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Why Baptism?

A NEW BEGINNING

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. Baptism is a physical sign of a new start with God. We see it throughout the Old

Testament and New Testament. When Jesus was baptised, it marked the end of His carpentry career and the start of His ministry. Jesus didn't need to be baptised for His sin. He was baptised in obedience to God.



“ 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 fulfill 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.” **Matthew 3:13-17**



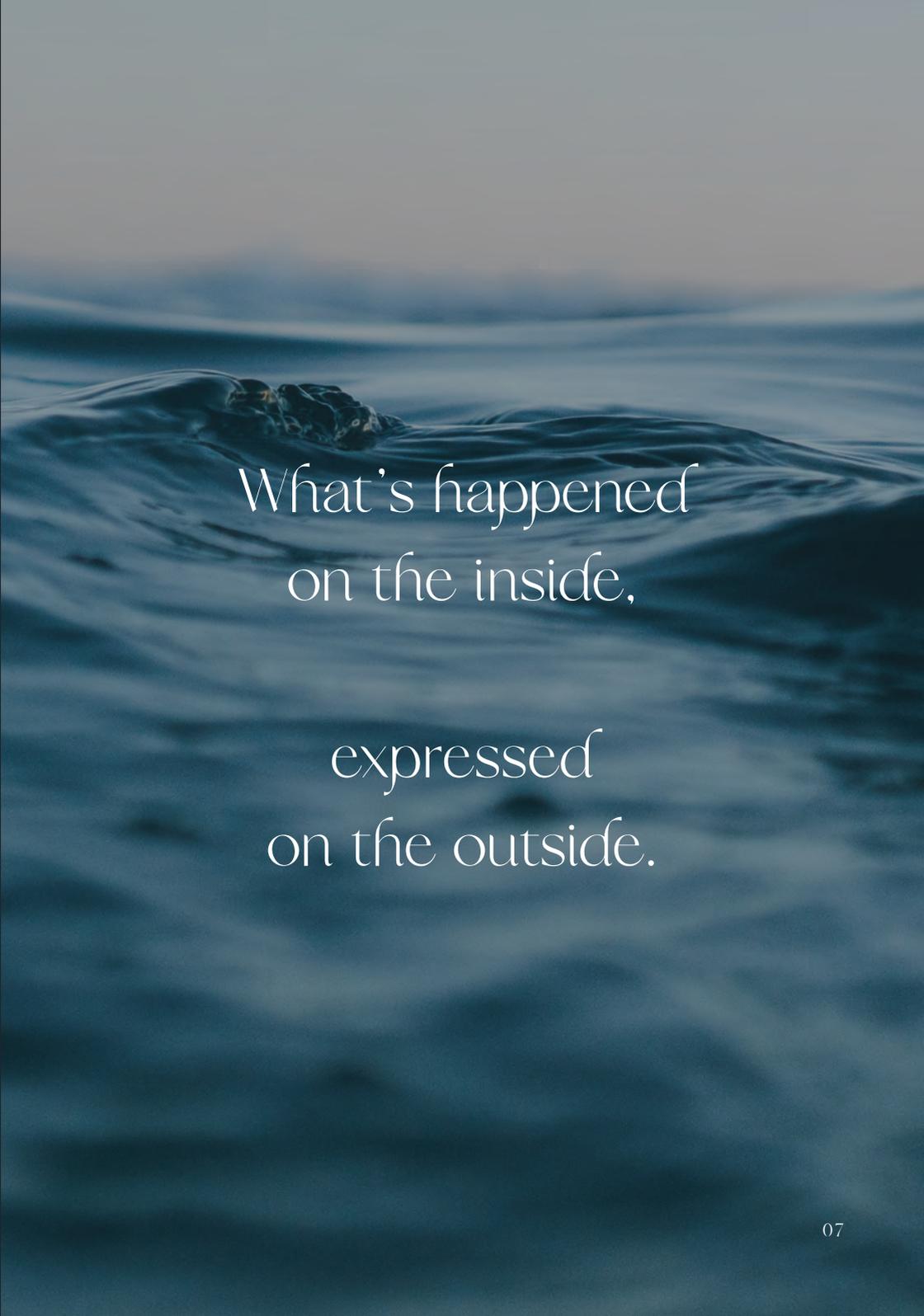
What Does Baptism Mean for Me?

*“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into 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 baptised, we are symbolically connecting to Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. 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**

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.’*



What's happened
on the inside,

expressed
on the outside.



What Do Jesus & the Bible Say About Baptism?

GO & MAKE DISCIPLES

*“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. Obedience is core to Jesus' Kingdom culture because it is rooted in the goodness of God. Our obedience in being baptised is our response to His saving grace in our life.

WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTISED?

In the book of Acts when people repented and believed (became born again), they were baptised straight away. In Acts 2, the apostle Peter has just finished preaching about Jesus. When the crowd hears the Good News, they asked:





*“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***

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***

Being baptised straight away happens again with the jailer in Acts 16: *“Then he and all his people were baptised immediately.” **Acts 16:31***

Preparing for Baptism



HOW MUCH DO I NEED TO KNOW?

In the stories we read in Acts, the people who were baptised didn't know everything about Jesus, but enough to know that they wanted to follow Him. You don't have to know everything about Jesus or baptism, to be baptised.

Baptism is a first step of faith connected to your repentance and belief in Jesus' Good News. You will grow in your understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Baptism is a beginning point. The richness of baptism and following Jesus will continue to unfold 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.

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



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.

WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING OR WEAR?

You can put on swimmers or get baptised in the clothes you're wearing. All you need is a towel and some dry clothes.





What's happened
on the inside,

expressed
on the outside.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I GET BAPTISED?

The closest thing we have to ‘a script’ of what to expect is that the person baptising you might say: *“I baptise you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”*

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. They also might invite the Holy Spirit to fill you with His power.

I’VE 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.

For those who have been christened as a baby, we would encourage them to make their own decision and consider baptism as a physical expression of their new faith.



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