

Baptism (1)

Romans 6:3-5

#1 Baptism

Along with communion, baptism is considered one of the rituals that gives Christians a sense of belonging and identity.

Baptism is an important way to confess our faith in Jesus publicly. Even Jesus Himself was baptized by John the Baptist before He started his ministry in earnest.

And, after finishing His work on the cross and being resurrected, Jesus commanded His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We call it **the Great Commission**.



#2 Baptism

The Baptist Faith and Message, which is the collection of beliefs of the Southern Baptist Convention, defines baptism this way.

“Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.”



Here, we find some important aspects of baptism. Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water. It is conducted under the authority of the triune God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. And, it represents believers’ faith in and union with Jesus Christ, who was crucified, buried, and risen from the dead.

#3 Baptism

1. The Immersion of a Believer

This describes the biblical way to conduct a baptismal ceremony. There are different methods of baptism according to different denominations. But we should at least know that **the Bible clearly defines baptism as the immersion of believers in water.**

The original Greek word for baptism, **baptizo**, is most clearly understood to mean **the complete immersion of an object or a person in water.**

So, there's no doubt that believers were fully immersed in water to be baptized in the New Testament. It was the way Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River.

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, **he went up out of the water**” (Mt 3:16)



That Jesus went up out of the water during His baptism implies that He was immersed in water.

#4 Baptism

2. Union with Christ's Death, Burial, and Resurrection

This describes the biblical way to conduct a baptismal Full water immersion represents a believer's union with Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, which are essential factors of the gospel.

The Bible says that Jesus, the Son of God, came to the world in human form to save people from their sins. We call this the **incarnation**, which means "The Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14)

Jesus chose to come to earth in human form because **that was the only way to save us from our sins.**

God set an important principle in the Old Testament about the forgiveness of sin.

"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life" (Lev 17:11)

#5 Baptism

2. Union with Christ's Death, Burial, and Resurrection

Because God set the life of a creature in its blood, only blood can make atonement for sin.

However, animal sacrifice couldn't perfectly atone for people's sins because they were not equal to human beings in terms of value.



So, to perfectly atone for people's sins, we need a being who can satisfy **three criteria**. First, it has to be **without blemish or defect**. Second, it has to have a **body to bleed**. Third, it has to be **equal to all human beings in value**.

There is only one person who can perfectly meet all three of these essential conditions for salvation—Jesus Christ.

#6 Baptism

2. Union with Christ's Death, Burial, and Resurrection

He came to the world as the “**lamb without blemish or defect**” (1Pt 1:19) who had no sin.

Jesus Christ was just like us because He had the same kind of body we have. “For there is... one mediator between God and mankind, **the man Christ Jesus**” (1Tm 2:5)

And Jesus could atone for all people's sins because He was the Son of God who could represent all human beings.

Paul calls Him “the second Adam or **the last Adam**” (1Co 15:45), saying, “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive” (1Co 15:22)

This is the purpose of the incarnation of Jesus Christ: to bear all our sins in His body along with their consequences and die on the cross, shedding His precious blood to make atonement for all people's sins. But, that's not the end.

#7 Baptism

2. Union with Christ's Death, Burial, and Resurrection

After being crucified, Jesus was buried in a tomb. But, His ministry didn't end in the grave. The Bible says that God raised Him from the dead on the third day.

“He was delivered over to death for our sins and **was raised to life for our justification**” (Rm 4:25), which is “for us, to whom God will credit righteousness – for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead” (Rm 4:24)

So, the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ play a very important role in our salvation. As Christians, we maintain that **salvation is only found in the name of Jesus Christ because only He can save us from our sins.**

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” (Ac 4:12)

#8 Baptism

2. Union with Christ's Death, Burial, and Resurrection

To believe in Jesus means that we accept everything He did, His incarnation, death, and resurrection, as truth and receive Him as our Savior and Lord.

These three factors are to be clearly shown in baptism. That's what the full immersion in water represents.

“Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **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. **For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.**”

(Rm 6:3-5)

Paul clearly states that being baptized means being united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, which full immersion baptism symbolizes.

#9 Baptism

2. Union with Christ's Death, Burial, and Resurrection

A believer's immersion in water symbolizes the death and burial of Christ. And the believer coming out of the water symbolizes Christ being raised from the dead. So, full immersion baptism is a beautiful picture of what Jesus did on the cross and in the empty grave for our salvation.

Early churches thought of the meaning of water in two ways. The first meaning of water is **a tomb**. Being completely immersed means that our old selves die and are buried with Jesus. And the second meaning of water is **a womb** which gives birth to life. The water also serves as the water of life which gives us a new life in Jesus Christ.

When we're fully immersed in water, we experience death to sin with Jesus. But when we come out of the water, we also experience resurrection with Jesus. In other words, **full immersion baptism represents believers dying to sin with Christ and being reborn in Christ.**

#10 Baptism

2. Union with Christ's Death, Burial, and Resurrection

Through baptism, we show not only our faith in what Jesus did on the cross and in the empty grave but also our determination to be crucified with Him in our sins and live and walk with Him as His people.

Paul beautifully describes this truth by using the metaphor of clothes.

“In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of **you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ**” (Gl 3:26-27)

Baptism can be defined as a ceremony through which Christians officially clothe themselves with Christ. So, baptism gives us a strong identity as Christians.

#11 Baptism

2. Union with Christ's Death, Burial, and Resurrection

But, that's not the end. What we also realize after being clothed with Him through baptism is that there are a lot of other people who wear the same clothes along with the same faith in Christ, which means that we are united with not only Christ but also other Christians through baptism.

So, being baptized is like putting on a new uniform. Just as a common uniform unifies an army, so does baptism. **By being baptized, we join the large, universal group of believers around the world as Christians.**

And an important characteristic of this new community in Christ is that there's no discrimination at all.

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (G1 3:28)

“For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.” (1Co 12:13)

Memory Verses

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” (Ac 4:12) (1)

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism... For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.” (Rm 6:4-5) (2)

“In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Gl 3:26-27) (1)

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gl 3:28) (1)

“We were all baptized by one Spirit so as e were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free ...” (1Co 12:13) (1)

Reflection Questions

- 1) Do you think it is important for Christians to be baptized? Why or why not? What does full immersion baptism symbolize?
- 2) If you have been baptized, what made you decide to be baptized? How did you feel when you were baptized and what changes has it brought about in your life?
- 3) If you have not been baptized, why not? What hesitations do you have about being baptized? What do you think is the necessary condition you need to meet in order to be baptized?