

# Get Baptised

## Getting into Scripture

The meaning of the original word 'baptise' is very helpful in understanding what the Bible teaches. It means 'immersion'. And it was sometimes used to describe a ship sinking, clothes being dyed or a person who was overwhelmed by debt.

We're going to take some time to look at what the Bible says about baptism – why we should be baptised, who should be baptised, and how baptism was conducted.

Read each of these passages from the Bible out loud together. To help get a good understanding of what is being said, try to describe what is happening or what is being said in your own words. Then take a moment to reflect and note down what stands out to you as important or significant, or that's really meaningful to you. Share together what you've got.

### **Matthew 3:13-17 (NIV)**

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?" <sup>15</sup> Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. <sup>16</sup> 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 alighting on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

### **Acts 8:26-38**

<sup>26</sup> Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." <sup>27</sup> So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, <sup>28</sup> and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. <sup>29</sup> The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

<sup>30</sup> Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

<sup>31</sup> "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

<sup>32</sup> This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. <sup>32</sup> In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth."

<sup>34</sup> The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" <sup>35</sup> Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

<sup>36</sup> As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptised?" [<sup>37</sup>]<sup>38</sup> And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptised him.

### **Acts 16:31-34**

<sup>31</sup> They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household." <sup>32</sup> Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. <sup>33</sup> At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptised. <sup>34</sup> The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole household.

### **Romans 6:3-7**

<sup>3</sup> Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? <sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – <sup>7</sup> because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

## **God's Story**

The Bible says something incredible about how to bridge the gap between people and God. God saw the chasm that separated fallen people like you and me from Him. He saw the infinite distance it really was – vaster than any of us could ever realise. God understood that no amount of human effort or resourcefulness would ever be enough to bridge it. So, because he loves us, He took the responsibility Himself and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on a cross for us all.

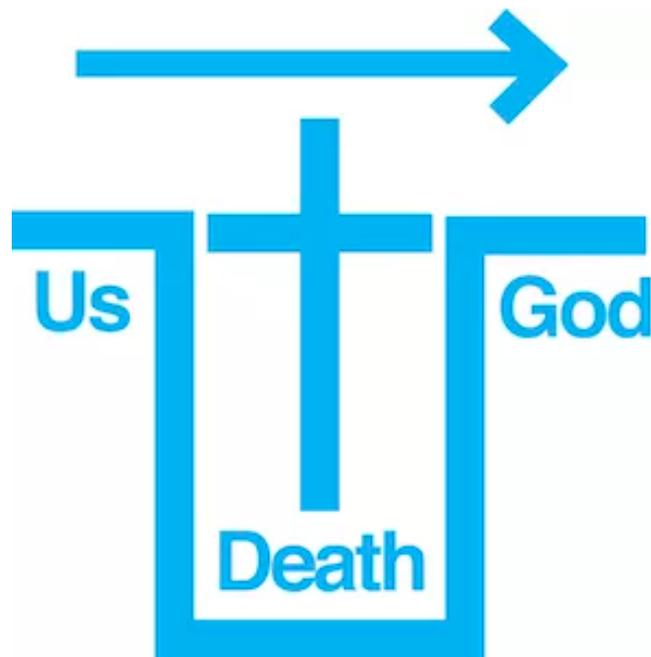
This is God's story – and we have the incredible privilege of carrying this message of the greatest news ever known. Because of what Christ has done for you, you can confidently tell your friends and family that the path to God is right there in front of them.

The act of being baptised is a way of witnessing to your faith. It's an opportunity to share God's story with people in your life. It's also a first step in sharing the power

of the gospel with other people, too. So, when you're sensing spiritual openness in a conversation, what's the best way to communicate this life-transforming path?

Take some time to discuss some of the following pictures and then commit yourself to remembering at least one of them, to help you tell God's story with focus and passion.

## The Bridge



The explanation of this illustration is clear and easy to memorise: on one side of the bridge is God. On the other side are people. Between God and people is a great chasm that exists because of people's inclination to rebel against God's way and go their own way instead. The Bible calls this "sin".

The problem people face is that we want to get to God, but we realise we can't just leap over the chasm. So we try by our own effort to get over it. In the end, we realise that all the effort in the world will never be enough to get us to the other side.

But God understood that no amount of effort would ever be enough to bridge the gap. So, motivated by love, God took the responsibility Himself. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on a cross for us all. And so the cross became the bridge between us and God.

## Do vs Done

Every religion ultimately suggests that you should attempt to bridge the gap between you and God through your own efforts. In a sense, religion is spelt "D-O".

At the end of the day, it's all about whether you DO enough right things to earn God's favour, or somehow DO enough to balance out the bad.

Every religion teaches this, that is, except one: Christianity. Christianity is spelt "D-O-N-E". The Bible says that what Christ did on the cross is enough. He has DONE what you and I could never do – he satisfied God's requirement for a perfect life so he could be a perfect sacrifice for our sin. Because of what Christ did on the cross, your sins can be forgiven and you can find favour in God's eyes right here, right now. The work that must occur to pay for sin and obtain eternal access to God has already been DONE.

## **Morality Ladder**

Sometimes people are unclear about the meaning of sin and the real nature of God's moral standards. They might think that they live a "good" life, and that they don't really need God. But Romans 6.23 explains:

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord".

One way to talk about this is to think of a ladder or scale.

You can say: "Look, supposing on this wall there's a ladder or scale of all the people who have ever lived. The very worst person is at the bottom, and the very best person is at the top."

Then you can ask: "Who would you put at the bottom?"

People might say: Adolf Hitler or Stalin (or their boss!)

And then you could ask, "Now, who do you think is the best person who's ever lived?"

And people might say: Mother Teresa, or their mother, or someone else.

Then we can explain: "I think you'd agree that all of us are somewhere in between one level and another. Most people would agree with that." You could even suggest where they might be on the ladder.

But then you can ask: "What do you think the standard is?"

Someone can look up and down and say: "Perhaps the ceiling is the standard"

But you can explain: “No, look at the verse ...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... the standard is not the ceiling or the top rung of the ladder—it’s the sky. Because the greatness and holiness of God was revealed in Jesus, and compared to him we all fall a long way short.”

## Your Story

Possibly the greatest realisation that any of us can ever make is that our own story fits into God’s greater story. As we learn to witness to our faith, first in baptism, and then in moments that are part of everyday life, we can learn to tell our own story to friends and family: our simple, personal account that conveys the impact Jesus has had in our life.

When you tell your story, you have the opportunity to talk about the gospel’s transforming power in your life.

As you learn to tell your story, the important contrast to make for someone is this: What difference has Christ made in your life? In other words, what were you like before Christ, and now what are you like after you’ve asked Christ to meet you?

When the opportunity arises in conversation, be ready to state as simply as possible what was going on before you met Christ, and what has been going on since you began to follow him. It’s worth taking some time and space here to develop a three-part basis for your story:

1. the key idea that describes who you were before you met Christ;
2. the reality that you came into a relationship with Christ; and
3. the key idea that describes who you are after journeying with Christ for a time.

Your simple, straightforward before-and-after explanation of Christ’s work in your life can have a profound impact on someone else.

## Next Steps

Here are some really practical things you’ll need to prepare for your baptism day.

## Your Story

- Consider asking your group leader, or the trusted friend who has helped you work through [getbaptised.com](http://getbaptised.com), to baptise you.
- You’ll need to decide where and when you want to be baptised. If you want to be baptised at church, get your group leader to talk to a key leader who looks after the baptisms classes. If you would like to be baptised somewhere else (like at home or in a friend’s pool or at the beach), then talk it through with your leader.

- It's a great opportunity to share your faith with friends and family – so make sure you let them know the time and the place well in advance.
- Make sure you bring your testimony written out on a piece of paper. That way you can be sure that you can share your story on the day.
- You'll need a change of clothes (dark clothes are best when you're baptised!). You'll also need a large towel.
- You can email your group leader below to let them know you've finished your baptism preparation.
- Congratulations! This is a fantastic step you're taking.