

BETHEL ASSEMBLY OF GOD
Littlestown, Pennsylvania
Request for Water Baptism

Today's Date: _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Is Bethel A/G Your Church Home? _____

Dear Pastor,

This is my Request for Water Baptism. I am at least 12 years of age**, have accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, and desire to be obedient to His commands as the Lord of my life. Further, I have read the information provided to that I may be fully acquainted with the ordinance of Water Baptism.

* * * * *

****For those who are under the age of 12, this form should be signed and submitted by a parent, or legal guardian, and turned in to the Church Office.****

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

If you are between the ages of 12 - 17, please have the Youth Pastor sign your request and if you are under the age of 12, please have the Senior Pastor sign your request.

Senior Pastor / Youth Pastor

Please read the attached article and return this completed request to the Welcome Center. Please keep the "Preparation for Baptism" information sheet and baptismal article for future reference.

Thank you and may God richly reward you for your step of faith!

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PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM

1. The Senior Pastor will meet with everyone being baptized at 9:15 AM before the service) in the Church Office to discuss details of the baptism.
2. You will need to wear shorts and a tee-shirt. (Please do not wear white clothing. Dark clothing works best - black or navy blue.) Time will be given for you to change just prior to the baptism.
3. Please wear underclothing or a bathing suit underneath your clothing. **This is not an option, it is mandatory.**
4. Be sure to bring a large towel and a plastic bag to carry your wet clothing. You can bring a hair dryer if you desire.
5. During the baptismal service, you will be asked to share a personal testimony concerning your salvation experience. Please give prayerful consideration to this opportunity.
6. Please consider inviting your family and friends to witness your testimony.
7. If you have any questions before this time, please feel free to call the Church Office at (717) 359-4675 or send an e-mail to Dianne Dell at diannedell@bethelag.com.
8. Be sure to spend time in prayer for the Lord to meet you powerfully in the waters of baptism!

*“It came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized,
and praying, the heaven was opened!” Luke 3:21*

Please keep this information sheet when returning your application.

*The ordinance is not optional,
but it does give rise to a number of questions.*

Be Baptized

By: G. Raymond Carlson

Baptism is a fundamental issue. To despise the scriptural rite is to despise the command of God. The Bible leaves no option. Jesus himself made no move toward public ministry until He had been baptized.

But the ordinance gives rise to a number of questions.

Is water baptism essential to salvation? If so, what about the thief on the cross? Was he saved without being baptized?

In which way should one be baptized? By sprinkling, pouring, or immersion?

What is the proper formula to be used? Should baptism be done in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit – or simply in the name of Jesus?

When should baptism occur? Immediately after conversion, or should there be a probation period?

All of these are proper questions which deserve our consideration. The Bible gives us the answers.

Is baptism important?

When issuing the Great Commission Jesus commanded, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19-20).

Following Peter’s stirring sermon on the Day of Pentecost, the people cried, “What shall we do?”

Without hesitation Peter replied, “Repent, and be baptized” (Acts 2:38).

The New Testament church began at this point. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).

Cornelius the soldier told Peter, “Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God” (Acts 10:33).

One of those things commanded was water baptism. “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:48).

Yes, baptism is important. From the Day of Pentecost whenever conversions are mentioned, they are without exception connected with baptism. In Samaria “when they believed...they were baptized” (Acts 8:12). The Ethiopian eunuch told Philip, “I believe,” and Philip then baptized him. (See Acts 9:37-39.)

To neglect this plain command of the Lord Jesus Christ is a serious act of disobedience.

Does baptism save?

There are churches that attribute to baptism some prerogatives which belong to God alone: (1) that it has power to work salvation; (2) that its profit is salvation; (3) that its fruit is salvation; and (4) that its end is salvation. This is the teaching of those who believe in baptismal regeneration. If it be correct, then baptism must be Deity personified, taking the place of God.

But the Bible teaches us that salvation is found alone through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism is an act of obedience and speaks of spiritual life begun. As such, it is a step to be taken following salvation, and not preceding it. Baptism is not “putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God” (1 Peter 3:21).

What method is biblical?

The word baptize mean literally “to dip” or “to immerse.” No stretch of the imagination can make it mean less. Significantly there are eight Greek words in the New Testament used to describe the application of liquids. With this wide choice of words meaning “sprinkle”, “pour”, and “immerse,” only the one meaning “immerse” is used for water baptism.

The Bible establishes these important facts regarding baptism:

1. *Water is required.* “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:36).
2. *Much water is needed.* John baptized in Aenon “because there was much water there” (John 3:23). Sprinkling or pouring would not require much water.
3. *Both the candidate and the administrator went down into the water.* “And they went down both into the water” (Acts 8:38).
4. *In baptism we are buried.* “We are buried with him by baptism into death” (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12). To bury anything means to cover it.
5. *The candidate comes up out of the water.* “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water” (Matthew 3:16). “And when they were come up out of the water...” (Acts 8:39).

What formula is correct?

“Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19). Does this contradict Peter’s command in Acts 2:38? There we read, “Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.”

There is no contradiction. This latter verse does not lay down a formula, but rather describes the reason and purpose of baptism, acknowledging Jesus to be Christ and Lord. When Peter and Paul refer to baptizing in the name of Jesus, they are giving the authority for baptism, and not the formula.

We are baptized into fellowship with the name of the Holy Trinity and in the name (by the authority and command) of Jesus Christ. Whatever we do in word or deed is to be done “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17).

What is the significance?

A father and mother were about to be baptized in the water. Their little son, unfamiliar with religious terminology, proudly announced, "Mom and Dad are going to be advertised tonight."

The boy's word choice was wrong, but in a sense it wasn't all that bad. All believers who obey this command of Christ truly advertise their faith.

Water baptism accomplishes three important purposes:

1. *The gospel is proclaimed.* First Corinthians 15:3,4 defines the gospel: "How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Baptism, like the Lord's Supper, shows the Lord's death. The work of Christ on Calvary and His resurrection are portrayed. The cleansing from sin is symbolized. The public sees what you believe.

The Bible clearly states that we are saved by grace through faith. That's the gospel. But faith is active, not passive. (See James 2:18) We express our faith by water baptism and thus proclaim the gospel.

2. *Our experience is pictured.* Baptism portrays conversion. "Old things are passed away...all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Immediately after a person dies, preparations are made for a burial. When we are converted, we die to the old life, and we should make preparation to bury that old life. Baptism portrays our identification with Christ in the spiritual death, burial, and resurrection. (See Romans 6:4,5; Colossians 2:12.)

3. *Our hope is declared.* In baptism we display our belief in the resurrection from the dead. Jesus said, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

Who should be baptized?

The Bible teaches that believers – and believers only – should be baptized. The sinner must first repent and believe. (See Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38.) In every instance the test is individual faith.

What about infant baptism? This takes away the meaning of the ordinance. There must be a personal sense of need, of guilt, before there can be an act of repentance and saving faith. Children, until they come to the age of accountability, are not expected to exercise saving faith. An infant cannot repent, be converted, or believe in Jesus. The Bible never commands infant baptism, and there is no scriptural example of it.

When should baptism occur?

The Ethiopian official was baptized immediately. (See Acts 8:36.) Paul was baptized within hours after conversion. (See Acts 9:7-19.) Cornelius and his household obeyed the Lord the very day that saving faith came. (See Acts 10:47,48.) Lydia and her household were baptized shortly after their conversion. (see Acts 16:33.) The 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost believed and were baptized immediately. (See Acts 2:41.)

Christians have no choice but to obey Christ's command. The idea of an unbaptized believer never occurs in the New Testament. Have you obeyed this important command of our Lord Jesus Christ?

This article, reprinted from the February 26, 1984 edition of the Pentecostal Evangel, stresses both his strong emphasis on sound doctrine and the importance of believers' baptism.