

WHAT NOT TO WEAR FOR YOUR BAPTISM



But why Believer's Baptism?

These two pictures are a way of saying that the person who is baptised has decided that they want to be a follower of Jesus Christ and with His help live a different life, be a different person; which is why we call it "believers' baptism."

As Baptist's then, we believe baptism can only be a reality for those who choose it, who have decided they believe in God and want to follow Jesus themselves; and that no one can make this decision for you. Therefore, our practice is not to Baptise infants or children who haven't made a choice for themselves.

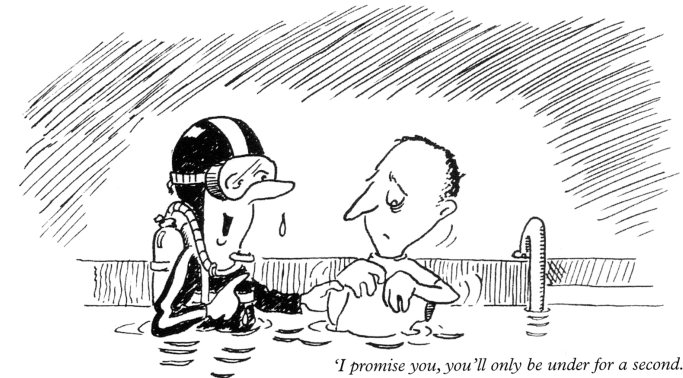
We also like to make the event a public one as this helps us decide if we really mean it and will give us strength later when we can look back and say "yes I am with Jesus!"

Therefore, you only need to be baptised once, for it is Jesus who keeps us clean and helps us live a great life; stay close to Jesus and you will have life in all it's fulness! (John 10:10)

Finally, we too like to use lots of water so that we can be fully immersed in it, as this is such a powerful symbol of cleansing and resurrection.

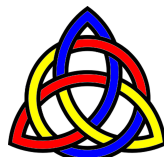
For further information on baptism, or any other issue, please contact the church or the Rev'd Richard Sherlock and we would only be too happy to help.

Baptism:



Making a splash!

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A bit of background

Firstly, there is nothing really special about the word “baptism.” It is a word from the everyday life of people living thousands of years ago in the Greek speaking world and was originally a word used in the cleaning of wool!

When the fleece was removed from a sheep (or goat) it would be dirty (think about wearing the same clothes for a year and living in a field!) and needed to be cleaned.

To do this they placed the wool in a bath and washed it by fully immersing the fleece in the water to make sure all of it got cleaned. The meaning of the word “baptise” is therefore, to submerge in a liquid. So you could say you baptise a biscuit every time you dunk one in your drink!



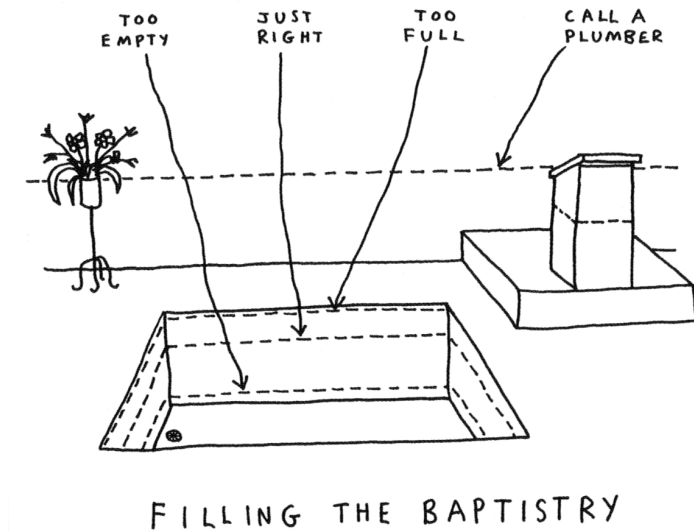
However, the picture of cleansing the sheep's fleece was seen as a good picture for us and our need to be cleansed from the spiritual dirt in our lives, the things we do wrong, those things we didn't do but should have, when we hurt other people and disappoint God.

Therefore the prophet Isaiah said; *“though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”* (Isaiah 1:18)

By the time of Jesus Christ, baptism was something every pious Jewish worshipper did before going into the Temple to worship. They did not want to go to worship God without cleaning themselves and so there were many bath houses at the main entrance to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Jesus tells His followers that they should be baptised in God's name to show that they are now taking God seriously, and the New Testament shows us that it was understood in a couple of ways:

- 1) Like the fleece, when we are baptised we are wanting to be clean, not from dirt and grease but from all the things we do wrong. We are telling the world that we want to stop living our old life, but rather live as God always wanted us to. This is what it means when we are baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, for we want to act and be as if Jesus were acting and being. Paul in his letter to Titus (a church leader) says baptism is the *“washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”* (Titus 3:5)



Through this act we say thank you Jesus for freeing us from our past and now with God's help we can really be us and know we are forgiven.

- 2) A second picture is used of baptism, which is similar to washing, but sees the pool as a form of grave! The person being baptised is seen as dying - of putting to death, giving up their old way of life. Of allowing all that has not been good in your life to die and then when you come back up out of the water, it is as if you have been restored to life, but this time with Jesus. Paul in his letter to the church in Rome wrote, *“we were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”* (Romans 6:3-4)

