

# Raised to New Life | The Meaning of Baptism

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Faith is a deeply personal commitment, but people can't see when you put your trust in Jesus as your savior. You have to tell them. God has given us the ordinance of baptism to let people know that we are followers of Jesus. As a result, it's important that we understand the powerful symbolism and meaning behind baptism. Some of the clearest teaching on baptism is found in [Romans 6](#).

**Romans 6:3-4** *Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.*

This passage teaches us several truths about baptism:

## Baptism Is Practiced by Christians Everywhere

From the earliest days of Christianity, Christians practiced baptism. In [Romans 6](#), the apostle Paul is writing to Christians that he has never met before who live in a different part of the Roman Empire. Yet, Paul knows that they have been baptized, because this is an important step for all Christians. Jesus was baptized ([Matthew 3:13-17](#)) and he commanded all of his followers to get baptized ([Matthew 28:18-20](#)). When a person is baptized they are taking part in a rite that has been practiced by Christians since the time of Jesus.

*[Related: [Common Baptism Questions](#)]*

## Baptism Signifies Our Death and Resurrection With Jesus

Have you ever wondered why God chose baptism as one of the two ordinances (along with communion) that he wants Christians to follow? [Romans 6:3-4](#) explains that baptism is important because it is symbolic of dying and rising with Christ. Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the grave. The Bible teaches that in some sense, Jesus's death and resurrection is your death and resurrection too. [Romans 6:3-4](#) describes the whole conversion experience in three parts.

First, when Jesus died on the cross he paid the penalty for your sins. Even though you hadn't been born yet, Jesus secured your salvation. Second, when you trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, the work of Jesus in salvation is applied to you. In that moment, you receive the benefits of Jesus's death and resurrection. Third, when you are baptized, you are making a public declaration about your faith in Jesus. This symbolic act shows that you are united with Jesus. Baptism means to dip or immerse. Therefore, immersion is the best way to symbolize this union with the death and resurrection of Jesus.

*[Related: [5 Facts About Water Baptism](#)]*

*[Related: [Baptism for Kids and Parents](#)]*

## Baptism Symbolizes, Not Saves

Over the centuries some churches and religions have taught that you need to be baptized in order to be saved. Some have argued that baptism is an important step in a series of steps that contributes to salvation. Others have said that in the moment of your baptism all of your sins are forgiven. However, the Bible teaches something different.

[Romans 5:1](#) and [Ephesians 2:8](#) make it clear that salvation is a gift from God that you receive through faith and not by your works, such as baptism. Just like a wedding ring, baptism is symbolic of a commitment that you have already made. Putting a ring on your finger doesn't make you married, and getting baptized doesn't save you. Rather, these are pictures of personal commitments.

Since baptism reflects a personal commitment to follow Jesus, baptism should only be done by those who are able to make a true pledge to trust in Jesus. The Bible doesn't give an age when someone is eligible for baptism. However, we must make sure that a person is getting baptized because of their faith in Jesus and desire to follow him. If a person is getting baptized to contribute to their salvation or because they are being forced by family or church, or just because other people are doing it, then they shouldn't be baptized.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. *Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.*
2. *Why do you think God commanded his people to carry out symbolic acts like baptism and communion?*
3. *What were you taught was the meaning or importance of baptism when you were a child? How is this different than what was described here?*
4. *Read [Matthew 3:13-17](#). Why is it significant that Jesus got baptized? For more on Jesus's baptism check out: [The Baptism of Jesus](#).*
5. *Read [Matthew 28:18-20](#). What are the implications of Jesus's command for his followers to get baptized?*
6. *Read [Romans 6:3-4](#). How is baptism symbolic of a person's union with Jesus? Why is baptism by immersion in water the best way to symbolize union with Jesus?*
7. *If you have been baptized, how was your baptism a turning point in your relationship with God?*
8. *Read [Romans 5:1](#) and [Ephesians 2:8](#). What do these passages teach us about the nature of salvation? What is the implication for the role of baptism in our lives?*
9. *When do you think a person is ready to get baptized? Support your answer using the passages above.*
10. *Why are some Christians hesitant to get baptized? How would you encourage a Christian who is reluctant to get baptized to go through with it?*
11. *Write a personal action step based on this conversation.*