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GUIDE Nº 8 OF 15 · FREE

Water Baptism

What it is, why believers do it, and how to prepare for your day

— ACTS 2:38 (KJV)

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A letter to you, dear friend

Dear friend, soon after believing, every new Christian meets a beautiful word: baptism. Perhaps your church has announced a baptism day, or a believer has asked whether you have been baptised, and you want to understand before you step into the water. Good — baptism is far too precious to do carelessly or to postpone carelessly. This guide explains plainly what baptism is, why Jesus commands and models it, what it is not, and how to prepare your heart for the day.

You will find that baptism is a joyful act of obedience, a public declaration, and a living picture of everything God has already done inside you. Read with your Bible open, and by the end, we trust, you will be able to say with the Ethiopian believer in Acts: 'See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?'

What baptism is: a picture of your new life

Water baptism is the outward sign of an inward reality. When you believed, God washed your heart, buried your old life, and raised you to new life — invisibly, in the spirit. In baptism, that invisible miracle is acted out in water where everyone can see it. Going under the water pictures burial: your old life, with its sin and shame, is buried with Christ. Rising from the water pictures resurrection: you come up to walk in newness of life. It is your salvation story told without words, in one unforgettable act.

Paul teaches exactly this in Romans 6: we are 'buried with him by baptism into death,' so that 'like as Christ was raised up from the dead… even so we also should walk in newness of life.' This is why baptism matters so much to believers: every time you remember your baptism day, you remember that the old you is buried and the new you is raised. Many believers in temptation have steadied themselves with that memory: 'I am baptised. I have buried that life. I will not dig it up.'

In the New Testament, baptism was in water, following faith, by immersion — the very word ‘baptise’ carries the sense of dipping or immersing — administered to those who had repented and believed. If your church teaches and practises baptism, follow its guidance gladly; the heart of the matter is your own faith and obedience to Christ.

> *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*
> **— Romans 6:3-4 (KJV)**

Why be baptised? Jesus commanded it — and was baptised Himself

The first reason is obedience. Jesus’ final commission to His church commands making disciples and baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Baptism is not an optional decoration for enthusiastic believers; it is the Lord’s own appointed first step of public discipleship. When you are baptised, you are quite simply doing what your Lord told His people to do — and there is deep joy in plain obedience.

The second reason is example. Jesus Himself was baptised by John in the Jordan — not because He had sins to confess, but, in His words, ‘to fulfil all righteousness,’ and to stand with us and show us the way. The Father’s voice spoke approval over those waters. If the sinless Son of God honoured baptism, His followers can only be honoured to follow Him into the water.

The third reason is witness. In the book of Acts, baptism was the public line-crossing: three thousand on the day of Pentecost, households in Philippi, believers in Ephesus. Baptism tells your family, your friends and the watching spirit world: ‘I belong to Jesus now —

openly, permanently, without shame.' Such a public stand strengthens your own heart remarkably; what we declare before people, we find easier to live before people.

> *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."*
> **— Matthew 28:19 (KJV)**

What baptism is not

Honest teaching must also clear away misunderstandings. Baptism is not what saves you. The thief on the cross beside Jesus was promised paradise without baptism, because salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone. Baptism follows salvation as a wedding ceremony follows a covenant — it declares and celebrates what God has done; it does not replace faith. If you were baptised before you truly believed — as an infant without your own faith, or as a religious formality — talk with your pastor honestly; many believers, on understanding this, choose to be baptised upon their own confession of faith, and churches receive them gladly.

Baptism is also not a washing that works by the water itself, nor a membership card for one denomination above others, nor a graduation certificate meaning you have 'arrived.' Baptised believers still grow, still fight temptation, still need the church. And baptism is not a performance to impress anyone — no photographs or applause make it more real. Its power is in the obedience of faith before God.

Finally, baptism is not to be delayed without reason. In Acts, believers were baptised promptly — the same day, even the same hour of the night. If you have believed, do not let fear, procrastination or other people's opinions hold you back for months. Speak to your church leaders this week and fix your day.

> *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”*
> **— Ephesians 2:8-9 (KJV)**

Preparing for your baptism day

Prepare your heart first. Spend time in Romans 6 and Acts 2 this week. Confess any known sin and settle any matter you can — return what should be returned, reconcile where possible. Forgive others. Come to the water clean in conscience, not because the water needs your perfection, but because your heart will enjoy the day far more unburdened.

Prepare your testimony: two or three simple sentences about who you were, how you met Christ, and what He has done. Many churches invite candidates to share briefly. Write it down and practise it once; on the day, speak from the heart, not from the paper. Invite your family and friends — even those who do not yet believe. Your baptism may be the clearest sermon they ever hear, and many have believed after watching a loved one go into that water with joy.

Prepare practically, as your church directs: what to wear (modest clothing that is decent when wet, often a provided robe or white garment), a change of clothes, a towel. Arrive early, pray with the others being baptised, and enter the water worshipping. It is a feast day, not an exam. Heaven celebrates it; so should you.

> *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”*
> **— Acts 22:16 (KJV)**

Do this:

1. Tell your pastor or leader this week: 'I have believed, and I want to be baptised.'

2. Read Romans 6 and Acts 2 slowly before the day.

3. Write your three-sentence testimony and invite family and friends.

4. Prepare clothes and a change as your church directs; arrive early and joyful.

After the water: walking in newness of life

Baptism is a doorway, not a destination. After the celebration comes the walking — 'newness of life' is a daily path, not a one-day feeling. Expect the enemy to test your declaration soon after; many believers report temptations or discouragements in the days following baptism. Do not be surprised and do not be shaken. Answer temptation with your baptism: 'That old life is buried. I walk new now.' Then use the escape routes in the guide 'When Temptation Comes.'

Keep growing in the fellowship that baptised you. Attend new-believer classes if offered. Serve in small ways. Keep your baptism day marked in your notebook and, each year on that date, thank God for His faithfulness across another year of walking. The memory will only grow sweeter.

And when you see the next new believer preparing for the water, encourage them with your own story. That is the chain of obedience, unbroken from the Jordan river to your own baptism day — and through you, it continues.

> *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."*
> **— Galatians 3:26-27 (KJV)**

A PRAYER BEFORE YOUR BAPTISM

Lord Jesus, thank You for saving me and for showing me this step of obedience. As I go into the water, I declare before heaven

and earth: my old life is buried with You, and I rise to walk in newness of life. Wash my conscience clean, fill me with joy, and let my baptism be a witness that draws others to You. Keep me walking new every day that follows. In Your name I pray, Amen.

Verses to hold on to

Keep these verses near you. Read one each morning. Say it aloud. God's Word will hold you on days when feelings are weak.

> *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."*
> **— Acts 2:38 (KJV)**

> *"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 (KJV)**

> *"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us... by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."*
> **— 1 Peter 3:21 (KJV)**

> *"One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all."*
> **— Ephesians 4:5-6 (KJV)**

You are not walking alone

Dear friend, you have finished this guide — well done. Keep it near your Bible and return to it whenever you need it. Growth is day by day, and your Father is patient, present and proud of every honest step you take toward Him.

If you would like someone to pray with you, answer your questions, or walk with you in these first steps, our free Salvation Follow-Up team would be honoured to hear from you. Visit slgrace.com and open the chat — ask for the "Salvation Follow-Up" desk. It is completely free, and you will be received with love.

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May the Lord bless you and keep you, make His face shine upon you, and give you peace — today and all your days. (Numbers 6:24-26)