

Basic Discipleship

A Course On New Testament Discipleship

Topic #3

New Testament Baptism

Objectives: As a result of the study of this topic we want to be able to:

- 1. Understand the meaning of baptism and its relationship to the Great Commission.**
- 2. Examine the various uses of the term baptism in the New Testament.**
- 3. Analyze those Scriptures that have been used erroneously to teach that baptism contributes to one's salvation.**
- 4. Distinguish between paedobaptism and credobaptism.**
- 5. Discern from the Bible the timing & the mode of baptism is to be practiced.**
- 6. Ask and answer commonly asked questions about the practice of baptism.**
- 7. Memorize a verse of Scripture on baptism.**

Introduction

Very often baptism is described simply in terms of what some church or denomination teaches. You will hear people speak of the "Baptist doctrine" or the "Catholic or Methodist doctrine" or "the doctrine of our church." However, the only thing that matters is what the Bible teaches about baptism. God's people should be baptized because God commanded it, not because some church requires it. They should be baptized a certain way, because that is the way the Bible teaches and it should have a certain meaning, the meaning which God gave to baptism. People need to remember what the Lord says about baptism, and then do what He says, because He said so.

I. *What is the meaning of baptism and how does it relate to the Great Commission?*

A. Definition of the Greek verb for baptism (βαπτίζω).

- 1. A lexical study of "baptizo" indicates it means, "to dip or to immerse."**
- 2. When used in relation to water, the word is used in first century Greek literature of a sinking ship, of someone sinking in mud, and of a fuller dying a piece of cloth by immersing it into the die.**

3. This study will demonstrate that when the Christian is being immersed in the water, he is proclaiming that Christ died and was buried for him.
4. The action of coming out of the water pictures Christ's resurrection.
5. By symbolism they are saying that they believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as the way of salvation.

B. Baptism is important because it is part of the Great Commission.

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

1. After people were initially converted or became disciples, as new believers they were to be baptized in the name of the Triune God.
2. The order is always the same in the Bible — first believe, and then after conversion, after a person is made a disciple, they are to be baptized.
3. A failure not to offer and encourage new believers to be baptized is a failure to obey a critical dimension of the Great Commission.

II. Does baptism have any part in salvation?

People have often been deceived into believing that they can rely on their good works for salvation. Some trust in their morality, some depend upon confessions to priests, some on their church membership, and still others trust in their baptism to save them. However, the unanimous voice of all Scripture is that people are saved by simple faith in Christ as Lord and not by any works.

A. Baptism does not save or help save a person.

1. Baptism is defined as a work and works do not save a person.
2. Jesus describes baptism as an "act of righteousness" (Matthew 3:15), and Christ through His apostles specifically said that such acts of righteousness do not save (Titus 3:5).
3. Salvation is a gift of God, which is not deserved, is not bought, and cannot be paid for (Ephesians 2:8&9).
4. We are plainly told in Scripture that the one who trusts in Christ immediately has eternal life (John 3:36; 5:24; 6:47).

5. Anyone who teaches that baptism saves, or helps to save, is teaching a works righteousness and thus a different gospel (Galatians 1:8&9).

B. Illustrations of people who are saved apart from baptism.

1. The immoral woman, of whom we are told, her sins, which are many, were immediately forgiven by her faith in Christ without having yet been baptized, was saved without baptism (Luke 7:37-50).

50 And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace"

2. The tax gatherer in Christ's parable on the basis of faith apart from baptism, went home declared forgiven without having yet been baptized (Luke 18:10-14).

14 "I tell you, this man went to his house justified . . ."

3. The thief on the cross simply turned to Christ in faith and without ever having been baptized he was promised that he would, that very day, be with Christ in Paradise (Luke 23:39-43).

43 And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

4. The Philippian jailor was told to simply believe in Christ and he would be saved - - his baptism followed his salvation but did not save him (Acts 16:22-34).

31 They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved . . ."

C. Baptism is separated from the plan of salvation.

1. We are told in the Bible that the gospel is the power of God to save an individual (Romans 1:16).
2. The Bible defines the gospel as the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-3).
3. The Apostle Paul clearly separated the gospel from water baptism when he said that Christ did not send him, "to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1 Corinthians 1:17).
4. If baptism were necessary to salvation, Paul would not have made such a statement separating the two.