

# EMMANUEL

*Baptist Church*

A Biblical Guide To

# BAPTISM

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“As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, “Look, there’s water! **What would keep me from being baptized?**” And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart you may.” And he replied, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

Acts 8:36-37

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Thank you for being a part of our Baptism Course at Emmanuel. We want this to be a great place for you to learn more about Baptism and to explore any questions or concerns you have.

## WHY A BAPTISM COURSE?

*The Disciples did not take people who wanted to be Baptized through a Baptism Course in the Bible. However, because Baptism has come to mean so many different things to different people, and in different churches, denominations, and religions, we want to make sure we take a Biblical approach and understanding to Baptism at Emmanuel.*

*We will look at the What, Who, Why, when and How of Baptism in the Bible*

*Feel free to share during this course any experiences you have had regarding Baptism, and any questions you have as well! At the end of the course, we will be glad to meet with you individually to see if you are ready to be Baptized.*

**Q: What brings you here today?**

Part 1  
**WHAT DOES  
THE BIBLE  
SAY ABOUT  
BAPTISM?**

## Where does baptism come from?

*A Look at John the Baptist and Jesus...*

We begin our study with a look at the first evidences of the practice of baptism in the Bible and the world. Though the Old Testament speaks of ceremonial cleansing rituals (where a person would wash his or her body before offering a sacrifice (i.e. Leviticus 17:15), the specific act of baptism first appears with the gospel accounts of John the Baptist. In fact, in the ancient world, no other form of baptism predates John's ministry in the sense that John intended. We'd be accurate therefore to say that the evidence suggests that John did it first. Let's have a look together at what this ministry was all about.

**What did John's ministry of baptism look like?**

**Read** *Matthew 3:1-6*

- Where is John baptizing the people who come to him? Why might this be significant?

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- What else is John doing in the wilderness besides baptizing people (v1)? Do you think this is significant?

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- What is he calling the people to do prior to being baptized (v2, 6)?

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- What do you think the word 'repentance' means?

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**Read** *Matthew 3:13-17*

- What do you notice about Jesus Baptism & Why do think it may be significant?

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**if Jesus was sinless and John’s baptism is a baptism of repentance, why is Jesus baptized by John?**

This does seem to be a puzzling question and is even one that John the Baptist wrestles with. When Jesus approaches him to be baptized John even says, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” (Matthew 3:14)

Jesus’ answer to John’s question is fairly straightforward, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness,” (Matthew 3:15).



**TRUTH** The Jordan River is the major river running through the nation of Israel. It is a significant body of water and is even today a public place for gathering and interaction. Anyone being baptized by John the Baptist would have been done so in a very visible way before many people that he or she knew. Baptism was always done in front of a group of people.

Since John’s baptism is one of repentance (Acts 13:24), and certainly Jesus being sinless was not, nor would he ever, be in need of repenting from sin.

Instead what is happening at Jesus’ baptism is a public association with a lost people as he begins his public ministry proclaiming the arrival of the Kingdom of Heaven. Rather than identifying himself as a sinner in need of repentance, he identifies himself with the people who desperately need the forgiveness and righteousness that could only come from him.



## How do I get baptized?

*Sprinkled, immersed, or poured?*

In the history of the church, there have been various methods (or modes) of baptizing individuals. These modes historically have included sprinkling, pouring, and immersing. You may have come from a tradition where the mode of baptism is critical to the membership within the local church, or you may have come from one that cared little about it. Likewise, you may have come from no church tradition, and you're puzzled as to how baptism is practiced currently. The fact is the mode of baptism is an important question that needs to be answered as we proceed. So what, if anything, does God's Word have to say on the how of baptism?

**Does the location where baptism was practiced in the New Testament help us solve which mode was used?**

**Read** *Matthew 3:16, John 3:23, and Acts 8:36–39*

- In each of the above passages, there is a common element. What is that?

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- What mode do you think is practiced in these passages? What from an initial reading of the text indicates to you that there is more than just sprinkling or pouring in view here?

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**Baptism is also very symbolic in the Bible. Which mode best captures the symbolism behind baptism?**

**Read** *Romans 6:3–4 and Colossians 2:12*

- What is the symbolism behind baptism?

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- Which mode do you think best captures the symbolism: immersion, pouring, or sprinkling?

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## **Does the word used to describe baptism in the original language help us understand the mode today?**

The New Testament was originally written in *Greek*. This Greek, like our English today, is rich in its diversity and assortment of vocabulary, and it allowed the New Testament writers very specific terminology to communicate very specific truths.

The New Testament writers chose a word that answers our question of the mode of baptism decisively. Though in fact they could have chosen any number of words to describe the act of placing water on individuals, such as “sprinkling,” or “pouring,” or even “moistening,” in every single instance, only one root word was deliberately chosen.

The word they chose (Baptizo), has a narrow meaning denoting “plunging,” “dipping,” or “dunking.” This one word, used 82 times in the New Testament.

**TRUTH:** 6 different writers in the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, and Peter) all used the same Greek word Baptizo to describe the rite of baptism.

## **What if I accepted Jesus at a church where I was baptized by another method?. Did that count, or does this mean I need to get re-baptized?**

No. If your heart at the time of your baptism was to be obedient to Christ in baptism, and in following the leadership you were under you were baptized by another method as a professing believer in Jesus Christ before a body of believers, we believe that this is a genuine baptism. We are not hung up on the display of the symbol so much as we are hung up on the heart.

## **So what does this mean for me?**

It is clear from the context of the passages describing baptisms, from the sense behind the symbolism and from the meaning of the single word used, that believers were baptized by immersion in water. Therefore, in seeking to follow the teachings and example of Scripture, we Baptize at Emmanuel by Full immersion.

## Who should be baptized?

*What kind of person can be baptized?*

So far we've looked at the origin of baptism and how it's done, and now we turn to examine what kind of person should be baptized. Perhaps you've come from a church background that baptizes infants, or one that requires baptism at a certain age, or perhaps you haven't even considered who gets baptized. Regardless of where you fit in, examining what the Bible tells us about who should be baptized is a critical question we need answered. As before, we'll dive into the Bible for answers.

## What must happen in someone's life before they're baptized?

- For each Scripture reference, place the two events described in order:

Acts 2:41

1 2 Received Peter's word

1 2 Baptized

Acts 8:12

1 2 Baptized

1 2 Believed Philip's message

Acts 8:35-36

1 2 Heard the good news about Jesus

1 2 Baptized

Acts 18:8

1 2 Baptized

1 2 Heard Paul and believed

- **Read Acts 2:36-38**, and give the first requirement that must occur in a person's life before he or she can be baptized. How long did the people wait to be baptized?

Requirement 1 \_\_\_\_\_

How long until baptized? \_\_\_\_\_

- **Read Acts 8:11-12; 16:25-33 and 18:8**, and give the second requirement that must occur in a person's life before he or she can be baptized. How long did these individuals wait to be baptized?

Requirement 2 \_\_\_\_\_

How long until baptized? \_\_\_\_\_

- **From your reading of the Bible, where do you think baptism ought to be done in the believer's life...?**

...at the beginning of their new life in Christ as one of the first acts of obedience?

...in the middle of their walk, once our sins have been dealt with?

...near the end when we can be sure that our sin is gone?

**Q: Why do you think some people wait to get Baptized?**

## So What? What does this mean for me?

From the accounts contained in the book of Acts, it seems clear that baptism is to be considered an initiatory practice by newer **believers** in Jesus Christ. In fact, the only requirements for this public profession of faith are a deliberate turning from sin, and a turning to Christ in faith for what he has done in dying for our sins. **These two requirements, repentance, and belief in Jesus Christ, are all that is necessary for someone to be baptized.**

## But what if I don't think I'm ready?

This is a common objection to pursuing obedience through baptism. Often people may be tempted to hesitate to become baptized thinking that they're not ready or that there are areas in their lives that need changing first. However, the New Testament is clear that if you have received Christ and want to follow him, there isn't anything else you need to do to get ready. In fact, it would seem that the New Testament directs us to people who are baptized before they have time to get their lives in order. The truth is that you are ready to be baptized as soon as you understand the responsibility to do it.



## **What if I was baptized as an infant in my previous church, does this mean I need to be re-baptized?**

In short, the answer to this question is yes. The Bible nowhere indicates that there were infants baptized. In fact, prior to the third century a.d., the practice of baptizing infants within the church was simply nonexistent. Unfortunately, this understanding of baptism comes more from tradition than from what God clearly teaches us in the Bible. Again we must return to the simple principle that faith and repentance, since an infant can neither repent of sin nor actively place faith in Christ or even declare this to the church, the practice of baptizing infants is not according to God's Word.

## **So who Should Be Baptized?**

There are only two requirements for baptism according to Scripture: Faith in Christ and repentance from sin. In short, **only a believer in Jesus Christ**—someone who has turned from disobedience to God and surrendered their life to Jesus as their Lord and Savior—can rightly be baptized declaring the work of the Lord in transforming their life.

**Q: Have you repented from your sin and put your faith in believed in Jesus, Who He is and what He did for you? Can you identify a moment in your life when this happened or a process?**



## Why should I be baptized?

### *Is baptism necessary?*

Now that we've seen what baptism is, and how it relates to us, we turn to the question of whether it's essential or not. You may be thinking that it seems a little strange to be getting into a tank of water and immersed in front of the church. You may be thinking that this seems like a needless act; something religious and passé. After all, salvation is by grace through faith alone in Christ, right? Maybe you've even outright refused to be baptized.

**TRUTH:** There has never been a time in the history of the Church when the rite of baptism was abandoned. It's been practiced uninterruptedly from Jesus until today.

If you're thinking any of these things, you're not alone. In fact, at this moment in church history, there are likely more unbaptized followers of Jesus than there have ever been. Many of us do not consider baptism until it's spoken of

from the pulpits, and very few seek out the act on their own.

Again, we need the Bible to teach us whether or not baptism applies to us today. Again, we need God's Word to be the final authority in our lives. Over our personal opinions, over our pride, over our indifference, over our ignorance, we need God's opinion of the matter.

So what, if anything, does the Bible have to say on the necessity of baptism?

## Does the Bible provide reasons for me to be baptized?

The answer to this question is an absolute yes! Over and over again, the Bible calls those who believe in Jesus to be baptized. Examine the following passages and fill in the biblical reasons for being baptized:

Reason 1

\_\_\_\_\_ himself was baptized (**Matthew 3:13-17**)

Reason 2

The Apostles \_\_\_\_\_ it (**Acts 2:38; 10:48; 22:16**)

Reason 3

It allows me to publically \_\_\_\_\_ my faith in Jesus  
(**Matthew 10:32-33**)

Reason 4

\_\_\_\_\_ commanded it (**Matthew 28:18-20**)

**Which reason to you is the strongest? If this were the only reason, would it be enough?**

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## Getting baptized also publicly associates me with Christ's work

- Read Romans 6:1-4 and determine what Paul associates with baptism.

In baptism, the believer is submerged under water associating them with what two things in Christ's work (v2-4)

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In baptism, the believer is also brought up from the water associating them with what else in Christ's work (v4)?

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## **I'm terrified of being baptized. I really don't like standing up in front of people and I get really nervous public speaking. Is there some other way I could get baptized?**

This is a very common feeling. Most pastors even get nervous every time they stand to speak. If you feel as though you are anxious, frightened or even panicked about standing and giving your testimony, you're in the company of almost everyone who's gone before you.

That said, your baptism will be unlike almost every public speaking engagement you've ever had to 'endure.' The reason for this is very simple: The Holy Spirit will assist you in your baptism. Jesus promises the Holy Spirit will come and "bear witness about him."

**TRUTH:** In the New Testament there is simply no such thing as an unbaptized believer in Jesus Christ. If you believed, you were to be baptized.

What that means that when you stand in the tank and declare Jesus Christ to be Lord it will be the Holy Spirit who speaks through you. You can have confidence that the Spirit will take over as you testify with boldness the incredible story of Jesus in your life. Rest assured that you will be greatly assisted by the Spirit of God in your testimony.

## **So why get Baptized?**

To sum it all up we've seen not only the clear commands from the Apostles and our Lord that all believers in Jesus Christ are to be baptized, but we've also seen how baptism supremely symbolizes our public association with Christ in death, burial and resurrection for the cleansing of our sin. The Bible is clear, if you're a believer in Jesus, you should be baptized. Baptism is a significant part of your Faith and life as a Christian.

## What does baptism accomplish?

*A Look at the Results of Baptism...*

We close out our study with looking at what God's word says about the outcome of baptism. When a person obediently follows Christ and profess his or her saving faith in him alone and this done in a public way before a body of believers and this person is baptized, what happens?

**Read *Ephesians 2:4-10***

- What in the character of God compels him to act? (v4-5)

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- What significant word is repeated three times in verses 5-8?  
What does that word mean?

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- According to verses 8 and 9, what role if any do we play in our salvation?

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- From your study would you say that baptism in any way provides salvation? (Think of the thief on the cross who believed in Jesus!)

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**Baptism doesn't save us, wash away our sin or get us to heaven. Instead it is an act of Obedience to God!**

**Read 1 John 5:1-5**

- Those who believe in Jesus and are Gods Children do what?

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- What is Baptism and Why is it important?

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**So What does Baptism Accomplish?**

In summary, we've seen that though baptism plays no part in my salvation it does provide great assurance and blessing as I obey Jesus' command,



**PART 2**  
**TELLING**  
**YOUR**  
**STORY**

### **How do I Tell What God Has done?**

Your personal testimony is a natural introduction into sharing the Gospel of Christ. Using the following guidelines will help you develop your own story of what God has done in your life. Remember...

- 1** You are a unique person in God's eyes! Let God be original in you. You have your own story to tell, and in the telling Jesus Christ can be lifted up and glorified.
- 2** God's power shows up best in "weak" people. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 2:1-5: And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.
- 3** Ask God to give you insights into how He has worked in your life.
- 4** Don't think of sharing with a group, but rather, with an individual. You do not need to be a speaker, just one who has the riches of Christ and now wants to share those riches with another person.

### **Before I received Christ, I lived and thought this way —**

Spend a brief time on "before." This is not a biography from childhood. It is best to start at a time in life, which relates to your experience with Christ. If you became a Christian as a child, thank God for the years you have known Him. We often think that the only exciting testimonies are those of people who have experienced much sin. Remember—anything God does in a life is exciting. Christ did not experience sin, but He did relate to people.

**How I received Christ I—**

Be as specific as possible. The Holy Spirit often convinces people that they should receive Christ when others are sharing how they received Him. However, many people cannot remember the exact circumstances of receiving Christ. Remember the when is not as important as the assurance that Christ is in your life.

**Now with Christ in my life, as I trust Him, I live and think this way—**

Be practical. Explain how you are continuing to grow as you learn to follow Jesus as your Lord. Be realistic don't create the illusion that all things, including you are perfect. Share how Christ is the problem-solver, meeting all your insufficiencies. Some areas where you may have seen changes are:

Relationships

Atmosphere in the home

Bad habits

Adjusting to change

Inner peace & new attitudes

Goals in life, changing

Priorities

Surrendering to God vs. being in  
Control

God's love & forgiveness

Fulfillment & peace of mind

New perspective on life

Freedom from fear

Assurance of eternal life



# checklist for My Baptism

The Date of My Baptism \_\_\_\_\_

What time should I get there? \_\_\_\_\_

Where should I go? \_\_\_\_\_

## What should i bring with me?

- Your written testimony
  
- Your Bathing suit
  - For men, your bathing suit should be a shorts-style suit
  - For ladies, your bathing suit should be a one piece with shorts that you will wear over it
  
- A change of clothes
  
- One or two large towels
  
- A plastic bag to hold wet clothes
  
- A hair dryer (optional)

## What should I do before that time?

- Pray. As the time of your baptism draws near ask God for clarity as you speak, and peace for any anxiety that may begin to surface.
  
- Practice. Go over your testimony by yourself as you prepare for your baptism. Pay careful attention to the words you are using and try to avoid jargon if at all possible.



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