

Foundation Study 14: Baptism

Baptism and communion are the two ordinances of the New Testament Church. The Greek term *baptizo* was used to describe the process whereby cloth was dipped into dye to change its color. Eventually, the practice of baptism was used to indicate a person's association with a specific cause, idea, or person. Those baptized by John (the Baptist) identified with their need to repent and change their ways (Mark 1:4). It was preparatory for Christ (Acts 19:4–5).

Christianity borrowed and enhanced the practice. Believers were baptized to indicate their **unity, association, and identity** with Jesus Christ. Baptism is the wedding ring of the Christian faith. It is an outward act symbolizing a unique, one-of-a-kind relationship with Jesus Christ.

There is no special spiritual blessing bestowed upon a believer when baptized. It is not salvific. Believers experience the joy of obeying Christ. Baptism is meant to be done in the presence of others to indicate a willingness to be identified as a follower of Christ. By deduction, baptism also indicates disassociation of any previous belief system or worldview.

To summarize, baptism is the following:

- An act for those who have already placed their faith in Christ (Acts 2:41, 8:12, 8:36, 10:47–48). It is for believers.
- An act of obedience (Matthew 28:19). It is commanded by Christ
- An outward sign of inward regeneration (Galatians 3:27).

Baptism is symbolic of

- our unity, power, new life and resurrection with Christ (Romans 6:1-10),
- our new nature in Christ (Colossians 2:12), and
- our cleansing from sin through the blood of Christ (Hebrews 10:22).