



## *What is Baptism About?*

Baptism is the celebration of the life that has been found!

**Luke 15:8-10** “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won’t she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.’ In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels when even one sinner repents.”

There are a few key things to understand about baptism and why we do it the way we do at Hoboken Grace.:

1. Baptism did not start with Christ.
  - a. In ancient Israel God had given them certain ceremonial cleansing rituals.
    - i. As with every ritual, they weren’t saved by the ritual, but the ritual was a sign of their faith.
    - ii. **Rom. 4:10** **But how did this happen? Was he counted as righteous only after he was circumcised, or was it before he was circumcised? Clearly, God accepted Abraham before he was circumcised!**
    - iii. Abraham was saved before the ritual of circumcision, the ritual was a sign of his faith.
  - b. John the Baptist uses Baptism as a symbol of repentance.
    - i. **John 3:23** **At this time John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim, because there was plenty of water there; and people kept coming to him for baptism.**
    - ii. This Baptism symbolized that they were repenting. They were saying publically, “I’m changing direction, I’ve been made clean by faith.”
  - c. This was an ancient Jewish idea and custom.
2. Jesus comes along, He takes what God had originally given, and brings an entirely new light to what the original cleansings had foreshadowed.
  - a. He actually makes us clean.
    - i. **Heb. 10:22** **let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.**
  - b. He actually rises from the dead, and brings us back to life spiritually as well.
    - i. **Col. 2:11-15** **When you came to Christ, you were “circumcised,” but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were**

**baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.**

- c. All of the sudden this is the perfect symbolic picture of what's happened to you and I spiritually.
  - d. From the beginning it was planned to be a picture of Christ.
    - i. I died with him.
    - ii. I rose with him.
    - iii. I am clean.
3. Jesus then gives baptism to his followers as a public proclamation of their faith. Something that does not, as has always been the case, give salvation, but is rather an expression of our faith.
- a. **Matt. 28:19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.**
  - b. This is why we wait until someone has placed their faith in Christ before we baptize them. We are told to “make disciples” and baptize them.
4. We see this throughout the New Testament.
- a. **Acts 2:38 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. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**
  - b. **Acts 2:41 Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.**
  - c. **Acts 8:12 But now the people believed Philip’s message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized.**
  - d. **Acts 18:8 Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, and everyone in his household believed in the Lord. Many others in Corinth also heard Paul, became believers, and were baptized.**
  - e. These baptisms were all public proclamations of faith in Christ made by a believer in Christ.
5. Baptism is our first step of obedience.
- a. Baptism is a command not a suggestion.
  - b. Baptism is to be a step immediately after following Christ.
6. Many ask us about believer’s baptism in light of the fact that they were baptized as a child. We believe that based on biblical precedent that adult baptism is to take place after you’ve been born again as a symbol of what happened.

- a. This doesn't take away from what happened before. Your parents made a decision and commitment to raise you to one day know Christ.
  - b. This is building upon your parent's commitment. This is simply you standing and saying, "I have experienced what they wanted to happen."
7. What is the significance of this step?
- a. It doesn't change anything spiritually. You're right.
  - b. It's kind of strange. You're right.
  - c. Can't I just tell people? You could, but that's not what he's asked you to do.

The more we have the conversation the more we see it mirroring the story of Naaman.

**2Kings 5:1-16** The king of Aram had great admiration for Naaman, the commander of his army, because through him the LORD had given Aram great victories. But though Naaman was a mighty warrior, he suffered from leprosy. At this time Aramean raiders had invaded the land of Israel, and among their captives was a young girl who had been given to Naaman's wife as a maid. One day the girl said to her mistress, "I wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria. He would heal him of his leprosy." So Naaman told the king what the young girl from Israel had said. "Go and visit the prophet," the king of Aram told him. "I will send a letter of introduction for you to take to the king of Israel." So Naaman started out, carrying as gifts 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing. The letter to the king of Israel said: "With this letter I present my servant Naaman. I want you to heal him of his leprosy." When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in dismay and said, "This man sends me a leper to heal! Am I God, that I can give life and take it away? I can see that he's just trying to pick a fight with me."

But when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes in dismay, he sent this message to him: "Why are you so upset? Send Naaman to me, and he will learn that there is a true prophet here in Israel." So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha's house. But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message: "Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy."

But Naaman became angry and stalked away. "I thought he would certainly come out to meet me!" he said. "I expected him to wave his hand over the leprosy and call on the name of the LORD his God and heal me! Aren't the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than any of the rivers of Israel? Why shouldn't I wash in them and be healed?" So Naaman turned and went away in a rage.

I'm not doing that, that's pointless!

But his officers tried to reason with him and said, "Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn't you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says simply, 'Go and wash and be cured!'" So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God had



**instructed him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child's, and he was healed!**

**Then Naaman and his entire party went back to find the man of God. They stood before him, and Naaman said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant."**

**But Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept any gifts." And though Naaman urged him to take the gift, Elisha refused.**

In some ways, baptism is like that. Was there any significance to dipping in the Jordan River? No, it was a question of faith, of obedience.

If you're going to follow Christ, there are going to be a lot of times when he's going to ask you to do things you simply don't understand. The question will be, as it is with this, will you obey?

You don't start to follow by saying no, you start by obeying, even if it doesn't make sense.

Will you follow?