

Practical questions on church membership
3. Do I need to be baptized?

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Introduction

- Something strange?
- “Believer’s baptism but open membership”

WHY should we baptize?

- The command & example of Jesus (Matt. 29:19, 3:13-17)
- The command & example of the apostles (Acts 2:38, 8:36-38)

WHAT does baptism mean?

- A picture of cleansing (Acts 22:16)
- A picture of conversion (Rom. 6:4-6)
- An initiation into the church (Eph. 4:5)

WHO should we baptize?

- Infant baptism?
 - No clear NT teaching (Col. 2:11-12)
 - No clear NT examples (Acts 16:32, 34)
- Believer’s baptism (Matt. 28:19, Acts 2:38, 41, 18:8)

HOW should we baptize?

- Usually immersion

Conclusion

Acts 16v25-34 (NIV)

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody’s chains came loose. ²⁷ The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!”

²⁹ The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

³¹ They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household.” ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³ At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. ³⁴ The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God--he and his whole family.

Some resources on baptism

Victor Jack, “Believe and be baptized” (free booklet available on the welcome table, good for someone thinking about baptism but doesn’t engage with infant baptism)

David Wright (ed.), “Baptism: Three Views” (good summary, with chapters on both believer’s and infant baptism)

Thomas Schreiner (ed.), “Believer’s Baptism” (more substantial defense of believer’s baptism)

Church Membership – FAQs booklet (available on the welcome table)