

# baptism



**cornerstone**  
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## WHAT CORNERSTONE BELIEVES ABOUT BAPTISM?

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are referred to as 'sacraments', because they convey grace to people (sacrament-an outward sign of an inward grace). These two ceremonies are also referred to as 'ordinances' because they were 'ordained' by Christ. For purposes pertaining to this document, we will be looking at the sacrament of Baptism.

Getting baptised in water is the first sign of obedience for a person who has committed their life to Christ. Here is why: Jesus and the early church leaders commanded that all believers must be baptised in water as a form of initiation into the adventure of following Christ. See Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:37-38, Acts 10:48. It must also be stated that Baptism is not necessary for salvation, but it is necessary if we are to be obedient to Christ, for He commanded all who believe in Him to be baptised.

## THE MODE & MEANING OF BAPTISM

When we look at the practice of Baptism in the New Testament it was carried out in the following way: The person being baptised was immersed, meaning was put completely under water and then being brought up again.

Baptism by immersion is therefore the mode in which Baptism was carried out in the New Testament. The word baptism comes from the Greek word baptizō, meaning to 'plunge, dip, immerse.'

## WHAT BAPTISM SYMBOLIZES...

### Baptism symbolizes union with Christ:

When a person is baptized it symbolises their union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Paul writes in Romans 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 the newness of life."

What baptism symbolizes then is that when a person goes down into the water, it is a picture of going down to the grave and being buried. Coming up out of the water is then a picture of being raised with Christ to walk in newness of life.

*"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."  
(1Pet3:21)*



<sup>[1]</sup> Bible Doctrine: Essential teachings of the Christian Faith, 1999, Wayne Grudem

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*“Baptism thus very clearly pictures death to one’s old way of life and rising to a new kind of life in Christ.”<sup>[1]</sup>*

## **Baptism symbolizes a cleansing:**

- In Acts 22:16 we read, “Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his Name.” Baptism displays the spiritual cleansing from the guilt of sin that we have received as a result of the death of Jesus.

## **The Baptismal waters are like a public press release:**

- Baptism is not a private matter. Jesus instructed us to go public with our choice (Mark8:38). Baptism is how we visibly reflect what has happened on the inside.

## **A few other significances of baptism:**

- Incorporation of the person baptized into God’s family.
- A life-long growth process into Christ-likeness.
- Unites believers to Jesus.

## **GETTING BAPTISED**

### **Who should be baptised?**

The pattern the New Testament reveals in several places makes it clear that only those who give a believable profession of faith should be baptised. This view is often called “believers” baptism.

This leads to the next question. Do we believe in infant baptism? No, we don’t. Nowhere does the New Testament speak of infants being baptised. Baptism in the New Testament is a sign of being born again. An infant cannot make the decision themselves to be born again.

## **What are the ingredients for baptism?**

**First** - Faith in Christ. Baptism is not about personal moral performance, but trust in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. One should not get baptised by coercion or social momentum, without faith in Jesus’ work on the cross.

**Second** - By immersion. As mentioned above baptism comes from the Greek word, baptize. Sprinkling doesn’t justify the original meaning of the word baptism. The amount of water is not as important as a genuine faith which makes baptism spiritually significant.

## **ONE BAPTISM**

In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, “... one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”(Eph4:5) he makes it clear that there is only one baptism. As believers, we all share in one baptism. This baptism reminds us that we are no longer our own. Baptism can only happen once. When a person has been baptised they cannot be baptised again.