



# Water Baptisms

A biblical foundation and practical guide to water baptisms at Kingscross Church.

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## What is Water Baptism?

Water baptism is the outward and visible symbol of an inward and unseen rebirth.

The word "baptism" comes from the Greek word, "baptiso", which means "to immerse, dip, plunge into or bury. Water baptism graphically depicts what happened to a person who has become a Christian - going under the water depicts Christ's death and their own death to self. Coming up out of the water depicts Christ's resurrection and their own rising to new life.

It is a public testimony that one has entered into faith union with Christ, and it marks and defines those who believe in Christ.

## Why should we be baptised?

Jesus commanded it.

"Therefore go and make disciples ... baptizing 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."

**Matt 28:19-20**

Water baptism is the first act of obedience in service of the Lord. Jesus was baptised. We are to follow Jesus' example, for even He submitted to baptism before He began His public ministry.

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."

**Matt 3:13-17**

Baptism was practiced in the book of Acts. Every believer was baptised. Repentance and faith, (conversion), preceded baptism:

- The Day of Pentecost: **Acts 2:38-39**
- Philip baptised the believers in Samaria: **Acts 8:12-13**
- Paul was baptised: **Acts 9:18**
- Cornelius and his household: **Acts 10:47-48**
- Lydia: **Acts 16:15**
- The Philippian jailer and his family: **Acts 16:33**
- Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and his family: **Acts 18:8**

## What is the meaning of baptism?

Baptism is a public profession of an inward change which occurred at salvation, where I declare death to the flesh and am alive in Christ. Physical water baptism is a picture of a spiritual truth as found in Romans 6:1-14 & Colossians 2:9-15.

The new convert goes down into a watery grave, symbolically enacting his own death to the old life. When he arises, he symbolizes that he has risen and is walking in the newness of life.

Do we continue to sin and suffer the weakness of the sinful nature? Yes! But we now can go back to the time of our baptism where we put to death the sinful nature and remind ourselves of the reality we now live in, where we now live our lives according to the Spirit.

## Who should be baptised?

Only believers should be baptised (not adult, or infant baptism).

“Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

**Mark 16:16**

The only requirements for baptism are the requirements for salvation found in **Romans 10:9,10**. Children who are old enough to believe the Gospel and exercise personal faith can be baptised – the gospel is simple enough for children to understand. This must be at their own request.

Backsliders who return to Christ should not be re-baptised. Baptism is a once-for-all act, not a recurring event.

## What must a Christian do about baptism?

Baptism is not essential for salvation. Ephesians 2:8, 9 makes it clear that a person is saved by grace, through faith and not by works. This includes baptism.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

**Ephesians 2:8,9**

Baptism however is essential for spiritual growth. It is an integral part of the Great Commission and precedes teaching (**Matt 28:19, 10**).

How can we say that we obey and follow the Lord if we are not willing to submit to His first commanded act of obedience?

## When must we be baptised?

Once someone believes they should be baptised

In the early church (Acts) people were baptised as soon as they believed. They did not wait for a period of time before being baptised. They were never told to “prove” themselves. This included the day of Pentecost, Crispus and his household (Acts 18:8).

## Where should we be baptised?

Most often publicly in front of the local church – but Biblically anywhere with enough water.

## What is the method of Baptism?

The method of baptism is one of full immersion into a body of water, performed by one or two trusted Christians together with the person being baptised. It is done in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- Baptism is done in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Matt 28:18**
- “...and Jesus, when He was baptised, went straightaway out of the water...” **Matt 3:13-16.**
- “John baptised in the Jordan because there was plenty of water there”. **John 3:23**
- The Ethiopian eunuch’s baptism “... and they went both down into the water” **Acts 9:38**

In performing the baptism, two people are usually involved, for two reasons. Firstly, it is safer to pull someone out of the water when there are two people lifting him or her. Especially if the location is a living body of water, such as a river or ocean. Secondly, it is an opportunity for a significant person to be involved in the memory of baptism – a parent, or spouse, or mentor etc.

The two people involved should be trusted Christians, such as a pastor or church leaders, or another Christian brother or sister who is well known by the participant. It does not have to be a pastor - after all, we are the priesthood of all believers (**1 Peter 2:4-10**).

## What happens on the day?

Different churches have different practices. Our practice follows what we know to be biblically sound and relationally wise.

### Participants

- **The obedient Christian** who is receiving baptism - you!
- **Two trusted Christians** who perform the baptism
- **The Christian community.** At Kingscross we invite the entire church to be present. The community participates in the celebration, by celebrating and praying for those who receive baptism.

### Typical Process

1. Everyone arrives.
2. A leader briefly explains what baptism is and whom it is for.
3. Each participant gives his or her verbal declaration of faith in Jesus.
4. We then enter the water and perform the ceremony, with one of the two trusted Christians leading the participant into baptism with words similar to:

*"Since you have declared your faith in Jesus Christ and desire to follow him. In obedience to Jesus, I now baptise you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."*

5. The participant exits the water, is given a towel, and is prayed for by his or her Christian brothers and sisters.
6. After that the ceremony is formally over, though those who participate may plan various after-parties. We encourage the party to never end!

### What should the participants bring?

- Appropriate clothing for being soaked in water. We would encourage participants to be thoughtfully appropriate, modest but not prudish.
- A towel.
- A change of clothing to get dry and warm, especially if the baptism is during winter!