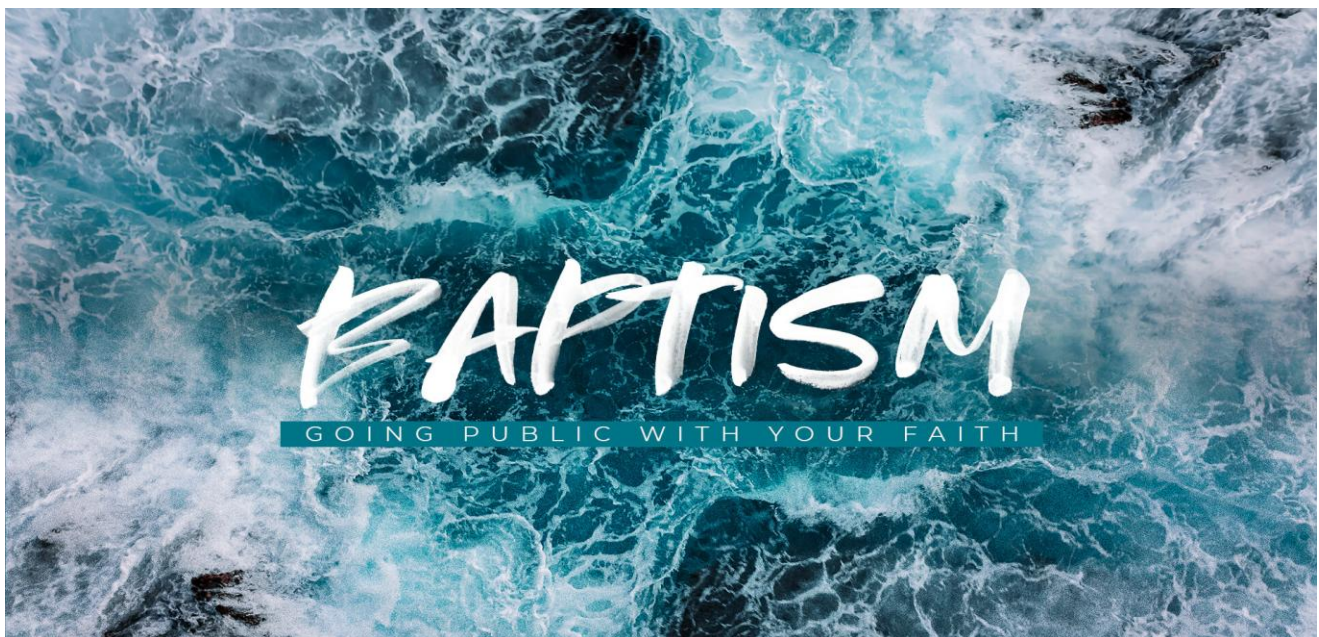




The First Big Step with Jesus . . .



What the Bible Teaches

Our prayer is that this brief study will help you understand what baptism is and what it is not by looking at God's voice in print, the Bible. This study will address questions of who, when, how, where and the why of baptism. We also pray that this study will prepare you to go public with your faith through baptism. God bless you as you seek to understand this next step.

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)?

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

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.

Note: Some Christians practice infant baptism. What does the Bible say? Below are some Scriptures from the book of Acts to bring clarity around this issue.

ACTS 2:

In chapter 2, we find Peter preaching the word in the midst of the crowd gathered in Jerusalem at Pentecost. The crowd cries out in conviction, “Brothers, what shall we do?” to which Peter responds, “repent and be baptized.” In verse 41, we read that those who were baptized were “those who received his word.” Infants cannot repent on their own. Infants cannot be cut to the heart that led to the question to the Apostle Peter – what shall we do?

ACTS 8:

There are two accounts of baptism in chapter 8. The first occurs in response to the preaching of Philip (one of the seven selected in Acts 6 to assist the apostles) in Samaria. In verse 12, we read that many were baptized: “When they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.”

The second account involves Philip as he encounters the Ethiopian eunuch. After preaching Christ from Isaiah 53 to the eunuch, he requests baptism, and Philip obliges. The text itself does not specify the conditions for such baptism; although, some manuscripts record the eunuch stating, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

ACTS 9:

Chapter 9 contains the baptism of Paul immediately after his experience on the road to Damascus. Within the context, we read that Ananias was specifically sent to minister to Paul that he might receive sight (having been blinded by the vision of Christ in 9:3-9) and “be filled with the Holy Spirit”.

ACTS 10:

The 10th chapter includes the baptism of Cornelius and, presumably, his household. After Peter preached the gospel to those who were gathered, “the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word”. Peter describes this as having “received the Holy Spirit”. When Peter recounts the experience to the church in Jerusalem, their interpretation of the event is that it evidenced that “God has granted repentance that leads to life.

ACTS 16:

Like chapter 8, this chapter also includes two distinct accounts of baptisms. The first involves Lydia and her household. Though nothing is specifically stated about the condition of her household (see below “What About Household Baptisms?”). Lydia’s

baptism is related to the reality that “the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul,” and her subsequent appeal is based upon her perceived faithfulness (10:15).

The second account in chapter 16 involves the jailer and his household who heard the “word of the Lord” that was preached to them by Paul and Silas (vs. 32). As in the case of Lydia, no explicit mention is made as to the spiritual condition of the jailer’s household, but his own is specifically included as vs. 34 indicates that they rejoiced “that he had believed in God.”

ACTS 19:

The final account of baptism in the book of Acts is found in chapter 19. In this context, Paul discovers some “disciples” who had been baptized into John’s baptism of repentance but had not yet received the Holy Spirit. In response, Paul baptizes them, lays his hands on them, and they receive the Holy Spirit.

3. WHY should we get baptized?

MATTHEW 28:18–20 *Jesus said, “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: _____

Note: People wonder what does it mean to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Spirit? Well, here at Montavilla we put it like this:

We are baptizing you into the name of the Father because you are now a child of God who belongs to the Family of God. And as the children of God, we are called to imitate God as beloved children who love others like we have been loved by God.

We are baptizing you into the name of the Son because you are now a servant of Jesus the King, who came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for you. As a servant of Jesus, serve others as your act of worship toward Jesus.

We are baptizing you into the name of the Spirit because you are now a missionary of Jesus, sent with the power and presence of the same Spirit that empowered Jesus to do everything he did on his mission from the Father.

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, did the following people get baptized?

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

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

c. Paul (Acts 9:17-19)

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

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

5. HOW should we get baptized?

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

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

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. It was only later when *baptizo* 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)?

2. Where did John the Baptist baptize?

a. Matthew 3:5-6

b. John 3:23

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?

8. Processing Questions:

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

- b. In your own words, what is baptism?

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

God? _____

Christians? _____

Not yet Christians? _____

- d. According to the Bible, what saves you? Is baptism a part of it?
(Romans 1:16, 1 Cor. 1:17)

- e. Why do you want to be baptized now?

- 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?

- g. What questions do you have about baptism that have not been answered?

Once you have completed this study feel free to reach out to Pastor Travis if you would like to discuss baptism further or schedule a time to say YES to Jesus in baptism.