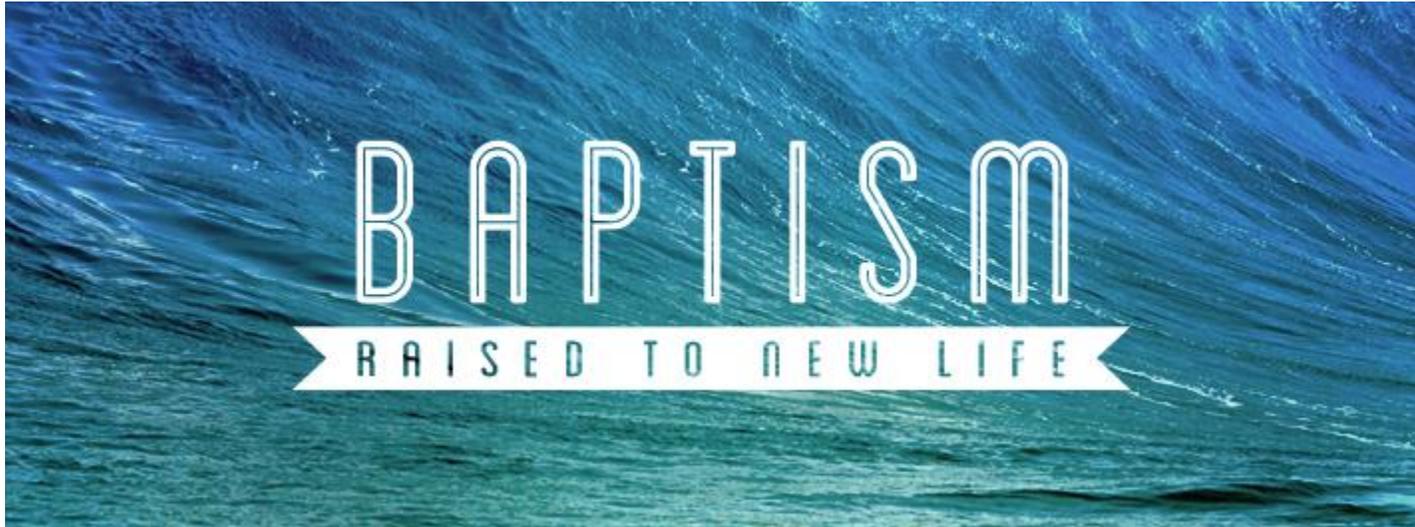


# The First Big Step . . .



A short Bible study to help you gain a Biblical perspective on an important area

Once you have completed this study, you will be prepared to take that first big step of obedience. More importantly, you will understand who, when, how, where and why it is important for you to do so! God bless you as you seek to understand this issue in the same way the Bereans did in the book of Acts — through studying the Bible.

*“Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”*

Acts 17:11 (NIV)

# 1. WHAT is Baptism?

**ACTS 2:38** *Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you . . .”*

If you take a trip to Israel and tour the ancient land where Jesus lived and taught, you’ll discover that the world of the Bible included the concept of ritual bathing. Men and women would ceremonially wash to cleanse themselves from their sins. Jesus and His disciples came along and called people to be baptized to **publicly proclaim one’s own death and the new life and identity they now have in Jesus Christ**. This is why the early church wanted people to go public with their faith as soon as they could, sometimes that very day, because they wanted to tell people the great news that they said good-bye to their old way of living and they had embraced a new way of living that is centered on the life and identity of Jesus.

Following Jesus is a personal decision that each person had to make but that decision has public implications. Therefore, baptism is an illustration that faith is both personal and public. The one thing faith in Jesus is not is private. The act of baptism as the first step in following Jesus gives a clear picture of that.

# 2. WHO should get baptized?

a. Whom did Jesus’ disciples baptize (Acts 2:41)?

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b. In Acts 10:27-48, whom did Peter say should be baptized?

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c. Referring to these people who had just become Christians in Acts 10, Peter . . .

- asked them to be baptized
- suggested that should pray about being baptized
- commanded them to be baptized

Baptism is a life-changing decision that someone has to make for themselves. A baby or toddler cannot make that decision.

### 3. WHY should we get baptized?

**MATTHEW 28:18–20** *And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Reason #1: \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 3:21** *When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too.*

Reason #2: \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 6:4** *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.*

**Colossians 2:11-12** *In him (Christ), you put off the sinful nature, . . . having been buried with him in baptism, and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.*

Reason #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Every Christian should be baptized to obey Jesus' command (Matt. 28:19), to follow His example (Luke 3:21), and to symbolize that our old life is gone and we have new life in Jesus (Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:11-12).

#### 4. WHEN should we get baptized?

1. How soon after they believed were the following people baptized?

a. 3,000 people (Acts 2:41)

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b. Ethiopian official (Acts 8:35-38)

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c. Paul (Acts 9:17-19)

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d. Philippian jailer (Acts 16:32-33)

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2. Were any of these people baptized before they personally believed in Christ?

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#### 5. HOW should we get baptized?

1. Was Jesus baptized by immersion, pouring or sprinkling (Mark 1:9-10)?

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2. In Acts 8:38-39, in what way was the Ethiopian official baptized?

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The meaning of the Greek word baptism βαπτίζω (*baptizo*) means to submerge or immerse. In New Testament times, the Greeks frequently used the word to refer

to “*baptizing*” their clothes in dye, “*baptizing*” a cup in water, or “*baptizing*” a cucumber in vinegar to make pickles. The meaning of the word indicates that baptism should be by immersion. It later became a technical term that referred specifically to the Christian practice of baptism.

## 6. WHERE should we get baptized?

1. Where was the Ethiopian official baptized (Acts 8:26, 36-38)?

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2. Where did John the Baptist baptize?

a. Matthew 3:5-6

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b. John 3:23

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A person can be baptized any place where there is enough water to be immersed.

## 7. Who should baptize me?

a. According to Matthew 28:19, who can baptize?

- only a pastor or church leader
- only someone who has been a Christian for a long time
- any Christian

Any faithful believer who leads someone to Christ may baptize them or encourage them to be baptized.

As you consider being baptized, do you have someone that you would like to baptize you?

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## 8. Processing Questions:

a. Was there anything new you learned as you went through this study?

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b. In your own words, what is baptism?

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c. What message do you want your baptism to send to:

God? \_\_\_\_\_

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Christians? \_\_\_\_\_

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Not yet Christians? \_\_\_\_\_

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d. According to the Bible, what saves you? Is baptism a part of it?

(Romans 1:16, 1 Cor. 1:17)

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e. Why do you want to be baptized now?

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f. Since baptism is publicly telling everyone about who Jesus is and what He has done in your life, who do you want to invite to see your baptism?

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g. What questions do you have about baptism?

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