

BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH



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Name:



This booklet is for those looking to understand believer’s baptism. It will highlight for you some of the foundational truths of baptism that we believe here at Berean. If you still have questions about believer’s baptism after completing this booklet, please reach out to one of the pastors or elders.

Once you have completed this booklet and written out your salvation testimony, you are ready to be baptized. Please call the church office at 910-868-5156 to schedule a baptism interview with a pastor or elder. You will give this booklet to your interviewer as a guide for the interview discussion.

Before you get started, you will need a Bible and a pen or pencil. There is no need to complete this booklet all in one sitting—take breaks and be sure to pray for guidance as you complete it.

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Believer's Baptism: A Sign of the New Covenant*

Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Anglicans, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and other Reformed churches practice infant baptism, pouring or sprinkling water on infants before the child has professed faith in Christ as Savior (paedobaptism). This raises the question: Why doesn't Berean practice infant baptism? And why does Berean insist on baptism by immersion, reserved for those whose faith is in Jesus as their Lord and Savior? These questions, along with many others, will be addressed in this lesson.

Were you baptized as an infant? _____

In contrast to those who practice paedobaptism (baptizing infants and children), those who advocate **believer's baptism by immersion** (often called credobaptism) hold a different view.

Credobaptism (Believer's Baptism): Membership in the visible church belongs only to those who personally believe (credo).

Paedobaptism (infant Baptism): Derived from the Greek word *pais* or *paidos* (meaning child or infant). Membership in the visible church includes the infants of believing parents.

Using these precise terms allows us to discuss the theological mechanics of baptism without constantly repeating the longer phrases "believer's baptism by immersion" or "infant baptism by sprinkling."

Baptists, Pentecostals, and other non-denominational Bible churches argue that credobaptism is the correct understanding of baptism in the NT. This conviction that only believers should be baptized is based on three main Scriptural arguments:

1. The order we see is salvation (repentant faith in Christ), followed by baptism.
2. The literal definition of the Greek word and the language in the passage about baptism.
3. The theological imagery or visual symbolism that baptism is supposed to communicate each time someone is baptized.

*Turn to Page 20 for more information on the New Covenant

Order Matters: Faith Precedes Baptism

Credobaptists argue that the New Testament establishes a strict sequence: a person must first exercise conscious, saving faith before being baptized. There are no examples in the NT of anyone being baptized before trusting in the Person and Work of Christ for their salvation. This is why we require a three-part testimony to salvation before we baptize anyone. We want to know about your life before you trusted in Christ, how you came to saving faith in the gospel, and how salvation has changed your life.

We baptize disciples of Christ because Jesus told us to in the Great Commission (Mat 28:18-20).

Mat 28:18-20.

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

And we only baptize those who profess to be followers (disciples) of Christ. Infants and small children are not followers of Christ. Another example of this sequence – faith in Christ, followed by baptism – is found in Acts 2:38-41.

Acts 2:38-41

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: ³⁹For 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.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” ⁴¹**So those who received his [Peter’s] word were baptized**, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

When we read Scripture like this and make theological decisions based on what it says, we are engaging in what theologians call exegesis. **Exegesis** is the critical explanation or interpretation of a text, especially Scripture, grounded in an objective analysis of what the words originally meant. At Berean, our conviction is that this is the only way Scripture should be interpreted.

Notice in verse 38 that repentance precedes baptism (order matters), and then look at verse 41: What Sequence do we see in this verse?

The Jews in Acts 2, who had previously rejected the truth that Jesus was the Christ (the Psalm 2 “Anointed one”), now had to change their minds (repent) about the Person and Work of Christ. Jesus was both the man from Nazareth and the divine Son of God. He was the God-Man. They had to believe that Jesus was both the Savior and Lord. They had to believe that his death was for the sins of humanity and that on the third day He rose from the Dead. Acts 8:12 and 18:8 provide two more examples of this sequence:

Acts 8:12

But when they **believed** Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were **baptized**, both men and women.

Acts 18:8

Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, **believed in the Lord**, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and **were baptized**.

In Acts 8:12, Philip preaches about the relationship between the kingdom of God, the Person of Jesus Christ, and how this is good news(gospel). What is the sequence in verse 12?

What precedes their baptism?

Now look at Acts 18:8. What does it say about Crispus, and how do we see the sequence or order in this verse?

Again, notice the Corinthians _____ and then were _____.

When did you put your faith in Christ as Lord and Savior? _____.

Were you previously baptized but have now realized you were not saved when you were baptized? Tell us when you were baptized and when you came to saving faith in Christ (approximate dates are fine).

What if I was baptized as an Infant?

Many believers come from traditions that practice infant baptism. If you were baptized as an infant, your parents likely sought to dedicate you to God and raise you in the Christian faith. We respect that desire and give thanks to God for their spiritual concern.

However, throughout the New Testament, baptism follows personal repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Because infants cannot yet repent, believe, or publicly profess faith in Christ, we do not consider infant baptism the same as believer's baptism.

What if I was baptized later in life but was still not a believer?

Likewise, if you were baptized before you were truly converted, your earlier baptism did not reflect genuine faith in Christ. In that case, we encourage you to follow the Lord in believer's baptism now that you have trusted Him as Savior and Lord.

Jesus' Baptism

Read about Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist below.

Mat 3:13–17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.

John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.

And when Jesus was baptized, **immediately he went up from the water**, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

The Mode of the Ordinance: Textual Clues for Immersion

Previously, we used the term exegesis – this is where we look at every word in a particular passage. We want to know what the word means in the context in which they are used. We study the language of the passage. Websites like www.blueletterbible.org let even those who can't read Greek see the original language and learn more about Greek words. Let's start with the word baptize.

βαπτίζω (*baptizō*) is found 77x in 64 verses in the New Testament (ESV). It is a verb. Most of the time, "baptize" is associated with water, but not always. Consider Acts 1:5
Immerse: _____

Acts 1:5

for John **baptized with water**, but you will be **baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now."

Jesus is the speaker in Acts 1:5, and he describes a baptism that is and isn't with water. A note from blueletterbible.org helps explain the meaning of this important Greek word *baptizō*.

The clearest example illustrating the meaning of *baptizō* is a text by the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (*bapto*) into boiling water and then 'baptized' (*baptizō*) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution.

Jesus was communicating that, just as John immersed people in water for baptism, those waiting for the Holy Spirit in Acts 1 would be immersed in the Holy Spirit when He came upon them in Acts 2.

The believer does not receive the Holy Spirit at baptism. This is a false teaching in both the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. Receiving the Holy Spirit occurs when a person is born again (John 3). Consider Acts 10:47. Peter says,

Acts 10:47

"Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, **who have received the Holy Spirit** just as we have?"

From this text we see two things: 1) _____ is directly connected to baptizing people.

2) Those being baptized had already received the _____ .

Romans 8:16 teaches that “the Holy Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

Do you know if the Holy Spirit lives in you? _____

How do you?

Again, the Greek word used in the text, *baptizō*, literally means “submerge,” “plunge,” or “immerse.” In the NT passages that describe baptism, the details point to physical immersion or submersion in water.

Mat 3:16

And when Jesus was baptized, immediately **he went up from the water**, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him;

John 3:23

John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because **water was plentiful** there, and people were coming and being baptized

Credobaptists note that a large volume of water ("plenty") is only required for total bodily immersion.

Acts 8:38–39

And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went **down into the water**, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

And when they came up **out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

Underline or highlight all the words in the three passages above that point to the mode of baptism being immersion.

The Theological Meaning: Baptism as a Burial

For Credobaptists, the primary theological purpose of water baptism is to serve as an outward, visual sermon or lesson. It symbolizes the believer's spiritual union with Christ's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection—a metaphor that is entirely lost without total immersion.

At this point, we are combining two ideas: 1) Baptism is only for those who are saved, those who have been born again. 2) Baptism must be by immersion to provide the visual imagery of what has already happened spiritually in the life of the follower of Christ.

Let's start with three passages:

Rom 6:3–4:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Gal 3:27

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Col 2:12

having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

When a person is converted (saved, born again), the Holy Spirit places the believer into Christ—they are united to Christ. They are righteous because Christ is righteous. They are sons of God because Jesus is the Son of God. Thus, when Christ died, they too spiritually died to the power of sin and to the Second death. Therefore, when Christ rose from the dead, the believer, united to Christ, rose from the grave and can now walk in the newness of life. So then, the believer has a spiritual resurrection (“washing of regeneration,” Titus 3:5) in Christ and awaits their physical resurrection when Christ returns to raise the dead.

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the **washing of regeneration** and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

The language of “washing” symbolically links the spiritual work to the physical act of baptism. The believer is not cleansed or washed in the water. That spiritual reality already happened. Instead, the believer's baptism by immersion pictures what has already happened.

Believer's Baptism by Immersion Best Pictures our Union with Christ in the Gospel.



Rom 6:3

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Rom 6:4

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Rom 6:6

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

Col 2:12

having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Why Should a Believer Be Baptized?

Let's begin by stating a few reasons you should not be baptized. You don't get baptized because you think it is necessary for salvation. Baptism does not wash away sin or make you a Christian. A person becomes a Christian through saving faith in Christ as Lord and Savior.

Acts 16:31

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Yet 1 Peter 3:21 says, "Baptism which corresponds to this now saves you." Those who teach baptismal regeneration—the idea that baptism saves a person—use verses like 1 Peter 3:20–21 to argue that baptism is required for salvation.

1Pe 3:20–21

because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

New Testament churches baptized only those who professed faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. There is no evidence in the NT that infants were baptized. There is no consistent pattern in the NT of linking salvation to baptism. Passages like Romans 10:13 and others come to mind, and in them, nothing is said about baptism for salvation.

Rom 10:13

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

1Jo 5:12

Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Peter sees salvation pictured in the ark and then draws the same parallel to salvation through water baptism. Physical water baptism symbolizes faith in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection; thus, the believer has a good conscience toward God because of faith in Christ's resurrection, which implies faith in His death for one's sins. Peter rejects any suggestion that baptism washes away sin with the phrase "not as the removal of dirt."

Believers Get Baptized for Three Reasons

1. **Believers desire to follow the example of their Lord Jesus.** He insisted that John baptize Him in obedience to the Father, and Christ's followers should desire to emulate His example.

Mat 3:13–17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

2. **Local churches disciple believers to get baptized in obedience to Christ's Great Commission found in Matthew 28 and Mark 16.**

Mat 28:19

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,

The idea of not being baptized as a believer is an alien concept in the NT. When the Holy Spirit saved a person from their sins, the person was baptized shortly thereafter.

Mark 16:15–16

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and **is baptized** will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Notice that the church proclaims the gospel; individuals believe and are baptized. There is no hesitation; once those whose faith is in Christ are saved, they desire to be baptized. Yet Jesus draws a line between faith and baptism, declaring that those who do not believe will be condemned. Observe that Jesus said nothing about those who were not baptized.

3. **Believers' baptism is how new Christians publicly profess their faith in Christ and the gospel to the New Covenant community they are uniting with through faith in Christ.**

This is why one of the questions you will be asked when joining the church is: Have you been scripturally baptized since coming to faith in Christ?

Baptism is the Sign of the New Covenant

In the Old Testament, the rainbow was the sign of the Noahic covenant; circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic covenant; and the Sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic covenant. But in the NT, both the ordinance of baptism and the Lord's Supper function as visible signs of the New Covenant (see Jer 31:31–34 below).

Colossians 2 powerfully links circumcision (the sign of the Abrahamic covenant) to a new spiritual reality: the circumcision of the heart that moves believers from being outside Christ to becoming members of His body. Under the New Covenant, membership is not based on physical birth but on the new birth (the spiritual birth from above, John 3:3–8). Therefore, the covenant sign is given only to those who have personally trusted in the Person and Work of Christ for their salvation from sin.

Col 2:11–12

In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Whereas physical circumcision was the sign of membership in the Abrahamic covenant, spiritual circumcision is not a visible sign; instead, it is an act of the Holy Spirit by which the believer receives a new heart and is united to Christ Jesus by faith. The visible sign to all is water baptism. In verse 12, Paul links burial and resurrection with Christ to baptism and the believer's union with Him. Water baptism does not unite a person to Christ; rather, it visibly portrays the spiritual union with Christ that has already occurred through faith and the Holy Spirit's work.

Are you ready to follow Christ in baptism as a public profession of faith in the gospel? _____

Jer 31:31–34

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Baptism and Church Membership

For 2000 years, water baptism has served as the entry point to local church membership. But water baptism is not the means of entry into the universal church—the birth from above is. Jesus told Nicodemus, “You must be born again” (John 3:3–8). Only the Holy Spirit can create new life and bring the believer into union with Christ. A person can no more place themselves in Christ than they can place themselves on the moon. Just as Christ accomplished for us what we could never accomplish for ourselves, so the Holy Spirit must accomplish for us what we cannot do—unite us to Christ.

When a person is born again, they immediately become a member of the universal church—the body of Christ, composed of all true believers. This spiritual reality is accomplished entirely by God’s grace through the Holy Spirit’s work. Water baptism does not create this union with Christ; rather, it publicly identifies and portrays it. Baptism is the believer’s public profession of trust in Christ alone for salvation and for belonging to Christ and His people. Paul writes, “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1Co 12:13).

For this reason, churches throughout history have recognized baptism as the means of entering the visible fellowship and membership of a local church. Baptism does not save a person or make them part of Christ’s body. Instead, it is a public declaration that they already belong to Christ and His New Covenant people by faith. Therefore, Berean will only baptize those who profess to be born again disciples of Christ.

John 3:3–8

Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again [or from above] he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.

So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Have you experienced the birth from above, the birth that only the Holy Spirit can bring about?

When were you born again? _____

Finally, A Word about Repentance

If you have been paying close attention, you may have noticed that we have not used the phrase "repent of your sins" in this lesson. Many Christians have heard that phrase in sermons, books, podcasts, and evangelistic messages. Because it is so common, it is important to explain why Berean does not use that language when discussing salvation. The NT places far greater emphasis on faith and belief in the Triune God, the gospel, and its promises than on repentance (about a 10-to-1 ratio).

In Acts 2:38, Peter told the Jews to "repent," but he did not command them to "repent of their sins." Repentance that results in salvation cannot be separated from faith in Christ. Repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin. In the NT, repentance can be divided into two senses: 1) repentance directly connected to being saved, and 2) repentance after salvation. Both are important but quite different.

We don't tell boys and girls, men and women, to "repent of their sins" (plural) because the NT doesn't use that language. The NT does not define saving repentance as a person attempting to identify and turn from every individual sin before coming to Christ. Saving repentance is always directed toward God and results in faith in Christ.

Acts 20:21

testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of **repentance toward God and of faith** in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Classic passages on salvation, such as John 3, John 20, Acts 16:31, Rom 6 and 10, 1Co 15:1–4, Eph 2:8–10, and others, do not present repentance and faith as two separate acts in which one first repents and then believes. Pre-salvation repentance means abandoning whatever keeps you from trusting in Christ and believing the gospel. Gluttony is a sin, but victory over gluttony is not a prerequisite to putting faith in Christ. To be saved, one must acknowledge their need for a Savior and, as needed, repent of anything that keeps them from believing in Christ's person and work.

Finally, in Acts, "repentance" is presented as a gift from God (11:18). Repentance that results in salvation is never separated from faith in Christ. The question is always, have you believed? Assurance of salvation does not come from confidence that we have repented sufficiently. It comes from believing God's promises concerning His Son and trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are not sequential acts, with a person first repenting and then believing. We are not looking for repentance distinct from faith.

In other words, an empty phrase like "I repent of all my sins" is absent from the NT, whereas language that confesses faith in Christ appears throughout the New Testament. Consider the classic passage in Matthew 16:13–16 as one of many examples. Peter confessed, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (16). We don't ask whether you have repented, as though that were a separate act from faith in Christ. But one could say, "I turned (repented) from Islam to faith in Christ."

Have you turned to Christ and believed the gospel for the forgiveness of your sins and the free gift of eternal life?

The apostle Paul penned the NT's most foundational passage on the gospel found in 1Co 15:1–4. At the heart of the good news are 5 amazing words underlined in v. 3.

1Co 15:1–4

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that **Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

If Christ died for my sins, I do not have to die for them. This is truly good news. The wrath of God was satisfied on my behalf through Christ's atoning, sacrificial death. The sinless Savior died so that I, the sinner, can be forgiven and granted eternal life through Christ Jesus my Lord. Christ makes it possible for God to remain just (sin was punished) and for sinners to be made righteous.

Rom 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Eph 2:8–9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

2Co 5:21

For our sake he [God] made him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him [Jesus] we [believers] might become the righteousness of God.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Rom 3:25–26

whom God put forward [Jesus] as a propitiation [cleansing and atoning sacrifice] by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance [patience] he had passed over former sins.²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he [God] might **be just and the justifier** of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Writing Your Salvation Testimony

As you follow the Lord through believer's baptism and/or as you become a member of Berean, it is important to be able to clearly summarize your salvation testimony so you can share it whenever God provides an opportunity.

The Great Commission commands us to make disciples; understanding the Gospel within God's Story is essential. This understanding creates an opportunity for faith, inviting people to believe in Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Part of being a disciple who makes disciples is listening to others' life stories, then telling your own story and how it connects with God's Story. When you tell people how God saved you and is transforming you, they will take notice. This can help them understand that they also need Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Sharing your salvation testimony helps people see that you now have a personal relationship with the Creator God of the universe.

Below are some key points to keep in mind as you write your testimony. Stick to the point and share only the main points. Be specific by sharing your feelings, thoughts, and events to help people visualize your story. Be truthful. Do not exaggerate. The work of the Holy Spirit in your life is powerful enough. Do not feel like you need to make it a bigger miracle. At Berean, we encourage believers to include three parts in their salvation testimony:

- Your life before salvation.
- How you came to believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord.
- Your Christlike transformation since salvation, and how the Holy Spirit is working in your life now.

Please type your testimony for your membership and/or baptism interview. Complete the three statements below by adding a few sentences to each of the 3 outlined areas. Email your typed testimony to the membership coordinator in advance of your interview so the pastor/elder can read and review it before the meeting. During your interview, the pastor/elder will help you refine your salvation testimony to make it easier to share with others.

- Before salvation, my life was... and my thoughts about God were...
- I came to believe in Jesus as my Savior and Lord around..., and God was working in my life...
- Since my salvation, I am seeing God transform me into Christlikeness through... and these are some things that are new and different...

We have provided this space for your first draft. You will notice bullet points under each of the three areas. Don't start by writing in paragraph form. Instead, brainstorm key points under each area. You can come back later to clean it up and turn the bullet points into sentences and paragraphs. We are here to help you write your testimony.

I came to believe in Jesus as my Savior and Lord around..., and God was working in my life

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What Is the New Covenant?

To understand believer's baptism, you first need to understand the New Covenant.

Throughout the Bible, God relates to His people through covenants. A covenant is a solemn relationship established by God that reveals His promises and purposes. Each covenant advances the story of redemption, preparing the way for Jesus Christ.

More than six hundred years before Jesus was born, God promised through the prophet Jeremiah to establish a **New Covenant** (Jer 31:31–34). Unlike the covenant God made with Israel at Mount Sinai, the New Covenant would offer complete forgiveness of sins, grant God's people new hearts, place His law within them, and unite them to Himself through the Holy Spirit.

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus took the cup and said, "This cup... is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20). The following day, He died on the cross for our sins, inaugurating the New Covenant through His sacrificial death. Everyone who trusts in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior becomes part of this covenant and receives its blessings.

At Berean, we place great emphasis on the New Covenant because it explains so much of the Christian life. It explains why Christ's sacrifice is the final sacrifice for sin. It explains why every believer receives the Holy Spirit. It explains why God's law is now written on our hearts. It explains why the church is made up of those who have personally trusted in Christ rather than those born into a particular nation or family.

The New Covenant also explains baptism. Under the New Covenant, baptism is one of two ordinances Christ gave His church, along with the Lord's Supper. Baptism does not save a person or make them part of God's family. Instead, it is the public sign that a believer already belongs to Christ through faith. Just as wedding rings do not create a marriage but publicly symbolize it, baptism publicly identifies believers with Jesus Christ, His death, burial, resurrection, and His New Covenant people.

For this reason, Berean baptizes only those who have personally believed the gospel for the forgiveness of their sins. Baptism is the joyful public declaration that you belong to Jesus Christ and are part of the New Covenant He established through His blood.

Our Covenant

As a bond of unity among us, Berean Baptist Church accepts for its members the following covenant:

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and upon our profession of our faith in Him, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We fully realize that the strength to uphold this covenant comes from the grace of God our Father, the shed blood of God the Son, and the power of the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

We promise to actively pursue personal holiness; to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church's spiritual growth and unity; to faithfully abide by the doctrines and behaviors outlined in this church's Articles of Faith; and to give cheerfully of our time, talents, and finances for the support of this ministry and its missionaries.

We further promise to faithfully attend the church's worship services, to maintain personal spiritual disciplines; to teach our children the Word of God; to share the gospel with our relatives and acquaintances; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements; and to avoid all gossip. We promise that we will love and pray for each other and in times of distress help one another.

We promise to endeavor to obey the commandments of our Lord Jesus and to abstain from anything that would cause our fellow brother or sister in Christ to stumble or that will bring reproach to the name of Jesus Christ.

We further realize that if we should fail to live up to the promises we have made, our brothers and sisters in Christ will always strive for our reconciliation and spiritual restoration. However, if we partake in a sustained and unrepentant violation of an Article of Faith, we will be brought under church discipline in accordance with the Church Constitution.

We make this covenant with each other for the express purpose of glorifying God as the visible representation of the body of Christ.

