

Baptism

Water is ordinary, so why do Christians think touching a person's body with water in baptism can do such extraordinary things? What exactly happens in baptism? Why do believers argue about infant baptism or believer's baptism? Let's study scripture to discover what happens in baptism, its relationship to God's covenant, who it's for, and the hope it gives to faithful believers.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- How would you describe the sacrament of baptism to someone who had never heard of it before? How important do you think baptism is in the life of a believer?
- Think back about any baptism ceremonies you've witnessed. How did the spiritual leader or liturgy talk about faith? How did the congregation or witnesses participate? What do these observations tell you about the participants' beliefs regarding baptism?



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [Baptism](#)

READ [Matthew 28:18-20](#), [Colossians 2:9-15](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

- How has the corporate nature of baptism been evident in the ceremonies you've witnessed—whether in a church service, at a hospital, or outside in a natural body of water? Even if you've never witnessed a baptism, why do you think it's important to involve the faith community?
- Baptism is a reminder of God's covenant with us and our place among his covenant people. Why do we need this physical, visual reminder?
- How does baptism give hope to parents whose children have walked away from the Christian faith? How does it give hope to someone who has not been living according to God's will? Identify some other challenging situations in the life of a believer and describe how individuals in those situations can find hope in the sacrament of baptism.
- One major theme in baptism is union with Christ in his death and resurrection. What effect does your baptism have on how you live your faith?

RELATED PASSAGES for further study

[Acts 2:36-39](#), [Acts 16:16-34](#), [Titus 3:3-8](#), [Romans 6:1-14](#)

CONCLUSION

Read and reflect on [Ezekiel 36:25-28](#). Then consider praying the following prayer from [The Worship Sourcebook](#) to remember and give thanks for your baptism.

*Blessed are you, O God, maker and ruler of all things.
Your voice thundered over the waters at creation.
You water the mountains and send springs into the valleys
to refresh and satisfy us and all living things.
Through the waters of the flood you carried those in the ark to safety.
Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery to freedom.
In the wilderness you nourished them with water from the rock,
and you brought them across the river Jordan to the promised land.
By the baptism of his death and resurrection, your Son, Jesus,
has carried us to safety and freedom.
The floods shall not overwhelm us, the deep shall not swallow us up,
for Christ has brought us over to the land of promise.
He sends us to make disciples,
baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Pour out your Holy Spirit,
wash away sin through the cross of Christ,
clothe the baptized with Christ,
and claim your daughters and sons,
No longer Jew or Greek, no longer slave or free, no longer male or female,
but one with all the baptized in Christ Jesus,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen**

*Prayer of Thanksgiving 6.3.4. *The Worship Sourcebook*. (Grand Rapids, MI: The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Faith Alive Christian Resources, and Baker Books, 2004), 273.

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