



## Lesson 3 - Baptism

### WHAT IS THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF BAPTISM

*Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:13-17*

There are many teachings and many traditions regarding baptism. This is one of the most controversial teachings since the church began. In this lesson we will explore what is written in the Scriptures to give you a better understanding of baptism. In this lesson, when we refer to baptism, please note that the mode of baptism referred to is full water immersion.

**What does the word "baptize" mean?** In the Greek, it is the word "baptizo", which literally means to dip, to immerse, to submerge, to make fully wet.

**What is water baptism?** Water baptism is an outward expression of an inward work. It is identifying with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism is only participated in by a person who has been born-again.

**Is water baptism commanded? If so, where?** *Matt 28:18-20 states, Then Jesus came to them and said "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

It also is stated in *Mark 16:15-16* when He said to them, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*" It doesn't mean that if you're not water baptized you're not saved. However, it is God's will that those who hear the gospel and believe will be water baptized.

**Why do we need to be baptized in water?** In *Matt 3:15* Jesus speaks of His own water baptism and He says, "*It fulfills all righteousness*". The word 'fulfill' means 'to complete'. Water baptism completes all righteousness.

**How? The basic principle is found in James 2:17:** *Thus, also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.* Water baptism is an outward action denoting the righteousness that took place in your spirit the moment you were born again.

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### WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER BAPTISM?

*In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. Col 2:11-15*

Water baptism symbolizes our spiritual circumcision.

*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Rom 6:3-7*

Water baptism symbolizes our death, burial, and resurrection with Jesus Christ. You were crucified with Christ on the cross. Immersion into the water symbolizes being buried and coming up out of the water symbolizes resurrection to newness of life.

*Who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 3:20-21*

Noah and his family were saved and delivered and brought safely through the water. This is symbolic of water baptism.

*Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 1 Cor 10:1-6*

Moses and the Israelites went through the Red Sea. This also is symbolic of water baptism.

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### ARE THERE DIFFERENT KINDS OF BAPTISM?

*Yes: Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. Heb 6:1-2*

Hebrews speaks of “doctrine of baptisms”. Notice the word “baptisms” is plural, meaning that there is more than one kind of baptism. One kind is the baptism in the Holy Spirit and another kind is water baptism.

### WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

It takes place after getting born again. You must believe first.

Phillip baptizes a believer: *“What prevents me from being baptized”? And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” Acts 8:36, 37*

Peter baptizes believers: *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days. Peter Defends God's Grace Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. Then they asked him to stay a few days. Acts 10:44-48*

A believer named Lydia and her household: *Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So, she persuaded us. Acts 16:14-15*

Jailer and his household after getting saved: *And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” So, they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household. Acts 16:30-34*

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### WHY BE BAPTIZED?

Because you want to follow Christ's example. *It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Mark 1:9*

Because Christ commanded it. Jesus said, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matt 28:19-20*

Because it shows you are a believer. *Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized. Acts 18:8*

Because obeying Christ's command shows that you know Him. *Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 1 John 2:3*

### WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

It is the symbol of Christ's burial and resurrection. *For I delivered to you first that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4*

*...buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. Col. 2:12*

It is a symbol of your new life as a Christian. *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2Cor. 5:17*

*Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4*

Baptism does not make you a believer, it shows that you already are! Baptism does not save you, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring - it's the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart.

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9*

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### HOW ARE WE TO BE BAPTIZED?

Like Jesus was baptized - by being immersed in water. *When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. Matt 3:16*

Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion under water. (Example) *So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. Acts 8:38-39*

It is the best way to picture a burial and resurrection. The founders of most denominations agree:

Martin Luther...*"I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies."*

John Calvin...*"The word 'baptize' signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."*

John Wesley...*"Buried with Him, alluding to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church."*

### WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Every person who has made the decision to believe in Christ. *Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. Acts 2:41*

*Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. Acts 8:13*

The one requirement for baptism is belief in Christ! We do not baptize children until they are old enough to understand and believe.

### WHEN ARE WE TO BE BAPTIZED?

As soon as you have believed! You shouldn't delay! There is no reason to delay. As soon as a person decides to believe in Christ, he can and should be baptized. *Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. Acts 2:41* *"Then Philip began with the scripture and told him the Good News about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, look here is water! Why shouldn't I be baptized right now? Philip said, if you believe with all your heart, you may. The official*

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*answered, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Phillip baptized him.” Acts 6-39 (paraphrase)*

### WHAT ABOUT BEING BAPTIZED TWICE?

It is recommended that you be baptized again if you have not been baptized by immersion since you became a believer. It doesn't devalue a prior experience, but it simply reflects your desire to be baptized in the same way Jesus was baptized.

### CAN MY FAMILY BE BAPTIZED TOGETHER?

Yes! If each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage family members to be baptized at the same time.

### WILL I HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING?

No. At the beginning of the baptism service, the pastor will briefly explain the meaning of baptism. You will wait at the edge of the water for your turn to be baptized. The pastor will introduce you, then briefly lower you just under the water.

**GOD WILL BLESS YOU AS YOU DEMONSTRATE YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST!**

### POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM

- Water baptism is necessary for salvation.
- I was baptized when I was a baby and that is good enough.
- Sprinkling water on my head is sufficient.
- Baptism is entrance into a denomination.

From this lesson you should know that these misconceptions are wrong, and why.

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### MEMORY VERSES

*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Eph 4:4-6*

*...buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. Col 2:12*

*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ Gal 3:26-27*

*And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:15-16*

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Matt 28:19*

### QUESTIONS FROM THIS LESSON

Please answer the following questions:

1) What does the word baptize mean?

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2) What is the importance of water baptism?

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3) Do I need to be water baptized to be saved? Why or why not?

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