

Lesson 4

BAPTISM: DISPLAYING OUR SALVATION

Where do I begin?

Lesson

4

BAPTISM: DISPLAYING OUR SALVATION

Where do I begin?

No decision of life is more important than the decision to receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour.

Your salvation, however, was just a beginning!

God wants you to grow.

*"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow t hereby:"
1 Peter 2:2*

God's process for growth is unique to each believer, but the process always begins exactly the same – with baptism!

INTRODUCTION

Of all the decisions you have ever made or will ever make, none will surpass the importance and significance of inviting Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Saviour. That reality is firmly established by seeking to answer the question Jesus asked in Matthew 16:26 ... "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

But now that you are on the other side of life's most important decision, what's next? Is that all there is? Absolutely not! This is really just the beginning!

You have been born into God's family, and God has many wonderful things in store for you as one of His children. Above everything else, God now wants you to GROW! (See I Peter 2:2 – in the margin) He wants you to become like His beloved SON.

God will beautifully orchestrate the events and circumstances of your life to grow you (or conform you) into the image of Christ (see Romans 8:28-29). It is important to know that God's dealing with you with regard to your individual growth will be UNIQUE to you. God does not rubber-stamp the process of growth with His children. We are all individuals, and God deals with each of us INDIVIDUALLY.

However! The growth process for each child of God BEGINS exactly the same! It begins with something very important to God called BAPTISM.

There are many different ideas, teachings, and beliefs about baptism. The purpose of this lesson is to give the Bible's clear and definite teaching on the subject so you can understand exactly what God's intention is regarding baptism.

Section A

What The Bible DOES NOT Teach About Baptism

1. The Bible DOES NOT teach that baptism is an act done to WASH AWAY SIN.

- I John 1:7 teaches that "the blood of Jesus Christ His (God's) Son cleanseth us from all sin." Accepting the payment the Lord Jesus Christ provided by shedding His own BLOOD when He DIED on the cross is what washes away our sin.

Baptism cannot wash away sin – only Christ's blood can!

If God had intended the waters of baptism to wash away sin, His beloved Son would not have had to die on the cross!

***If baptism saves, as some denominations teach,
why is it not found in the verses that clearly explain our salvation?***

- John 3:18 He that **believeth** on him is not condemned: but he that **believeth** not is condemned already, because he hath not **believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
- John 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye **believe** on him whom he hath sent.
- John 3:36 He that **believeth** on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that **believeth** not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.
- John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and **believeth** on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.
- John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and **believeth** on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.
- John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that **believeth** in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:
- John 8:24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye **believe** not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.
- Acts 10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever **believeth** in him shall receive remission of sins.
- Acts 16:30-31 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, **Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.
- Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have **believed** in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.
- I Cor. 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that **believe**.
- I John 3:23 And this is his commandment, That we should **believe** on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

The issue in all of these verses is BELIEF!

Note: There is not one example in the entire Bible of someone getting SAVED by being BAPTIZED!

If baptism provided salvation, or was a part of salvation, it would be found in the verses that teach us how to be saved.

2. The Bible DOES NOT teach that baptism bestows any supernatural BENEFIT upon the one being baptized.

- Though baptism is extremely significant to God and serves an extremely important purpose in the life of its recipient, God did not institute baptism as a means of achieving or receiving supernatural grace, life, or forgiveness. As we will see in [Section B](#), God designed water baptism to be an outward demonstration of an already established spiritual reality in the life of the one being baptized. In other words, baptism is not to be observed to CAUSE something to happen to you spiritually... It is to be observed BECAUSE something has happened to you spiritually!

Baptism is significant not because of what it **does**, but because of what it **pictures**.

Regarding infant baptism,
the Bible NEVER:
gives an example of it...
teaches it...
commands it...
or even alludes to it!!!

3. The Bible DOES NOT teach that baptism is a religious ritual or ceremony performed on BABIES or CHILDREN to determine their eternal destiny.

- There is not one reference in all of Scripture TEACHING that babies are to be baptized so they can go to heaven if they die. Not only is the baptism of babies not COMMANDED, it is not even ALLUDED to in all of God's instruction to us. Furthermore, there is not a single EXAMPLE of a baby being baptized in the entire Bible.

Section B What The Bible DOES Teach About Baptism

WHO should be baptized?
*Every person who is
saved.

1. The Bible clearly teaches us
WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED.

- EVERY PERSON who has placed his faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour is COMMANDED by the Lord Himself to be baptized.

Matthew 28:19

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:”

- The testimony exemplified by the early church is that baptism is the very FIRST STEP in a person's life AFTER salvation.

Acts 2:41

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

Acts 8:12

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

Acts 18:8

“And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.”

The testimony of the early
church exemplified that
Christ's followers are
to be baptized.

Conclusion:

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Every person who is SAVED.

2. The Bible clearly teaches us

WHY WE SHOULD BE BAPTIZED.

a. We should be baptized as an act of OBEDIENCE to Christ's COMMAND.

- ❑ God calls all believers to a life of OBEDIENCE after they have been saved. In fact, I John 2:3 teaches that the way you can KNOW you have genuinely been saved is by doing what He has COMMANDED you to do, ...
“*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*”
- ❑ As we saw in Matthew 28:19, the very first thing Christ Himself commands you to do after accepting Him into your life is to be baptized. Your baptism then, since Christ specifically commanded you to do it, becomes one of the first outward EVIDENCES to you (and to anyone else!) that you have genuinely been born again. Again, baptism *does not and cannot* save you. Baptism *does not and cannot* make you any MORE saved than you already are. It simply gives evidence that you *have already been* saved by your desire to WALK in OBEDIENCE to His commands. Jesus said, “*You are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you.*” (John 15:14)
- ❑ It is extremely important to realize that if a person will not obey the very first thing Christ commanded him to do, it is DOUBTFUL that he will think it is important to obey His OTHER commands.
- ❑ Baptism then, is the beginning place of a life of SUBMISSION and OBEDIENCE to the Lord Jesus Christ. According to what Jesus taught in Matthew 28:19-20 (the Great Commission), **baptism is the pivotal decision between a person's SALVATION and his continued spiritual GROWTH.** This truth is set forth in the fact that Jesus established that baptism FOLLOWS salvation and yet PRECEDES teaching. (See Matthew 28:19-20 in the margin)

WHY should we be baptized?

*We should be baptized as an act of obedience to Christ's command.

Obedience to Christ's commands is how we know we are saved.

Baptism *does not and cannot* save, but our obedience in being baptized gives evidence that we *have been* saved.

If a person will not obey Christ's first command, it is doubtful he will obey His other commands.

Baptism is the beginning place of a life of obedience to Christ.

Baptism is the pivotal decision between a person's salvation and his continued spiritual growth.

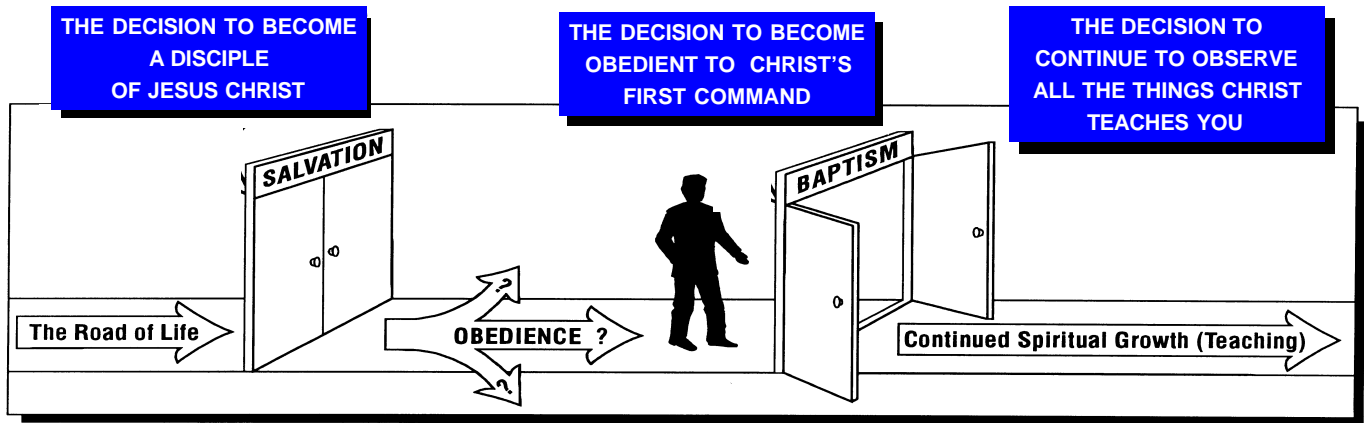
Baptism follows salvation and yet precedes teaching.

The Biblical Design of Discipleship

(Matthew 28:19-20)

1. **Salvation** – “... Teach (make disciples of) all nations”
2. **Baptism** – “... baptizing them (disciples) in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost”
3. **Teaching** – “... teaching them (the baptized disciples) to observe all things that I (Christ) have commanded you.”

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: ...”
Matthew 28:19-20



WHY should we be baptized?
 *We should be baptized as an act of submission to Christ's example.

Christ set the example by being baptized Himself.

Christ's example and testimony is that baptism is an act of obedience.

We righteously fulfill the desire of our heavenly Father by following Christ's example in being baptized.

Following Christ's example is characteristic of true believers.

b. We should be baptized as an act of SUBMISSION to Christ's EXAMPLE.

- Jesus set the EXAMPLE for us to FOLLOW by submitting Himself to baptism.

Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22

- In Christ's baptism, He both exemplified and testified that baptism is an act of OBEDIENCE. When John the Baptist humbly resisted baptizing the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 3:14, Jesus responded, "Suffer(allow) it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Jesus firmly established that His baptism was necessary to righteously FULFILL the desire of the Father. In following Christ's EXAMPLE, we too righteously FULFILL the desire of our heavenly Father.

- The Father confirmed His approval of Jesus' act of obedience as Jesus was coming up out of the water when He spoke from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). We too PLEASE our heavenly Father when we respond in OBEDIENCE to His commands (I John 3:22).

- It is important to understand that **following** Christ's **example** is characteristic of TRUE BELIEVERS.

I John 2:6; John 10:27; John 12:26

- Other significant things to note about Jesus' baptism.
 - It was the first recorded step He took as He was about to begin His public MINISTRY (Matthew 3:1-3,13).
 - It was the first time in history the three Persons of the Godhead were HEARD and OBSERVED together (Matthew 3:16-17).
 - It was not only the FIRST thing Christ observed as He BEGAN His public ministry, but it was the LAST thing He commanded as He ENDED His public ministry (Matthew 28:19-20).

c. We should be baptized because it is an OUTWARD PICTURE of the INWARD REALITY that took place in us when we received Christ.

- You received your salvation because you responded in OBEDIENCE when you heard the GOSPEL. The gospel is defined in I Cor. 15:1-4 as the DEATH, BURIAL, and RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ. (See I Cor. 15:1-4 in the margin.) It was through those three events that Christ provided your salvation.
- The moment you called upon the Lord Jesus Christ to save you, there was a very definite spiritual reality taking place in your life. The Spirit of God literally “baptized” you into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ that you were trusting for your salvation. The word “baptize” means “to IMMERSE, to DIP, to be PLACED into, to submerge.” In other words, your salvation was complete when the Spirit of God “immersed” you or “placed you into” Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.

I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:3-4

WHY should we be baptized?
 *We should be baptized as an outward picture of what happened inwardly when we received Christ.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand... For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how 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:”

I Corinthians 15:1-4

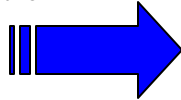
When we received Christ, the Spirit of God baptized us spiritually (i.e. “immersed” us, “placed us into”) Christ’s death, burial and resurrection.

HOW DID THE “GOSPEL” ACTUALLY SAVE YOU?

The **PROVISION** of Christ
(This is what Christ did.)
 I Corinthians 15:1-4

It’s **APPROPRIATION** in your life.
(This is how what Christ did was applied to your life.)
 I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:3-4

Christ DIED to pay the penalty of your sin on the cross.

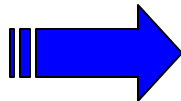


When you called upon His name to save you, **SPIRITUALLY**, you were “placed into” Christ’s death; and **YOU DIED** with Him!

“For I delivered unto you ... how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures”

I Corinthians 15:3

Christ was BURIED with your sin in the grave.

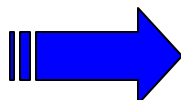


When you called upon His name to save you, **SPIRITUALLY**, you were “placed into” Christ’s grave; and **YOU WERE BURIED** with Him!

“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:”

Romans 6:3-4a

Christ ROSE victorious over sin to newness of life in His resurrection.



When you called upon His name to save you, **SPIRITUALLY**, you were “placed into” Christ’s resurrection; and **YOU WERE RAISED** to newness of life by the same power God put into operation when He raised Christ from the dead physically. (See Col. 2:12)

“... 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.”

Romans 6:4b

Through water baptism you are provided a unique opportunity to share your salvation testimony.

You demonstrate publicly, outwardly, and physically what took place in you privately, inwardly, and spiritually the moment you were saved.

Through the act of water baptism, you are publicly demonstrating what you trusted to save you – the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

- The reason Christ gave you the command to be baptized in water is to provide you with a very unique way of sharing your salvation TESTIMONY. Through your WATER baptism, you are demonstrating publicly, outwardly, and physically the SPIRITUAL baptism into Christ's death, burial, and resurrection that took place in you privately, inwardly, and spiritually the moment you called on His name.
- When you stand in the water at your baptism, you are publicly demonstrating that you have trusted Christ's DEATH on the cross on your behalf. As you are taken beneath the water, you are publicly demonstrating that your sins were BURIED with Christ in His grave. As you come up out of the water, you are publicly demonstrating your RESURRECTION with Christ, and that He has raised you to walk in the newness of life.

Romans 6:3-4



What the wedding ring is to marriage, baptism is to salvation.

When a couple falls in love and is united in marriage, they exchange vows with each other in the presence of God and other witnesses. In most cultures, part of the ceremony includes the exchanging of rings. The rings, however, do not make the couple married. Their vows solidified that. The rings are simply the outward, visible sign to everyone who sees them that the couple is married. Likewise, baptism is the OUTWARD, VISIBLE sign of the INWARD, SPIRITUAL reality that a person has been united with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Conclusion:

WHY SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

1. To OBEY Christ's COMMAND.
2. To FOLLOW Christ's EXAMPLE.
3. To publicly demonstrate our identification with Christ's DEATH, BURIAL, and RESURRECTION.

3. The Bible clearly teaches us

WHEN WE SHOULD BE BAPTIZED.

a. We should be baptized AFTER our salvation.

- Before salvation, there is no inward REALITY with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection for our water baptism to outwardly PICTURE. This is made clear in the example of Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26-39. In verse 36, the eunuch asked, "...what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip answered him with the biblical prerequisite for baptism in verse 37, "... If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." The eunuch responded biblically, "... I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Upon his profession of faith, Philip THEN baptized him.

WHEN should we be baptized?

*We should be baptized AFTER our salvation.

Baptism has meaning only for those who have believed in Christ, but the testimony of Scripture is that all who have believed in Christ will be baptized.

❖ Are you completely sure that you have been saved?

❖ Have you been baptized since you have been saved?

b. We should be baptized at the _____ AFTER understanding God's command and purpose for us to be baptized.

- "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized..." (Acts 2:41)
- "When they believed... they were baptized." (Acts 8:12)
- "Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized." (Acts 18:8)

❖ Do you understand what baptism is and why God commanded you to be baptized?

❖ Will you determine today to observe (obey) this first command of the Lord Jesus Christ at your first opportunity to do so?

(If your answer is yes, write today's date on the line below.
If your answer is no, write a brief explanation of why.)

WHEN should we be baptized?

*We should be baptized at the first opportunity AFTER understanding what baptism is.

Conclusion:

WHEN SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

1. AFTER our salvation.
2. At our FIRST OPPORTUNITY after understanding God's command and purpose for baptism.

4. The Bible clearly teaches us

HOW WE SHOULD BE BAPTIZED.

- a. The only BIBLICAL method of baptism is IMMERSION because of the DEFINITION of the word "baptize." As previously discussed, the word literally means "to immerse, to dip, to be placed into, to submerge."
- b. The only **biblical** method of baptism is **immersion** because it is the only method that actually PICTURES the death, burial, and resurrection.

HOW should we be baptized?

*We should be baptized by immersion.

The word baptism means "to immerse, to dip, to be placed into, to submerge."

The only biblical method of baptism is immersion...

... because of the definition of the word "baptism".

... because it is the only method that pictures the death, burial, and resurrection.

... because it follows the examples of baptism recorded in the Bible.

c. The only **biblical** method of baptism is **immersion** because of the EXAMPLES of baptism recorded in the Bible.

- ❑ Jesus was **immersed** in His baptism.
"And Jesus, when he was baptized (immersed), went up straightway out of the water." Matthew 3:16
- ❑ The Ethiopian eunuch was **immersed** in his baptism.
"... they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized (immersed) him." Acts 8:38

Conclusion:
HOW SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

Only by _____.

WHERE should we be baptized?
We should be baptized through the authority of a local church.

5. One final subject regarding baptism is WHERE WE SHOULD BE BAPTIZED.

a. As we will see in Lesson 7, God's plan is being carried out on the earth during this period of time through the only institution Jesus ever died for, promised to build, or entrusted with the gospel... the LOCAL CHURCH.

Ephesians 5:25; Matthew 16:18; I Thessalonians 2:4a

- ❑ The LOCAL CHURCH, then, is the obvious place through which you are to be baptized.

Note: The actual place of the baptism is not significant. (It could be in a lake, river, ocean or creek.) The significant thing is that your baptism is carried out by the AUTHORITY of a local assembly of believers.

Since baptism is a public testimony of salvation, your baptism in a local church automatically identifies you to the doctrine of salvation taught in that church.

b. Since baptism is a public profession of your SALVATION, the local church in which you are baptized is extremely important. Whether you intend it to be so or not, the actual testimony of your salvation demonstrated through your baptism automatically links you to the DOCTRINES concerning SALVATION that are publicly taught in the local church that is administering your baptism.

- ❑ Some churches baptize, but theirs is not scriptural baptism because it is not by IMMERSION.

Why is this not scriptural baptism?

Because the public testimony of salvation is LOST because the outward demonstration of the gospel is ABSENT.

- ❑ Some churches baptize by immersion, but it is not scriptural baptism because they believe immersion is essential to SALVATION.

Why is this not scriptural baptism?

Because the public testimony of salvation is that the WATERS of baptism are what actually WASH away sin.

- ❑ Some churches baptize by immersion, but it is not scriptural baptism because they believe you can LOSE your salvation.

Why is this not scriptural baptism?

Because the public testimony of salvation is that the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ was not ENOUGH to secure salvation; human works still need to be added to COMPLETE your salvation, or to KEEP your salvation.

Conclusion:

WHERE SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

Only through the ministry of a local church that teaches sound doctrine concerning SALVATION.

- ❖ Write the date of your salvation here: _____
- ❖ Write the date of your baptism here: _____
- ❖ Write the name of the local church that baptized you here:

If you have been baptized prior to your salvation...

– or –

If you have been baptized by any other method than immersion...

– or –

If you have been baptized by a church that teaches that baptism is essential for salvation...

– or –

If you have been baptized by a church that teaches you can lose your salvation...

You have the wonderful opportunity to publicly identify yourself through baptism with sound doctrine concerning the power of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection as your only hope and means of salvation.

Conclusion:

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Every person who is SAVED.

WHY SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

To obey Christ's command, to follow Christ's example and to publicly demonstrate our identification with Christ's DEATH, BURIAL, and RESURRECTION.

WHEN SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

AFTER our salvation and at our first OPPORTUNITY after understanding God's command and purpose for baptism.

HOW SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

Only by IMMERSION.

WHERE SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

Only through the ministry of a local church that teaches sound doctrine concerning SALVATION.