

Baptism Study Booklet



Key Verse

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you, and surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:19,20

Baptism

Baptism is an important issue for Christians who want to obey Jesus Christ completely.

The Bible makes it very clear that we are saved by faith not baptism (Ephesians 2:8), and yet in New Testament times baptism was linked closely with a person's response to Christ. In his first sermon, the Apostle Peter called on his non-Christian audience to "Repent and be baptised, every one of you" (Acts 2:38). We find this pattern constantly repeated throughout the book of Acts. As people responded to the gospel they were baptised.

In many churches we seem to have moved away from the biblical pattern. Baptism now tends to be a second stage of commitment. While there are some good reasons for new Christians waiting a short time before being baptised, we must not move too far away from the pattern God has laid down in His word.

Through these studies you will look at the basics of Baptism. If you have not been baptised, God has some important things to say to you. Listen carefully to Him and may God show you the importance and significance of baptism.

At the conclusion of these studies you need to meet with another Christian and talk through what you have learned about baptism. The Coordinator of baptisms will help you find someone to talk these issues through.

God bless you as listen to Him speaking to you through His word.

*This study booklet is adapted with permission from
New Growth 2 written by John Sweetman.*

Study 1: The Baptism of Jesus

READ MATTHEW 3: 1-17

John the Baptist didn't wear trendy clothes and didn't eat at the best restaurants, but his whole heart was set on God and His Kingdom. His job was to prepare his people for the coming of Jesus (much like our role in the world).

Describe the purpose of John's baptism and the method he used:

1. *the purpose (3:2,6,11)*
2. *the method (3:11,16)*

Was it sprinkling or immersion?

Why do you think John didn't want to baptise Jesus (3:14)?

Picture the scene at Jesus' baptism: the water, the rough guy in the camel-hair suit, Jesus coming into the water, the baptism, Jesus moving out of the water, the heavens opening, the Spirit descending, the great voice from heaven.

Your baptism may not have the same setting or supernatural signs as Jesus' baptism but in many ways it will be the same.

Describe some of the similarities:

Why do you think Jesus was baptised? (He had not sinned, so he had no need to repent.)

Jesus' baptism shows how important it is

Study 2: The Baptisms of Jesus

READ JOHN 3: 22-30

What was the problem John was facing (3:26)?

How would you have felt in the situation?

What was John's reaction? (Put it in your own words)

Because John had built his life around serving God he was glad when everyone flocked to Jesus. It meant that his job of preparing people for Jesus had been done well.

Think of an area in your life where you feel that you have been unfairly treated by God or by other people. Have you thought of something? An area perhaps in which you feel hurt or bitter.

Now say verse 30 a few times. Can you give the situation to Jesus?

This passage also tells us about baptism. Please answer the following questions:

- 1. Who was in charge of the baptisms?*
- 2. Who was actually doing the baptisms?*
- 3. Who was being baptised?*
- 4. What was the method of baptism?*

**Baptism was clearly an important part
of the ministry of Jesus.**

Study 3: Baptisms in the Early Church

READ ACTS 8: 34-39; 10: 44-48

You have been reading about the conversion and baptism of two important men. Look at both passages and rearrange the following events in the order in which they occurred. Not all the events are mentioned clearly in each passage.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| <i>Baptism</i> | 1. |
| <i>Believing in Jesus</i> | 2. |
| <i>Hearing the good news</i> | 3. |
| <i>Receiving the Holy Spirit</i> | 4. |
| <i>Searching for truth</i> | 5. |

Some churches baptise babies, but we hold that people should believe **before** they are baptised. Baptism (the symbol) follows conversion (the event). In Acts baptism **always** followed belief.

Answer the following questions from the passage:

- 1. Who suggested that the baptisms should occur?*
 - a. For the Ethiopian*
 - b. For Cornelius*
- 2. How soon after their believing in Jesus did the baptisms occur?*
 - a. The Ethiopian*
 - b. Cornelius*

Baptism was important to the first Christians.

Study 4: The Meaning of Baptism

READ ROMANS 6: 1-11

So far we have considered the importance of baptism in the early church. Jesus was baptised, Jesus and his disciples baptised others, and the early church baptised brand new Christians. But what does being baptised really mean?

First let's consider what it doesn't mean. It doesn't mean you are perfect. It doesn't mean you have no more trouble with temptation. It doesn't mean you have made it to a new level of Christian life.

Baptism is a symbol which looks back at something that has already happened in your life.

Finish the following from the reading: When you became a Christian you -

- 1. died to*
- 2. were united with Christ in*
- 3. became alive to*

Therefore when you became a Christian you died, rose again and now live a new life, just as Jesus did. Baptism symbolises this (6:3,4). Going under the water symbolises your death, and coming out again symbolises your new life. ***Baptism is telling everyone in a public way that you have died to your old life and are living in Jesus.***

1. Does Chapter 6 verse 6 apply to you?
2. What does it mean to be free from sin?
3. What does baptism mean to you?

***Baptism is a public statement of
what God has done in you.***

Study 5: Baptism is Important

READ MATTHEW 28: 16-20

The words in this passage were spoken by Jesus to his disciples during the time between his resurrection and his ascension into heaven. They are very important because they describe what Jesus wants his followers to do.

Use two words from the passage to describe your task as a Christian.

I have to (28:19)

The disciples would have easily understood what Jesus was talking about because they were "disciples" themselves. As Jesus had disciplined them, so they were to go and make disciples of others.

There are many things involved in making disciples. This passage speaks of two important components. What are they

1. (v19)

2. (v20)

So that's your job as a Christian. You are to **make disciples** of those people who don't know Christ. This involves leading them to Christ, seeing them baptised and teaching them to obey Jesus.

If this is your job then **you** need to be both baptised and obeying Jesus. You can't expect it of others if you have not done it yourself.

Paul's words to the crowd at Jerusalem are a challenge to everyone who wants to follow Jesus (Acts 22:16):

"And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptised and wash your sins away, calling on his name."

***If you have committed your life to Jesus,
you need to be baptized.***

Together

1. Check through the studies to make sure your answers are correct and you understand the meaning and importance of baptism.

2. Share your answers to the following questions:
 - a. *What does "believers baptism by immersion" mean?*

 - b. *What would you say to someone who said to you that they wouldn't be baptised because they couldn't see any reason for it?*

 - c. *What is the meaning of baptism?*

 - d. *When should you be baptised?*

3. If you have any more questions about baptism please ask your helper. If they don't know the answers, they will find help.

The Bible says that baptism is an essential action for all Christians.

Are you willing to obey Jesus by being baptised?

4. Talk with your helper what to do from here.

5. Share some praise points that have come out of these studies.

6. Pray together.

So you want to be baptised!

1. The arrangements for your baptism will be coordinated by one of the Pastors.
2. You need to decide who you would like to conduct the baptism. The person conducting the baptism needs to be known to the church. They can be a parent or spouse, or a leader in the church e.g. pastor, coordinator, small group leader, ministry leader. Please talk this matter through with the baptism coordinator so there will be no disappointment.
3. You also need to choose who will do the baptism prayer, the song we will sing, and who will hold your towel. You may also choose whether it will be conducted in the morning service or at Boost.
4. The date for the baptism should be arranged at least 4 weeks in advance to fit in with the church program and for you to invite family and friends to the service. It is really important that you invite others to the baptism because it is a powerful way of showing what God has done in your life and your commitment to follow Him.
5. Wear your normal clothes for the testimony then slip out and change to be ready for the baptism. It is usually best to wear light coloured clothes. Ladies need to be aware of the impact of the water on their apparel.
6. Please arrive 20 minutes before the service to check the arrangements. Your baptism will be in the first part of the service.
7. After giving your testimony, the leader will ask you the following questions. Suggested responses follow each question.

Questions

1. Have you asked the Lord Jesus Christ to be your saviour?
2. Will you strive to grow to be the man (woman) of God that the Father has planned for you?
3. Will you try to please God with the way you live your life?
4. Will you strive to love God with all your heart, mind and soul, and with all your strength?

8. Testimony

For those who want to be baptised, we believe it is important that they share in a public way, what God has done in their life and why they are getting baptised. This reflects a biblical principle of confessing faith in Christ in our own words. (Rom. 10:9-10, Heb 13:15-16, John 12:42-43)

Your testimony should be written out, and read as a short testimony to the church family. Usually one page is sufficient. The exercise on the next page will help you to write your testimony. Please take some time to work your way through it.

We realise that speaking in public is very threatening, so we are flexible with how your testimony is delivered and are willing to work with you on a suitable approach. This may include a more casual interview style with a pastor including questions/answers. We encourage those who may find a public statement difficult to see it as an opportunity for personal growth and to challenge the non Christians who may be in the congregation. Please talk this over with the pastor arranging the baptism.

A Baptism is a great event, not only in your life, but also in the church family who are extremely supportive and excited for what God is doing in your life. So as a church we want to create ways that will help as many people as possible to publicly show their devotion to Jesus Christ and give honour to God as they get baptised.

9. Meet with the Pastor

About a week before your baptism, you need to meet with a pastor who will go through your testimony with you and talk with you about what it means to be a Christian. Sounds scary, but it's not. It is your responsibility to arrange the appointment.

10. There is a strong expectation that you will also apply for church membership. Baptism and church membership go hand-in-hand. Membership can be explained to you by your helper and if possible the interview conducted before your baptism. We would like to welcome you into membership as soon as possible after you are baptised.

11. Please complete the application form and pass it on to one of the Pastors.

BAPTISM APPLICATION FORM

Birkdale Baptist Church

(Please complete and give to one of the Pastors if you are considering Baptism)

Name:

Phone: (hm)

(wk)

(mob)

Approximately how long have you been a Christian?

Preferred service: am service pm service either

Preferred date:

Person you would like to:

Conduct the baptism:

Pray for you:

Hold the towel:

Song that you would request be included in the service:

If you are under 18 years, do have your parent's support?

Yes No

We encourage anyone who is being baptised to seriously consider becoming a member of Birkdale Baptist Church. This means, broadly speaking, that you believe this church is your spiritual home and family, and also that you are willing to be contributing to the direction of the church. Do you wish to find out more about church membership?

Yes No

