

## the baptism ceremony

In an adult baptism generally the following questions are asked before the congregation.

*Do you believe that as the Son of God... Christ Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures?*

*Do you look to Jesus in trust & obedience as your Saviour & your King?*

*Is it the chief aim of your life to serve the true & living God & to wait for his Son from heaven?*

*Do you declare that you bring Xxxx to baptism as part of your deep desire & prayer that their sins might be forgiven through faith in Jesus?*

*Do you promise to pray for the salvation of Xxxx without ceasing?*

*Do you promise to teach Xxxx the message of God in the Bible?*

*Is it your determination to live a godly life before Xxxx.... a life of faith & love & obedience?*

*As part of your godly life, is it your determination to be committed to the body of Christ, his church, and in particular.. this church?*

*Do you promise all these things relying on God's good & sovereign grace?*

The following question is then asked of the congregation.

*Q. Do you, the members of this church family, promise to receive () with Christian love & care, to pray for him/her, to seek his/her growth in the knowledge of Christ; & to never willingly set before him/her any conduct which might cause him/her to stumble or be unworthy of Christ?*

*A. We do.*

This final question & answer reveals the importance of the congregation's role. That's why the family of the child to be baptised should be a committed member of that congregation who regularly attends its gatherings.

## what's next?

Hopefully this leaflet has cleared up some confusion. It may have confirmed your intention to proceed with baptism.

However, it may also have become clear that baptism is not for you or your child. In the case of a child it may be possible to hold a naming ceremony as a more appropriate alternative to a baptism.

Its very important that any promises we make are made with honesty & integrity. God looks at our hearts.

In the end, what is most important is not whether or not someone is baptised.

What is most important is the response a person has made to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Please be sure about that.



# baptism?

*There is lots of confusion & wrong thinking about Christian baptism.*

*This leaflet contains information about what baptism is, what baptism isn't & who baptism is for.*

Before anything else we need to be clear about the message at the heart of Christianity & the Bible... the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## an important message

The Bible teaches us that God is the loving ruler of this world & us, his creatures.

But all of us fail to treat God rightly. We defy his rule. We doubt his word. We prefer to live life our way. This rebellion against God's loving rule is what the Bible calls sin. Our sin cuts us off from God. Our sin earns God's right anger & judgement.

But because of his love & mercy, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, came to rescue us from our sin & its consequences.

He left heaven, became as human as you & I, yet lived rightly under God's rule- the way we were meant to live.

Jesus alone never earned God's judgement for Jesus alone never sinned.

As the Son of God, Jesus died an innocent death in order to win our pardon from sin.

In his death, he was judged for the sins of guilty people.

But that's not all! Three days after his death, he rose to life proving that he is the Saviour & the King.

This is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is the message at the heart of Christianity.

Its a message that requires a response.

There are only 2 possible responses. There is no middle ground.

***"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."***

*1Peter chapter 3 verse 18*

## an important response

One response is to continue going our own way. The consequence of this decision is to face God's judgement of our sin.

God however, calls on everyone to make an alternative response. He wants us to acknowledge our sin & to rely on Jesus' death & resurrection to put things right with him. This will involve surrendering to Jesus' authority & seeking to trust & obey him in all of life.

A Christian is a person who has made this alternative response.

***"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."***

*John chapter 3 verse 36*

Being clear about the gospel of Jesus Christ helps us to be clear about baptism.

Now, we are in a position to understand what baptism IS & is NOT.

## baptism IS...

In the Bible, baptism is a public act declaring a person's decision to turn away from sin & to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

The use of water in baptism symbolises the cleansing from sin & forgiveness that Jesus won for us in his death in our place.

## baptism is NOT...

Baptism is NOT for everyone.

Baptism does NOT make a person Christian.

Baptism is NOT necessary to go to heaven.

Baptism is NOT a naming ceremony in the way the word "Christening" is often used.

Baptism is NOT the way a child is "registered" with the church.

## who is baptised?

Hopefully the answer to this question is now obvious.

Baptism is only appropriate for Christian people. In the same way that it only makes sense for a person who is married to wear a wedding ring, baptism only means something if the person is committed to the Lord Jesus.

So, in the Bible, baptism is for adults who have become Christians. There are also examples of whole families being baptised when the parents become Christian.

Within the Presbyterian denomination, children are also baptised if at least one of the parents is genuinely Christian and an active member of the local congregation.

