

LESSON 4: WATER BAPTISM

“Now that I am saved, where do I start?”

KEY = OBEDIENCE

Most every religious denomination in existence teaches some form of water baptism as part of their doctrine and the diversities in their teachings are wide. This study is intended to give the Bible's clear and definite teaching on the subject, so that the individual understands God's perfect intention regarding baptism.

I. What water baptism is not...

You will discover in the following passages that baptism is NOT for salvation. Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:5-7 state clearly that salvation is by God's grace and mercy alone. There is nothing a person can do to earn eternal life.

See Romans 10:9-10, 13 - This passage does not include water baptism.

The thief on the cross believed upon Jesus and Jesus said, *“To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”* The thief was not baptized in water, he only believed! Luke 23:42-43

II. What is baptism and why should I be baptized?

A. Baptism is the first act of obedience in service to the Lord.

Let us look first at the example set by Jesus Himself by submitting to baptism before He began His public ministry.

Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22

Jesus was certainly not a sinner in need of being baptized. It is clear that Jesus was baptized in obedience to God's plan.

Matthew 3:13-17 states *“...Suffer (allow) it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”*

Here are some Bible characters who first submitted to baptism after salvation:

1. The Ethiopian eunuch – Acts 8:36-39
2. The apostle Paul – Acts 9:18
3. The Philippian jailer and his house – Acts 16:25-33

This point of submission and obedience is the single most important thing to realize regarding baptism.

- B. We are commanded to be baptized.

Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 10:48

See John 14:15, 15:14. Remember, Jesus said these things!

- C. Baptism is a public act of identification with the gospel of Jesus Christ (and is a testimony to the fact that Jesus Christ is our Lord because we have obeyed Him).

Romans 6:1-7 – Water baptism identifies us with the spiritual truth of this passage.

Also, see any water baptism in the New Testament ...they are all public!

- D. It physically illustrates (or pictures) the spiritual reality of the gospel that we trusted in to save us and unite us with God in Christ.

Romans 6:1-7:

Christ died	-	I died (spiritually)
He was buried	-	I was buried (spiritually)
He was raised	-	I was raised (spiritually)



III. When should I be baptized in water?

Water baptism always comes after salvation. New Testament water baptism is only for believers and must take place after a person is “born again.”

Acts 8:36-39, 9:18, 16:25-33, 18:8

This is exactly why babies cannot be scripturally baptized. It is impossible for a baby to believe in Christ. Therefore, babies cannot be baptized.

IV. What is the method of water baptism?

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. No one in the Bible was ever sprinkled because no one can be buried by sprinkling dirt on them.

Matthew 3:13-17 – Jesus went “up straightway out” of the water.

Acts 8:38-39 – They went “down” into the water.

V. Where am I to be baptized?

The location is not important. The fact that it is public is important. Since all the water baptisms in the Bible were performed in public and because we are part of the body of Christ, publicly in the presence of a local church is the best place!

See any of the previous references where someone was baptized.

VI. A Biblical defense against the false teaching that water baptism washes away sin...

- Jesus Himself didn't baptize. Luke 19:10, John 4:2
- The Apostle Paul wasn't sent to baptize. 1 Cor. 1:17, 1 Cor. 15:1-4
- Only blood washes away sin. Heb. 9:22, Col. 1:14, 1 Peter 1:18-19, 1 Cor. 6:20
- Adding baptism to the gospel results in what the Bible says is “another gospel”. 2 Cor. 11:4, Gal. 1:6-9, Prov. 14:12, Ex. 20:25
- If baptism washes away sin, why did Christ have to die? Gal. 2:21, Gal. 3:21, Col. 2:13-14, Heb. 10:10-14
- Jesus said HE was the ONLY way. John 14:6; Matt. 7:13-15, 21-23

VII. Summarizing - 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.
- B. It is essential for service and spiritual growth. Matthew 28:19-20 (the “great commission”) 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 first act of obedience. If a person refuses to obey the Lord in the first point, he will not obey in future points.

Matthew 3:13-15; John 14:15; 15:14

VIII. Memory Verses

Romans 6:1-7 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also [in the likeness] of [his] resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.