

BAPTISM GUIDE

We're so delighted to be able to be a part of this exciting step in your journey of following after Christ. Baptism is a wonderful and sacred act of obedience to Christ and an outward declaration concerning the new life we've been given by God through our relationship with our Lord Jesus.

This Baptism Guide is mean to give you some basic information about the nature, purpose, and meaning of Baptism and to help answer any questions you may have.

In our time together, we'll look at what the Bible says about baptism, explore how our church practices it, and answer common questions you might have. We hope this will not only inform your mind, but stir your heart to worship—and help you take your next step in faith with joy and confidence.

ABOUT BAPTISM

1. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the act of a BELIEVING Christian; the outward, visible testimony of our conversion to Christ.

It is often said that baptism is the outward evidence of an inward reality. Baptism does not make you a Christian. It is a demonstration that you already believe. Baptism is the proper response when we become a disciple of Jesus and seek to live according to his word for the rest of our lives! It's the mark of the people of God.

"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18-20

Baptism is a symbol of IDENTIFICATION with Christ

In water baptism, we publicly identify with Jesus, put away the old life of sin, and begin a new life of obedience to Christ. As we go into the water we identify with His death; as we go under the water we identify with His burial; as we come out we identify with His resurrection. In identifying with the work of Christ by faith, we are new creations - old things have passed away and everything about us is made new

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Corinthians 5:17

"...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead." Colossians 2:12

Baptism illustrates NEW LIFE as a Christian

"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." Romans 6:4

Baptism signifies BELONGING to the family of God

Baptism is a sign of initiation into the church – the family of God – and belonging to the body of Christ. It signifies a Christian's entrance into the church. This is why we baptize together as a congregation – it's the joyful welcoming of new members into the body!

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:27-28

"For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:13

In summary, the *New City Catechism* says it well:

"Baptism is the washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; it signifies and seals our adoption into Christ, our cleansing from sin, and our commitment to belong to the Lord and to his church."

2. Why do we get baptized?

To follow the example set by CHRIST and because Christ COMMANDED it.

"Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan." Mark 1:9

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." Matthew 28:19-20

"And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...'" Acts 2:38

3. When is a good time to get baptized?

As soon as you BELIEVE! THERE IS NO REASON TO DELAY! As soon as you have decided to trust Christ with your life, you can and should be baptized. If you are waiting until you are perfect, you will never be ready.

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, 'See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?' And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him." Acts 8:35-38

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SALVATION?

The Bible says that we are saved **not by WORKS**, but by **GRACE alone**, through **FAITH alone**.

“For it is by grace that you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

“and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf” 2 Corinthians 5:15

What is Grace?

Grace is God’s **UNMERITED FAVOR** toward you.

What do we need to be saved from?

The Bible tells us that every single person who has or ever will live is a sinner.

“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)

Sin is rebellion against God. It is “falling short” of the glory of God, the perfect standard that he sets. It is choosing to worship and serve ourselves rather than the God who created us, loves us, and has a perfect claim to our obedience and love. Sin is a disease that affects every person who has ever lived. And it’s a fatal disease...

The Bible also tells us that *“...the wages of sin is death...”* (Romans 6:23)

Death means separation. Our sin separates us from God; it is deserving of the wrath of a holy and perfect God. This is what we all need to be saved or rescued from.

Put simply, when we are saved, we are saved from the wrath of a perfect and holy God, and from the result of sin - eternal separation from our Creator.

What is the means by which we are saved?

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” II Corinthians 5:21

JESUS, being perfectly pure in word, thought, and deed, was the only eligible candidate to pay the price for our sin.

"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
Romans 5:8

While we wanted to have nothing to do with God, He initiated a relationship with us.

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." I John 4:10

This means God's love is a **SACRIFICIAL ACT** directed toward us.

And to receive this great gift of salvation, all we have to do is believe!

"For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved... For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'" Romans 10:10, 13

What are the benefits of this gift?

1. The Holy Spirit is given

The moment one places their trust (faith) in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins they also receive the Holy Spirit.

"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise." (Ephesians 1:13)

2. Eternal Life

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever should believe in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

3. Abundant Life

God also wants us to experience life knowing that we are fulfilling our purpose here on earth. The following verse speaks of a _____ of life that can only be achieved by having a relationship with Christ.

Jesus said, *"I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly."* (John 10:10)

Bottom Line: Salvation comes by trusting in Christ for the forgiveness of our sins and now we are free to live for Him.

Look up these verses about Jesus' specific statements regarding eternal life:

- John 3:3-5 (to Nicodemus)
- John 4:10, 13-14 (to the woman at the well)
- John 5:24; 10:27-30 (to the Pharisees, or religious leaders)
- Ephesians 2:8-9 (to believers)

Recommended Reading:

- Desiring God, by John Piper
- So Great Salvation, by Charles Ryrie
- What's So Amazing About Grace? by Phillip Yancey
- Jesus + Nothing = Everything, by Tullian Tchividjian

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

We believe man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God. All human beings are born with a sinful nature. and in the case of those who reach moral responsibility are sinners in thought, word, and deed.

We believe that all who receive the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God, a relationship in which they are ETERNALLY SECURE.

What JESUS accomplished on the cross must be the focus of our salvation. If we begin looking to ourselves, we are in serious trouble. This only serves to confuse and take attention away from what Christ has done, as if we have some part in obtaining our righteousness before God.

On a scale of 1-10, how sure are you that you are going to heaven? (circle a number)

(uncertain) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (certain)

On what do you base this rating? _____

Common reasons some people struggle with being 100% certain about their salvation:

1. SIN – “I’m not perfect; how can God love me? How can he save me?”

*“...God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
Romans 5:8*

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:1-2

2. RELIGION in place of RELATIONSHIP – “If I do enough good, I’ll deserve salvation!”

"We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."
Isaiah 64:6

"Let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD." Jeremiah 9:24

"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

3. MISSING the PROMISES of GOD – "What if God changes his mind?"

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." 1 John 5:13

"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified." Romans 8:29-30

"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39

THE TRUTH ABOUT ME

I am a wonderful creation of God – Psalm 139:13-14

I am deeply loved by God – John 3:16

I have been adopted as God's child – Ephesians 1:5

God's love for me will never change – Ephesians 2:4

I am God's workmanship – Ephesians 2:10

I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit – Ephesians 3:12

I may approach God with freedom and confidence – Ephesians 3:12

I have been forgiven for all my sins – Colossians 1:14

No one can snatch me from the hand of Christ – John 10:27-29

I am a citizen of heaven – Philippians 3:20

I can resist the enemy and he will flee from me – James 4:7

I can confess my sins and God will always forgive me – I John 1:9

I will spend eternity with God – I John 5:11-12

I can find freedom in the truth of God's word – John 8:31-32

I have been freed from sin – Romans 6:1-7

My salvation is by God's grace, not my works – Ephesians 2:8-9

I have been given a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind – II Timothy 1:7

DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

“But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” 1 Peter 3:15

Understanding the Value of Your Personal Testimony

1. It is UNIQUE because YOU are unique.
2. It is PERSONAL and therefore easily understandable.
3. It is AUTHORITATIVE because it is your story.
4. It is MEMORABLE because of the experiences you share.
5. It is UNARGUABLE since people cannot argue against your experience.

WRITING YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

(For a biblical model, read Paul’s testimony in Acts 26.)

STEP 1: NEED

What was your life like BEFORE your relationship with Jesus Christ?

What were you lacking, and what illuminated your need for a Savior?

Example: “Growing up, I occasionally attended church; however, I rarely thought about God. My purpose in life was to live for myself and do what pleased me...”

STEP 2: GOSPEL

Specifically, HOW and WHEN did you receive Christ and become a Christian?

How did the Gospel story become part of your story?

Example: “After attending my dorm’s Bible study in May of last year, I realized my need for Christ. So, I prayed and asked Christ to forgive me of my sins. I believe that He loves me so much that He died for me and rose again. I asked Jesus to come into my life and give me a new heart...”

STEP 3: TRANSFORMATION

How is your life different since believing in Christ? How has He changed you?

Example: “Jesus has changed my life! I no longer fear the future and I am filled with His joy and peace. Although my life is far from perfect, I now know why I was created. Jesus has given me a new purpose in life, because Jesus is my life. (Colossians 3:4)”

SHARING YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

When & how did you receive Jesus Christ and become a Christian?

Why do you want to be BAPTIZED?

SHARING YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Helpful Tips:

- Keep your story simple, clear, and direct.
- Contrast your life BEFORE and AFTER receiving Christ.
- Avoid religious phrases (e.g. “born again,” “sanctified,” “justified,” “filled with the Spirit,” etc.), because someone who does not yet know Jesus may be confused by the use of terms they do not understand or appreciate.
- Include the core truths of the Gospel (e.g. Jesus died for my sins and rose again; I Corinthians 15:1-4).
- If you came to Christ as a child, you may desire to emphasize what your life might have been like without Christ, being grateful for what you were spared from by God’s grace.
- Avoid using the specific name of religions, denominations, or churches you may have been part of in the past. Even if we are fervent to see people know the truth, they may be offended.
- Include a meaningful verse(s) if it fits into your story.

Preparing for Baptism

Before the Baptism

Be sure to wear appropriate clothing for baptism. You can come to the church wearing your church clothes, as you will be provided with a place to change clothes. Please bring a bathing suit and shorts (i.e. board shorts, swim shorts) to wear during the baptism, a towel to use afterwards and a plastic bag to carry wet items. A baptism t-shirt will be provided for you to wear during the baptism.

During the Baptism

During the baptism itself, you will be asked to respond to 2 questions verbally: 1) How and when did you come to follow Jesus? And 2) Why do you want to be baptized today?

Be concise in your responses, but don't feel like you have to rush through your answers either. It may be helpful to write down your responses ahead of time and read your answers – this can take away a lot of the potential stress of remembering what you want to say, and helps make sure you are able to express yourself both concisely and fully.

The most important thing to remember: relax and enjoy the moment. Your public declaration of faith through baptism speaks louder than any words you might have to say.

After the Baptism

You will be directed backstage where you can change back into your clothing. At this time, you will receive a certificate of Baptism and your baptism t-shirt is yours to take home with you.

What Now?

The Staff & Shepherds at Desert View Bible Church would like to offer our sincerest CONGRATULATIONS on taking this important step of obedience in following Christ. We are so delighted to celebrate this great occasion with you!

Baptism is, of course, just one step in a long journey of obedience and great adventure in growing in the Lord. We want you to know we are committed to helping you grow in your relationship with Jesus in any way that we can. To find out more about growing in your relationship with Christ, please speak to your Shepherd or Pastor who will be glad to assist you. That's what Desert View Bible Church is here for!