

Water Baptism

As a new Christian, it is very important to take steps that help you identify with Christ in every area of your life. One of the first steps a new Christian should take is to be baptized in water. This is one of the most powerful ways in the New Testament that believers are identified with Christ.

*“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, _____
_____, in the name of Jesus Christ
for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the of
the Holy Spirit.’”* (Acts 2:38)

What Does Baptism Mean?

The word baptism means to immerse, plunge or dip under. In numerous places in the New Testament we have examples of believers being baptized or immersed in water as a symbol of their identity with Christ in dying to sin and being resurrected to new life.

*“Then both Philip and the eunuch went down _____
_____ and Phillip baptized him.”* (Acts 8:38)

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
_____ in the name of the Father and
the Son and the Holy Spirit.”* (Matthew 28:19)

All Christians should be baptized and even Jesus himself was baptized as an example for us to follow (Matthew 3:13-15). To help you see how full of meaning baptism is to the Christian, work through the study below.

Our identity with Christ in his death and resurrection is so important that the scripture gives us at least seven pictures of what baptism represents to us in our relationship to Jesus Christ. See which ones you identify with the most.

1. Water Baptism Is a Memorial

We Are:

A. Crucified with Christ

*“I have been _____ with Christ and _____ no longer live, but
_____ lives in me. The life that I now live in the body I live _____
_____ in the Son of God, who gave himself up for me.”*
Galatians 2:20

*This study was written by Eric Stovesand
Pastor, Church on the Mountain
384 South Landing Drive
HCR 79 Box 71
Crowley Lake, CA 93546
eric@churchonthemountain.org
760-935-4272*

We are baptized into Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Once we've recognized that we have a sin nature and we turn and give our life to Christ, we are identifying now with His life, no longer our old life that is bent towards sin. Through baptism we are committing to memory that we have been crucified (dying to our old nature) with Christ.

B. Buried with him in baptism

“Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death. We were therefore _____ through baptism _____ in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”
(Romans 6:3-4)

C. Raised with him in newness of life

“If we have been united with Him like this in his _____ we will certainly also be united with him in his _____.”
(Romans 6:5)

2. Baptism Is a Ceremonial

Baptism is the outward act that signifies an inward reality. What a wedding is to a marriage, so is baptism to a saving relationship to Christ. Marriage is the life-long relationship of two people. The wedding is the outward ceremony that celebrates that relationship and binds it together with promises of covenant faithfulness and commitment. Marriage is the relational bond, the wedding is the ceremony. In baptism, we celebrate through a ceremony of immersion in water, the inward relational bond that we have with Christ.

“For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage....So, my brothers, _____ to the law, through the body of Christ, that you _____, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.”
(Romans 7:2,4)

Memory Verse

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-- for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Acts 2:38-39

3. Baptism Represents Being Clothed in Christ

*"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have _____ with Christ."
(Galatians 3:26,27)*

Baptism states that we are totally involved with Jesus. We are so involved in him that it is as if we are clothed with Christ. Baptism isn't an entrance requirement for denominational acceptance or some initiation rite to a new club. It is the mark of belonging to Jesus, an outward witness to the world that we have decided to follow him and identify so completely with his life that we are covered over, wear and are clothed with the Spirit of Jesus.

4. Baptism Represents Being Freed from Sin

The Old Testament gives us a many symbols and pictures of things that become a literal reality for those of us who now trust in Christ. There are two pictures in the Old Testament that have to do with baptism and both represent a deliverance and freedom from bondage to sin. The first picture is of Noah and the Ark as he and his family were delivered from a corrupt world into a new life through an experience of cleansing with water.

*"For Christ _____ once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were _____, and this water _____ that now saves you also."
1 Peter 3:18-21*

Also, when Israel passed through the Red Sea on their way to the promised land, they went through an experience where they passed through water as a symbol of cleansing and freedom from their past bondage to slavery.

*"For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the [Red] sea. They were all _____ into Moses in the cloud and in the sea Now these things occurred as _____."
(1 Corinthians 10:1,2,6)*

Much like those of Old Testament times, for us baptism is a visible picture of the washing away of our past life of slavery to sin and ushering us into a new world, a new land of abundance. Baptism is the outward sign of the inward reality of freedom from sin.

5. Baptism Is a Covenant Sign

A covenant is an agreement or contract between parties. Just as in the Old Testament, where relationship with God was called a covenant, and the sign or mark that signified this covenant was circumcision (which comes from the time of Abraham), so the sign or mark of entering into a relationship with Christ for salvation is circumcision of the heart. By the work of the Holy Spirit, there is a “cutting away” of our old nature so that it is no longer dominant in our lives. The potency of God’s life giving Spirit is no longer covered over or hindered by our carnal, sinful, fleshy nature. Water baptism is a demonstration and sign of this new covenant.

“In him you were also _____, in the _____, _____, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been _____ in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”
(Colossians 2:11,12)

6. Baptism Is a Cleansing of Our Conscience

“...and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a _____.”
(1 Peter 3:21)

7. Baptism Is an Act of Obedience

Jesus made it clear that baptism should accompany belief and he underwent baptism himself. The Bible makes clear that faith without works is dead (James 2:17). In other words, belief without obedience or action is useless. Baptism is our first opportunity to obey God and act on our faith.

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, _____ in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.....’”
(Matthew 28:18,19)

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ Jesus replied, ‘Let it be so now; it is _____ to do this to _____.’”
(Matthew 3:13-15)

Which of the seven pictures of baptism do you understand and identify with the most?

Why?

A Reference Point

In the future you can look back to your own water baptism as the moment when you publicly declared your faith in Christ. This reference point will always remind you that you began your Christian life in obedience with a ceremony that identified you clearly with Jesus Christ, His death, His new life, a clean conscience that is free from sin, clothed with his grace and marked with the sign of relationship with God.

When Should You Be Baptized in Water?

After you repent.....turn away from sin and follow Jesus.

After you believe.....completely trust in Christ’s death and resurrection in your place for salvation.

Who Should Baptize You?

According to scripture, any genuine believer can baptize you in water. A small group leader, a mature Christian or your pastor would be best. If you have accepted Christ and have truly turned to him, now is the time to imitate Christ’s example and follow him in water baptism. Talk to the person who gave you this study, a small group leader or your pastor and ask him to help you arrange to be water baptized.