



# WATER BAPTISM

You have made a life changing decision to follow Christ, and now you are getting ready to be baptized with water. What is water baptism? What does it mean? Why should you get baptized? Continue reading as we answer these questions.

## **What Is Water Baptism?**

### **Baptism Is a Sign of God's Covenant Made without Hands**

God relates to His people through covenant (a solemn agreement). When God established His covenant with Abraham, there was a sign of covenant given—circumcision. In the New Testament, God established a new covenant with us through Jesus, and baptism is the outward sign of our involvement in this covenant.

"And in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." Colossians 2:11–12

### **Baptism Is Pictured in the Story of Moses, Israel and the Parting of the Red Sea**

When God delivered His people Israel out of bondage in Egypt, they passed miraculously through the parted waters of the Red Sea. They passed out of slavery and into freedom and a new life. The chariots of Egypt were drowned in those same waters. This is a great picture of Christian baptism. When we trust in Christ, we are liberated from our bondage to sin and selfishness and set free to live the new resurrection life of Jesus. When we are baptized, we pass through the waters from slavery into freedom and our old life is destroyed—much like Pharaoh's armies.

"For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." 1 Corinthians 10:1–2

### **Baptism Was the Practice of the Early Church**

When we obey the Lord by following Him in baptism, we're following the pattern of the early

church we find in the book of Acts. Acts is a historical book in the New Testament, which recounts the story of the first followers of Jesus. The following Scriptures are some of the examples found in the New Testament of Christians being baptized: Acts 2:36–38; 2:41; 8:36–38; 10:47–48; 16:30–34.

### **Baptism Is an Act of Discipleship**

We baptize new believers because Jesus Himself was baptized by His cousin John. When we're baptized, it's an act of following Jesus, an act of discipleship. This is what discipleship means—to follow Jesus.

"Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and You come to me?' But Jesus answering said to him, 'Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he permitted Him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'" Matthew 3:13–17

### **Baptism Is a Watery Grave**

Baptism symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, yet baptism is more than symbolic. It's a spiritually significant work of living faith, whereby we bury the "old man" (Romans 6:6). We're included in Jesus' suffering and triumph when we first believe. When we're baptized, we're baptized into Jesus' death and the waters of baptism become for us a watery grave. The person we used to be exists no more! The old "us" has been buried!

"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so

we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin." Romans 6:1-7

### **Baptism Is an Act of Obedience**

We baptize new believers in obedience to Jesus' command.

"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'"

Matthew 28:18-20

We call these verses "The Great Commission." In them, Jesus commands His followers to take the message of the good news about Jesus into the entire world. The command to baptize followers of Jesus is a very important part of this command.

### **Why be Baptized?**

1. Because you want to follow Christ's example. Jesus himself was baptized. He was not a sinner, yet he humbled himself in obedience to identify with us and give us an example to follow.

"At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan." Mark 1:9

2. Because Christ commanded it. Water baptism is an act of faith and obedience to the commands of Christ.

"If you love me, you will obey what I command."  
(John 14:15; James 2:17-18)

"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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

3. Because it shows you are a believer. Baptism declares that you are a follower of Jesus Christ. It is a public confession of your faith in, and commitment to, Jesus Christ. It is the next step after salvation through repentance and faith and is an important foundation for the Christian life (Hebrews 6:1-2).

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved..."  
Mark 16:16

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." Acts 2:38

### **The Meaning of Baptism**

1. Baptism is a visible act with a spiritual meaning. It is a symbol of Christ's burial and resurrection. Our entrance into the water during baptism identifies us with Christ's death on the cross, His burial in the tomb, and His resurrection from the dead.

"...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."  
1 Corinthians 15:3,4

"...having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead."  
Colossians 2:12

2. It is a symbol of your new life as a Christian. We bury the 'old life' and we rise to walk in a 'new life'. Baptism is like a wedding ring – it is the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart, a commitment that has to be followed through and lived out on a daily basis.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"  
2 Corinthians 5:17

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." Romans 6:4

Baptism does not make you a believer; it shows that you already are one! Baptism does not 'save' you; only your faith in Christ does that.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast."  
Ephesians 2:8,9

## How are we to be Baptized

1. As Jesus was baptized – by being immersed in water. The word "baptize" comes from the Greek word baptizo which means "to immerse or dip under water".

"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water." Matthew 3:16

2. Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion under water. The book of Acts shows us that this was the norm for every believer.

(Example) "...then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water...." Acts 8:38,39

## Who should be Baptized?

Every person who has made the decision to believe in Christ. When Paul writes to the believers in Rome, he assumes that all of them have been baptized (Romans 6). The one requirement for baptism is belief in Christ!

"Those who accepted his message were baptized...." Acts 2:41

"But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Acts 8:12

We do not baptize children until they are old enough to understand and believe.

## When are we to be Baptized?

As soon as you have believed! You shouldn't delay. Believers in the New Testament were baptized the same day. As soon as a person decides to believe in Christ, he can and should be baptized.

"Those who accepted his message were baptized...." Acts 2:41

"Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they travelled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him." Acts 8:35-39

## What about being Baptized Twice?

We recommend that you be baptized again if you have not been baptized by immersion since you became a believer. It doesn't devalue a prior experience but simply reflects your desire to be baptized in the same way Jesus was baptized.

## Can a family be Baptized together?

Yes! If each family member fully understands the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time.

## Will I have to say anything?

The pastor will introduce you and will give you an opportunity to tell a bit of your story of how you came to this decision to be baptized. You will be briefly prayed for and then lowered just under the water. You will then leave the water to get changed and watch the others being baptized.

## What to Bring

- Clothes to be baptized in that are NOT see-through when wet. Also, make sure your clothes are primarily solid colors and don't have a lot of patterns. You will need to wear a shirt and pants/shorts.
- Water shoes or flip flops, if you would like to wear them in the baptismal. (Note: The ground will be slippery, so choose shoes with a good grip.)
- Towel to dry off with
- Change of clothes for after the baptism
- Plastic bag for wet clothes
- Hairbrush/comb and hair dryer (if desired)



# WATER BAPTISM APPLICATION

Preferred Title (Circle One): Mr. / Mrs. / Ms. / Rev. / Dr.

DOB: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender (Circle One): M/F

Ethnicity (Circle One): African American / Asian / Caucasian / Hispanic / Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status (Circle One): Married / Divorced / Single / Widowed

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Second Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following:

How long have you been a Christian having accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior? \_\_\_\_\_ Years / Months

Have you ever been baptized by immersion in water before? Yes / No

If Yes, in which church? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you attend Agape Church regularly? Yes / No

If yes, are you interested in becoming a member of Agape Church? Yes / No

In your own words, please state why you desire to be baptized by immersion in water.

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Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## School-aged Children - Parental Permission

I have read the water baptism packet and discussed water baptism with my child \_\_\_\_\_

I consent to his/her decision to undergo water baptism by immersion.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Office Use Only

Application approved / not approved because:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date to be baptized: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Minister's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_