



## Baptism at Watermark

### What is Baptism?

*Baptism* comes from the Greek word *baptizō* (“to plunge, dip, immerse”), which is used 75+ times in the New Testament. We first see baptism in the New Testament when John the Baptist was immersing people in the Jordan River. Going under the water symbolized the public acknowledgment that the person was a sinner and desired to repent from those sins (see Matthew 3:1-12).

### Why Do We Still Baptize People Today?

For at least two reasons:

- 1. Jesus’ Example.** Although He had no need to repent from sins, Jesus was baptized as a sign of fulfilling all righteousness, identifying with the Father, and submitting to the Father’s will (**Matthew 3:13-17**)
- 2. Jesus’ Command.** In the Great Commission, Jesus made it clear that baptism is a part of the process of making disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (**Matthew 28:19-20**)

### Why Does God Command It?

Baptism is a concrete way for believers to demonstrate their obedience to Jesus’ command to profess faith in Him publicly. As a person is immersed in the water, he or she is proclaiming: “I believe in Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection; and I am trusting in Him alone for my salvation” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Acts 4:12). Baptism is also a proclamation and illustration of the gospel truths to non-believers and an invitation to them to come to faith in Christ.

- **“Identification” with Christ (a visible symbol of our identification with Christ — Romans 6:1-14)**
  - ✓ We identify with Christ’s death and burial when we go under the water. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, our coming out of the water symbolizes that we now walk in a “newness” of life. (Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:17)
  - ✓ We are not PERFECT! But when we trust in Christ for our salvation, we are no longer *enslaved* to sin, and we have the power through Christ to defeat what our flesh desires to do. “Dead to sin and alive to God” (Romans 6:5-11).
- **“Public Profession” as a Believer in Christ (outward expression of an inner spiritual change — Matthew 10:32)**
  - ✓ We believe that baptism happens **after** conversion and is not a **means** of salvation. You are not saved by being baptized. You are baptized to show that you have been saved.
  - ✓ Otherwise, Paul would not write in 1 Corinthians 1:17: “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”
- **“Obedience” as a Believer in Christ (Matthew 28:19-20)**
  - ✓ Baptism is more properly called an “ordinance.” We participate in the ordinance of baptism because it was ordained and commanded (“ordered”) by the Lord Jesus Christ as a symbolic demonstration of our faith in Him.
  - ✓ Even though baptism does not save, **it is not optional**. The Bible commands believers to be baptized (Matthew 28:19-20).



## Can Baptism Save Me?

NO! There is no causal link between baptism and salvation.

- There are only a couple of passages that mention baptism and salvation together. There are about 200 passages that speak of salvation with no mention of baptism.
- Baptism is not “essential” for salvation, but it is an **important first step of obedience**.

## Is Baptism a Sacrament?

Baptism does not impart grace to the participants, but rather it is a public proclamation that the participants have already received grace by placing their faith in Jesus. While baptism does not impart any special blessing, holiness, forgiveness, or salvation to participants, it is an ordinance commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ. Even though baptism does not save, **it is not optional**. The Bible commands believers to be baptized in Matthew 28:19.

## How Does Watermark Baptize?

We choose to follow Christ’s example by using full submersion.

## When Does Watermark Baptize?

Because baptism is a public acknowledgement of faith in Jesus Christ, it logically follows that the only valid candidates for baptism are those who have trusted in Him for salvation.

- **Infant Baptism.** Infant baptism is not explicitly referenced anywhere in Scripture. We will dedicate and pray for our babies, but will only baptize those believers who can articulate their faith and declare that their life has been changed.
- **May Baptism Service.** We typically hold a churchwide baptism service in May of each year, but baptisms occur at Watermark throughout the year.

## Questions to Determine Whether You Are Ready to be Baptized?

Can you answer “yes” to the following questions?

- Do you believe that you are a sinner separated from God? (Romans 3:23)
- Do you believe that your sins deserve punishment and that the punishment for your sin is death? (Romans 6:23)
- Do you believe that there is nothing you can do to earn salvation? (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- Do you believe that God loved you so much that He sent his Son to the cross for you and there took your punishment? (John 3:16; Romans 5:8)
- Have you put your trust in Christ? (Romans 10:9-10)
- With all your heart, do you intend to walk with Christ all of your life? (Colossians 1:10)

## What’s Next?

- Get baptized! The ABC’s: **A**udible, **B**rief (2-3 minutes), **C**hrist-centered
- Pursue membership in a church where you can grow. (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- Remember that sanctification is a process. (Philippians 2:12)