

# Why We Immerse (*Baptize*) New Believers in Water

By Calvin Bergsma, Pastor of Georgetown Christian Fellowship [www.gcfchurch.net](http://www.gcfchurch.net)

***As Jesus ascended into Heaven He commissioned us saying:***

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**Matthew 28:19-20** "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing 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 am with you always, to the very end of the age"

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The Book of Acts documents the amazing birth of the church and the following exponential growth of Christianity.

Although Jesus and His message greatly impacted the land of Israel and the Jewish people, He *was still... primarily a local phenomenon.*

It was not until after His death, resurrection and an additional 50 days of prayer and waiting that the Holy Spirit (*which He had promised*) was poured out on the followers of Jesus.

Only after this infusion of God's mighty power did Christianity emerge as the most influential movement this world has ever seen.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Acts we find the message Peter preached which started this revolution.

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## ***Acts 2:14-21 and 38-41***

But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: ... And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him." And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." **So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls"**

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## ***What a spectacle that must have been!***

**There are five basic events (*when combined*), that mark conversions in the New Testament:**

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| <b>1. Hear</b> ( <i>The Good News of Gospel</i> )           | <b>4. Confess verbally</b> ( <i>Faith in Jesus</i> )                      |
| <b>2. Believe</b> ( <i>Place personal faith in Christ</i> ) | <b>5. Be baptized in water</b> ( <i>In Identification with Christ</i> )   |
| <b>3. Repent</b> ( <i>Turn away from sin</i> )              | <b>6. Remain faithful</b> ( <i>Live consistent with your confession</i> ) |

**From that moment on...** wherever the apostles preached, they instructed those who believed to be *baptized* and expect to receive the Holy Spirit.

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<b>Acts 8:5-12.....</b>	Philip teaches the Ethiopian eunuch who responds by being baptized.
<b>Acts 8:26-40....</b>	Philip preaches in Samaria. People respond in faith by being baptized.
<b>Acts 9:18.....</b>	The conversion of Saul to Paul.
<b>Acts 10:47-48...</b>	The "Gentile Pentecost"- God shows Peter the Gospel message is not for Jews alone.

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<b>Acts 16:15.....</b>	The conversion of Lydia and her household.
<b>Acts 16:16-33...</b>	Paul & Silas' jailer ( <i>and his household</i> ) responded in faith and are immediately baptized.
<b>Acts 18:8 .....</b>	Crispus, the synagogue ruler.
<b>Acts 19:3-5.....</b>	Those that had not heard yet of Jesus are baptized.
<b>Acts 22:16.....</b>	Paul's story revisited - his sins are washed away, calling on the name of the Lord in baptism.

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*In the Book of Acts, these five "ingredients" all take place in a very short time period, almost as a singular event.*

**To explain what baptism is (and its significance) we must look at the word "Baptism". It comes from the Greek word "baptizo" which literally means:**

- To immerse, to submerge, to saturate, plunge, dip, or bury in water.

**The very word itself excludes it from meaning "sprinkling" or "christening"**

- The Greeks had a word for *sprinkle* (*rhantizo*), as well as one for *pour* (*cheo*).

**Baptism was not an English word, but a transliteration of the Greek word "baptizo".**

- In the 17th century **King James**, who was both the head of state and the "Church of England", commissioned the translation of a new Bible into the English language – the King James Version. The Church of England taught and practiced christening (or *sprinkling*) of infants, so when the translators came to the Greek word "baptizo", rather than simply use the **existing** English equivalent "**immerse**", they chose to create a new **English-sounding** word **baptism** thereby **masking** the obvious meaning of "baptizo". This most likely was done in order to protect the method and tradition the Church of England had established and practiced of christening infants.

**For the 1<sup>st</sup> 100 years of Christianity baptism was always done by immersion.**

This practice was followed because the 1<sup>st</sup> century church saw it primarily as a **symbolic burial** of the new convert's **old life** and a **resurrection** into a new life.

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**Colossians 2:12** "And you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead."

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**Romans 6:3-5** "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, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, **we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection** like his."

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This makes **Baptism** one of the most foundational **teachings** of the New Testament.

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**Hebrews 6:1-3** "Therefore let us leave the **elementary teachings** about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again **the foundation of repentance** from acts that lead to death, and of **faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment**. And God permitting, we will do so."

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**Acts 8:26-40** “Do you understand what you are reading? And he said, How can I, except someone should guide me? And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him...

Then **Philip opened his mouth**, and began at the same scripture, **and preached to him Jesus**. And as they went on their way, they came to some water: and the **eunuch said, See, here is water; what keeps me from being baptized?** And Philip said, **If you believe with all your heart, you may**. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stop: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and Philip baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more: but he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.”

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### **This act of obedience and identification cost some converts their very lives.**

- From 1527 to the 1700's between 20,000 and 40,000 **Anabaptists were martyred** by both Protestants and Catholics because they were baptized by immersion.
- Even today in many countries being baptized can mean losing **friends, job, family** and **sometimes life**.

### **Obedying the Lord's command to be baptized is one of the most rewarding things a believer can do.**

- It's one of the **first tests of obedience** you will encounter as a new believer.
- It allows us to do something **tangible in response** to the great salvation that God provides.
- It **puts us in the cue** for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- Even **Jesus submitted to Baptism** by John, after which the Father spoke from Heaven affirming this act of obedience, sending the Holy Spirit upon Him anointing Him at the start of His ministry.

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**Matthew 3:13-16** “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. And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

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### **In my own life I remember the night my brother Doug and I were baptized.**

A small gathering of new believers stood on the muddy banks of the Grand River. When my turn came to be baptized, I waded out into the dark river, illuminated only by an unusually bright moon. I stood between two of my Christian brothers, one of whom asked if I was ready to leave my old life behind and follow Jesus as Lord and Savior. I answered "yes" and they plunged this repentant sinner beneath the water and lifted me up as one bursting from a grave.

As I raised my hands in praise to God and they let me go, I walked down the river worshipping the God who not only went to the grave for me but rose to give me life.

Never had I felt as clean as the night I was washed in the dirty Grand River.

## **BAPTISM IS A PERSONAL STATEMENT OF FAITH...**

An **outward expression** of an **inward change**.

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**I Peter 3:21** “This is a symbol of baptism, which now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, it saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

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## **Baptism is an important marker in a Christian’s life...**

You were born to your mother on a day and hour ***you did not choose***.

However, ***you may choose*** the day and hour ***to be born of the water of Baptism...***

when you obey ***His command to be Baptized***.

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**Acts 22:16** “**And now why do you wait?** Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.”

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