



Baptism

Study Guide

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A WORD ABOUT BAPTISM

The first thing we want to emphasize is that we believe it is not the water that saves us, or the ritual, but the grace of Jesus Christ. We put our faith and confidence in His death and resurrection, which alone has the power to save. With that said, however, we do believe that the Bible teaches that disciples (followers) of Jesus should be baptized by immersion (dipping) in water.

Here are three basic reasons why we practice baptism in this way . . .

1

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Jesus was baptized by immersion.

Read Matthew 3:13-17, especially note verse 16.

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. ¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

THINK ABOUT IT

Did Jesus "need" to be baptized?

Why then did he choose to be baptized?

Was Jesus baptized by immersion or sprinkling?

About how old was Jesus when he was baptized?

We want to be imitators of Christ, and though several different methods and modes of baptism have been used through the years since Jesus' day, it is our desire to teach and practice baptism as Christ himself did. Here we can see his clear example in the Bible.

Which of these might be good reasons to be baptized even if I don't "need" to?

____ As a witness to others

____ To follow the example of Jesus

____ To be baptized in the manner that Jesus was

____ To signify an adult commitment

2

OTHER EXAMPLES OF BAPTISMS IN THE BIBLE

Every baptism in the New Testament is by immersion (going fully under the water).

Baptism in the Early Church

Read Acts 2:36-38. (Read the entire chapter if possible)

(Peter speaking to the crowd) ³⁶ "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." ³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

THINK ABOUT IT

How would you summarize the main thrust of Peter's message (verses 14-36)?

What was the people's response?

What did Peter tell them to do, in answer to their heartfelt response?

(Two things) _____ and _____

What did Peter say they would then receive? (Also two things)

_____ and _____

Read Acts 8:35-39.

³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" ³⁷ Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." ³⁸ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. ³⁹ Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

What did the eunuch have to do prior to being baptized?

Was the eunuch baptized by immersion or sprinkling?

How did the Eunuch feel after he was baptized?

THE MEANING OF THE WORD BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Greek word that is used in the Bible for “baptism” or “baptize” is “baptizo”, which means “to immerse or dip under water.” In those days, if they wanted to wash anything by plunging it fully under the water, they would say that they “baptized” them. (Other Greek-language options of the day would have been “rantizo” for “sprinkle”, or “cheo” for “pour”.) But every single time someone is baptized in the Bible, the word used is “baptizo.” This carries a lot of weight to us, as we try to follow the Bible’s teaching. Through the centuries, various churches have taken up other methods, perhaps for convenience, but the simple fact is that immersion is the original, Biblical method.

Interestingly, even such renowned theologians and church leaders as Luther, Calvin, and Wesley attest to this fact . . .

Martin Luther... *“I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the work imports and the mystery signifies.”*

John Calvin... *“The word ‘baptize’ signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.”*

John Wesley... *“Buried with Him (in Romans 6), alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church.”*

These historical quotes actually lead to our final point as we explore the reasons that we baptize believing adults by immersion . . .

3

THE BIBLE BEAUTIFULLY EXPLAINS BAPTISM

The Bible teaches that there is great significance and meaning in baptism by immersion.

While the above reasons are certainly factual and good ones, our teaching and practice regarding baptism is also driven by the rich and wonderful meaning that the Bible itself ascribes to immersion for adult believers.

Baptism in the writings of Paul

Read Romans 6:4-5. (Read verses 3-11, or the whole chapter, if possible.)

⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

What does baptism symbolize?

How does immersion completely under water show this?

Baptism is a physical picture of a spiritual reality.

We believe that this powerful imagery from Romans 6 is God’s intention. Paul uses intentionally drastic language here: Baptism represents a death ... and a burial and resurrection! It symbolizes dying to sin, burial with Christ, and being raised up to live a new life in Him! It truly is a beautiful and powerful picture of our new life in Christ.



CONCLUSION

We practice baptism by immersion for all who have put their confidence (faith / trust) in Christ, along with repentance (a turning from the old life) and a confession of their commitment to live a new life in Christ.

This is in keeping with the Bible's clear teaching and example, and it is also the normal practice of the Church during its' first 1000 years.

Baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and our personal identification with Him by dying to our own sin and being raised to walk in a new life with him. It also symbolizes our sin being washed away.

While baptism does not save us (it is not "magic water"), it is a beautiful picture of the salvation that is given to us by grace and through faith in Christ.

We hope you can see that this is not something we take lightly, but rather it is something we see as important, beautiful, and God-given. It is not for the sake of "following rules to get saved." We are all saved by God's grace! We believe that sacraments such as baptism and communion are a vital part of the Christian life, and our desire is to follow the Bible's teaching.

Being baptized in the way that Jesus was will also accomplish the following:

- It will show others the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and how you have died to your sin and have been raised to walk in a new life with Christ. It is one of the greatest ways to witness to your friends and family. It will demonstrate to them exactly why you have changed and what God is doing in your life. If you were looking for an opportunity to tell everyone at once, here it is!
- It will solidify an adult commitment to following Christ, and serve as a vivid milestone in your Christian walk.
- It will be an example for children and youth who are old enough to consider commitment to Christ and following Him in baptism. It will also encourage other adults who may need to follow Christ in baptism.



WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

1. Pray.

Pray over this study guide and the scriptures and principles in it.

Ask God to show you what you should do.

2. Contact us.

If you decide you are ready to be baptized, contact the church office at **281.980.7070** or at: contactus@firstcolonychurch.org

We will be happy to schedule your baptism at any time – either during one of our worship services, or if you prefer, at a smaller gathering of close friends and family. We have baptized people in rivers, lakes, and swimming pools in addition to the baptistery in our church building. We just want to make sure you have people there to celebrate with you during this wonderful occasion!

Once you have scheduled your baptism, invite friends and your family to come to the party and watch.

3. Get Baptized.

On the day of your baptism, be sure to bring a change of clothes, a towel (towels are provided for baptisms in the church building), and any personal items that you might need

We will go over the "practical how to's" of the baptism with you before the ceremony.

Please let us know if you have any questions, or if you would like to meet with someone for prayer, discussion, or further study.

We are so glad you are considering this important sacrament, and we pray the Lord will bless you as you study and pray over this matter!

