believer's life, when he or she was "born again" through faith in Jesus Christ.

Why Should We Be Baptized?

Believers in Jesus Christ are to be baptized because Jesus Christ commanded it (Matthew 28:19), and because we love the Lord. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Throughout the book of Acts, we read how the early church gave heed to the importance to water baptism (2:41; 8:12,38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15,33; 19:3-5).

Who Should Be Baptized?

All born-again believers in Jesus Christ and only believers should be baptized. (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:12, 36-38; 16:31-33; 18:8)

Should Infants and Children Be Baptized?

After Peter spoke at Pentecost, "those who gladly received his word [in its entirety] were baptized" (Acts 2:41, bracketed words added). In the New Testament, every instance in which a person was baptized and his or her identity was given, that person was an adult. In light of scripture, infant baptism must be ruled out, because infants cannot receive the Word of God and understand it. However, infants are to be dedicated to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:26-28). Children may be baptized if they receive and understand God's Word.

Therefore, in keeping with the scriptures, we reserve baptism for believers.

In Whose Name Should We Be Baptized?

As part of the Great Commission, Jesus instructed the disciples to baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Therefore, baptism is in the name of God Himself, in His tri-unity.

Is Water Baptism Necessary for Salvation?

The short answer is no.

The Bible clearly teaches that we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9) and according to God's mercy (Titus 3:5). The thief on the cross next to Jesus had no time to be baptized; yet Jesus promised that he would be with Him in Paradise that day (Luke 23:43). The Bible contains no record of Jesus baptizing anyone—a strange omission if baptism was essential for salvation. The apostle Paul declared, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel..." (1 Corinthians 1:17). Had baptism been essential for salvation, then certainly Paul would have been sent to baptize as well as preach Christ.

This clearly indicated that salvation is a response of faith to the gospel, not the act of baptism. Therefore, water baptism is not an act of salvation, but an act of obedience.

Here at Calvary Chapel

We schedule baptisms periodically, as the need arises and as the Holy Spirit directs us. If you would like to be baptized in water, be sure to either contact the church office or tell one of the pastors.

If you are a born-again believer in Jesus Christ and you have not yet been baptized, be sure to do this as soon as possible, out of love for and obedience to our Lord.