

Binder Reading: Water Baptism & the Bible Sections:

- Water baptism is a public declaration of your commitment to follow Jesus Christ. Baptism represents dying to your self-willed nature to doing things your own way and being raised to a new life of obedience to Jesus doing things His way.

Matthew 3:13-17

“13 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?” 15 But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him,[a] 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,[b] with whom I am well pleased.”

- What does this passage reveal about the high significance God places on baptism?
- What was the reason Jesus should be baptized?

Jesus Commanded Believers to be Baptized

Matthew 28:18-20

“18 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[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Do You Need to Be Baptized to Have Salvation?

- There are no actions you can perform to add any value to Christ's death, which fully atones for your wrongdoing. You are saved by believing His payment is fully sufficient for your forgiveness no additional good works justify you before God.

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast.”

- Your grateful response to Jesus' gift is to follow Him in obedience. Water baptism is an important step of obedience.

What If You Sin After You Are Baptized?

Romans 6:13

“13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.”

- You have the freedom to become an instrument of righteousness, since the slavery to sin was buried with Christ and you now live in the new resurrection life with Him.
- Baptism demonstrates this spiritual truth. You bury your sin-ruled, self-willed nature and your good intentions in the watery grave of baptism. You are resurrected out of the baptismal grave relying on His resurrection power to help you do what is right.

1 John 2:1-2

“2 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”

1 John 1:9

“9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Preparation for Water Baptism

Essential Questions:

- Have you repented of your sins?
- Do you believe that Jesus' death and resurrection fully paid for the forgiveness of your sins?
- Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?
- Do you renounce Satan and all his works and all his ways?
- Do you promise to follow Jesus Christ and be faithful to Him until He returns for you?

What If You Were Baptized as an Infant?

- If your parents had you baptized as an infant, God remembers their faith and the prayers prayed for you at the time. Now, as an adult, water baptism is a public declaration of your repentance your faith that Christ's sacrifice washes away your sins, and your decision to follow Him. It is not a rejection of what your parents did for you; it is ratifying their faith and making it your own.

Interacting with the Bible

2 Timothy 3:16-17

"16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God[a] may be complete, equipped for every good work."

2 Peter 1:20-21

"20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

Luke 21:33

"33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

1 Thessalonians 2:13

"13 And we also thank God constantly[a] for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men[b] but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers."

Psalms 119:33-37

"33 Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes;

and I will keep it to the end.[a]

34 Give me understanding, that I may keep your law

and observe it with my whole heart.

35 Lead me in the path of your commandments,

for I delight in it.

36 Incline my heart to your testimonies,

and not to selfish gain!

37 Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things;

and give me life in your ways."

General Guidelines for Interpreting Scripture

Plain meaning:

- Usually, the simple, obvious, plain meaning is the intended one. Take passages at face value whenever possible. Read the words in their normal sense. "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense"

Context:

- Let Scripture interpret Scripture. Consider the verse in the context of the surrounding verses (unit of thought or paragraph), in the context of the chapter, and in the context of the whole book.
- Fit the passage or verse into what the Bible as a whole says about the subject. Read other passages that refer to the same subject to get a more complete understanding. Fit the passage into the relevant theme(s) in the Bible.

- Consider the cultural and historical context. When the passage refers to a subject within the culture or history of the original hearers (e.g. food sacrificed to idols). Use TTT.
 - First, consider "Then meaning, " what it meant to them at the time.
 - Next, find the "Timeless principle" that applies to us now.
 - Finally, act on "Today's application" of the principle. Use your common sense.
- Use any special guidelines for understanding the particular type of literature

What God is like:

Exodus 34:6-7

"The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty [unrepentant] unpunished."

Promises:

- Most promises are conditional on your response to God's conditions; you will observe an if/ then relationship. Fulfill the conditions attached to these promises, and you can trust God to fulfill them. If the promise is given to specific people, check to see that you are in the same circumstance as the one(s) receiving the promise in the Bible. If not, look for the principle implied by the promise and apply that.
- What is conditional about this promise?

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Difficult passages to understand:

- If the passage taken at face value and in context doesn't seem to make sense, is unclear, seems to contradict other clear passages, or seems inconsistent with God's self-described character, consider one or more of the following:
 - Interpret unclear passages in light of clear ones, not the other way around
 - Interpret an isolated passage in light of multiple passages on the subject
 - Confirm implicit teaching (indicated but not stated with explicit teaching (clearly stated) elsewhere in the Bible
 - Use "TTT"
 - Use guidelines for special types of literature
 - Remember what God wants us to know for sure He has communicated to us clearly.