

the meaning of baptism

Ken Sanner, *November 14, 2004*

(All Scripture passages from the NIV unless otherwise noted.)

Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19).

He led by example: John 3:22: Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing.

Baptize is from a Greek term. *Baptizo* means to "dunk," "dip," "plunge," "submerge," or "immerse."

Baptism is about publicly identifying with Christ. It is an act of obedience. Baptism is an outward expression of an inward decision to align oneself with Christ and what He lived and died for.

Baptism is a picture of cleansing and resurrection and allegiance. The visual picture of baptism represents:

1. cleansing from the sin of the old life;
2. dying to the old life and being born to a new life; and
3. a sign of commitment or allegiance to a new Master.

This visual picture of an inward decision is best summed up in the words—I am not ashamed. Baptism is the believer's declaration to the world that Christ is the standard by which he/she intends to live.

Romans 6:4: Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

As we go into the water, believers say, in effect, "I am identified with Him in His death and burial."

As we come up out of the water, believers say, in effect, "I am identified with Christ in His resurrection and victory over sin and death."

By the sin of Adam, we are corrupted, so from birth we are inclined to sin. New life and a right relationship with God are possible only through the redemptive acts of Christ Jesus. In obedience to the command of Christ, we come to make public confession that our sins have been washed away, and by means of baptism with water, to signify that inward washing and new life in Christ are now ours by faith. We are further moved to experience the constant washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

When we are baptized we commit to the following:

1. We believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.
2. We have the assurance that our sins are forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ.
3. We accept the Old and New Testaments as the authority for our lives.
4. We will live in obedience to Christ.
5. We will, by this act of baptism, testify to the world that we are Christians.