

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” were “many” was immediately forgiven by her “faith” in Christ’s power & promise to forgive and save apart from her being baptized (Luke 7:37-50).

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

2. In Christ’s parable of two men going up to the temple to pray, the tax collector who relied on God’s mercy alone was said to saved by his faith apart from being baptism, (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 the Lord Jesus” and he would be saved & then after He received Jesus his baptism followed his salvation—but did it 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. When writing the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul distinctly separated the gospel from water baptism when he said that Jesus did not send him, “to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (1 Corinthians 1:17).
4. If baptism were necessary to salvation, then the Apostle Paul would not have made such a statement separating the two.

III. What verses do people use to teach that baptism saves?

To add ANYTHING to the Gospel is to say that Jesus' death on the cross was not sufficient to purchase our salvation. To teach that we must be baptized in order to be saved, is to invalidate the sufficiency of the saving power of Christ's death and resurrection (Galatians 2:21). Any verses that are used to try to prove that baptism saves, must be understood in the broader context of the Bible. Since the Bible never contradicts itself, the diligent student of Scripture will discover there is always a clear explanation for verses people apply to falsely teach that baptism saves.

A. Acts 2:38 does not contradict Ephesians 2:8&9. utilize

38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1. The term, "**for the forgiveness of sins**" sometimes has been used erroneously to justify water baptism as a means to salvation.
2. However, when one uses the word "**for**" in this passage, much like it is used every day in conversational English, we can easily understand and apply what Peter meant.
3. For instance — when we say, "A man is arrested **for** stealing" or that "grateful **for** a favor" or "blamed **for** carelessness" or "commended **for** bravery" how are we using the word "for" in English?
4. Certainly we do not mean "one is commended in order to be brave" but rather that — "one is commended because he is brave."
5. Even so, the word "for" does not mean *in order to secure* the forgiveness of sins and it is not rendered that way in any translation of the Bible.
6. The Greek word **eis** (εἰς), here translated "for" is sometimes translated in the Bible "against, among, at, upon, unto," etc.
7. For instance, in Luke 11:32 we are told that the people of Nineveh repented "at" (εἰς), or "because of" — the preaching of Jonah.

32 "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

8. Likewise, we are to be baptized "**for the forgiveness of sins**" meaning, not "in order to be forgiven" but rather "because we are forgiven."

9. We are baptized as a public expression of our faith to say that we are unashamed of the death, burial & resurrection of our Lord & Savior.

B. Mark 16:16 does not make baptism a requirement to be saved.

“He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”

1. Jesus was not teaching that baptism saved you, for then the verse would have read, “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved *and not been baptized* shall be condemned.”
2. The Lord never mentions baptism as a basis of condemnation for the simple reason that salvation is based on our faith in Jesus Christ who by His grace already has paid for our sins.
3. The Lord Jesus assumed a child of God would publicly confess their faith (Matthew 10:32), which in the first century was done by baptism.
4. Certainly there are people today who have been saved, but who have never confessed their faith by believer’s baptism—not because they are rebellious but because they do not understand its importance.
5. It is unfortunate that God’s order—to believe and then be baptized has been—totally reversed by some believers—who baptize infants, and then later when they hear the gospel—they ask them to believe.

C. 1 Peter 3:21 does not teach that baptism removes sin.

21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

1. The key to understanding this is the phrase “corresponding to that” because the word “corresponding” is the Greek word “antitupos” (ἀντίτυπος) which gives us our English word “antitype” a word used in some translations like the KJV, NKJV & the YLT.

21 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, (New Kings James)

2. Baptism, immersion, is an “antitype” or a mirror image of an earlier type — namely Noah’s ark in the Flood — a type or a picture or a typological prophecy of death, burial & resurrection of Christ.

- 3. Peter does not say that baptism saves us — but that baptism “corresponds” (ESV/HCSB) or “prefigures” (NET) in that it pictures or symbolizes an antitype of that which does save us.**
- 4. This is further clarified by the words that follow — “not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”**
- 5. Water on the body, or the body placed in water, cannot remove the stain of sin — only the blood of Christ can do that (1 John 1:7–2:2).**
- 6. It is not your baptism that saves you, but appealing to God in faith for new life provided through the death and resurrection of Christ.**
- 7. When a person is baptized or immersed—they picture this great truth.**