



The Meaning of Baptism (2)

Rom. 6:3-5

#1 The Meaning of Baptism

The Baptist faith and message, which is the statement of faith of the Southern Baptist Convention defines what baptism is.

THE BAPTIST
FAITH &
MESSAGE



“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.”

1) The Immersion of a Believer in Water

There are some different methods of baptism according to different denominations. But the Bible clearly defines baptism as the immersion of believers in water.

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

#2 The Meaning of Baptism

1) The Immersion of a Believer in Water

Full immersion baptism is important not only because it's written in the Bible but also because of its symbolism.

“Or 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)

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

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.

#3 The Meaning of Baptism

1) The Immersion of a Believer in Water

Early churches thought of the meaning of water in two ways.



1) Tomb

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 the water is **a womb** which gives birth to life. So, full immersion baptism represents **believers being reborn and recreated in Christ**.

“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.”



2) Womb

#4 The Meaning of Baptism

2) Baptism: Being Clothed Christ

Baptism is a ceremony through which we officially clothe ourselves with Christ.

“All of you who were **baptized into Christ** have clothed yourselves with Christ.” (Gal 3:27)

Baptism represents **believers' being united with Christ and other Christians** in the church community. So, being baptized is It's like putting on a new uniform—Christ.

Just as a common uniform unifies an army, so does baptism. **Now, we're wearing the same spiritual uniform.** We're enlisted in Christ's army.

So, baptism gives you a **strong identity as Christians**. If you are clothed with Christ, what would you look like? How would other people see you? You will seem like Christ. It means that those around us can find the image of Christ in our lives.

#5 The Meaning of Baptism

3) In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

The Baptist faith and message also stated that baptism must be administered in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist **in the presence of the triune God**—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus also commanded His disciples to baptize people “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19)

This reminds us **how the triune God has worked for our salvation**. **God the Father** predestined and promised our salvation and sent His only Son. **God the Son** came down from heaven to earth as a human and died on the cross to forgive our sins. And Jesus has sent **the Holy Spirit** to strengthen us to believe in Him, follow Him, and grow with Him.

#6 The Meaning of Baptism

4) Baptism: Ordinance or Sacrament?

The Baptist faith and message says, “Christ assigned His church two **ordinances**—baptism and the Lord’s supper. **Ordinance means decree or command.**”

It calls baptism ‘an ordinance’ not ‘a sacrament.’ **An ordinance** can be simply defined as an authoritative command, order, or decree.

Sacrament, however, means “a religious ceremony or ritual regarded as imparting divine grace.” The word sacrament implies that **the act itself conveys grace to the believer.**

we should use the word ‘ordinance’ not ‘sacrament’ for baptism because even though baptism is important in Christian faith, **it itself doesn't have special, spiritual power.**

Baptism doesn’t make anyone Christians. The ritual itself doesn’t have the power to make someone be born again.

God’s grace doesn’t come from any form of rituals but only from Himself.

#7 The Meaning of Baptism

4) Baptism: Ordinance or Sacrament?

So, baptism only serves as **an illustration and remembrance of God's grace** that we've already received from Him.

We're baptized **not to receive God's grace but to remember the grace we've already received in Christ.** So, baptism is **not a means of grace, but rather an affirmation of it.**

That's why **the public statement of faith** is the most important part of baptism. Only those who have already professed their faith in Jesus are qualified to be baptized.

The New Testament never suggests the baptism of anyone **who is not a conscious believer** in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Southern Baptist Convention rejects the baptism of infants who can't consciously profess their faith in Christ.

Baptism is not necessary for salvation. **But baptism demonstrates a believer's obedience.** No true Christian in the New Testament resisted baptism or neglected the opportunity to obey Jesus in this way.

Memory Verses

“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.” (Rm 6:4) (2)

“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 6:5) (1)

“All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” (Gal 3:27) (1)

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19)

Questions

- 1) What are some important meanings of baptism? What does it mean to you personally that you are united with Christ in His death and resurrection? What does it mean for you to put on Christ? How can these truths be applied in your life in practical ways?
- 2) What's the difference between an ordinance and a sacrament? Why should baptism and the Lord's supper be considered ordinances, not sacraments? What do you think of 'infant baptism'? Do you think it should be allowed? Why or why not?