

Clear News, and not so clear news.

Not so clear news first.

Matt 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." ESV PLEURAL You cannot baptize a nation as an event.

Acts 2:38-39

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." ESV INDIVIDUAL (Gk is plural is this is addressed to all listeners, the action advised is individual)

**This is initiation Baptism, which is Baptising into the church.**

HOW?

The Greek word for Baptism has had hundreds of years of scholars disagreeing as to its exact meaning. It is safe to assume that it is not an exact word. It has meanings other than initiation baptism.

Different groups have defined "Baptism" according to their tradition, not according to the meaning of the word (which is not clear), unfortunately using it as a means to define their differences, that is as a dividing principle, when it was given as a unifying principle. Initiation Baptism is given by God to unite believing Christians, not to divide them.

There are different uses in the New Testament, see *Promise of the Father*, Ch 4.

([https://www.amazon.co.uk/Promise-Father-Nik-Howarth-ebook/dp/B00AGJXMHS/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1488705051&sr=1-1&keywords=The+Promise+of+the+Father+Howarth](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Promise-Father-Nik-Howarth-ebook/dp/B00AGJXMHS/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1488705051&sr=1-1&keywords=The+Promise+of+the+Father+Howarth))

## Clearer News

There are many types of Baptism, for example, Baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is difficult to see some of these as a simple instantaneous event; they are better seen as a whole process, sometimes symbolised by an event.

There is an initiation Baptism by which an individual is joined to the church that involves the symbolism of washing and uses water.

For example, Act 2:38

Repent first, then be Baptised. Just getting washed in water by the church would not constitute baptism, the washing is the symbolising of the process that starts with repentance, the end point is the accepting into the fellowship of believers.

So,

Initiation Baptism:

Starts with not being a Christian

Then by becoming a Christian by changing our mind about Jesus and desiring to keep his teaching (repentance)

Desiring to be seen and to identify with Jesus and with those who follow him

Undergoing a ceremony to **declare this** that involves washing with water

Being accepted into Christian fellowship as a full and equal member.

What does “washing with water” mean?

There are many traditions that vary from full immersion to just touching the head with a little water. The New Testament is not perfectly clear, although those Christian groups that *tend* towards an understanding of the scripture that says it is authoritative on its own *tend* towards total immersion.

This church totally immerses.

## The very clear news

Jesus commanded the church to Baptise new members.

Peter commands new members to be baptised.

It seems very clear to me, that even if we cannot agree on exactly what Baptism means, and exactly how to do it, the King of Kings and his experts, the apostles, say we should be baptised.

If we have not submitted to a process of Baptism, we are commanded to do so. Sometimes we should suspend our understanding and just obey.

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