



**Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. MARK 16:16**

**Every believer** in Jesus Christ should be baptized. Knowing that, there will always be discussions about when, how and the necessity of baptism in order for a Christ follower to enter Heaven. Christian baptism is rooted in the ministry of Jesus – in His death and resurrection. It involves much more than a trite ceremony in front of the Church or even getting wet in one form or another.

Baptism is not to be taken lightly. Nor is it to be left out of the practice of any Christ-honoring Church. It is a gift of God and administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the book of Matthew, we find that the risen Lord, when sending His disciples into the world, commanded them to baptize (Matthew 28:18-20). The universal practice of baptism by the early Church is easily found in the testimony throughout the New Testament. The Church today continues this practice as an act of commitment to the Lord who bestows His grace upon all people.

Baptism is the sign of new life through Jesus Christ. It unites the one baptized with Christ and with His people. The New Testament scriptures and the worship of the Church unfolds the meaning of baptism in various images which express the privilege of being in relationship with Jesus Christ through personal repentance and salvation. These images are often linked with the symbolic uses of water in the Old Testament.

Baptism is participation in Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12); a washing away of sin (1 Corinthians 6:11); a new birth (John 1:5); an enlightenment by Christ (Ephesians 5:14); a re-clothing in Christ (Galatians 3:27); a renewal by the Spirit (Titus 3:5); the experience of salvation from the flood (1 Peter 3:10-21); an exodus from bondage (1 Corinthians 10:1-2); and a freedom giving gift into a new humanity in which barriers of division whether of gender or race or social status are transcended (Galatians 3:27-28; 1 Corinthians 12:14).

Christian baptism enables believers in Jesus to join in the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. It celebrates the personal confession of sin and the conversion of an individual's heart. Baptism highlights the turning away from and forgiveness of sins.

Administered in the example of and obedience to our Lord, baptism is a sign of our common discipleship. Through the confession of sin and the act of baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ and with each other. We are to be one people, called to confess and serve one Lord in each place and in all the world. (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Baptism is both God's gift and our human response to that gift. It looks toward becoming more like Jesus in everyday life (Ephesians 4:13). Personal commitment and growth are all symbolized in the experience of Christian baptism.

**Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19**