

The Way
Birth of the Church
Lesson 02: God Commands His Children to be Baptized
We are indebted to [Ethnos360](#) for providing the basis of these lessons

Review (Where We've Been)

Last week we learned about the arrival of the Holy Spirit following Jesus' ascension.

- Jesus' close followers were waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem
- Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit would dwell in those who believed
- The Holy Spirit arrives with signs and wonders (wind and fire), and then indwells

Last week we concluded with Peter telling people to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Christ, as well as to repent and be baptized.

Acts 2:37 (ESV) Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" **38** And Peter said to them, "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. **41** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

BIG Idea

Today we will be looking more closely at Peter calling people to be *baptized after they believed* in Jesus as their Savior from sin.

We'll do this by highlighting three baptisms: John the Baptist, Jesus, and Christian (modern-day) baptism.

Although each of these baptisms are *distinct*, they *build on one another*.

Information (What You Need to Know)

Before we discuss baptism, allow me to make a bold statement...

In the Scriptures we don't have knowledge of *any* unbaptized believers, except the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43).

Baptism (as we'll discover) is *the significant way* a Christian makes their faith public.

Three Building Blocks of Baptism...

1. John's Practice of Baptism

- Called people to repent

Matthew 3:1 (ESV) In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

What did it mean for them to repent?

- ✓ Admission of sinfulness and need to be made right with God
- ✓ Rejection of the idea that being Jewish made them right with God
- ✓ Reliance on God's mercy to forgive those who confess Jesus as Lord and repent of sin

- Identified people with the coming Deliverer

Matthew 3:3 (NLT) The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said, “He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming! Clear the road for him!’”

“John’s baptism was to show that the people had repented of their sins and that they were looking and waiting for the Deliverer to come.” – Firm Foundations

- Baptized people by immersion

Matthew 3:5 (ESV) Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, 6 and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

- Symbolized people being cleansed of sin

Matthew 3:11 (ESV) “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

2. Jesus' Example of Baptism

- Didn't need to repent

Matthew 3:13 (ESV) Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

- Identified Himself with man (a righteous man needed to die for the unrighteous)

Matthew 3:15 (ESV) But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented.

- Baptized by immersion

Matthew 3:16 (ESV) And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water...

- Symbolized full obedience to God

Matthew 3:16 (ESV) And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; **17** and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

3. The Church’s Practice of Baptism

- People should repent and believe in Jesus (John looked forward; we look back)

Acts 2:37 (ESV) ...they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” **38** And Peter said to them, “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.”

- Identifies people with Jesus and the Church

Acts 2:41 (ESV) So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

- Baptize people by immersion (we’ll look at this in closing thoughts)

- Symbolizes an *acting out* of the believer’s *immersion* or *identification* with Jesus in His death and resurrection

Romans 6:4 (NLT) For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

“Baptism pictures a person being buried with Christ (submersion under water) and being raised to new life with Christ (emergence from water). This symbolizes the person’s union with Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they now have power to live in newness of life.” – ESV Study Bible

Application (What You Need to Do)

Three Elements Included in the Ethiopian Official’s Baptism...

- The Word of God

Acts 8:27 (ESV) And he [Philip] rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship **28** and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

- The Teacher of God

Acts 8:30 (ESV) So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” **31** And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with

him. **32** Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this [Isaiah]...**35** Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

- **The Spirit of God**

Acts 8:36 (ESV) And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” **38** And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. **39** And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

Philip’s message to the Ethiopian official was the same message Peter gave in Acts 2 ending with the words, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ".

This is why we uphold baptism as the decisive way for people to respond publicly to the gospel.

"Baptism is an outward expression of an inward faith." - Watchman Nee

Will you walk in The Way of Christ by taking the first step of obedience, which is baptism?