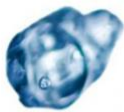


*Renew*  
CHURCH NZ

# WATER BAPTISM



# History of water baptism

## **Mark 1:4-5**

*4This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. 5All of Judea, including all the people of Jerusalem, went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.*

The practice of water baptism originated from the symbolic cleansing in water by the Levites in the Old Testament before performing their priestly duties. It symbolised being cleansed and pure in the sight of God. This practise was modified by John the Baptist for the purpose of publicly declaring repentance for the forgiveness of sin. The early Church baptised Believers not only as a demonstration of repentance, but also as a public testimony of their decision to follow Jesus wholeheartedly (and more – see below). This continues today.

## What does water baptism symbolise?

### **1. Death and resurrection**

When a believer is water baptised, he/she publicly declares that the old sinful life is finished and that he/she will live for Jesus Christ from that day forward.

Water baptism symbolises burial (going down under the water) and resurrection (coming up out of the water). Death and resurrection. Death to (choosing to forsake) our old life, our sinful ways and weakness to sin. Resurrection, because there is a new life. A new beginning as a new creation, as a child of God leaving the old ways behind for good.

### **2. Identity with Christ**

Water baptism symbolises allegiance to Jesus Christ. When we are water baptised, we identify with what Jesus did for us. When Jesus died, our old sinful life died with Him. When Jesus was buried, our old sinful life was buried with Him. When Jesus rose again, we were resurrected with a new life in Him!

## **Romans 6:1-5**

*1Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more kindness and forgiveness? 2Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? 3Or have you forgotten that when we became Christians and were baptized to become one with Christ Jesus, we died with him? 4For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.*

**Colossians 2:12**

*For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.*

**3. Symbolises the washing away of sins****Acts 22:16**

*And now, why delay? Get up and be baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on the name of the Lord.'*

**4. Genuine repentance and forsaking all other gods**

Repentance means a turning away from a sinful life style and sinful practises.

Many people in non-western countries are disowned by their families, excommunicated from their culture, imprisoned and even killed, simply for being water baptised and demonstrating their obedience to Jesus and forsaking all other gods.

**Why be water baptised?****1. Jesus was water baptised****Matthew 3:13-17**

*<sup>13</sup>Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup>But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?"*

*<sup>15</sup>But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him.*

*<sup>16</sup>After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. <sup>17</sup>And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."*

This one account alone gives more than enough incentive for believers to be water baptised. Every believer should pattern his/her life on the life of Jesus.

**Ephesians 5:1-2**

*<sup>1</sup>Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. <sup>2</sup>Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.*

## **2. Part of Jesus' earthly ministry was baptizing people**

### **John 4:1-2**

*1 Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John<sup>2</sup> (though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did).*

## **3. The early believers were commanded to be water baptised**

### **Acts 10:48a**

*So he gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.*

### **Acts 2:38a**

*Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.*

## **4. Water baptism has great spiritual significance**

Water baptism is far more than a ritual or religious exercise or ritual. It is intended to be an essential part of the spiritual foundation for all new Christians. Great spiritual strength and consistency comes from being water baptised. It is not just symbolic, supernatural things happen at baptism!

## **5. Water baptism is a public declaration of a spiritual transformation**

When a couple get married, they invite their friends and family to witness their vows to each other – to celebrate with them as they make public their heart intention. Water Baptism is very similar, a person invites their friends and family to witness their baptism... to celebrate with them as they make public their heart intention.

## **FAQs**

### **1. Is water baptism essential for salvation?**

Some Christians believe that water baptism is essential for salvation. Scripture proves this is not true.

### **Ephesians 2:8**

*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.<sup>9</sup> Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.*

### **Romans 10:9**

*If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

### **Luke 23:39-43**

*39One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!”*

*40But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? 41We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” 42Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”*

*43And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”*

Some Christians stubbornly refuse to be water baptised, and they use this account of the thief on the cross as their defence... The problem with this example is that the thief physically couldn't be water baptised (obviously).

## **2. Is being sprinkled with water really water baptism?**

Some religious denominations sprinkle water on the person and call it water baptism. This is not what the Bible calls being water baptised. The Greek word 'Baptizo' means to submerge (not sprinkle).

## **3. What about baby baptism (christening)?**

The New Testament example is belief, repentance, water baptism. There are no accounts of infants being water baptised in the Bible. We must be careful not to give tradition pre-eminence over what the Bible teaches.

I believe when a person, young or old, understands what water baptism is, what it means, and is by his/her own decision wanting to be baptised, then that is the right time for them.

## **4. Baptised into what?**

The Bible teaches that when a new believer was water baptised, he/she was baptised in/into the name of the Lord Jesus or in/into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Acts 19:5**

*As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

### **Matthew 28:19 (NLT)**

*19Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

The exact phrasing isn't important, as we see in the Bible the wording is not identical in every account. It is the meaning of the words which are important.

However, any church that baptises people in, or into the name of anything, or anyone else but the pattern shown to us in the Bible, is in extreme error and must be avoided.

## **5. When should a person be water baptised?**

### **Acts 2:38a**

*Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."*

It is Scriptural to be water baptised as soon as possible after becoming a Christian, but one must understand that water baptism signifies a complete and total forsaking of the old life, and to everything that is not pleasing to God, and a new life living for Jesus alone!

## **6. Who should do the water baptising?**

The New Testament examples show that someone in a position of leadership in the church baptised people.

## **7. Can a person be water baptised more than once?**

The Bible never suggests repeated water baptism. If a person has been baptised in any way that is unscriptural. (for example, sprinkled, baptised as a baby, baptised into the name of a church) I strongly recommend being baptised again in the Biblical way.

## **8. Where should a person be water baptised?**

### **Acts 8:36-38 (NLT)**

*<sup>36</sup>As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?"<sup>38</sup> He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.*

Anywhere there is water! It is wise though, to have a group of believers present to support and encourage the one being baptised. Also, it is an awesome testimony to any friends and family who are unbelievers.

## **9. Baptism for the dead?**

### **1 Corinthians 15:29 (NLT)**

*If the dead will not be raised, what point is there in people being baptized for those who are dead? Why do it unless the dead will someday rise again?*

The context was that there were false teachers in Corinth were teaching that there was no resurrection, and these same teachers were baptising the dead (verse 29 was Pauls' way of exposing their contradiction and hypocrisy).

This practice of being baptised for those who have already died goes against the entire New Testament theme... That we are saved by grace through belief in Jesus Christ... that we are destined to die once, and after that to face eternal life with God or eternal separation from God.

## Conclusion

At Renew Church, we hold a Water Baptism celebration on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of every month after the morning service.

Please fill out a Connect Card if you would like to be baptised or have any further questions regarding baptism, or alternatively email us: [contact@renewchurch.nz](mailto:contact@renewchurch.nz). We would love to hear from you!

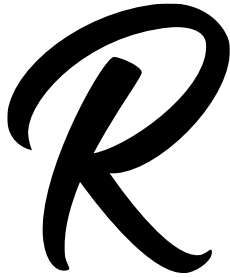
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