

Understanding Baptism

What is baptism? The word baptize comes from the Greek verb baptizo, meaning to cover or plunge in water, wash, dip, or immerse. It is an outward sign of an inward change. The inward change is that we are new creatures because of our acceptance of salvation through Jesus the Christ. **Read Matthew 28:19-20.** This scripture is known as the Great Commission. These are the instructions given by Jesus before He ascended to heaven.

Why be baptized? Again, baptism is a command from our Savior, Jesus. Not only are we commanded to be baptized; baptism is a testimony that we are publicly identifying or agreeing with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. He set the example for us by being baptized by his cousin, John the Baptist or John the Baptizer. **Read Matthew 3:13-17.** This scripture tells us not did Jesus get baptized, but that God was well pleased with Him. Jesus' baptism was not one of repentance, but it was accomplished before His public ministry. Baptism also unifies Christians. It is a witness to other believers that we are disciples of

the body of Christ. **Read John 17:20-23.** Jesus prayed that His followers would be unified.

What happens during baptism? Water is always present and may be in the form of a natural body of water (like a river or lake), a baptism pool in a church, or even a swimming pool.

The pastor or church elder or minister will ask you a few questions to allow you the opportunity to outwardly profess your faith. You may be asked to profess your confidence that you are saved, profess that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you will do your best to follow Christ, and profess that the power of the Holy Spirit, you look forward to living forever with Christ.

After professing your faith, the church leader will say, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The leader will then immerse you in the water. Going back to Matthew 28:19, Jesus instructed His followers to baptize new disciples in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In scripture, to do something in the name of a particular person means that the act is being done with that person’s

authority. **Read Acts 16:18.** Paul commands the evil spirit to come out of the woman in the name of Jesus Christ. It was by Jesus' authority that Paul was able to command the evil spirit out of the woman. Baptism done in the name of all 3 Godheads acknowledges that the baptism is done under the authority of the Triune God.

What is believer's baptism? This refers to the practice of baptizing only those who have a personal faith in Jesus. The emphasis is on faith as a human response to God's grace, a believer who trusts in God, the obedience and faith of a believer, and a believer's witness to the world. **Read Acts 2:5-41.** This is the account of Peter preaching after being filled with the Holy Spirit. Three thousand new believers accepted Christ and were baptized.

What does baptism by immersion symbolize? Immersion (going down into the water) means we identify with Christ's death. Submersion (being completely under the water) means we identify with Christ's burial. Emersion (emerging or coming up out of the

water) means we identify with Christ's resurrection from the dead.

Read Romans 6:3-4.

Baptism doesn't save us nor does it make us perfect. **Read Luke 23:43.**

Baptism is one of the first steps in a Christian's life. In the New Testament, new followers were baptized sometimes immediately.

Do you believe that Jesus died for you and rose from the dead?

Have you confessed your sins to God and asked for forgiveness?

Have you expressed to God a desire to follow him for the rest of your life?

Do you wish to join the body of Christ and help care for Christians around the world, as well as those in your local church?

Do you want to publicly say that you belong to Christ?