

# Water Baptism

## What is water baptism?

Water baptism is an important step in our journey as followers of Christ. According to the Bible, baptism (*baptizō*) means to immerse, to submerge, to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water. Water baptism is submersion in water.

## Why should I be baptized?

Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19) Throughout the book of Acts, there are numerous accounts of people accepting Jesus Christ, repenting of their sins and being baptized (Acts 8; 16:11-33; 18:8). Furthermore, as recorded in the passage below, Jesus led by example.

### Matthew 3:13-17

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

<sup>15</sup> Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

<sup>16</sup> As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

## Is water baptism necessary for salvation?

No. According to the Bible, salvation is received by faith (trust) in Jesus. It's a work of God's grace alone. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." The Apostle Paul relays that "it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

## What does water baptism symbolize?

Water baptism is a way to symbolically identify in the death (going into the water) and resurrection of Jesus (coming out of the water) – dying to our old life and ways, and rising into our new life in Christ.

### Romans 6:1-11

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup> By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? <sup>3</sup> Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— <sup>7</sup> because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

<sup>8</sup> Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. <sup>10</sup> The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

<sup>11</sup> In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

(Also read Colossians 2:12 and Galatians 3:37-28.)

## **What questions are asked when I am baptized?**

We ask the following questions:

1. Do you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God?
2. Have you accepted Him as your personal Lord and Savior?

In answering “yes” to these questions, you are publicly acknowledging that Jesus is the Son of God and that you have accepted the gift of salvation giving Him lordship (authority and power) in your life.

*If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. (1 John 4:15)*

*He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. (2 Timothy 1:9-11)*

## **What can I expect after I am baptized?**

You can expect the church family to celebrate with you! Prayerfully anticipate a greater sense of the Spirit of God in your life and supernatural understanding of God’s love for you, as He is well pleased with you! (Matthew 3:16-17)

## **If I was baptized or “sprinkled” as an infant, do I need to be baptized again?**

Since we believe water baptism is a public proclamation of our faith in Jesus Christ and identification with His death, burial and resurrection, infant baptism does not align with our doctrine. However, we offer the opportunity for parents to dedicate their infants to the Lord. This includes the church community praying for the child and parents, for wisdom to raise them well and for God’s blessing on their family.

## **When can a child be baptized?**

Children may be baptized when they understand the purpose and value of water baptism, and clearly demonstrate a faith in Jesus.