

Discipleship Lesson 4

Baptism

Key Memory Verse:

“What hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

Acts 8:36b-37a



Discipleship

Lesson 4

Baptism

As you study this lesson you will understand why the following statements are **not true**.

1. Man must be baptized in order to be saved and go to heaven.
2. Baptism by sprinkling is just as meaningful as baptism by immersion.
3. Baptism is just between me and God.
4. Baptism can be put off if I'm uncomfortable with the subject.

Now That I Am Saved, What Is the Next Step?

Nearly every religious denomination teaches some form of baptism as part of its doctrine, with a wide diversity of teachings on its importance and meaning. This lesson is intended to give the Bible's clear and definite teaching on this subject so we may understand perfectly what God's intention is regarding baptism.

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to instruct the Christian on what the Bible teaches about baptism and its importance. It also answers two key issues: the method of baptism and infant baptism.

I. Jesus Commanded Baptism

- A. Read Matthew 28:18–20. Is Jesus giving us a suggestion, an option, or a command when it comes to baptism? _____

II. Jesus Was Baptized

- A. Read the heavenly Father's reaction to the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:16–17; Mark 1:9–11).

Our heavenly Father was well pleased with Christ's baptism. He sent a special anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus at that time. It prompted God to announce Christ's Sonship and marked the start of His public ministry. The Father is also well pleased when we acknowledge Him before men through baptism.

- B. The Jordan River was not holy water. Baptism can be performed in any kind of water, be it a natural body like a lake or river, or a manmade reservoir like a swimming pool or baptismal tank. There's nothing special about the water. The significance is in the act.

III. Why Does God Instruct Us to Be Baptized?

- A. Jesus set the example Himself by submitting to baptism before He began His public ministry. Why did Jesus submit to baptism? Review Matthew 3:13–17 (especially verse 15).

- B. Baptism demonstrates our **willingness to submit** to the authority and Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is an act of obedience.

- C. Name the people from the following passages who submitted to baptism immediately after salvation.

1. Acts 2:41 _____

2. Acts 8:26–39 _____

3. Acts 9:18 _____

4. Acts 16:25–33 _____

Notes and Questions

Notes and Questions:

IV. What Is the Purpose of Baptism?

The purpose of baptism is to declare the gospel of Christ. Study 1 Corinthians 15:1–4 and Romans 6:1–7 (specifically verses 3–5) to identify the **two** purposes for baptism. What are they?

A. At its very heart, baptism is a picture of the gospel itself.

1. It is a picture of the _____, _____ and _____ of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Christ gave the ordinance of baptism to the Church as identification with Himself (Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12).

B. Baptism is also seen as identifying the new believer with the local assembly of believers or the local church.

1. In Acts 2:41 we see three thousand souls, who had gladly received Peter's words, being baptized and then were "_____ to them."

2. It is a public testimony of the new convert's identification with Jesus Christ. It is an outward display of the inward reality of our being *united together* with Christ.

V. Who Should Be Baptized?

- A. The clearest case of an individual's baptism in the Bible is the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26–39.

Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

Acts 8:36–39 (verse 37 not found in the NIV)

In verse 36, the eunuch asked if there was anything keeping him from being baptized. Philip then gave the condition for baptism in verse 37. What is the prerequisite that Philip identified in these verses?

Therefore, the **only requirement** for baptism is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9–10).

- B. True salvation is seen in Romans 10:9–10.

1. We must _____ that He is Lord and Savior.
2. Believe in your _____ that Jesus Christ is the risen Lord.

- C. Some other instances of baptism immediately after salvation include:

1. Acts 8:12
2. Acts 18:8
3. Acts 10:43–48

Notes and Questions

VI. What is the Method of Baptism? Sprinkling or Immersion

- A. Acts 8:26–39 gives us the clearest example of the method of baptism. In verses 38–39, both Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch went _____ into the water and came _____ out of the water. In Matthew 3:16, Jesus was baptized in the same manner.
- B. As stated previously, baptism is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1–4). The only way to bury someone properly is to put them completely underground. No one can be buried by sprinkling dirt on them. There is not a single example of anyone being sprinkled or having water poured on them as a means of baptism in the Bible. The biblical method of baptism is complete immersion.
- C. The word *baptize* is really an anglicized form of the Greek word *baptizo*. This was a common word in the first century meaning, “to dip, immerse, plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm, or soak” (see *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Arndt and Gingrich, 2nd Edition, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979, p.131).

Even according to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, the original meaning of the word is “to immerse.”

The word was used in the cultural context in the sense of “to dip in dye.” To dye a piece of cloth another color you must dip the entire cloth in the dye. So to be baptized properly you must be placed entirely under the water. This is consistent with the meaning of the word in the original language of the text.

D. First Century History

Josephus, the great first century Jewish historian, mentions in his writings that proselytes to Judaism were immersed in water. The Roman mystery religions were also practicing immersion during the time of Christ. Immersion was an initiation rite used by various religions all over the world. God employed this common practice in the church.

VII. Infant Baptism and Barriers To Baptism

- A. There are no New Testament examples.

There is not a single mention of an infant or small child being baptized in the New Testament. Those who were baptized first believed and repented. An infant or small child is not capable of these cognitive functions.

- B. The example of Christ.

How old was Jesus when he was baptized according to Luke 3:21–23?

(Note verse 23.) _____

He was circumcised as a newborn, presented in the temple as an infant, and baptized as an adult.

- C. The position of children.

Children are held in a favorable condition with God, according to Matthew 19:14. Also, 2 Samuel 12:11–23 shows that babies who die prior to the age of accountability are in heaven with the Lord.

- D. The barrier of Family Traditions

If you were baptized as an infant by your parents', many people are reluctant to be baptized again because they feel they are dishonoring their parents, and family traditions. Your infant baptism honored your parents' faith. By being baptized as an adult, you are honoring your parents hope, because they were hoping when you were baptized as a baby that you would follow Jesus. This new baptism allows you to make the decision to follow Jesus on your own. There is nothing wrong with being baptized again.

- E. The barrier of fear.

People say, "*I am not ready to be baptized.*" That statement many times is rooted in fear. That fear is rooted in feelings of not being good enough, or righteous enough, etc. to be baptized. But the only requirement for being baptized is that you know you have invited Jesus Christ into your life as your Lord and Savior. Perfection is not a prerequisite. Baptism separates followers of Jesus from fans of Jesus. If you are serious about your spiritual growth and want to follow Jesus, then taking this step will always encourage you.

Notes and Questions:



Notes and Questions:

VIII. How Important Is It to Be Baptized?

- A. It is not essential for salvation. Ephesians 2:8–9 makes it clear a man is saved by grace, through faith, without works, including baptism. See also Galatians 2:16.
- B. It is essential for service and spiritual growth. Matthew 28:19–20 proves it is essential. Baptism is an integral part of the great commission and precedes teaching.
- C. Before anyone can be taught to follow Jesus Christ, they must be willing to submit to the authority and lordship of Jesus Christ. Baptism is a public confession of this submission and can be rightly categorized as the “first act of obedience.” If a person refuses to obey the Lord in the first point of submission, he will not obey or submit in future acts of obedience (Matthew 3:13–15; 2 John 6; James 4:17).

Have you been baptized by immersion? Yes or no? If not, what is keeping you from submitting to baptism? Write down any reasons you may have for not being baptized. Be prepared to discuss them with your discipler.

- D. Remember, it takes character to be obedient to what Jesus commands no matter what your parents, friends, or past religious tradition teaches. Being baptized says you are serious about your commitment to Jesus Christ.

IX. Practical Application

- A. Why is it important to be baptized? What is the significance to you personally?
- B. What method of baptism should be the standard in the Christian experience?
- C. Name two important truths or principles that stood out to you from this lesson.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____