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## A Voice From The Past

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The following excerpt is from the sermon “God-Guided Men,” preached by Charles Haddon Spurgeon:

“Very often, some of those who really do believe in Jesus neglect to avow their faith in the Lord’s appointed way. Nothing is more plainly taught in the New Testament than that it is the duty of every believer in Christ to be baptized. It is the duty of every Christian, having first given himself to Christ, afterwards to give himself to Christ’s Church, according to the will of God. Now, my dear friend, do your Master’s will, and consult not with flesh and blood.”

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## Why Should I Be Baptized?

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- **To obey Christ’s command**

**Matthew 28:18-20**, “*And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’*”

**Acts 10:48a**, “*And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ....*”

- **To share publicly one’s faith in Jesus Christ**

**Acts 19:5**, “*When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*”

- **To identify with Christ and His Church**

**Acts 2:41**, “*So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*”

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## What Is the History of Baptism?

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- **Old Testament baptism for purification**

“Washing rites characterize priestly preparation for offering sacrifice in the Old Testament (Ex. 40:12-15). On the Day of Atonement, the high priest bathed both before and after his offering (Lev. 16:4, 24). Visitors to the Temple should not enter the inner courts without washing hands and feet (t. Kelim I.6). Water washings are linked not only with religious purity but also with concern for sinfulness and moral purity (see Isa. 1:16-17; Jer. 4:14; Ezk. 36:25)” (Harper’s Bible Dictionary, 92).

- **Old Testament baptism for proselyte conversion**

A proselyte is a person who converts from one religion to another. Within the biblical sense, this refers to Gentiles who wanted to identify themselves with the nation of Israel so that they could worship the true God. In the Old Testament, part of the conversion rite included ritual baptism in addition to being circumcised and offering sacrifices. It symbolized the dying of the Gentile to his past life and being raised to a new life in Judaism and a new relationship with God.

- **New Testament baptism of John the Baptist**

In the ministry of John the Baptist, baptism was used as a symbol of one’s repentance in anticipation and preparation of the coming Messiah. **Mark 1:4**, “*John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*” John baptized people as a visible symbol of their inward repentance.

- **New Testament baptism of Jesus Christ**

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, which symbolized the inauguration of His Messianic ministry. In addition, Jesus’ baptism prefigured His own death. **Matthew 3:13-15**, “*Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?’ <sup>15</sup> But Jesus answering said to him, ‘Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he permitted Him.*” Jesus would fulfill all righteousness not through the act of water baptism but through His death and resurrection. His baptism at the beginning of His ministry foreshadowed the baptism He would undergo at the end of His earthly ministry (Lk. 12:50). Jesus offers us the fullest understanding of baptism in the great commission where it signifies a belief in the gospel and union with the triune God (Matt. 28:19).

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## What Is Baptism?

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- **Baptism is a symbol**

Baptism is a meaningful symbol picturing death, burial, and resurrection. **Romans 6:3-4**, “*Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*”

- **Baptism is an outward sign of an inward change**

Baptism is an outward expression of an inner reality: the death of the old sinful nature and the emergence of new life in Jesus Christ. In **1 Corinthians 12:13**, Paul said, “*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*” Baptism is a figure chosen by the Holy Spirit to illustrate His act of uniting the penitent believer with Jesus Christ. Repeatedly in the New Testament we read of the believer as being someone who is “in Christ Jesus,” e.g., **Romans 8:1**, “*...there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.*”

- **Baptism is by immersion**

The Greek word (the New Testament was written almost completely in the Greek language) *baptizo* is the word for “to baptize.” The word means, literally, “to immerse.” Occasionally in Greek literature baptize was used as a synonym for “to bury,” or in its intensive form meaning “to drown,” or of a ship sinking. In addition, the Greek language has words for “pour” and “sprinkle,” but these are never used of baptism. If we are going to attach value to the actual words that are used in the New Testament in our interpretation or the meaning of a statement, then we must consider that baptism indicates immersion.

- **Baptism is not necessary for salvation**

Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone (Acts 4:12; John 14:6). Eternal life cannot be earned through personal merit or good deeds which includes being baptized. **Ephesians 2:8-9**, “*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> not as a result of works, that no one should boast.*” If baptism was a means of salvation, the Apostle Paul would not have made the statements of **1 Corinthians 1:14-17**.

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## When Should A Person Be Baptized?

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- **After one understands and believes the gospel**

*Acts 2:41, "...those who had received His word were baptized..."*

*Acts 8:12, "But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike."*

- **After one shows a personal faith in Christ**

A person must be baptized on the basis of his/her own faith. In addition, an intellectual comprehension of the act is implied as a prerequisite. This is the reason we do not practice pedo-baptism (the baptism of infants or little children) or baptism of the dead (a Mormon practice of proxy baptism for the dead). Though not prescribed in the Scriptures, the staff and elders of NorthCreek Church have prayerfully established 12 years of age to be the minimum age for baptisms in a church service/function.

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## What Keeps Believers From Getting Baptized?

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- **Ignorance**

The believer has never been taught about the nature and necessity of baptism.

- **Indifference**

The believer undervalues the ordinance of baptism and has never taken the time to be obedient to the Lord in this area of his/her life.

- **Fear**

The believer is afraid of taking a step of faith in being baptized publicly before the body of Christ.

- **Pride**

The believer is ashamed of being saved for so long and not being obedient to this command.

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## **Five Steps to Being Baptized at NorthCreek**

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- **Read the Baptism Handbook and fill out the Baptism Application.**
- **Attend a Baptism Orientation Class, bringing your completed application for review.**
- **Meet with a pastor or elder to discuss testimony.**
- **Return revised testimony to NorthCreek by due date given by your class leader.**
- **Approved applicants will be scheduled a baptism date and time. All baptisms will be conducted by an elder or pastor of NorthCreek Church.**