



Baptism Packet

Baptism



Preliminary Definition

Baptism, Christian, a sacrament that admits a person to membership in the Christian Church.¹ The forms and rituals of the various churches vary, but Baptism almost invariably involves the use of water and the Trinitarian invocation, “I baptize you: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (Some Eastern churches use the formula, “This servant of Christ is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”) – *Encyclopedia Britannica*

What Baptism Isn't

Baptism Isn't Necessary for Salvation

- The Bible teaches that there is no work that a man or woman can perform to be saved.

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

- The Bible teaches that eternal life is “the free gift of God.”

Romans 6:23 – *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

What Baptism Is

1. An Act of Expression

- Throughout the New Testament—Galatians, Colossians, Ephesians, Romans, 1 Peter, 1 Corinthians, Acts, and all the Gospels—there is an emphasis on and a revelation of the pattern of baptism as a response to salvation.
- Baptism is an “outward expression of an inward truth.” Just as Christ was crucified and buried in death, so we are immersed in the water. Likewise, as Christ was raised from the dead, so we are brought out of the water.

Romans 6:1-4 – *What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 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*

¹ To be clear, Rittman GBC fully acknowledges that when a person comes to know Christ through faith and repentance, he or she is immediately part of what is commonly referred to as the catholic (i.e., universal church.) Many *local* churches require baptism as part of their church membership. Above all, in neither case do these scenarios involve baptism as a requirement for salvation.

in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

- In many ways, baptism is like a wedding ring: an outward symbol of an inward commitment.



2. An Act of Obedience

Matthew 28:18-20 – Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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.”

- With authority, Jesus commands us to make disciples and baptize. To be a disciple of Jesus, we are told to be baptized.
- “Christian baptism, then, signifies both the death of our old life in sin and the experience of new life in Christ that replaces it.” – *Robert Mohrlang*

3. An Act of Identification

- “Baptism is not in the O.T. It shows up in the N.T. The reason we don’t know much is because baptism started in the ‘silent period’ between Malachi and Matthew.” – *Randy Smith*
- Baptism in Jesus’ time was a way of identifying oneself with Christ and His Church:

1 Corinthians 1:13-15 – What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas”; still another, “I follow Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name.

- Baptism, then is a way of identifying oneself with God and His community. It is like a membership card.



There is only one thing require of you to be baptized: You must make a personal decision to believe and accept the salvation of God through Jesus Christ.

Those who received his word were baptized – Acts 2:41

When they believed... they were baptized – Acts 8:12

Commonly Asked Questions

1. Does it matter how many times someone is dunked?

- The Bible does not give much insight into the procedure of baptism. Some churches baptize by single immersion (one dunk). Grace Church practices triune immersion (three dunks)²

2. Does it matter if you get dunked forward or backward?

- Those who baptized “backward” do so to represent the posture of a dead person, or buried facing upward.
- Those who baptize forward do so because Romans 6 mentions being baptized into the likeness of Christ. This is coupled with John 19:30, which indicated that Jesus, “bowed his head (*forward*) and gave up His spirit” at the crucifixion.

3. What about infant baptism (Pedobaptism)?

- Biblically, baptism follows our faith in Christ and repentance of sin and thus is always an informed and conscious decision. It is because of this that Grace Church does not perform infant baptism. However, we do perform parent dedication services as a way for parents to commit to raise their children in a God-honoring way.

² Why does Grace Church practice triune immersion? During the Byzantine period (330-1453 AD), some Christians rejected the doctrine of the Trinity (the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Because of this, they would be baptized in the name of Jesus, but not the Holy Spirit.

The practice of the Church was to have people immersed three times: once in the name of the Father, once in the name of the Son, and once in the name of the Holy Spirit, thus symbolizing agreement with the doctrine of the Trinity.

4. If I have been baptized in the past, how do I know if my baptism is genuine?

- Your baptism is genuine if you did it as a conscious choice as a sincere believer and follower of Jesus.

5. Does it matter if you sprinkle or immerse?

- Biblically, baptism is always done by way of immersion.
- The Greek word for “baptize” (*baptizo*) means “to immerse completely” or “to plunge under.”

6. Who can baptize me?

- At Grace, we recommend that a Pastor or Elder baptize you.

7. What should I expect during a baptism service?

- We ask that you bring a towel, shorts, and a dark colored t-shirt.
- The Pastor leading the service will call you to the baptism pool.
- Upon entering the baptismal pool, you will be given opportunity to testify of your faith in Christ as your Savior being your reason to be baptized.
- The person baptizing you will immerse you three times forward, (Invoking the Trinity—saying “I baptize you: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”) pausing in between each dunk.
- Finally, the person baptizing you will pray for you at the end.

8. Should I invite friends and family to my baptism?

- Absolutely! Baptism is an outward expression to the world that you want to be identified with Christ.



REQUEST FOR BAPTISM

We are excited that you have decided to pursue baptism here at Rittman Grace Brethren Church! Please complete this form and submit to the church office so we can be aware of your desire. Thank you for expressing interest in Baptism.

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____

PLACE OF BIRTH _____

(CITY AND STATE)

Please select your baptism preference:

I discussed Baptism with one of the Pastors on: ____/____/____

I wish to be baptized on ____/____/____

by:

Pastor _____

Elder _____

Some Questions for You

1. Briefly describe the circumstances through which you became a “follower of Christ.”:

2. How has God been working in your life recently?

3. Why do you desire to be baptized?

The undersigned acknowledges that this testimony is the property of Grace Church and may be printed and distributed to the Grace Church family.

Name

Date

Return this form:

- *to the church office*
- *to one of the leaders of Rittman GBC*
- *via email to the church office secretary at jen@rittmangrace.org*

If you have any questions, please call the church office at 330-925-3626. We will contact you with next steps once we receive this form.