

Count me in!

BAPTISM EXPLAINED



"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." Romans 6:4 NLT

What's the Meaning of Baptism?

Baptism is the act of saying your own Yes please! to God's invitation to belong to Him through Jesus.

God doesn't take over your life by force. He offers to come into your life (and you into his). So your consent – your own 'Yes' – is vital.
(See Revelation 3:20)

Baptism symbolises death (as you go underwater) and resurrection (as you rise back up). It represents giving up an old life and taking up new life.

Giving Up

You're giving up on living your own way, apart from God (what the Bible calls 'sin'). This includes trying to earn credit with God in your own way.

Turning away ('repenting') from sin isn't promising to live perfectly from now on. It's saying you want to be separated from sin and joined to God instead of the other way around.

Taking Up

In baptism you're also taking up a new life filled with wonderful gifts that God wants you to have:

Peace with Him—security in and access to God, as a dear child to a loving parent, confident that you completely belong;

His personal presence and power with, in and through you by the Holy Spirit;

A place in his family—growing in God's love in loving community;

A noble life to live – taking up a cross of your own as you learn to live in Jesus' way of service and sacrifice, and

A unique role to play in His work to renew the world.

This is to name just a few! Unpacking them will take a lifetime – and more: because in addition to them all is the promise of eternal life with God.

So baptism is your response to God's love. You fully entrust yourself into Jesus' hands, acknowledging him as your Saviour and your Lord, and receiving the new life he offers.

Who Should Get Baptised?

Anyone who wants to belong to Jesus, receive all that he offers, and learn to live in his way.

Baptism is an initiation, not a graduation. This means that baptism is not for those who have reached a certain level or proven themselves good enough. You don't need **any** credit points with God to qualify for baptism. (In fact, if you think you have some, in baptism you give them up – and that whole way of thinking.)

You don't need to know a certain amount about God—but be willing and ready to learn a lot and to live Jesus' way.

You don't need to have your life in order—but be willing and ready for Jesus to begin reordering things as his Spirit works in and through you.

You don't need to be a regular 'church person' who knows all the right things to say and do—but be willing and ready to connect in and grow.

You don't need to have mastery over all your sins, bad habits, flaws, wounds and addictions—but be willing and ready to hand them over to Jesus and co-operate with the healing he wants to bring.

So you don't have to reach a certain level—just be wanting to make a start. (Or if you made a start with Jesus some time ago, it's never too late to publicly affirm your faith in Jesus!)

So who shouldn't be baptised?

- If you don't want to fully entrust yourself to Jesus but would still rather live independently of God.
- If you're not choosing for yourself (if someone's forcing you to or if it's just to please or impress someone).



Baptism in the Bible

Jesus' own baptism: Matthew 3:1-17, Mark 1:1-11, Luke 3:1-22, John 1:29-34

Jesus' instruction to baptise: Matthew 28:18-20

New believers are baptised: Acts 2:36-41, Acts 8:26-40, Acts 9:1-19, Acts 10:44-48, Acts 16:11-15, Acts 19:1-7

Baptism enacts death and resurrection: Romans 6:1-14

Baptism shows unity with all God's people: Ephesians 4:1-6

Baptism marks 'Christian' as our prime identity: Galatians 3:26-29

Who baptises you isn't vital: 1 Corinthians 1:11-16



What Happens at a Baptism?

Firstly, there's usually opportunity to share your story of coming to faith in Jesus. Being baptised isn't just between you and God, it's also a real encouragement to others. Short and simple is often best.

The baptism itself is usually quite brief: You will be asked something like 'Do you repent of your sin, and entrust yourself to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?' On saying 'I do', you'll be dipped under the water with the words 'I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.'

After you come back up, those gathered will pray God's blessing on you, including that you will be filled with the Holy Spirit. Often this involves one or a few people laying their hands on your head/shoulders.

Finally, there's a celebration – your church family will want to rejoice with you and bless you.



Getting Ready for Baptism

Meet with a pastor or trusted Christian leader about wanting to be baptised, and discuss:

- Setting a date—keep in mind who you'd like to invite to witness and share in this important moment.
- Choosing a location—a church, a river, a pool, the ocean, or any safe water—but again think about who else will be able to attend and see and hear.
- How best to share your story of coming to put your faith in Jesus.
- What's next after your baptism—to get on a great path of learning and growing.
- Who you'd like to pray for you immediately after your baptism, and how.
- What celebration will happen afterwards. (See Luke 15!)
- And since you're going to get really, really wet – what's appropriate to wear, and how to get dry and changed.



Baptism—Common Questions

Do I need to be baptised to be saved?

No, you only need to entrust yourself to Jesus Christ. Some do this and never have opportunity to be baptised (Luke 23:32-43). However, faith in Christ leads to obedience to Christ, who was baptised and calls us to be. It is ritual, but far from empty. So if you can, you should.

What if I was christened as a baby?

It is excellent that your parents had that intention for you. But since the Bible portrays baptism as *your own* response to God, it is best to be baptised now you're old enough to decide for yourself. (However, if you were also later confirmed in a church that takes that approach, you may feel that that was your moment of publicly owning your christening as your baptism.)

How old is old enough to decide for myself?

There is no set rule on this and it will be different from person to person. Talk it over with your pastor and family. If they feel you are too young, don't worry! Why not ask to set a date for the future? In the meantime there is nothing to stop you loving and trusting Jesus, asking for his Spirit, and learning and growing in him.

What if I'm scared of water, or public speaking, or have difficulty with mobility?

None of these should be the barrier that keeps you from baptism. Talk with a pastor to find a way that makes it possible. The mode (complete submersion in water) and usual format aren't the absolutely essential things, and we know that Jesus is very keen to include all who sincerely want to belong to him.



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