

## Scripture on Baptism

Water baptism is an ancient & *symbolic* act through which believers publicly acknowledge their need for God's forgiveness.

The people of Israel evidently began practicing baptism during the period between the end of the Old Testament and the birth of Christ. When non-Jewish people came to believe in God and wanted to become members of Israel, they were required to undergo an immersion baptism. This baptism was a *symbolic* washing, through which they agreed about their need for God's cleansing & forgiveness of their sins.

By the time of Jesus, many Jewish people believed they were accepted by God simply because they were descendants of Abraham. This is what made John the Baptist's message so revolutionary. He instructed his people that they needed God's forgiveness just as much as non-Jewish people needed it, so he challenged them to admit this need by being baptized (Matthew 3:1–12). As a prophesied precursor, John proclaimed that the Messiah who was coming would be the One who would provide that cleansing.

Jesus' disciples baptized His followers (John 4:1,2) and Jesus called on all Christians to baptize those who want to follow Christ (Matthew 28:19). Throughout the book of Acts, the early Christians followed Jesus' instructions. In Scripture the pattern remained the same: first, people put their faith in Jesus as their Savior—and then they were baptized to publicly commit before the community of believers (see Acts 2:41; 8:12, 36–38; 9:18; 10:44–48; 16:14–15, 30–34; 18:8; 19:4,5). There is not one single biblical example of baptism before conversion. The New Testament order was always “believe and be baptized” (Acts 2:38–41).

Therefore, baptism is not what causes anyone to become a Christian—it is a response after becoming a Christian. It is not something you do to earn God's acceptance—it is something you do because you have **received the free gift** of God's acceptance through faith in Christ. We become Christians when we **admit our sin and trust Christ as our Forgiver**. Baptism is a *symbolic* act—the water cannot wash away sin. Baptism is merely an “object lesson” of how our sins were washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:18–19).

The idea of infant baptism may be commendable as people strive to dedicate their child to God. However, infant baptism is not a religious rite found in the Bible and at times leads people to equate salvation with baptism.



Therefore, we baptize people who have never been baptized for the reasons outlined in the Bible (as a sign & symbol of their personal commitment to follow Jesus Christ), and in the manner outlined in the Bible. For those who may have been baptized as infants, we are not rejecting previous spiritual or church experiences—just completing them.

## Why Be Baptized?

If you have personally received Christ, you are permanently forgiven and accepted by God... not dependent on baptism. (Romans 8:1; Colossians 2:13,14). However, there are some excellent reasons why you should be baptized.

First of all, Jesus commands us to actively baptize believers (Matthew 28:19). Since He is the Lord, and since His will is always good, this should be reason enough. It is a very important act of obedience to the Forgiver and Leader of your life. Being baptized is also an opportunity for you to spiritually influence others in a positive way. It provides you a way to publicly show your faith before others. Non-believing friends and family members usually attend our baptisms, and they are often deeply impacted by the stories of those being baptized. Christian friends are also built up by this and motivated to continue sharing the message of Christ.

Being baptized is also an opportunity for you to take a step of faith. Getting baptized is, at times, intimidating because it involves taking a stand for your faith in front of the community of believers. It could be stepping outside of your “comfort zone” to do something that shares Christ and serves others. Christ will challenge you to take such steps throughout your life journey, so experiencing baptism can be a celebrated success of displaying your faith!

Simply put, we emphasize baptism because the Bible emphasized it (Matthew 28:18–20).



## Immersion vs. Sprinkling?

The two baptisms that are actually described in the Bible were both by immersion (Jesus—Matthew 3:13–17 and the Ethiopian—Acts 8:36–39). These biblical descriptions imply immersion because when people are baptized *in water*, they are pictured as *going down into* and *coming up out* of the water. In addition, the word baptism comes from the Greek word “baptizo,” which means “to immerse, dip or plunge.” Both archeology and church history testify that immersion was the mode of baptism used in the early church.

The symbolism is best pictured by immersion. It pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6: 3,4). It also pictures our identification with Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection (2 Corinthians 5:17) *The old you has passed away, the new you has been raised.*

*\*If there are special circumstances that prevent immersion, please feel free to discuss this privately with one of our elders or pastors. Ultimately, the amount of water used in a public baptism is not the issue, an obedient heart is.*

“More than simply going public with my faith, getting baptized was a personal moment between Jesus and me. When I said to Him, ‘I’m with you,’ He answered me, ‘No, Nick- I am with YOU.’”

-Nick Tilley

## Still Have Questions

Then contact us at any time and our staff are willing to discuss your concerns and questions at your convenience. This is about following Christ, not man-made rules. Those who have participated in our baptism celebrations say it is one of the most meaningful moments in their life. Without clear understanding of this powerful act of obedience, the meaning is lost. Read the scriptures included here, talk with others in the church about their experience of baptism and pursue the answers diligently. And by all means, let us help in whatever way we can. That’s why we’re here.

## How Do I Register?

If you want to be baptized this year, then go to [thecrossing.church/baptism](http://thecrossing.church/baptism) to register.



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1800 Bowles Ave.  
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Online Campus | [thecrossing.online](http://thecrossing.online)