

NOTES ON  
BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

by  
Rev. Leigh Robinson

## ***Introduction***

In this series of studies we will consider the following questions:

- **Who may be baptized?**
- **Why should a person be baptized?**
- **When should a person be baptized?**
- **What is the meaning of baptism?**
- **How should a person be baptized?**

Before discussing these questions it will be helpful for us to remember that:

- **In the Gospels we have baptism commanded.**
- **In Acts we have baptism practiced.**
- **In the letters (epistles) we have baptism explained.**

### **Question #1: Who may be baptized?**

In Acts we have a number of accounts of people being baptized. Read these accounts to find the answer to the question: Who may be baptized?

- Acts 2:22-41, especially vv37-41
- Acts 8:12-13
- Acts 8:26-40
- Acts 9:1-19
- Acts 10:1 – 11:18
- Acts 16:11-15
- Acts 16:16-34
- Acts 18:8
- Acts 19:1-7

In these accounts we discover that prior to their baptism these people had:

- heard the gospel message
- been convicted by the Holy Spirit
- repented of their sin
- believed in Jesus

According to Acts 2:38, what two things happen to people who repent and believe

in the Lord Jesus?

- Their sins are forgiven
- They receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

In the light of the Bible teaching concerning who may be baptized, are you ready to be baptized?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

### **Question #2: Why should a person be baptized?**

There is one simple reason why a believer in the Lord Jesus should be baptized: because Jesus commanded it in the Great Commission (Mathew 28:18-20).

The practice of baptism as recorded in Acts (see passages above) is proof of the fact that the apostles and early believers understood and obeyed Jesus' command concerning baptism.

Will you obey Jesus' command?

### **Question #3: When should a person be baptized?**

The fact that the believers whose stories are recorded in Acts (see passages above) were baptized so soon after their conversion proves that baptism is not dependent on biblical knowledge (beyond the basic gospel message) and spiritual maturity.

The Bible does not prescribe when a believer should be baptized. Although New Testament believers were baptized immediately, two factors in our day may make it wise for professing believers to wait until they have received adequate instruction and until they show some evidence of spiritual transformation. The two factors are:

- The differing views on baptism held within the Christian church. This fact means that there is often confusion regarding baptism, hence the need for careful study of the Scriptures.

- We live in an age of tolerance in which believers (particularly in the West) are unlikely to be persecuted for their faith. This fact makes it easier for people who are not truly converted to desire baptism. Therefore, it may be wise to delay baptism until there are signs of genuine spiritual life.

#### **Question #4: What is the meaning of baptism?**

Baptism is called a church 'ordinance' because the Lord Jesus ordained (commanded) that his followers should observe it. The other church ordinance is The Lord's Supper, or Communion. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic ritual that points to the historical fact of Jesus' crucifixion. Baptism is a symbolic ritual that testifies to two things: the believer's union with Christ and with the body of Christ, the church.

- **The believer's union with Christ**

The following passages speak about the believer's union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection, which occurs at conversion. Baptism in water pictures and bears witness to this spiritual baptism.

- Romans 6:1-7
- Galatians 3:26-28
- Colossians 2:9-12

- **The believer's union with the body of Christ, the church**

The believer's union with the church, the body of Christ, which also occurs at conversion, is spoken about in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. By baptism in water the believer is bearing witness to the fact that he/she is part of the body of Christ.

If a believer becomes a member of the body of Christ, the church, at conversion why is it necessary to seek membership in a church? The answer to this question lies in understanding

- The universal church (all Christians; those already in heaven and those still on earth)
- The local church (groups of Christians that meet together in particular geographical locations)

To become a member of a Rosebank Union Church (a local church) you must:

- Be a member of the universal church (by conversion)
- Attend the Discovering Church Membership Course

- Be in agreement with the Statement of Faith of Rosebank Union Church and commit to fulfilling the responsibilities of a church member

### **Question #5: How should a person be baptized?**

The following point to immersion being the Biblical mode of baptism:

- The Scriptures (Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39)
- The meaning of the word 'baptizo' (to dip, plunge, immerse)
- The fact that baptism symbolizes the believer's union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. Immersion in water pictures the believer's death and burial with Christ. Coming up out of the water pictures his/her resurrection to new life in Christ.
- The practice of the early church
- Archaeology (some archaeological excavations of ancient church buildings have revealed the existence of 'baptistries')

### ***Some practical questions regarding the baptismal service***

- **What do I need to bring?**  
A baptismal gown will be provided for ladies, but please bring a towel and a change of clothing.
- **When do I come?**  
Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of the service.
- **Where do I report?**  
Please come to the Speaker's Lounge at the left rear of the platform.
- **Am I required to share a testimony in the service?**  
No. The baptism is your testimony. Having said that, I would encourage you to share a brief testimony concerning your salvation experience. Doing so will strengthen your faith, and your testimony may be used by God to help someone in the service to draw closer to him.
- **Should I invite unsaved family and friends to my baptism?**  
Absolutely! Many would not come to church to hear some famous guest preacher, but they will come to see you baptized because of their relationship with you. Invite as many as you can. Maybe organize a tea or a lunch for them at your home after the service as this will give them an incentive to come, and provide you with a further opportunity to talk to them about what God has done in your life and answer questions they may have.