

One of the first steps of obedience in the Christian life is

BAPTISM!

Jesus Christ directed every Believer to be baptized.

It is a command for both the Church leader and the new Believer.

“Go. . . teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” - Matthew 28: 19

From the first, Christians have practiced baptism. It has taken many forms and been assigned many differing meanings. But the earliest form was full immersion in water and had one basic meaning- the symbolic washing away of the sin of the person who was a Believer.

On the birthday of the Church, the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached a sermon that won 3,000 converts! How did they tell their friends and family of their new faith? The Scripture below tells us...

Acts 2:38-41

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ***Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.***

Let’s take a closer look at

the meaning and message of baptism.

BAPTISM: What Does it Mean And What Does it Do?

BAPTISM *A sacramental, ritual, or religious ceremony signifying spiritual rebirth accomplished by immersion in water*

The English word- "baptism" -is a transliteration of the original New Testament Greek word- "baptizein" - which means to dip into water.

We learn much about the meaning of the word by the context of its use.

- a. The word was used of the process of dyeing a piece of cloth, describing the act of immersing the cloth in the dye solution, an act which completely changed its appearance.
- b. The word was used to describe the act of tempering iron that was to be used in manufacture of tools and/or weapons. The iron was heated red-hot then beaten into the shape desired; then that piece was “baptized” in cold water where it cooled hardened for use.
- c. The word was used of a sponge being put into a container of water. The sponge was “baptized” and in the process was water filled in every pore. The nature of the sponge was changed by its "baptism."

These three usages are apt symbols of the Christian baptism.

- ◆ Baptism forever changes the way we appear to the world for it declares, in a public and irrevocable way, our new nature in Christ.
- ◆ Baptism serves as a tempering act, strengthening our resolve to follow Jesus. It leaves us with a cutting edge to our faith.
- ◆ Baptism speaks of the saturation with the Holy Spirit that the believer experiences as he becomes one with Christ.

We baptize by full immersion.....

- a. because of the implications of the word itself
- b. because it was the norm of the Scripture
- c. because the symbolism of the act requires it

So, what does it MEAN?

- Baptism is, as we have pointed out, an act of Obedience. When we obey God faithfully, we are blessed. So, friend, you are inviting His blessing on your life.
- Baptism is an outward sign of inner change and it is a powerful means of experiencing spiritual renewal and solidifying our faith.

Consider the meanings that are revealed in the following passages.

Matthew 28: 19-20

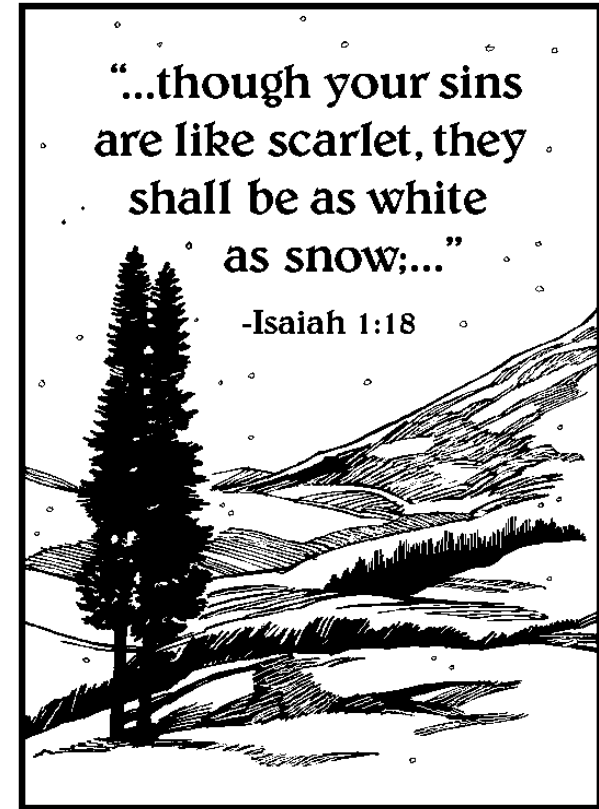
Acts 2: 38-41

- It is a **rite of initiation.**
Romans 6:3-8 *Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*

- It is a **rite of illustration.**
The physical rite is an illustration of spiritual realities.
 - a. We are buried in the waters just as Christ was buried in the tomb. This is the burial for the old nature which led us into sin and disobedience.
 - b. We are raised from the water just as Christ was raised to new power and victory over evil.

Galatians 3: 26-29

- It is a **rite of incorporation.**
Saved through faith, we give notice to the world of our acceptance in the Body of Christ, the church, through baptism. Actually, it is a form of joining the Church, not this congregation, but the greater world-wide Christian church.



Washington Assembly of God

... about Baptism