

the basics of baptism

The following study guide

1. Takes you through some preliminary teaching that you need to understand before you can take the step of Baptism
2. Outlines the bible's teaching about baptism.

Please carefully read the information and fill in the appropriate sections. (Answers are found at the end.)

Are you a good person?¹

In Acts 2:38 in answer to a question about how to be saved the Apostle Peter says "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."

According to Acts 2:38 what are the two things we must do to receive forgiveness for our sins?ⁱ

We therefore need to look at what both of these things are. First, we will look at Repentance and then we will look at Baptism.

Repentance literally means to turn around and head in a new direction. So if you are going North, to repent, would be to turn around and head South.

Before we can head in a new direction we need to be clear about what direction we are really heading.

The last part of Acts 2:38 refers to our need to "receive forgiveness for our sins" therefore repentance means that we need to understand whether or not we have any sins and what is the consequence of sin in our life.

The following test helps clarify how good a person is measured against God's law.

Almost everyone thinks they are a good person ... but the question you should be asking is, "Am I good enough to go to heaven?" How would you know?

The way to find out is to ask yourself if you have obeyed the **Ten Commandments**.

Most people say, "**Well, I've broken one or two, but nothing too serious, like murder, etc.**"

So let's go through them and see how you do.

(Tick the innocent or guilty box for each following commandment.	INNOCENT	GUILTY
<p>1. "You shall have no other gods before me."</p> <p>Have you always put God first in your life? Jesus said to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength-- so much, that your love for your parents, brothers and sisters, friends, and even your own life is like hatred compared to your love and devotion for God. Have you ever failed to put Him first in your life?</p>		
<p>2. "You shall not make for yourself any idol."</p> <p>Who is God to you? Is he only a god of love and mercy who would never judge anyone and</p>		

¹ From www.livingwaters.com/good/

<p>never cast anyone into Hell? If that's your god, then you're right. Your god couldn't cast anyone into Hell because he doesn't exist. He's a figment of your imagination. You've created a god in your own mind that you're more comfortable with. You may call it your "personal belief," but God calls it idolatry. It's the oldest sin in the Book, and the Bible warns that idolaters will not inherit the kingdom of heaven.</p>		
<p>3. "You shall not take the name of God in vain." Have you ever used God's name as a curse word? If you have, you've taken the holy name of God-- who gave you your life, your family, and everything precious to you-- and used it as a filthy, four-letter word. Hitler's name wasn't even despised enough to be used as a curse word! If you have used God's holy name in that manner, you are a blasphemer and the Bible says "God will not hold him guiltless who takes the name of the Lord in vain."</p>		
<p>4. "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy." God commands that we set aside one day in seven. Have you ever been guilty of breaking this Commandment?</p>		
<p>5. "Honor your father and your mother." Have you always honored your parents in a way that's pleasing in the sight of God? Ask Him to remind you of the sins of your youth. You may have forgotten them, but God hasn't.</p>		
<p>6. "You shall not murder." Jesus warned "Whoever is angry with his brother without cause, is in danger of judgment," (Matthew 5:22) and the Bible says, "He who hates his brother is a murderer," (1 John 3:15). God sees hatred in the heart to be as wicked as murder. We can violate His Law by attitude and intent.</p>		
<p>7. "You shall not commit adultery." Jesus warned, "You have heard... 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Have you ever looked at another person with lust? The Bible says that adulterers and fornicators (those who have had sex before marriage) will not enter the kingdom of heaven.</p>		
<p>8. "You shall not steal." Have you ever stolen anything (even if it was something small)? The value of the thing stolen doesn't matter; petty theft is still theft. Have you ever taken anything that belonged to someone else (from the office, school, parents, etc.)? If you have, that makes you a thief.</p>		
<p>9. "You shall not lie." Have you ever told a lie? Then you are a liar. How many murders do you have to commit to be a murderer? Just one. If you have told even one lie, that makes you a liar. The Bible warns that all liars will have their part in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 21:8). You may not think deceitfulness is a serious sin, but God does.</p>		
<p>10. "You shall not covet." This means we should never desire anything that belongs to another person. Not their house, nor their car, nor their money, nor their wife, nor their lifestyle, nor anything that belongs to our neighbour.</p>		

Who of us can say we are not guilty of breaking these Commandments? This is what the Bible means when it says, "**All have sinned** and fall short of the Glory of God."

Can you see your predicament? You are **guilty** of sinning against God Himself, and, because you have a conscience, ("*con*"=*with*, "*science*"=*knowledge*) you have sinned "with knowledge."

Isn't it true that **every time** you lied, stole, or lusted, etc., **you knew it was wrong?**

Does the fact that you have sinned against God scare you? **It should.**

You have actually **angered** Him by your sin.

The Bible says His **wrath** abides on you, that you are an "**enemy of God** in your mind through wicked works."

Perhaps you think God is good and because of his goodness He will overlook your sins?

But if you knew of a human judge who turned a blind eye to the crimes of a **guilty** rapist... would you describe him as a "good" judge?

No. That would be a "**corrupt**" judge. God could **never** be a corrupt judge.

He will punish all the rapists, murderers, and thieves... But He won't stop there. He will also punish **all liars**, the **lustful**, **adulterers**, **idolaters**, and **blasphemers**.

The place of eternal punishment is Hell.

God does not want you to perish. He is rich in mercy and compassion, and has provided a way for you to be forgiven. He has invited you to come to Him for a full pardon and receive the free gift of Eternal Life. You cannot earn it, and you do not deserve it, but God is offering it to you as proof of His love for you.

What can you do to be good enough to deserve God's reward?ⁱⁱ _____

Imagine you are standing in front of a judge, guilty of multiple serious crimes. All the evidence has been presented and there is no doubt about your guilt. Your apologies and good works cannot erase your crimes; therefore you must be punished. The fine for your crime is \$250,000 or imprisonment, but you don't have two pennies to rub together. The judge is about to pass sentence when someone you don't even know steps in and pays your fine for you! The court accepts the money and declares that you are free to go. The law has been satisfied, your debt has been paid in full, and the stranger's sacrifice was a demonstration of his love for you. That's what God did for you 2000 years ago.

The Bible says that the God of the Universe became a man (Jesus Christ), and suffered and died on the cross for your sins and mine so that we could be set free. Then he rose again from the dead and defeated death! It's as simple as this—we broke the Law, and Jesus paid our fine.

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
(Romans 5:8)

Do you acknowledge the fact that you are a sinner? _____

How do you feel about this? _____

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us." (Galatians 3:13)

Do you see God's great love for you? Do you see your need for His forgiveness? Do what He commands and "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come

from the Lord.” (Acts 3:19) You must turn away from sin and turn to God. Desire to have NOTHING to do with sin, and surrender your life to the One who can save you. Jesus died to set you free, and then he rose from death to be your Lord. Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” If you will confess and forsake your sins (repent) and trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, God will forgive you and you’ll pass from death to life.

If you are not sure how to pray, read Psalm 51 and make it your prayer.

What does it mean to "put your faith in Jesus Christ?" It means to personally trust in Jesus the same way you'd trust in a parachute if you had to jump 25,000 feet out of an airplane. You wouldn't just "believe" in the parachute; you would put it on! In the same way, the Bible says, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ..." and you will be saved. There are millions of people who "believe" Jesus exists . . . but they have not put on the Savior—there's a BIG difference. And the difference will be obvious when you “jump” through the door of death.

Today, with all your heart—turn away from sin, and surrender your life to Jesus Christ. Please don't put it off till later. You may not yet have all the answers to your questions, but better to put on the parachute first and then ask questions, then to pass through the door unprepared, grasping for the parachute when it's too late. You can pray something like this—"Dear God, today I turn from all my sins (name them), and I put my trust in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. Please forgive me, and grant me your gift of everlasting life. Amen." There is nothing magic about these words—it is the attitude of your heart that God cares about.

God will transform you from the inside out. You will think and feel differently as you learn to trust and obey Him. God will give you new strength to live right and love Him above all else. Read your Bible daily and obey His Word. You can trust God—He loves you and will always be faithful. To help you get started, you may also want to read “10 Principles for New and Growing Christians.”

If you've decided to reject the gift of forgiveness and you die in your sins, there is no hope for you.

What exactly is baptism?²

Acts 2:38 says “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.”

Firstly, we have looked at the fact that we are sinners and worthy of punishment. (We have broken God's law.)

Secondly, we have acknowledged that we cannot do anything to make ourselves acceptable to God.

Thirdly, we have heard that God is willing to forgive us our sin if we come to him in repentance and ask for his forgiveness and accept that he has paid the price for our sin through the death of Jesus Christ.

The second key part of Acts 2:38 is the command to be baptised. We will now look at what baptism means.

The word "baptism" as it appears in the Bible means immersion (the process of submersion in water followed by emergence from the water).

Scholars agree that the baptism of the Bible is immersion. The following examples from the Bible substantiate that conclusion:

"As soon as Jesus was baptised, He came up out of the water." Matthew 3:16.

"Then Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptised him. When they came up out of the water." Acts 8:37,38

² <http://www.crossroadschurch.com/aboutus/baptism.asp>

Note the descriptions of the baptisms - "down into the water," "came up out of the water."

What is the significance of baptism?

Baptism is the outward expression of the inward miracle. It is a visible, tangible, physical expression of what is happening inside spiritually. Our baptism is a picture to be seen by others revealing what is happening within us.

Two descriptive word pictures are given in the Bible to explain what happens at baptism.

Being Buried

"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 (see also Colossians 2:1) We are identifying with Jesus' experience and demonstrating outwardly in our baptism that:

- a) we are dying to our old life and the ways of sin.
- b) we are burying that old life of sin.
- c) and we rise to live the new life.

Putting on new clothes

"For all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." - Galatians 3:27. We are demonstrating by our baptism that we are:

- a) taking off our old clothes of our sinful nature and lifestyle,
- b) and putting on new clothes of Jesus' nature and lifestyle.

We put on Jesus' values and His priorities. We surrender to Jesus' way. We make Him Lord of our lives, as well as Saviour. That means - "I'm no longer the boss of my life. Jesus is." (Galatians 2:20)

Why should I be baptised?

1. Because Jesus was baptised. He is our model, our example, in everything we think and do. Read Matthew 3:13-17.

Jesus came to John the Baptist at the River Jordan to be baptised. John, however, balked at doing such a thing, saying that Jesus should instead be baptising him (John). "Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.'" (v. 15)

Jesus said it is proper - it is the right thing to do. So John baptised Him. And immediately afterward, God expressed how pleased He was with Jesus' actions.

Jesus said baptism was the right thing to do, and then He followed through with action.

2. Because Jesus commanded it.

After His resurrection and before His ascension to heaven, Jesus left these final directions to His followers (which includes us):

"All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. 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." Matthew 28:18-20. See also Mark 16:15,16.

3. Because baptism was an integral part of every conversion experience recorded in the book of Acts (which tells about the actions and beliefs of the first Christians and the first churches that formed after Jesus' ascension).

Note the following examples of the apostles, their associates, and the first

Christians baptised:

- a. Groups of people being baptised - Acts 2:41; 8:12
- b. Paul being baptised - Acts 8:34-39; 9:18; 22:11-16
- c. Cornelius being baptised - Acts 10:47, 48
- d. Lydia and her household being baptised - Acts 16:13-15
- e. Philippian jailer and his household being baptised - Acts 16:33, 34
- f. Corinthians being baptised - Acts 18:8
- g. Ephesians being baptised - Acts 19:5

Note that though each situation varied in some aspects, all who were baptised expressed belief in Jesus and were baptised immediately. We are saying that baptism is a part of becoming a Christian. We are not saying that you are lost without baptism; but according to these Scriptural examples, baptism is a part of one's conversion experience.

4. Because it is a way to witness to others of your belief in Christ and your resulting commitment.

Though it may seem scary and humiliating to be involved in such a public act of surrender, it translates into a powerful witness to all who view it.

How will I know when I am ready to be baptised?

You are ready to be baptised:

When you believe that Jesus is the Son of God and are ready to receive Jesus as your Saviour.

When you are ready to repent - ready to turn your life around.

When you are ready to put your past behind you and put your life in Jesus' hands. Read Acts 2:38, Colossians 3:5-10, John 1:12, 13.

Is there anything getting in the way of you getting baptised? _____

Who should baptise me?

At Northern Beaches Church of Christ baptism is often done by the Pastor but can be done by any Christian. Often someone asks to be baptised by the Christian who led you to belief in Christ, or a Christian who been significant in your life.

Questions:

What do I believe the bible teaches about baptism?

What questions do I have about baptism?

What do I believe I need to do as a result of this teaching?

(For more useful information check out <https://www.northernbeacheschurchofchrist.com.au/resources-for-growth.html>.)

ⁱ Repent & Baptised.

ⁱⁱ We can do nothing to earn God's gift. We must simply come to God in repentance and accept his free gift.