ALL NATIONS
WORSHIP CENTER
*Where Jesus is Lord*

# Baptism

**This resource is for any person wishing to know more about All Nations Worship Center's theological convictions regarding baptism. If you have surrendered your life to Christ and wish to be baptized at All Nations Worship Center or simply desire to learn more about our beliefs, we invite you to attend a baptism class. You can find out more information at allnationsworship.org/baptism.**

# What Is Baptism?

Baptism and Communion (the Lord's Supper) are the two ordinances prescribed by our Lord Jesus Christ as visible symbols of an invisible grace. They are discernible and tangible representations of both the invisible realities of the gospel and the Spirit's application of this gospel to our lives. With both ordinances, believers have an opportunity to "remember" God's goodness and grace, especially as revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

In baptism, as we enter into the waters or watch another do so, we are reminded that Christ was crucified and raised from the dead and through faith in Him, we too have died to the old self in order to live for Christ. All Nations Worship Center's Statement of Faith describes baptism as a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. As an outward symbol, baptism signifies that a person's former way of life has been put to death and depicts a release from the mastery of sin.

**As a symbol, baptism illustrates a number of significant realities:**

- Christ's death and resurrection
- The disciple's union with Christ in His death and resurrection
- The cleansing and washing away of sin
- The new life in which a disciple walks

# What Is Baptism Not?

Baptism is not "necessary for salvation."
Though grace is mysteriously mediated through baptism, it is not saving grace, but rather sanctifying grace. We are more conformed to the image of Christ as we obey Him in the call to be baptized.

Without in any way diminishing the duty and delight of baptism for a believer, we warn against any thinking that suggests that salvation is dependent upon baptism. The gospel is one of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

# Why Should One Be Baptized?

Based on Scripture, we are baptized to:

1 Obey the commands of Christ.
2 Demonstrate that we are disciples of Christ.
3 Follow the example of Christ.

Baptism is not merely a responsibility, but also a privilege. We have the opportunity to demonstrate our trust in and love for our King through obedience in this ordinance. If we think of baptism as a mere burden, we have not properly understood the joy of following Christ in the call to be baptized. We should have a similar response as the Ethiopian eunuch who, when he believed the gospel, proclaimed, "What prevents me from being baptized?"[1]

The desire to be baptized should be motivated by a desire to glorify God in faithful obedience. Any other motivation (to join a particular local church, to please a friend or family member, etc.) should not be the ultimate reason for seeking to be baptized.

**Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)**
Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

**Acts 2:37-41 (NLT)**
Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God.” Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

**Acts 22:16 (NLT)**
What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord.’

# Who Should Be Baptized?

All Nations Worship Center's Statement of Faith states, "(Water) baptism is only intended for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become His disciple."

This means we practice what is called "believer's" or "confessor's" baptism, meaning we only baptize those who believe and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Reading through Acts, we find baptism explicitly related to repentance, receiving the Word, believing and receiving the Holy Spirit. There is no explicit evidence to suggest that nonbelievers were baptized.
*To view All Nations Worship Center's Statement of Faith, see page 12 & 13.*

**Acts 2:41 (NLT)**
Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.
**Acts 8:12 (NLT)**
But now 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.

## Should a Person Be Rebaptized?

For those who were baptized at an earlier age, it's important to understand that we only need to be baptized once. If you trusted in Christ at that time, your baptism is valid. If, however, you experienced sprinkling with or immersion in water before trusting fully in Christ, your experience was not baptism and you do need to be baptized. The question is, "Was I truly trusting in Christ when I was baptized?" Another way to ask it is, "Have I been baptized since I made a decision to surrender my life to Christ and follow Him only?"

As a believer, there will always be seasons of hardship, joy, growth and maturity in your life, yet you do not need to be rebaptized each time you experience these seasons. Instead, praise God for His faithfulness and thank Him for His continued work in your life. However, if you believe that your original experience was prior to truly trusting in Christ as Lord and Savior, you should pursue obedience in this area by being baptized now.

## When Should a Person Be Baptized?

As soon as a person trusts in Christ, he or she should be baptized.
The Scriptures do not speak of a delayed baptism in which a believer refrains from getting baptized. In all the accounts in the Scriptures, baptism is rather immediate. We follow this pattern of somewhat immediate baptism unless there are convincing reasons to delay.

## The Practice of All Nations Worship Center

At All Nations Worship Center, we ask believers who wish to be baptized to temporarily delay for a brief season in order to go through baptismal preparation and await a scheduled baptismal celebration. We do this for several reasons.

First, this practice allows us to discuss the gospel and the meaning of baptism and to teach our theological convictions regarding both.

Second, it allows the church the opportunity to celebrate together as a congregation, sharing in the joy of a person's obedience and agreeing to walk with him or her in the fellowship of believers.

Finally, it allows the person being baptized to invite family and friends who will have an opportunity to celebrate and hear the proclamation of the gospel.

# Improper Motivations for Delayed Baptism

1 **Not Being Good Enough** There will never be a time where a person will be "good enough" for baptism. Our right to enter the baptismal waters is grounded upon Christ's righteousness, not our own. If we have been united to Him through faith and believe His death and resurrection counted for us and purchased us a place in heaven, we should confidently draw near in obedience to His command and example of baptism.

2 **Fear** The enemy often uses fear and anxiety in our life to delay obedience to the Lord and stop us from entering into a wonderful next step of faith. God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.[2] If you are fearful of getting baptized, we encourage you to talk with your campus pastor, disciple group leader or a staff member.

3 **Wanting a Specific Time and Place** Sometimes people want to delay baptism so they can be baptized during a "special" time of the year or at a "special" place like the beach or a specific body of water. We encourage you not to pass up an opportunity to be baptized, but to trust that God has called you to be obedient in the here and now.

**Acts 22:16 (NLT)**

What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord.’

## Where Should a Person Be Baptized?

Although there are no prescriptions in the Scriptures to location, we prefer to practice the ordinance within the context of the local church in order to allow the congregation to celebrate together in a person's act of obedience and submission (by context, we do not simply mean in a church building, but through the ministry of a local church).

That said, we do not want to prescribe what the Scriptures do not and thus we do allow for baptism to occur outside the weekly gathering. Our preference in such cases is that video and/or pictures be taken to record the event so that the church can share in the joy.

## How Should a Person Be Baptized?

Though other denominations and theological traditions baptize by pouring or sprinkling, All Nations Worship Center practices baptism by immersion. We do so in light of the following considerations.

**1. The Greek Word βαπτίζω (baptizō) Literally Means to Submerge or Immerse.** Our English word baptism is a transliteration of the Greek baptizō. Baptizō was used in Greek literature to describe the act of immersing something in water or another liquid. It later became a technical term that referred specifically to the Christian ordinance of baptism.

**2. The Representation of Union in Christ's Death and Resurrection Is Best Expressed Through Immersion** Whether buried below or above ground, the symbolism of burial is still that of being placed under something. Likewise, resurrection is accomplished by coming out of something (whether grave or tomb). Immersion best symbolizes this reality by actually placing the believer under the water and bringing them out.

**Colossians 2:12 (NLT)**
For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

**Romans 6:3-4 (NLT)**
Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

**3. The Surrounding Context of Baptisms in the Scriptures Suggests Baptism by Immersion**

**Matthew 3:16 (NLT)**
After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him.

**Mark 1:5, 10 (NLT)**
People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. … As Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens splitting apart and the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove.

**Acts 8:38-39 (NLT)**
He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing.

# Baptism at All Nations Worship Center

## Prior to the Baptism

1. We ask those wishing to be baptized to participate in a baptism class in which we explain the gospel, core Christian beliefs (articulated in our Statement of Faith found on page 12 & 13) and our theology of baptism.
2. Following the Baptism Class, you will receive a link where you can send us a copy of your testimony story. You will not have to share your testimony live in front of people.

# Baptism Services

We have typically schedule baptism opportunities in the summer in which the church celebrates baptisms together. We encourage those wishing to be baptized to do so within the context of these gatherings.
During your baptism, you will be asked 2 questions:
**Adults:**

1. "Do you renounce the sins of your past, the ways of this world, anything dark or demonic that you've been connected to and pledge your allegiance to Jesus Christ?"
2. "Who is Jesus Christ?" You reply with "Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior."

**Kids:**

1. "Do you reject this world and claim Jesus as your King?" You reply with "Yes" or "I do."
2. "Who is Jesus Christ?" You reply with "Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior."

The baptizer will then say, "I baptize you, my (brother or sister) in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" and then immerse and raise the baptizee out of the water.

# Helpful Hints

1. Please check the email you received after attending this baptism class for a link to sign up for our next baptism opportunity. If you did not receive an email (or can't find it), let us know by emailing baptism@allnationsworship.org.
2. After signing up for a baptism event, you will receive an email with all the information you need about when to arrive, where to go and what to wear.

# Sharing Your Testimony

## What Is a Testimony?

Your testimony is your part of God's bigger story. It reflects the change Christ has done and continues to do in you, as further evidence of His Holy Spirit's power. He has rescued you, is transforming you and will sustain you. Just as He did in the Bible, God will use your story as evidence for more people to understand, believe and receive Him for who He is and what He's done.

Simply put, your testimony is the story of what your life was like before you met Jesus, how you came to surrender to Him as your Lord and Savior and what your life is like now that you are in a personal relationship with Jesus.

## Why Should One Share Their Testimony?

In Matthew 28, Jesus tells His disciples to "Go and make disciples..." Shortly after, Acts 4:33 tells us that with "great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." The apostles set the example before us that we are to go and tell of the resurrection of Jesus. God has equipped each believer with two tools to tell the story: one tool is His Word and the second is our word.

## His Word

His Word (the Bible) is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.[3] The Bible tells us everything we need to know to surrender our lives to Jesus. The Bible is without error and, in its entirety, reveals the redemptive work of Jesus. It needs nothing else.

## Our Word

So why were we given two tools? It's true His Word is all sufficient. But, to a world that doesn't know His voice, God has equipped each believer with our word. Our word does not save, but often times becomes the bridge God chooses to use to connect the dying world to the life-giving Savior. Our word shows the validity of His Word to our family, friends and those we come in contact with. We share our testimony out of obedience to Jesus so that those around us can know Him as their Savior. Our word engages hearts. His Word changes hearts.

It is the responsibility of the Church to make disciples. Therefore, All Nations Worship Center requests that all those baptized be willing to share their testimony. We do this in two ways; we write our testimony and we share it via video. Though it may seem intimidating to some and trivial to others, your testimony is a powerful way to share what God has done in your life to people needing your word to connect them to Jesus and His Word.

## How Does One Share Their Testimony?

Simply put, you tell your story and talk a lot about your relationship with Jesus. You are the expert, but if you need a little help with your word, then turn to His Word. In Acts chapter 26, Paul gives his testimony to King Agrippa. It may be a great idea to pause right now and read this chapter before moving forward.
Paul tells his story with a specific goal: to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. In sharing his testimony, Paul provides us with an outline that is definitely worth repeating.

1. Your life before Jesus.
2. How you surrendered to Jesus.
3. Your life in relationship with Jesus.

# Testimony Writing Tool

## Where to Start?

It is helpful to start by writing out your testimony. Ask God to reveal to you the things from your past and present that He wants you to share. Use the template provided to write out your testimony.

## Your Life Before Christ

• "Before I surrendered my life to Christ..."
• Think about your attitudes, beliefs, values and actions before you became a Christian.
• Who/what did you worship?
• Be honest, but don't glorify your past/sin. Remember, He gets the glory for the transformation He's done in you.

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## Circumstances Surrounding Your Surrender

• "Then I surrendered my life to Christ..."
• Share how you became aware of your need for Christ.
• How did you receive the gospel?
• Share how you went from knowing about Him to knowing Him personally.

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## How Your Life Is Different Since Your Surrender

"Now that I have a relationship with Jesus..."
- Explain what a relationship with Him means to you now.

- Compare your beliefs, attitudes, thoughts and actions now to those you had before surrendering to Christ. (Consider your relationships, work, values etc.)
- Be honest and open – your unique testimony can encourage others in their discipleship journey.

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## Helpful Testimony Tips

1. Keep your testimony focused on Jesus and what He has done for you.
2. Be authentic. There is no expectation that you 'have your life all together' now that you're following Jesus.
3. Please avoid saying that you have "always been a Christian." This gives the impression that faith is something you can inherit. Becoming a Christian is about making the decision to accept Christ's death on the cross as payment for your sin, not just growing up in a Christian home.
4. Please don't talk about the sins of someone else.

# What Follows Baptism?

Throughout Scripture, individuals are called to "repent and be baptized." Baptism is the first step of obedience for the believer, but not the last. So, what is the believer to do following baptism?
Be a disciple. The command of Jesus was not to go and make converts, but to make disciples. As a disciple of Jesus, you are to ultimately be a follower of Jesus in such a way that you become like Him.

**Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)**
Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

# How Do I Grow as a Disciple?

**Read the Word and Pray Daily** The Bible is not just a book of stories, but is one true message revealing the character of God so that we can know Him personally. Daily reading of God's Word is the best way to grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ. Visit allnationsworship.org/discoverjesus to download a 21-day devotional to help you read the Word daily. While the Bible is a primary way God communicates with us, prayer is a way we can communicate with Him. Prayer is one of the strongest ways to deepen your relationship with Jesus. We pray because it transforms our heart to be more like His. We pray to hear from Him. We pray because Jesus prayed.

**Be Active in Corporate Worship** *(Show Up at Worship Gatherings Each Week)* We gather together each week to worship and glorify God through public declaration of the gospel, song, teaching and other elements like communion and baptism.

**Get Connected** You were created to be in community and called to be a disciple-making disciple. There are many ways to grow your relationship with Jesus and get connected with other believers including serving, joining a disciple group. For more information, visit allnationsworship.org and click "Get Involved".

**Grow in Your Faith** Do you want to learn more about how to read your bible, how to share your faith, or what we believe as a church? Then register for Growth Track! Growth Track is comprised of 2 on-demand video lessons followed by a final in-person session at your campus. For more information and to start your on-demand lessons, visit allnationsworship.org/growthtrack.

**Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT)**
Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

# Statement of Faith

Our prayer for you is that you actively pursue a life of holiness with the Holy Spirit's help. Surrendering to Jesus is not merely believing He is your Savior but also living with Him as your Lord. As you prepare to take your next step of obedience in baptism, now is a good time to examine your life and identify any area where you are not actively seeking to live like Christ.

We care about you and are called to walk with one another in community. If you have any questions or concerns about this Statement of Faith, please email baptism@allnationsworship.org.

**God Is Triune:** There is one God: infinite, eternal, almighty and perfect in holiness, truth and love. In the unity of the godhead, there are three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-existent, co-equal and co-eternal (Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 45:5-6, 1 Timothy 2:5).

**God the Father:** Creator of heaven and earth. He sustains all, rules over all and His plans and purposes cannot be derailed. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for the good of those who love Him, gave His Son Jesus Christ for mankind's redemption and intends for us to live in relationship with Him (Genesis 1, John 3:16-17, James 1:17).

**Jesus Christ:** The only begotten Son of God and the eternal Word made flesh. He was supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary and is perfect. He is fully God and fully man. He is the only Savior for the sins of the world, having shed His blood and died a substitutionary death on the cross. By His death our guilt is removed and we are reconciled to God. Having redeemed us from sin, He rose from the grave and was victorious over death and the powers of darkness. He ascended into heaven where He intercedes for His people and rules as Lord over all, awaiting His return. He is the Head of the church, and should be adored, loved, served and obeyed by all. He will one day physically return and bring forth the judgment of the just and unjust and the fulfillment of His kingdom (Matthew 1:20, Romans 5:8, Mark 16:1-8, Acts 1:11).

**The Holy Spirit:** As God the third person of the Trinity, He convicts and comforts. Through the proclamation of the gospel, He persuades men to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. He unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, and dwells within the believer. He will lead the church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God's Word (John 14:26, John 16, Romans 8:26, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

**The Scriptures:** The Bible is the written Word of God. It is the essential and infallible record of God's self-disclosure to mankind. It is free of error in all it teaches and leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose and revered as the living Word. The Scriptures are the authoritative

guide for all Christian life, practice and doctrine. They are sufficient and must not be added to, replaced or changed (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21).

**Man:** God made man, male and female, in His own image, that they might glorify Him through enjoying fellowship with Him. Tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God and became subject to divine wrath. Man is depraved and incapable of returning to God on his own. All are spiritually dead and without hope apart from salvation in Christ alone (Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1-10).

**The Gospel:** The good news of Jesus's birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. Christ's death satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and satisfies His holy wrath. It also demonstrates His mysterious love and reveals His amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men must be saved (Acts 4:12, John 1:1-14).

**Man's Response to the Gospel:** Faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, demonstrated by a life of repentance from sin. Man is to love the Lord with all his heart, soul, mind and strength. This gospel of grace is to be sincerely preached to all people in all nations (Matthew 22:36-40, Romans 10:9, Matthew 28:16-20).

**Man's Inheritance Through the Gospel:** Salvation, the free gift of God, is provided by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone and for the glory of God alone. Anyone turning from sin in repentance and looking to Christ has the righteousness of Christ imputed to him. He is justified, forgiven, fully accepted and adopted by God (2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 1:5).

**Sanctification:** The Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification and seeks to produce His fruit in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. All believers are charged to persevere in the faith knowing they will have to give an account to God for their every thought, word and deed (Galatians 2:20, Philippians 2:12).

**Marriage:** Our beliefs about marriage and sexuality, as with all topics, are based on Scripture. We are all created in the image of God. We all have sinned and fallen short of God's standards, yet His forgiveness, grace and mercy extend to all who repent. Marriage is a picture of Christ's relationship with His bride - the church. It is defined from the beginning of Scripture as a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman and reaffirmed by Jesus as God's design for sexual expression. God designed sexual intimacy for a marriage relationship and does not endorse or condone it in any other context. Consequently, any sexual expression, whether heterosexual or homosexual, outside of marriage is prohibited by Scripture (Genesis 1:26, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 5:22-23, Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-5, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5).

Read the complete Statement of Faith at allnationsworship.org/about to find out more about what we believe concerning the church, being empowered by the Holy Spirit, church ordinances and the consummation.

## Footnotes

[1] See Acts 8:26-40 (NLT), where the Ethiopian eunuch, after understanding the gospel from Philip, immediately requests baptism upon believing.

[2] 2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT): For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

[3] Hebrews 4:12 (NLT): For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

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