



Understanding Water Baptism

The word baptize is from the Greek verb *baptidzo* which means “to immerse.” The process of baptism consists of immersion, submersion and emergence. This process is used to describe John’s baptism and Christian baptism. Simply stated, to baptize is to totally immerse an object in another substance and then bring it out again.

Many denominational wars over the years concerning water baptism could have been avoided if we had just translated the Greek word for baptize properly—to immerse. When a person is baptized in water, his or her body is totally immersed in the water and brought out again.

The awesome significance of water baptism is that it symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and our identification with Him in them. The Scriptures refer to Jesus as being the last Adam ([1 Corinthians 15:21-22](#), 45). Jesus, in His sacrifice for us, represented us. When a person receives Jesus as Lord, he identifies fully with what happened to Jesus ([Romans 6:4-6](#)). Water baptism is a physical act that should indelibly mark the mind of the person being baptized with the reality of his union with Jesus Christ.

Water baptism also gives the believer the opportunity to openly testify to others of his born-again experience. It serves as an outward sign and testimony of an inward grace. The believer has been crucified with Christ, buried with Him and raised together with Him to walk in newness of life ([Galatians 2:20](#); [Romans 6:4](#)).

Jesus said in [Matthew 28:19](#), “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” We believe it is scriptural to baptize in the Name of each of the Trinity.

Someone might ask the questions, “What was the purpose for John’s baptism?” John’s baptism served the purpose of revealing to Israel the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world ([John 1:29-33](#)). When Jesus—the Lamb of God—was baptized, it was to fulfill righteousness because He had committed no sin ([Matthew 3:15-17](#)). Jesus’ baptism also demonstrated and foretold of His own death, burial and resurrection yet to come.

Sometimes, people have confused *water* baptism with the baptism into the Body of Christ (being saved). In [Acts 2](#), when Peter preached about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, he said: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (verse 38). When a person is born again, he is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ. This is not water baptism. Water baptism is *not* the baptism that saves. It is the precious blood that Jesus shed on the cross, *not* water, which cleanses us from sin. (See [Ephesians 1:7](#); [Hebrews 9:22](#); [Revelation 1:5](#).)

A person must be baptized into the Body of Christ (saved) *before* water baptism. For without first making Jesus Lord and believing that God raised Him from the dead, water baptism would have no purpose. Water baptism is an experience after salvation to confirm and strengthen your commitment to live a godly life.



The baptismal waters represent a burial ground. When you're buried with Christ in baptism, you are proclaiming to heaven, earth and hell that the old you no longer exists. To be buried with Jesus means that your old self died to sin just as Jesus did when He was made sin for us ([Romans 6:3](#), 6, 10-12). That's why we are immersed. It's a picture of burial.

Coming up out of the water signifies our being raised to new life in Christ. To be raised with Jesus means making Him Lord of every area of your life—spirit, soul and body. You've been bought with the blood of Jesus and you belong to Him. Every day you now ask, "Lord, where do You want me to go? What do You want me to say? What do You want me to be? Not my will, but Thy will be done."

[Romans 6:11-13](#) now becomes a very important scripture to us: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

When we, in obedience to our Father's Word, reckon, account and confess that we are dead to sin and alive to God through Jesus, we will experience both progress in our Christian lives and victory on a daily basis. Old habits and the relics of sin from our former lives will fall to the ground. Our minds will experience renewal and we will be living expressions of Jesus Christ in this earth.

Water baptism should be a very significant time in your life as a believer. It's a time to fully commit to obey and follow Jesus, being willing to fulfill the purpose and plan of Almighty God for your life. This is not something just for super-Christians. It's basic Christianity—part of the solid foundation you need to build upon.

So if you feel you've never *properly* buried your old, sinful nature and dedicated your whole self to the Lord, don't wait any longer—find a place to participate in water baptism and get totally free!