

## About baptism

Word baptism derived from a Greek verb meaning:

1. to dip, to immerse, to wash
2. cause to perish

In Old Testament times: ritual bathing

Gentile converts to Judaism were required to be circumcised, undergo a ritual bath and offer a sacrifice

John the Baptist: An event signifying repentance, a turning toward God and anticipation of the Messiah

John's baptism was inadequate, not the baptism we celebrate and observe

With Jesus' baptism, no longer just about water and cleansing of sin – about the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 4:4-5 (p. 1821) → one baptism

“The Sacrament of Baptism holds a deep reservoir of theological meaning, including:

- dying and rising with Jesus Christ;
- pardon, cleansing, and renewal;
- the gift of the Holy Spirit;
- incorporation into the body of Christ;
- and a sign of the realm of God.

The Reformed tradition understands Baptism to be a sign of God's covenant. The water of Baptism is linked with the waters of creation, the flood, and the exodus. Baptism thus connects us with God's creative purpose, cleansing power, and redemptive promise from generation to generation. Like circumcision, a sign of God's gracious covenant with Israel, Baptism is a sign of God's gracious covenant with the Church. In this new covenant of grace God washes us clean and makes us holy and whole.”

*Book of Order W-3.0402*

“[Baptism] makes clear that before we loved and chose God, God loved and chose us. Before we decided to become members of God's family, God “adopted” us to belong to it.”

*Shirley Guthrie Jr.*