

BAPTISM

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WELCOME TO THE BAPTISM INFORMATION CLASS!

Your decision to find out more about baptism shows you are serious about following Jesus Christ.

Baptism is one of the major highlights of the Christian life. Baptism is:

- A significant milestone on your spiritual journey
- A sign of your covenant relationship with Jesus Christ
- A step of obedience in the process of becoming a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ
- A celebration of your new life in Christ

At the Baptism Information Class we want to help you understand all that baptism means and rejoice with you about what God is doing in your life.

BAPTISM—WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

- Baptism is a one-time spiritual event indicating—in an outward, symbolic and public way—your internal response to the gospel message and a decision that already has been expressed by faith in your heart.
- It is symbolic of your identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.
- It is saying publicly that you have forsaken your old way of living and that you embrace your new life in Christ.
“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- In summary, baptism is an act of obedience to Jesus Christ and is an outward, public sign and declaration of your intention to follow Him.
- Baptism *is not* a spiritual “rededication.”
- Baptism *is not* what some churches call “Confirmation.”

WHAT DOES THE WORD “BAPTISM” MEAN?

1. Literally—the New Testament Greek word *baptizo* means “dip” or “immerse” something into water.
2. Figuratively—the primary meaning takes on a secondary meaning, namely “identify with.”

Think of a can of paint—whatever color—and a paintbrush. If you dip the brush into the can, the paintbrush will take on the same color as the paint inside the can.

Similarly, at conversion when you are placed into the body of Christ and when His Holy Spirit comes to reside in your heart, then you begin to manifest Godly character qualities.

*“For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”
(1 Corinthians 12:13)*

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control...”
(Galatians 5:22-23)*

WHY SHOULD YOU BE BAPTIZED?

1. Because you want to follow the example of Jesus Christ

“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.” (Mark 1:9)

2. Because you want to obey Jesus’ command

“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.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

3. Because privately you want to affirm that Jesus is your Savior and Lord

*“We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.”
(1 John 2:3)*

4. Because publicly you want to declare your allegiance to Jesus Christ to those inside the faith community and to those outside the faith community

“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.” (Acts 2:41)

“Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.” (Acts 18:8)

WHAT DOES BAPTISM SYMBOLIZE?

1. As you are lowered beneath the water and then raised up out of the water, you are identifying yourself with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”
(1 Corinthians 15:3-4)*

“Or 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.” (Romans 6:3-5)

2. You are personally declaring the death and burial of your old way of life—before conversion—and allegiance to your new life in Christ.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

IS BAPTISM NECESSARY FOR SALVATION?

- No, you cannot earn your salvation.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

- Baptism is not a condition for salvation; rather it is a consequence of salvation.
- The act of baptism does not grant you salvation nor does it assist you in holding onto or maintaining your salvation. Salvation is God’s realm and God’s responsibility. Only God’s grace, and your faith in Christ’s finished work on the cross and in His resurrection, brings you into the family of God.
- Baptism—much like a wedding ring—is an outward symbol of a commitment you have already made in your heart.
- Like Communion (the Lord’s Supper, Eucharist) baptism is a symbolic ritual—an act of obedience to Jesus Christ’s command.

“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.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Any person of any age who clearly *understands* and clearly *has responded* to the gospel message summarized below:

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”
(1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

Note in the book of Acts that the issue is understanding and response...

“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.” (Acts 2:41)

“But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” (Acts 8:12)

“They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.” (Acts 16:31-33)

“Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.” (Acts 18:8)

Although we do not “baptize” or “christen” infants and younger children, we do encourage the biblical practice of dedication based upon two clear examples in Scripture...

Hannah Dedicates Samuel

“So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, ‘Because I asked the LORD for him.’ When the man Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual

sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vow, Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, ‘After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the LORD, and he will live there always.’” (1 Samuel 1:20-22)

Jesus Presented in the Temple

“On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived. When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.” (Luke 2:21-22)

To arrange for child dedications, contact the church office or childdedications@mcleanbible.org.

WHEN SHOULD YOU BE BAPTIZED?

There is no mandatory timeline, but typically in Scripture it was soon after a person’s conversion experience. Some were baptized immediately (Philippian jailer); others the same day (Cornelius, Lydia), or a few days later (Apostle Paul).

We strongly encourage followers of Jesus Christ to pursue baptism as soon as practically possible after placing their faith in Him—but only with clear understanding and instruction.

“Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, ‘Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.’ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, ‘Go to that chariot and stay near it.’

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ Philip asked.

'How can I,' he said, 'unless someone explains it to me?' So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture:

*'He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before the shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth.'*

The eunuch asked Philip, 'Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?' Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?' And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him." (Acts 8:26-38)

HOW ARE YOU TO BE BAPTIZED?

At McLean Bible Church, you are baptized by total physical immersion in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

1. The meaning of the word is clear. With reference to baptism, the Holy Spirit could have selected the common Greek word *epicheo* ("pour upon") or another common Greek word *hrantizo* ("sprinkle"), but instead, throughout the New Testament the Holy Spirit selected the word *baptizo* ("immerse").
2. The text of Scripture describes immersion. Specifically it states "down into" and "up out of" the water.

"And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up

out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.”
(Acts 8:38-39)

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.” (Matthew 3:16)

3. The act of immersion best symbolizes the gospel message and your faith in Jesus Christ.

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...”
(1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

“Or 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.” (Romans 6:3-5)

WHAT ABOUT BEING BAPTIZED TWICE?

The Bible speaks about being born twice but *not* about being baptized twice.

“In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again [or born from above].”
(John 3:3)

- A person’s conversion and his or her baptism are closely linked in Scripture.

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and

Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”
(Ephesians 4:4-6)

- At conversion, the follower of Jesus Christ is placed—at that moment, once and for all—into the body of Christ.

“For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”
(1 Corinthians 12:13)

- If you were dedicated, christened or baptized as an infant—or as a teenager or adult—but before you had come to a personal faith in Jesus Christ, that is, understood and responded to the gospel message, then we recommend that you proceed with baptism by immersion regardless of your age.
- This simple act of obedience to Christ in no way devalues an infant christening. Instead, it builds upon the promise your parents and godparents made to nurture you spiritually until you came to your own personal faith, with full understanding of and response to the gospel message. We believe the Bible teaches believer’s baptism.

MAY FAMILY MEMBERS BE BAPTIZED TOGETHER?

Yes, we encourage it, provided that each member of the family has made a genuine profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

“When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. ‘If you consider me a believer in the Lord,’ she said, ‘come and stay at my house.’ And she persuaded us.”
(Acts 16:15)

“They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.’ Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family

were baptized.” (Acts 16:31-33)

“(Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don’t remember if I baptized anyone else.)” (1 Corinthians 1:16)

WILL BAPTISM CANDIDATES NEED TO SAY ANYTHING AT THEIR BAPTISM?

The real issue here is a verbal confession of your faith in Jesus Christ.

“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 10:32)

“That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” (Romans 10:9-10)

“If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.” (1 John 4:15)

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...” (1 Peter 3:15)

- In all circumstances the baptizing pastor will ask you to give a public, affirmative, oral response to some simple, straightforward questions such as:

“Do you believe Jesus Christ was the Son of God? Do you believe He died and shed His blood for your sins—that He was buried and raised from the dead on the third day? And by God’s grace and power do you intend to obey God’s Word and honor Him in your life?”

At the end—to make it easy for you—the baptizing pastor will say, “If so, please answer, ‘I do.’”

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- *In most circumstances*—prior to the day of baptism—we will require a written testimony.
 - *In many circumstances*, if time permits, we will ask baptismal candidates to verbalize their personal testimony in 1-2 minutes in such a way that anyone hearing you could understand how to become a follower of Jesus Christ.

IS BAPTISM A REQUIREMENT FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

McLean Bible Church does not require baptism for church membership. However, we strongly encourage every follower of Jesus Christ to take this important step of obedience to Him.

HOW DO I SIGN UP FOR BAPTISM?

You may contact the church office or email baptisms@mcleanbible.org.

