

FIRST EDITION • BOOK 04

DISCOVER BAPTISM



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WHY BAPTISM?

Being baptised is part of being a follower of Jesus. When someone puts their faith in Jesus, baptism is their very first step of faith and obedience.

WHAT DOES BAPTISM REPRESENT? A NEW BEGINNING

Baptism is a physical sign of a new start with God. We see it throughout the ancient world and in the Old Testament. For example, when people converted to Judaism, they were baptised before they were circumcised. This physical act of baptism symbolised their faith conversion.

This beautiful act extends to the New Testament where Jesus was baptised, marking the end of His carpentry career as and the start of His ministry. Jesus didn't need to be baptised for His sin. He was baptised to become immersed in God's new day for Him.

“

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.” Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

(Matt 3:13-17)

”

When John the Baptist came to announce that the Messiah was almost there, he told people to get ready by turning away from sin and turning to God. (this is what it means to repent). John the Baptist called on people to respond to their conversion on the inside by being a simple act of being baptised.

Baptism is a conversion. It draws a line in the sand that divides our past from our future. It's an intentional decision to turn away from our old life and give ourselves to Jesus.



WHAT DOES BAPTISM MEAN FOR ME?

WHAT'S HAPPENED ON THE INSIDE, EXPRESSED ON THE OUTSIDE

“

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised 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.

(Romans 6:3-4

”

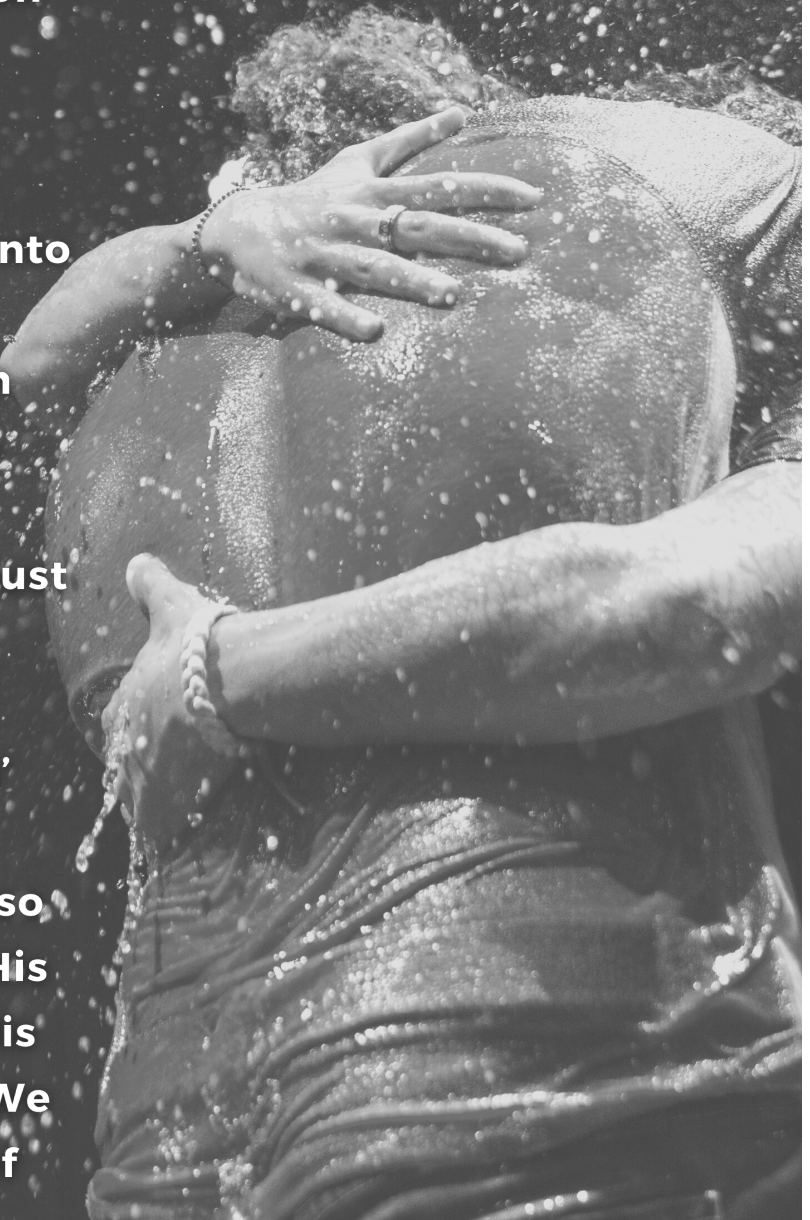
The New Testament was written in Greek. The English word 'baptism' comes from the Greek word 'bapto', which literally means 'to dip'; 'immerse' or 'submerge'. In ancient Greek writings, 'bapto' was used to describe a sinking ship or a drowning man.

When we are born again, we go through the same pattern Jesus followed in His death, burial, and resurrection. When we are baptised we are submerged or buried into Jesus' story. Through baptism, we declare that we are nailing our old life to the cross with Jesus. We die to our self-rule and living life without God. As we go into the water, our sin and old life are buried and taken away. (Acts 22:16, 1 Peter 3:21).

Water is frequently used in the Old and New Testaments to symbolise God's Holy Spirit. Just as water gives natural life, God's Spirit gives eternal life. When this amazing transformation happens, it is often a private and internal event. Going under the water is our physical demonstration—to humans and the spiritual realm—that says, 'I am dead to the old life and alive in Jesus'.

BAPTISM CONNECTS US TO A FAMILY

Baptism is also a powerful expression of family and belonging. In the ancient world, children adopted into families would be baptised and given their new families name. This symbolism is still just as poignant today. When we are immersed in Jesus' death and resurrection, He also immerses us into His family. We share His name (Christian). We become children of God.





WHAT DOES JESUS SAY ABOUT BAPTISM? GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES, BAPTISING THEM...

““

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

(Matthew 28:19-20)

””

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to obey His commands. His commands are not optional. Obedience is core to Jesus' Kingdom culture because it is rooted in the goodness of God. He has done so much for us, Our obedience is the first expression of obedience in response to His saving grace in our life.

WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTISED?

Baptism is a celebration of our new life in Jesus. In the book of Acts we learn that when people repent and believe (born again), they are baptised immediately.

In Acts 2, the apostle Peter has just finished preaching the Good News about Jesus. When the crowd hears the story, they want to respond. So, they ask:

““

“Brothers, what shall we do?”

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you

in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call." With many other words, he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

(Acts 2:38-41)



The answer was repent (turn from your sin to God) and receive the Holy Spirit. That answer is still the same for those who believe the message today (Acts 8:36-38, 22:16, 10:47-48, 16:33).

In Acts 8, Philip has shared the good news about Jesus with the Ethiopian who he met along the road. Luke writes:



'Upon coming to faith, the Ethiopian saw water nearby and exclaimed, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptised?" Philip immediately baptised him.'

(Acts 8:35-38)



The same is repeated in Acts 10 where, after seeing Cornelius' household receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, Peter proclaims:



"Can anyone keep these people from being baptised with water?

They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."

(Acts 10:47)



This is expressed again with the jailer in Acts 16:



"Then he and all his people were baptised immediately."

(Acts 16:31)





HOW MUCH DO I NEED TO KNOW?

In the stories we read in Acts the people who were baptised didn't know much about Jesus, but enough to know that they want to follow him. You don't have to know everything there is to know about Jesus or baptism.

Rather, baptism is a first step of faith connected to your repentance and belief in Jesus' Good News. If you ask someone who has been a Christian for some time to reflect on their baptism, they'll likely tell you that they didn't really understand or know much when they got baptised but have grown in their

understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Baptism is a beginning point. Even if you take all the theology classes in the world, the richness of baptism and following Jesus will continue to unfold for you throughout your life of faith. It's not that we endorse ignorance or a lack of understanding about baptism. But if you are truly born again, we encourage you to simply obey and continue to learn what it means to die to your old life and live for Jesus—day by day, minute by minute.

WHERE SHOULD I BE BAPTISED?

The Bible does not specify being baptised in a special place like a church building. Baptism can be done when a person is born again and wherever there is enough water to baptise them.

We don't have a problem with people being baptised in a church building or being baptised in a special baptism service.

However, we encourage people to be baptised by the person who has told them about Jesus. as soon as possible and wherever possible. For example, you can be baptised in a bath, pool, creek, river or beach. In fact, as long as there is enough water for you to go under the water.

OPTIONAL THINGS YOU COULD DO

The following are not necessary and are not done in the Bible but have become part of the way many churches' do baptism:

- Baptism classes
- Sharing what God has done for you in front of the people who witness your baptism
- Inviting people to watch your

baptism

- Inviting people to watch your baptism
- Being baptised by a pastor, minister or elder
- Being baptised publicly

PUBLIC OR PRIVATE?

Baptism does not necessarily mean a change of culture or community. There are some cultures where publicising your baptism can destroy connections with family and friends. For people who have converted from other religions, it can be dangerous for new believers to be baptised and confess their faith in Jesus publicly.

In many countries and cultures, new believers are baptised secretly, as water baptism can be considered the ultimate betrayal of their religion or family and can result in persecution, alienation, hardship, and in some cases death.

In Australia, there is no hard and fast rule about private or public. You can decide. Having said that, baptism should never be done privately because we are

embarrassed or ashamed of being identified as a follower of Jesus.

WHO SHOULD BAPTISE ME?

Any born-again Christian can baptise a new follower of Jesus. They do not need special credentials or training. Jesus instructed all His followers to baptise new followers and teach them to do the same.

IS THERE A MINIMUM AGE?

When a child is ready? When the Holy Spirit has moved in their hearts to ask Jesus into their hearts and they can express for themselves who Jesus is and what he has done for them.

We believe that children need to honour their parents and ask them for their permission.

Parents need to be sensitive to the reality of the child's faith and support them in this step.

If parents are wrestling with this matter, it is wise to seek the counsel of an elder or pastor of the church.

WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING OR WEAR?

You can put on swimmers or get baptised in the clothes you're wearing. Either way, you will need a towel and some dry clothes.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I GET BAPTISED?

There is no playbook or precise instructions on how to do a baptism. There is no specific words or prayers. The closest thing we have to 'a script' of what to expect is that the person baptising you might place their hand on you and gently push you under the water while saying, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

Sometimes the location you are baptised will determine just how you go under. For example, sometimes, you could collapse your knees and go under the water without being assisted.

Sometimes you could kneel and bow down under the water. In other places, you might be able to fall backward and go under the water.

You can discuss how you would like to go under the water with the baptising person. There is no right or wrong way.

Symbolically, baptism is about being 'buried' in the water as a sign of connecting to Jesus' death and resurrection.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME AFTER MY BAPTISM?

After your baptism, the person baptising you or those who are with you might pray and ask God for a special message for you or something from the Bible. They also might invite the Holy Spirit to fill you with his power.

I HAVE BEEN CHRISTENED, DOES THAT COUNT?

There is no clear reference to a christening in any part of the Bible. Almost every time baptism is mentioned in the bible it is connected to people responding to the good news about Jesus. So, believing in Jesus comes before being baptised. We understand that some people who have been

christened as a baby and then who later did confirmation as a teenager to confirm the promises of their parents at their christening may not feel the need to be baptised. We would however encourage them to make their own decision and consider baptism as a physical expression of their faith.