

Lesson 6: Baptism

Virtually every Christian denomination in existence teaches some form of baptism as part of their doctrine. The diversities in their teachings are wide. This lesson is intended to give the Bible's clear teaching on the subject.

What is Baptism?

Water Baptism is an outward symbol of inward spiritual transformation.

1. From God's viewpoint, it is an outward sign of identification with salvation through Christ.
2. From the believer's viewpoint, it is a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ and an outward mark of spiritual growth and development.
3. From the observer's viewpoint, baptism outwardly marks the one being baptized as a committed follower of Christ.

Biblical examples of Baptism



John the Baptist – John came as a prophet baptizing in the Jordan River. The Bible records that he baptized people as a sign that they had repented from their sin and that they also desired to be spiritually prepared for the coming of Christ. (Mark 1:4)

Jesus Christ – John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. Jesus set the example for our baptism by submitting to baptism before He began His public ministry. (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22).

Why was Jesus baptized?

1. In Matthew 3:13-15, it is clear that Jesus was baptized in submission and obedience to God's plan. In verse 15, He said, "Permit it to be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Jesus was fulfilling all of God's righteous requirements to be Israel's (and our) Messiah.
 2. Certainly not because He was a sinner! Rather, He was identifying with the program of God to save sinners through the coming of Christ to earth.
 3. If the waters of baptism washed away sin, Jesus would never have been baptized!
- Note: From these passages we see then that repentance is a matter of the heart and baptism is a matter of outward association with God and righteousness.

Other Bible characters who submitted to baptism

1. The Ethiopian eunuch — Acts 8:36-39
2. The apostle Paul — Acts 9:18

3. The Philippian jailer and his family—Acts 16:25-33

What is the purpose of baptism?

Romans 6:1-7 (specifically verses 3-4) shows three purposes of baptism.



1. It pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
2. It is a public testimony of the believer's identification with Jesus Christ, with His death and resurrection. Baptism simply identifies us with the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. It shows the believer's intention to follow Christ in obedient living.

Who should be baptized? Believers!!!

Contrary to the teachings of several denominations, and of Roman Catholicism, which advocate infant baptism; we believe that Scripture instructs that the only proper candidates for baptism are people who have trusted in Jesus and His atoning work. (Babies cannot believe!)

Furthermore, the Bible does not give a "requirements checklist" (or as some new Christians think that they must get some things cleaned up in their life first) for baptism. The only prerequisites for baptism are those for salvation found in Romans 10:9-10.

- Heart belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- Confession that He is Lord and Savior.

There are, simply, no cases of baptism in the Bible of anyone but believers. Baptism is not necessary for salvation, but rather, a step of obedience for a believer.

When should one be baptized?

1. In the clearest case of an individual's baptism in the Bible, the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized immediately after salvation as recorded in Acts 8:36-39.
2. Some other instances of baptism immediately after salvation include: Acts 8:12 and Acts 18:8
3. One should be baptized as soon as it is practical after they have been born again and come to understand the Biblical doctrine of baptism. Note again: our goal is to help prepare you to obey God in this matter.

What is the method of baptism?

1. Acts 8:26-39 gives the clearest example. In verses 38-39, both Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch went down into the water and came up out of the water.
2. In Matthew 3:16, Jesus was baptized in the same manner.
3. As seen previously, baptism is a picture of death, burial and resurrection. The only way to bury someone is to put them completely underground. The biblical method of baptism is complete immersion. Also, and very importantly, the Greek word, "*baptizo*", means to dip or immerse.



How important is it to be baptized?

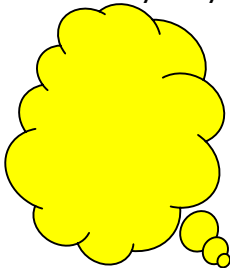
It is NOT essential for salvation. Ephesians 2:8-9 makes it clear a man is saved by grace through faith without works, which would include baptism.

It IS essential for spiritual growth. Matthew 28:19-20 (the "great commission") shows that baptism is essential. Baptism is an integral part of the great commission and precedes the command to teach.

Basic questions

Where should I be baptized?

1. Since baptism is a public confession of your faith in Jesus Christ, most often it will be done publicly, in front of a local church. Many times people will be baptized in creeks or rivers, which is fine; the Lord Jesus Christ was baptized in the Jordan River. The actual place of baptism is not important. The act of public testimony of your identification with the Lord Jesus Christ is the important point.



2. We can simply inform the pastor of your desire for baptism and he will give further instruction and work with you on the timing.
3. Thought: Being a believer and not being baptized would be like being in the army and not wearing the uniform!



Homework

1. Water Baptism is a _____ symbol of inward spiritual transformation.

- From God's viewpoint it is _____

_____.
- From the believer's viewpoint it is _____
and an outward mark of spiritual growth and development.
- From the observer's viewpoint, baptism _____ baptized
as a committed follower of Christ.

2. As best as you understand it why was Jesus baptized?

3. What are the three purposes for baptism found in Romans 6:3-4?

A.

B.

C.

4. When should one be baptized? One should be baptized _____
after they have been born again and come to understand the Biblical doctrine of
baptism.

5. Baptism by complete immersion in water is a picture of what?

6. Is baptism essential for salvation? _____ Give a scripture reference that
explains this.

7. Baptism is essential in order for the Christian to grow _____.

Key Memory Verse: Romans 6:3-4

Our next meeting will be: _____

Daily in the Word

It is important to spend time reading and meditating on the Word of God. Read each day's passage and answer the two questions for each day. As you read these passages, remember that these are God's words to YOU and that He wants you to learn more about Him by reading His Word.

DAY 1 Matthew 3:13-17	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?
DAY 2 Acts 8:36-39	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?
DAY 3 Colossians 2:6-12	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?

DAY 4 Acts 2:41-47	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?
DAY 5 II Peter 1:5-10	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?
DAY 6 Ephesians 4:14-21	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?
DAY 7 Colossians 3:1-4	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?