

Baptism - “An outward expression of an inward reality.”

Baptism is an ordinance of the church. An outward rite ordained by Jesus Christ symbolizing an inner spiritual condition that already exists. *(As opposed to a “sacrament” which indicates God doing something to the individual who participates no matter what their heart or spiritual condition might be.)*

What Is Symbolized in Baptism?

CRM churches believe that baptism is an outward sign of **an individual’s personal faith commitment**-the spiritual relationship that exists between the person and God through Jesus Christ. *Romans 6:3,4* reminds us that the believer has died to their old way of life and has been resurrected as a new creation in Jesus Christ.

Baptism also symbolizes a moral cleansing. *(Acts 22:16, 1Corinthians 16:11)*

Baptism is also an act of initiation into the Body of Christ. *(1Corinthians 12:13)*

Baptism has no saving power. It is a symbol of a salvation experience that has already taken place. When verses talk about baptism that saves you *(1 Peter 3:21)* it’s referring to what baptism symbolizes- identification with Jesus. He has separated us from the lost and given us new life through His death and resurrection. We are justified by faith alone. *(Romans 4, 5:1,2)*

Why Be Baptized?

If baptism has no saving power then why do it? Simply put...**because Jesus told us to and we are to be obedient to His instructions** *(Matthew 28:19,20)*. Jesus modeled obedience in baptism. *(Matthew 3:13-17)*. Peter teaches the baptism response in *Acts 2:38*. The same with Paul in *Acts 22:16*. Baptism, the public declaration of our faith in Jesus, is of the utmost importance in the life of a believer.

Who Should Be Baptized?

Since baptism is an expression of an individual’s faith commitment to Jesus Christ, CRM churches baptize believers. *People that have already made a personal decision to accept Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of their life.*

This was the normal practice in the New Testament. People repented, entered into a relationship with Jesus, and were baptized as a public proclamation of that relationship *(Acts 2:41; 8:12,12,37; 9:18)*. Jesus says, “Go into the world...make disciples...and baptize them.

There is no mention of babies being baptized in the Bible. The *household* passages don’t mention children or infants being baptized. Infant baptism is a meaningful action on the part of a child’s parents... but it is a decision that has been made on behalf of the child.

Biblical baptism is a personal response to what God has done in someone's life. It is a decision that a person needs to make for themselves to proclaim that that has taken place in their life because of the grace of God.

In CRM churches parents commit their infants to God's care and keeping through a dedication service. Baptism is reserved to celebrate the point when a child decides for themselves to personally enter into a relationship with Jesus.

How?

The Greek word for *baptize* is *baptidzo*. The primary meaning is to dip or to immerse. It was a word used by dyers of cloth. To baptize a fabric meant to dip it completely under the dye. There were different terms used for sprinkling or pouring.

Christian baptism is certainly a matter of the heart but our church baptizes believers by immersion because it is the method that matches what the Bible teaches. The practice of believers in the New Testament church. *(The first record of sprinkling was in 250 A.D. in a death bed experience. In 1311 the Catholic Church first made immersion...or sprinkling acceptable.)*

Baptism by immersion also vividly portrays what has happened in the life of a believer. The old way of life...dying to sin...and being raised to new life in Jesus (Romans 6:3,4).