

BAPTISMS AT VERITAS

We are so glad that you are considering baptism! Please take some time to review the following information about this next step. To sign up for baptism, please visit www.veritasfayetteville.com/baptism and fill out the form to RSVP. If you have other questions about baptism, please email us at life@veritasfayetteville.com

WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

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. (Matthew 3:13, 16–17)

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19–20)

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... (Acts 2:38)

We baptize because Jesus modeled it himself and made it part of His ministry and part of our mission. Simply put, we baptize because Jesus commanded us to; however, there is also purpose and wisdom in that command. Baptism provides a decisive, public way of taking a stand that Jesus has saved you, that you're crazy about Him, and that you're going to follow Him all the days of your life.

Sadly, the church has substituted all sorts of things for baptism: "Stand up if you have decided to follow Jesus." "Come down the aisle and meet me here in front." "Pray this prayer with me." "Sign this pledge card." Or perhaps worst of all: "Every head bowed and every eye closed. If you have accepted Jesus as your savior, just look up at me. I'll see that and know that you are going to spend eternity in heaven."¹

We're probably all familiar with these statements. They're sometimes called "invitations" or "altar calls." When you look for an altar call in the Bible, there is really no clear example of something like this. What we do see as a clear example of a decisive, public way of proclaiming that you are now a Christian is baptism.

Essentially, you are publicly proclaiming three things in Baptism:

TO GOD:

Thank You for saving me. I'm Yours. Help me to live a life that shows Jesus to the world.

TO BELIEVERS:

¹ *Vintage Church* by Driscoll & Breshears, pg. 119

Celebrate with me! Jesus has saved me! Remember when He saved you? Encourage me, help me, and keep me accountable to following Jesus.

TO UNBELIEVERS:

I want you to know the Jesus that I know. If you see any change in my life, if you see anything good in my life, it's not me- it's Him! He wants you to know Him.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

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. (Romans 6:3-4)

Having been buried with him [Christ] in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. (Colossians 2:12)

Every time a person enters into a new life with Jesus Christ, the Bible tells us that all of heaven rejoices. Baptism is an outward proclamation of an inward reality that God has created new life within that person. Baptism is the new believer's testimony to the public of his belonging to Jesus. As he is immersed beneath the waters, he is proclaiming that his old self, enslaved to unbelief and sin, has died. And as the believer is raised up out of the waters, he is proclaiming that his new self, freed from sin and death, has been raised in the resurrection of Jesus. He is proclaiming that he now belongs to Jesus.

WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

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. (Mark 1:5)

And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. (Mark 1:10)

John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized... . (John 3:23)

We believe that a physical submersion into the water is the best way to show the death and burial of the old self and that a physical emersion from the water best represents the new self being raised from the dead.

The word *baptism* in the Greek means dip or immerse. Going "into the water"² and "coming up out of the water"³ are the common biblical language associated with baptism. Baptism by immersion was the universal practice of the early church.

² Acts 8:37-38

³ Mark 1:10

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. (Luke 3:3)

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. (Acts 8:36–38)

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. (Galatians 3:27, NASB)

Baptism is an outward proclamation of faith, and is therefore only for believers. Our understanding of the Bible is that every baptism in the New Testament was preceded by confession of sin and repentance, which is something that neither an unbeliever nor an infant can do. Because baptism represents a union with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, we believe only in baptism of believers.

In light of this, we encourage everyone that was “baptized” as a baby or those that believe they were baptized before they were actually Christian to be “re-baptized.”

We understand that not everyone will agree with our view of biblical baptism. If you have a conviction that infant baptism is biblical and valid, our elders would love to talk with you. Please contact one of the pastors by emailing life@veritasfayetteville.com.

For anyone who is unsure about what he believes about baptism, we recommend further reading and studying on the matter.⁴ We can provide resources to assist you in your search of the Scriptures.

DOES BAPTISM SAVE YOU?

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8–10)

We are saved solely by God’s grace applied to us by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Nothing we do can save us... our salvation is not a result of our works. We are, however, called to do good works and obey the commands of Jesus, baptism being one of them. So like all the other “good works,” we baptize and are baptized not in order to be saved, but *because* we are saved. Just because a Christian is not yet baptized doesn’t mean he isn’t a Christian. Baptism is an outward demonstration of what has already occurred inside of us. Similarly, if my wife is not wearing her wedding ring, she’s still married. The ring is simply an outward display that she’s married. Nevertheless, I’m glad that she wears her wedding ring.

⁴ For further study: <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/articles/infant-baptism-and-the-new-covenant-community>

We believe that, though baptism doesn't save you, God is pleased when His child proclaims to the world that the salvation of Christ has come into his life.

WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN?

The New Testament shows no example of baptism when the person did not request it. All instances of baptism follow an individual's decision to trust Christ alone for their salvation (Acts 2:41, 8:12, 10:47-48). At Veritas, we wait until the child is old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them. When a child responds to the gospel, we gladly baptize them as a symbol of their faith in Christ.

WHAT ABOUT INFANT BAPTISM?

In the Bible we find parents bringing children to Jesus. He held them and prayed for them and told us to welcome them, but he did not baptize them, and he did not tell anyone to baptize them.

Baptism is a public profession of salvation (as the Bible teaches), and only people who have intentionally responded in faith to the gospel should experience baptism.

If you have not experienced baptism as an adult, even though you have experienced baptism as an infant, the full meaning and significance of baptism has yet to take place in your life. We strongly encourage you to be baptized as an adult follower of Jesus.

WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

As soon as you have believe in Christ for salvation. "But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts 8:12)

SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED IMMEDIATELY AFTER SALVATION?

The Bible teaches that baptism should follow your decision to become a follower of Jesus. There is no reason to delay. If you wait until you are "good" enough, you will never feel ready for baptism. Since baptism is not a part of your salvation but a symbol of it, it is ok to wait until the next scheduled baptism.

WHAT DO I WEAR?

Dress in clothes you don't mind getting wet! You should wear a dark shirt and shorts. Remember to bring a change of clothes to wear home. There is a changing room available. Please bring a towel. Arrive 30 minutes before the service is scheduled to begin for some last-minute instructions.

HOW DO I REGISTER?

RSVP online at www.veritasfayetteville.com/baptism or at the Connect Table on Sunday, then we will contact you with our upcoming Baptism Sunday dates.