



DISCOVERY'S POSITION ON BAPTISM

AM I READY TO BE BAPTIZED?

Baptism is for somebody who wants to accept or has accepted the teachings and call of Jesus Christ. God, the author of all things, created mankind to have fellowship with Him. Sin entered the world and mankind became separated from God. Jesus Christ gave up His position next to God to come to earth where He lived a sinless life. He voluntarily died on a cross to pay the price for our sins and then rose again thereby allowing us the possibility of a renewed relationship with God. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and mankind. For all those who accept His sacrifice He gives the Holy Spirit as a guide toward personal growth.

If you have come to a point in your spiritual journey where you believe this is true, then you are ready to be baptized. Baptism is one step in a journey of following Christ, not the only step or the last step. You need not understand everything there is to know about God. You need not "clean up your life" first. You need simply to understand the purpose of your baptism and commit to following Christ.

YOUR PERSONAL STORY

As part of celebrating what God has done and is doing in your life we would like to video tape your story of what God is doing in your life and how you came to be baptized. We will be showing portions of each person's story during our baptism weekend. Don't worry, we'll arrange the details and interview you, so all you'll have to do is chat to us. Your video story will encourage others of what God is doing in your life.

THE CHALLENGE TO SHARE YOUR BAPTISM

Since baptism is a public declaration, we encourage you to prayerfully consider whom you might invite to witness your baptism. Perhaps you have friends, neighbors or family members who would come and celebrate with you. These people need not necessarily be followers of Christ, in fact often times in the Bible, people were baptized in a public setting for all to witness. If you know of people who are not yet followers of Christ who might like to come and celebrate with you, please pray about inviting them.

WHO CAN BAPTIZE ME?

Anyone who is a baptized follower of Christ can baptize you. You can ask one of the Discovery Staff members or a family member or perhaps someone who has helped you to choose to follow Christ. In the Bible, pastors, friends and family members all performed baptisms.

SOME MORE BACKGROUND ON BAPTISM

Baptism is a public declaration of a commitment to Christ. In a sense, baptism is like a wedding ring - an outward symbol of an inward commitment. Symbol is not substance. Marriage depends on a commitment, not on bands of gold. The same is true of becoming a Christian. What may outwardly identify you as a believer does not automatically make you one. The wedding rings do not marry the couple. They are fitting symbols, but without the reality of commitment, a ring - like baptism - is void of meaning. Your baptism then, is one step in a committed journey of following Christ and his teachings. Baptism itself does not save you - Jesus does. However, Jesus calls us to be baptized in recognition of a life dedicated to him. In the Bible, baptism is the expected and normal practice for every follower of Christ (Acts 2:38-39). If you have never been baptized, we encourage you to consider when would be appropriate to schedule your baptism.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ON BAPTISM

The word baptize (baptizó), was commonly used among the first century Greeks to signify a number of ordinary events. Examples include the dyeing of a garment by plunging it into a vat, the drawing of water by dipping one vessel into another, or even the sinking of ships at sea. It was also used metaphorically. For instance, a teacher might use the term when students bombard him with questions. Some form of the word is used 91 times in the New Testament. The vast majority of these cases refer to the act of submitting to immersion in a body of water in response to a person's admission of his sinfulness, a sense of repentance, and the realization of the need for God's mercy and forgiveness to overcome that condition. In light of this large body of Biblical references, Discovery Church views baptism as an important milestone for every believer. It is a beautiful drama, ordained by God, in which an individual publicly proclaims his/her commitment to Christ in a visual portrayal of death and burial to self, and resurrection to walk in a new Christ-centered life.

BIBLICAL PASSAGES ON BAPTISM

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commands His followers to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit..."
Baptism is the means by which followers of Christ are identified.

In passages such as Acts 2:41, 8:12, and 10:47-48, it is evident that baptism follows an individual's decision to trust Christ alone for salvation. The New Testament records the baptisms of adult believers only. Baptism was never intended to provide salvation for an individual, but rather to publicly identify a person with Christ.

In Romans 6:1-11, the apostle Paul explains how the immersion mode of baptism identifies the believer with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Going under water pictures Christ's death and coming out of the water illustrates His resurrection. Baptism symbolizes a commitment to enthrone Jesus Christ as the Lord of your life.

WHAT ABOUT INFANT BAPTISM?

If the purpose of baptism is to publicly identify a believer in Jesus Christ, the question may well be asked by some, "What is the significance of my baptism as a baby?" In the Bible, we find parents bringing their children to Jesus. He held them, prayed for them, and told us to welcome them. But He did not baptize them, and He did not tell anyone else to baptize them. Baptism is for those who have made a personal decision to trust Christ alone for their salvation.

If you were baptized as a child, it was the intent of your parents that you would one day be a follower of Christ. Your baptism as an adult can be viewed as the fulfillment of your parent's wishes. It in no way repudiates the baptism you received as a child.