



# FOLLOWworship

## LESSON 4: BAPTISM

If you have been a part of a Christian Church you have probably witnessed or participated in a baptism. There are various practices and even belief systems in the tradition of baptism within the church. If you have not been in a church culture, then baptism might be a bit of a mystery to you. In this lesson we hope to clarify the questions you might have about getting baptized.

### 1. What does baptism mean to you?

So, what exactly is so special about getting dunked into a pool of water in front of a group of people? You may be thinking "I already live a Christian-like life. I pray and read my Bible every day. I try to reach out to others in need. I go on missions trips. I know that baptism isn't what saves me. Was it really necessary for me to get baptized?"

According to the Bible, Christian baptism is important because it is a step of obedience to God. It's a way for us to make our faith in Christ public and express our commitment to Him. It's a way for us to identify with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Along with communion, we practice baptism as one of the Holy Sacraments. Just like a wedding ceremony and wedding rings are public demonstrations of our love and commitment to our spouse; baptism is our witness before God and others that we are committed to our our new life in Christ.

#### **Romans 6:3-4:**

*Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.*

#### **Galatians 3:27:**

*And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes.*

### 2. What does the author mean when he says that putting on Christ is like putting on new clothes?

The word "baptize" literally means to "immerse." For Christians, the process of getting immersed in the water symbolizes dying and being buried with Christ. The other process of baptism, coming out of the water, symbolizes Christ's resurrection. Baptism is a symbolic announcement about my faith. Or another way to think about it is that it represents the New Covenant that we learned about in our 2nd Lesson of this series. And if Jesus was baptized shouldn't we be too?

### **Mark 1:9-11:**

*One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. As Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens splitting apart and the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy."*

3. Does baptism need to be done in a church and by a pastor for it to count?

Jesus taught that anyone who is a disciple of Christ can baptize a new believer. In order for the gospel message to be spread throughout the world, it requires more than just a lead pastor or minister to be able to lead a people to Christ. So if you are a believer and have followed Christ in baptism, you are eligible and able to baptize another.

Matthew 28:19

*Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

There are some verses in scripture such as Mark 16: 16 and Acts 2: 38 that may lead a person to believe that a person needs to be baptized in order to be "saved". When we look at Scripture we must look at the full counsel of God's Word before we determine the truth.

Here is a summary of the evidence that being baptized does not save us:

1 .The Bible is clear that we are saved by faith alone. Abraham was saved by faith, and we are saved by faith (Romans 4:1-25; Galatians 3:6-22).\*

2. Throughout the Bible, in every dispensation, people have been saved without being baptized. Every believer in the Old Testament (e.g., Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon) was saved but not baptized. The thief on the cross was saved but not baptized. Cornelius was saved before he was baptized (Acts 10:44-46).\*

3. Baptism is a testimony of our faith and a public declaration that we believe in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures tell us that we have eternal life the moment we believe (John 5:24), and belief always comes before being baptized. Baptism does not save us any more than walking an aisle or saying a prayer saves us. We are saved when we believe. \* This is why we do not baptize infants but instead have their parents dedicate them to the Lord. When children reach the age that they can express a full understanding of what it means to be saved and believe that in their hearts, then they can become baptized.

4. The Bible never says that if one is not baptized then he is not saved.\*

5. If baptism were required for salvation, then no one could be saved without another party being present. Someone must be there to baptize a person before he can be saved. This effectively limits who can be saved and when he can be saved. The consequences of this doctrine, when carried to a logical conclusion, are devastating. For example, a soldier who believes on the battlefield but is killed before he can be baptized would go to hell.\*



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6. Throughout the Bible we see that at the point of faith a believer possesses all the promises and blessings of salvation (John 1:12; 3:16; 5:24; 6:47; 20:31; Acts 10:43; 13:39; 16:31). When one believes, he has eternal life, does not come under judgment, and has passed from death into life (John 5:24)—all before he or she is baptized. \*

\*Reference: Does Mark 16:16 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?-Got questions.org

To summarize; our faith must rest in Christ alone. A Christian only has two requirements to fulfill before getting baptized. First, you must have trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin. Second, you must truly understand what baptism is; it's a step of obedience in publicly proclaiming your faith in Christ.

**Ephesians 1:7:**

*He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.*

**Key ideas for discussion.**

1. What exposure have you had to baptism in the past and what have you believed about it?
2. How has this lesson impacted what you believe about baptism? Has anything changed?

**Action Step:**

Prayerfully consider if baptism is something that you still need to take a step of faith in. If so your next step would be to contact your pastor to arrange to be baptized.

Additional resources: Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ  
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