

BAPTISM

Baptism - Application Form

There has been much confusion around the subject of water baptism throughout the centuries. To this day you will find many varying beliefs and practices amongst our modern denominations and church groups. We do not claim to understand everything about the ancient practice of baptism, but we do know that: it was commanded by Christ, practiced by the early church, and has been a pivotal moment of faith for millions of believers throughout the centuries.

In this brief document we will attempt to answer some of the most common questions about baptism: What is water baptism? Why should I be baptized? When should I be baptized? How should I be baptized? Do I have to be baptized to go to Heaven?

What is water baptism?

The word “baptize” which we see in scripture comes from the greek word “baptizo” which simply means to dip, dunk, or submerge. It is a descriptive word used to denote a particular action and not a religious ceremony as it is commonly thought of today. When the scriptures were being translated from the original language into English, the translators did not know what to do with this word. Should they translate it into English by using the word “dip”? Would this common word convey the deep significance of baptism which was commanded by Christ? They decided to create an English word out of the greek form, and that is where we get the word “baptize”. So baptism is the act of submerging someone in water as a sign of repentance and faith.

Paul speaks of the symbolic nature of Water Baptism and teaches that it signifies identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. *“Did you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 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.”*(Rom 6:3, 4 NIV)

Why should I be baptized?

In the New Testament we find that water Baptism always follows conversion (wherever possible). Jesus himself set an example for us as he is baptized by John the Baptist in John 3:13-17, his disciples and early church converts were immediately baptized upon conversion as well.

When it came time for Jesus to return to His Father, Jesus commanded His disciples to *“Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”* (Matt. 28:19) Water baptism is therefore an important step of obedience and a part of each believer’s public profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said in (Matt. 10:32) *“Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.”* When we are baptized, we are taking a stand, we are making a confession that “I belong to Christ; He is now Lord of my life!” Through obedience in baptism we openly and publicly identify ourselves with Christ.

When should I be baptized?

In the New Testament, baptism was immediately after conversion, or as soon as possible. The Apostle Paul was baptized immediately following his conversion experience in Acts 9:18. In Acts chapter 8, we read the account of Philip and the eunuch. The eunuch, upon confessing that he believed (with all his

heart) that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, was immediately baptized by Philip. At Pathway Church we do not have the facilities to offer baptism each week, so we need to schedule a special event or service to perform baptism for our congregation.

How should I be baptized?

Water Baptism was introduced by John the Baptist as an evidence of the Jew’s repentance (Mark 1:4). Jesus submitted to the baptism of John (Mark 1:9,10) and thus endorsed the ministry, mode and method of baptism that John used. The presence of God the Father and the Holy Spirit also endorsed the ordinance of Water Baptism as practiced by John (Mark 1:10,11). The Jewish tradition holds that full immersion is required for ritual purity and this form of baptism is still used by orthodox Jews to this day.

The scriptural record seems to indicate that John’s baptism of repentance was done through full immersion in water. At Pathway Church we baptize by immersion in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We do not have any record of young children or babies being baptized in the scriptural record. There are a few instances of entire families being baptized (which does not clarify the issue for us). Since we do not have clear instruction on the matter, we have chosen to wait until each child can make a personal profession of their own repentance and faith (minimum age varies – 7-8 years of age).

Do I have to be baptized to go to Heaven?

We do not believe that baptism is necessary for salvation. We do believe that it is the first step of obedience in following Christ and that its significance cannot be understated.

In Acts 16:30-31 the Philippian jailer asked: *“What must I do to be saved?”* The answer given - *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”*

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Rom. 10:13)

“For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8,9)

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

These scriptures support our statement that Water Baptism is not necessary for forgiveness of sins, salvation or entrance to Heaven. This is a blessing secured by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are not baptized to be saved. We are baptized because God has saved us.

What do you need from me?

If you would like to be water baptized we would ask that you fill out this form and drop it off at the welcome table during our Sunday morning gathering OR email the completed form to nathan@pathwaylife.com. You will be contacted by a pastor from the church who will make sure you understand the significance of baptism and set a time and place for your baptism.

Name(s) _____

Street Address _____

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone Number(s) _____