

BAPTISM

I'm thrilled that you're considering baptism! This is an exciting step in your Christian journey.

Below are a few common questions about baptism that people ask me from time to time. I pray you find the answers both encouraging and helpful.

If you have more questions about baptism, contact me (304-346-0431, mfriend@BibleCenterChurch.com). I want to help.

If you're ready to move forward, sign up (BibleCenterChurch.com/register) to schedule your indoor or outdoor (seasonal) baptism! It's our goal to respond to you in less than 24 hours.

Love in Jesus,
Pastor Matt



1. Why is baptism such a big deal?

Because Jesus made it a big deal. In one of His last talks to His followers—after He arose from the grave and before He ascended into heaven—He made baptism a priority.

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

It's one of the first things Christians do after deciding to follow Jesus (Acts 2:41; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 16:13-15).

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house... Then immediately he and all his household were baptized (Acts 16:31-34).

2. What does baptism symbolize?

Just as a wedding ring is an important symbol of marriage, baptism signifies that...

You believe that Jesus died for your sins, was buried, and arose from the dead.

Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead (Colossians 2:12).

Your sins have been forgiven (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

[Jesus] saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).

You want to be publicly identified as part of God's spiritual family.

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body... and we were all given the one Spirit to drink (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

You are trusting in Jesus to save you from judgment, just as Noah and his family trusted in the ark to save them from judgment.

...God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you... (1 Peter 3:20-21).

3. Who should be baptized?

Since baptism symbolizes the beginning of the Christian life, at Bible Center Church we only baptize adults, students, and children who have believed the gospel and prayed to receive Christ into their life. Around the world, this is known as “believer’s baptism.”

The people believed Philip’s message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized (Acts 8:12).

Instead of baptizing small children and infants, we host child dedication services throughout the year where parents dedicate themselves to raise their children in the gospel.

4. Is water baptism necessary for my salvation—to make it into heaven?

No. Water baptism is commanded by Jesus; however, it is not necessary for salvation. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

For 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).

In Luke 23, we read about the thief on the cross who became a Christian shortly before he died on the cross, even though he was not able to be baptized. Jesus assured him, *Today you will be with Me in Paradise.*

Although baptism immediately followed salvation, and while a genuine believer wouldn’t ultimately refuse baptism, no good work—including baptism—saves us (Galatians 5:1-12).

5. How should I be baptized?

At Bible Center, we believe Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection are best pictured when a believer is immersed in water. While we acknowledge that our Christian brothers and sisters around the world (in other traditions) practice baptism in other ways (e.g. sprinkling or pouring) and while we welcome those with differing views into the life of our church, we’ve chosen to practice baptism by immersion (Mark 1:5, 9-10; John 3:23; Romans 6:4).



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