

# Understanding Water Immersion (Baptism)

## What does the word ‘Baptism’ mean?

1. *To dip repeatedly or to immerse or submerge.*
2. *Also refers to a Jewish custom - a ceremony in which they were cleansed.*

## Baptism in the New Testament

1. *Baptistes - This Greek word refers to a person who baptizes. Also used to refer to the baptizer (John the Baptist & Baptists in general).*
2. *Baptismos – This Greek word refers to a washing, or purification with water. It can also refer to a manner of washing prescribed by Hebrew law (Hebrews 9:10) – contrasting it with Christian baptism.*
3. *Baptisma – This Greek word refers to true Christian baptism and the baptism that John preached about. This is the rite of immersion as commanded by Christ and identifies the believer publicly with the fellowship of Christ and the church.*

*This word is used:*

- *13 times in reference to John’s baptism.*
- *5 times in reference to Jesus’ baptism.*
- *4 times in reference to Christian baptism.*

## Jesus’ Baptism:

1. *Authenticated the ministry of John the Baptist.*

### **John 1:9**

**[9] In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.**

2. *Set an example for His followers. The baptisms that John performed symbolized repentance – yet Jesus was without sin. He tells John that “**it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness**” (Matt. 3:15). Jesus was identifying himself with the sinners he had come to save and whose sins he would bear.*
3. *Publicly dedicated Himself for His ministry. Jesus’ baptism was very public and recorded for all coming generations. It announced his public role as the Messiah with a testimony directly from Heaven.*

### **John 1:10-11**

**[10]And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. [11]And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."**

**Christian Baptism is a symbol of:**

*1. The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

**1 Corinthians 15:3-4**

**[3]]For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.**

*2. That which He did for our salvation.*

**1 Corinthians 15:1-2**

**[1]Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. [2]By this gospel you are saved.**

**In submitting to baptism, we testify to the:**

*1. Death to the old self.*

**Romans 6:1-2**

**[1]What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? [2]By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?**

*2. Burial & resurrection of the old self and our desire to walk in newness of life.*

**Romans 6:4**

**[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 newness of life.**

*3. Implies faith in the coming resurrection from the dead.*

**Romans 6:5**

**[5] For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.**

**Significance of baptism in the N.T.**

*The meaning of baptism is seen in its symbolism of that which Christ taught by example.*

*1. Immersion – as the body is lowered into the water, it symbolizes the physical death of the believer – identifying with the physical death of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*2. Submersion - as the body is completely submerged in the water, the believer identifies with the burial of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

3. *Emergence – being raised from the water, the believer is raised to walk in newness of life and has publicly proclaimed his desire to be identified with Christ in this life. Also the believer has the hope of the resurrection, based on the resurrection of the Lord.*

### **Correct form of believer's baptism:**

*The Scriptures are very clear that full immersion is the correct method of baptism.*

*Acts 8:39 describes the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by Phillip.*

### **Acts 8:39:**

**[39]And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away.**

1. *They had to “come up out” of the water.*

*Matthew 3:16 describes the same action when Jesus was baptized.*

### **Matthew 3:16:**

**[16]And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water.**

1. *Jesus also “went up” from the water.*

*John 3:23 gives us an idea of the quantity of water needed for proper baptism.*

### **John 3:23**

**[23]John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized.**

1. *Notice it mentions ‘plentiful water’.*

*Notice that none of these examples use the ‘sprinkling’ of water to accomplish baptism. It is always done by complete immersion, when the believer has decided of his own free will to identify with Christ.*

### **Does baptism save?**

*Again the Scriptures are very clear that we come to salvation through faith in Christ and by accepting his redemptive work on the cross – there is no other way!*

*Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us of how we are saved.*

### **Ephesians 2:8-9**

**[8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9]not a result of works, so that no one may boast**

### **Reflection:**

Total immersion baptism is an act of obedience on the part of the believer to publicly identify oneself with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ!