

The First Big Step . . .

BAPTISM

A 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)*



THE ROCK CHURCH

I. WHO should get baptized?

1. Who should be baptized?

a. What is the first thing that Jesus commands to be done to those who have become His disciples (Matthew 28:19)?

b. Whom did the apostles baptize (Acts 2:41)?

c. In Acts 10:47-48, whom did Peter say should be baptized?

d. Referring to these people who had just become true Christians, Peter . . .

- asked them to be baptized
- suggested that maybe they should be baptized
- left it as an opinion
- commanded them to be baptized

“I have never been satisfied to think of the Bible as simply containing God's Word, or as a record of man's yearning after heavenly things. I accept it in its entirety as God's Holy Word and approach it in expectation of meeting Him on virtually every page.”

— Dr. Carl G. Morlock (well-known Mayo Clinic physician)

2. Who should baptize?

a. Is Matthew 28:19 a command only to be baptized, or is it also a command to baptize others?

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

- only a minister or priest
- only older believers
- any believer who wants to obey Matthew 28:19

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

II. WHEN should we get baptized?

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

3. There is no command or example anywhere in the Bible for the baptizing of babies.

a. How do we know that baptizing a baby will not help save his soul (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 10:9)?

b. Today, there are many traditions (teachings of men) that have been added to what the Bible teaches. Infant baptism is a tradition that arose long after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1) What did Jesus caution us to look out for concerning the traditions of men (Mark 7:6-9)?

2) What does God want us to learn (1 Corinthians 4:6)?

III. 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 word baptism (Greek: baptizo) is to dip or immerse. In New Testament times, the Greeks frequently used the word to refer to “baptizing” their clothes in dye or “baptizing” a cup in dishwater. The meaning of the word indicates that baptism should be by full immersion.

“If good men wrote the Bible and then claimed it was written by the inspiration of God, they would be liars — and liars are not good men. They would be deceivers, and good men don't purposely deceive people. If bad men wrote the Bible, they would be condemning themselves, because the Bible condemns sin. Bad men tend to justify themselves, but the Bible never justifies sin. Bad men couldn't have written the Bible because the Bible is a good book. Since neither good men nor bad men wrote the Bible, the only Person left is God. God wrote the Bible and it is the masterpiece of His handiwork.”

— John Wesley (18th-century British preacher)

IV. 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 _____

3. Does baptism have to take place in a church building or baptismal font?

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

V. WHY should we get baptized?

1. Being baptized does not help obtain eternal salvation.

a. In Romans 1:16, what is God's power to save us? _____

b. Is baptism a part of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 1:17)? _____

c. Would you consider baptism to be a righteous or unrighteous deed?

d. Are we saved by any works of righteousness that we do (Titus 3:5)?

2. Water baptism is a symbol of a believer's spiritual baptism (placement) into Christ. Since we have been spiritually placed (baptized) into Christ, what two events in Christ's life have also happened to us (Colossians 2:12)?

a. _____

b. _____

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense. Take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the context indicate clearly otherwise."

— David L. Cooper (Christian author)

A believer going under the water symbolizes that his old life is dead and buried with Christ; coming up out of the water symbolizes that he has been raised to a new life. Fear boxes us in, but faith in God brings real freedom. Obedience in baptism is a mark of faith.

3. Baptism is a public testimony identifying a believer with Christ. In New Testament times, slaves were often baptized after they were sold, showing the community that the slave belonged to a new master. In the same way, a believer is declaring to everyone that he now belongs to Christ by being baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 10:48). What effect do you think the public baptism of 3,000 believers in one day had on the city of Jerusalem (Acts 2:41)?

4. One reason to be baptized after we receive Christ is that Jesus commands it. What happens to all who obey God's commandments?

a. Matthew 7:24-25

b. John 13:17

c. John 14:21

Thought questions:

1. For baptism to be biblical, when should it be done?

2. For baptism to be biblical, how should it be done?

3. According to Scripture, should a Christian put off being baptized?

4. Why should a Christian be baptized?

Assignment:

If you have not been baptized since your personal decision to believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, God wants you to be baptized. Talk to the leaders of your church about where and when you can be baptized.

Memorize and think about:

“Whoever has My commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love Him and show myself to Him” (John 14:21).

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON BEING BAPTIZED AT THE ROCK CHURCH:

What about being baptized twice?

We recommend that you be baptized again only if you have not been baptized by immersion since you became a believer. It doesn't devalue a prior experience, but simply reflects your desire to be baptized in the same way that Jesus was baptized and the mode in which the Bible directs us.

Will I have to say anything at my baptism?

No. At the beginning of the baptism, the pastor will briefly explain the meaning and biblical purpose of baptism. Following that, the pastor will introduce all those being baptized and present a pre-taped video in which you will briefly describe how you came to know Christ and why you want to be baptized. In order to prepare what you will share in this video, please write a few thoughts about the following questions:

1. What was my life like before I became a Christian (spiritual upbringing)?

2. How did I get saved (when, where, how, who helped you, etc.)?

3. How has Christ made a difference in your life (specifics are good)?

After you have submitted this completed baptism study, someone will contact you to set up a time to have you filmed and will finalize the final details for your baptism.

Who can baptize me?

Great question! You may have a pastor or anyone who is a believer (and has been baptized) conduct your baptism.

What should I bring and wear at my baptism?

Bring a towel and anything else you'd need after going swimming. We encourage women to wear a swimsuit with dark shorts and a dark T-shirt over the suit. Men may wear a swimsuit and a plain T-shirt.

When do baptisms take place?

At The Rock, we currently offer baptisms once a month at each location. Baptisms take place right after announcements as part of our regular services on the specified day. Please submit this form two weeks BEFORE the baptismal service in order to be scheduled, or contact office@experiencetherock.com for more information.

I have personally completed this study and fully understand the biblical significance of baptism:

name (please print)

date

phone

signature

e-mail