

BAPTISM

a GUIDE for the CHURCH

What is baptism?

Baptism is an ordinance of the church. Moments before Jesus ascended to His Father in Matthew 28, He commanded that all who follow Him be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We call baptism an *ordinance* of the church because Christ *ordained* that it be performed.

The Scripture is clear that this ordinance, or command, involves the immersion of believers in water.¹ The English word “baptize” is a transliteration of the Greek work “*baptizo*,” which literally means to *immerse*. Therefore, we do not practice sprinkling or pouring, but practice the biblical mode of immersion in water. Furthermore, the New Testament pattern and symbolism indicates that baptism is reserved for those who have placed their faith in Christ. Therefore, we do not baptize infants but only those who have made a credible profession of faith in Christ.

The Scripture is also clear that this ordinance, or command, is an act of obedience, symbolizing the believer’s faith in Christ, death to sin, and new life in Christ.² Baptism is not necessary for salvation but is essential for obedience to Christ’s command. Furthermore, baptism is a symbol or picture of the gospel. Romans 6 demonstrates that immersion in water depicts Christ’s death and burial and that being raised out of the water depicts Christ’s resurrection from the dead.

Therefore, all who place their faith in Christ ought to publicly declare their new life in Christ through the act of baptism. In doing so, they are declaring themselves to be a member of the church and thus are committing themselves to the local church. Furthermore, in doing so, they are declaring their resolve to follow Christ all the days of their life and are inviting the accountability and encouragement of their local church.

¹ Adapted from Article VII of *The Baptist Faith and Message, 2000*

² Adapted from Article VII of *the Baptist Faith and Message, 2000*



*Following Jesus,
Becoming like Him together*