



GETTING STARTED

> *As your group time begins, use this section for very brief review prior to showing the video to help get the conversation going.*

Let's do life together!/Opening Discussion: Welcome to your LIFEgroup; how was your week, did anyone see God do something in their life this past week? Did anyone get an opportunity to share the Gospel? Did anyone invite a friend to LG or church this week? Please tell us or share your **story**.

Our Subject Today: This week we continue in our sermon series, CHRISTIAN(ESE) and will dig deeper into the Christian doctrine of Baptism. This study will set the biblical foundation on the subject of baptism so you can defend the faith and understand how to help someone who needs or wants to be baptized.

VIDEO NOTES/QUESTIONS

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY / OBSERVATION: *Mark* is the shortest of the Gospels. He lets the narrative speak for itself as we see the actions of the Servant of God who gave His life for others. (*Mark 10:45*)

INTERPRETATION: See Commentary on pages 5-6

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Pastor David began the service by saying that baptism "may" be the most controversial doctrine of them all, at least in our culture. Why is that? Take a moment and share with your LIFEgroup how you were baptized and what lead up to that event.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: Pastor David's words—"While the Doctrine of the Trinity is the most complex doctrine we will deal with this in series, the Doctrine of Baptism is probably the most controversial and church, I say that because whenever we've taught on this topic in the past, there have always been people who have pushed back and even got up and left the church because of it. Even though we are a Southern Baptist Church, about 90% of our members have never been a part of a Baptist church before and they too have wrestled with this idea of baptism; and the tension that being baptized might just cause in some relationships with others, and even in their very own heart."

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)

2) In the N.T., and specifically in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, it's interesting to note that while Jesus' earthly ministry lasted only about three years, He chose to begin and end His ministry with the same thing: Baptism! (*Mark 1* and *Matt 28:18-20*) Discuss the following question: "Since baptism was the bookends of Jesus' ministry, why do you think it is important that we take baptism seriously?"

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: Pastor David - "Who are we to minimize something that Jesus maximized? Now, is baptism a big deal simply because Baptists say it's a big deal? Well, yes and no; and church, I say that because even though Webster's dictionary defines Baptist as being this, "*A member of a protestant denomination holding that baptism should be given only to believers after confession of faith and by immersion rather than sprinkling*", the truth I need you to hear today is that baptism is important, not because Baptists say it's important, but because the Bible says that it's important. In fact, the Bible talks about baptism some 74 times so let's be clear; baptism is not a Baptist idea, it is a Bible idea."

Read Mark 1: 1-5

3) Who should be baptized? For what reason should people be baptized?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: One pastor said, "Because it is what you are supposed to do" (not a good answer). From Pastor David - The word literally means to immerse, dip, or dunk and for a long period of time that little word, Baptizo, had no religious significance whatsoever. Don't miss that because when it comes to the question of WHO should be baptized, what we see in the Scripture is that from the very, very beginning the only people who were baptized were those folks who had repented of their sins and confessed Jesus as their Savior. *Acts 2:40-41* – "With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."

Read Acts 8:12-13; 8:34-40; and Acts 16:29-33

4) What is the emerging pattern in the verse? Why is it so important to follow this pattern?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: Pastor David's words: "Church, you can look at every verse in your Bible from Genesis to Revelation and without exception, every baptism in the Bible took place after a person's salvation experience, never before, and so the Scripture is clear; the only person who should be baptized is one who has made a personal decision to repent of their sins and trust Jesus Christ as their Savior." Digging Deeper: Does this support infant baptism - how can you use these points to depend your doctrinal beliefs? If we consider ourselves people of the Bible then we must follow it's teaching!

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)**Read Mark 1:9-10**5) If Jesus came *up* out of the water, where do you think Jesus had been?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: Pastor David's words: "Another reason we know that Jesus was baptized by John into the Jordan river is because here in v.10, the Bible says that *"as Jesus was coming up OUT OF the water, He saw heaven being torn apart and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove."* Jesus was down in the water because the word "baptize" comes from the Greek word "baptizo" which means to immerse, submerge, to make overwhelmed, I.E.: "fully wet"

Read | John 1:7 and Romans 6:1-5

6) Is baptism a requirement for salvation? Does baptism make us saved?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: Pastor David - "Water doesn't save anyone regardless of whether it is a spoonful or a tankful. Instead, the only liquid in the Bible that saves is the blood that poured out of Jesus on the cross; so, to be clear, baptism does NOT save us but if you've been baptized before your salvation experience or in a way that wasn't by immersion, it does mean that your baptism is out of order and it is not in the way that Jesus Christ commanded."

SUMMARY (My Take-Away for This Week)**POSSIBLE SUMMARY/TAKE-AWAY:**

- The Holy Spirit has been speaking to me today about getting baptized.
- I have been putting it off, my baptism is out of order
- I will sign up today for the Outdoor Baptism Celebration on Saturday 10/13/18
- Now that I have a foundation of my faith on the subject of baptism, I can talk to a family member or friend about getting baptized.

WORK OUT (This Week's Assignments)

- I will pray and ask God: "Should I be baptized?"
- I will obey God if he says I should be baptized.
- I will talk to a pastor about being baptized at the outdoor baptism celebration, in a weekend service, or a private baptism

MY NEXT STEPS FROM THE WEEKEND WORSHIP

1. Today, I will sign up for the outdoor baptism celebration next Saturday, October 13 at 6:30 PM (sign up outside worship center or in lobby of overflow).
2. This week, I will email Pastor David at dwhitten@fishhawkfc.org to talk more about scheduling my baptism on another date.
3. This week, I will pray for those within our church who need to obey Christ and follow Him in baptism by immersion, after salvation.
4. This week, I will memorize *Acts 2:38*, "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ.'"

HOW MY GROUP CAN PRAY FOR ME THIS WEEK

[> Record Group Prayer Request Here:](#)

COMMENTARY

Baptism: The Christian rite of initiation practiced by almost all who profess to embrace the Christian faith. In the NT era persons professing Christ were immersed in water as a public confession of their faith in Jesus, the Savior. This was accomplished in direct obedience to the explicit mandate of the Lord (*Matt. 28:16-20*). The word “baptize” is itself a loanword borrowed from the Greek term *baptizo*. Few scholars contest that the meaning of the term is “immerse,” and not “to pour” or “to sprinkle.”

As such it pictures the death of Jesus for the sins of the world, His subsequent burial, and His triumphant resurrection. There is also a reenactment of the believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old man, and a resurrection to walk in newness of life with Christ (*Rom. 6:4*).

The Bible clearly teaches that salvation is appropriated solely by faith based on the grace of God. Baptism, being an act of man, can never cleanse a person of sin or procure God’s forgiveness (*Rom. 4:3*).

The word “baptism” has several uses in the NT. In addition to its usual sense of faith-witness initiation, the Bible speaks of a baptism of fire (*Matt. 3:11-12*), baptism by/in the Holy Spirit (*1 Cor. 12:13*), baptism for the dead (*1 Cor. 15:29*), and even the baptism of the Hebrew people into Moses and the Sea (*1 Cor. 10:2*). But overwhelmingly the most prominent use of the word refers to the first response of obedience by a new follower of Jesus.

Accordingly, the only appropriate candidate for the witness of baptism is someone who has something about which he can bear witness (*Acts 2:38; 8:12-13, 36-38; Eph. 4:5*). There is no precedent for infant baptism in the NT; in addition, only one who has experienced regeneration can give genuine witness to that experience. (Paige Patterson, “Baptism,” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003])

Question 3. Mark 1:1-5. The appearance of John the Baptist in the wilderness was the most important event in the life of Israel for more than three hundred years. It had been that long since Israel had heard a “word from God.” The desert region in which John started his ministry of baptism is estimated by scholars to be between Judea and the Dead Sea. This area is known for its stark surroundings and rugged terrain.

The wilderness in Israel’s history symbolized rebellion and disobedience. The nation of Israel, after the deliverance of God and the Exodus from Egypt, disobeyed God by not going into the promised land. As a result they wandered in the wilderness for forty years before they actually entered the promised land as God’s people. By coming to the wilderness to be baptized, the people were admitting their wandering from God and their rebellion toward God and their desire for a fresh start.

The baptism by John was a baptism of repentance. Repentance means a turning away from something and turning in a new direction. Israel was being asked to turn away from its disobedience and rebellion and to start anew by turning toward the coming Messiah. By doing so they would be forgiven—released—from their sins and would experience the grace of God through the Messiah. (Rodney L. Cooper, *Mark*, vol. 2, *Holman New Testament Commentary* [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000]).

Question 4. Acts 8:12. When the power of Jesus Christ encounters the power of Satan, there is no contest. Philip’s message is clear. It reminds us of the basic gospel in *Acts 4:12*. Again, this Bible writer so concerned about the role of women in God’s plan, emphasizes that they, too, heard Philip’s message, trusted Christ, and were saved. Furthermore, they were baptized. Luke has not made much of this yet in his account, but we shall see it again in a strategic way before this chapter finishes.

We are almost as astonished as the Samaritans must have been when we read that Simon also believed and was baptized. Was this magician, whether charlatan or sorcerer, genuinely converted? The following paragraph will show us enough information to demonstrate that he was not. Remember that the word *believe* does not always mean saving faith in the New Testament (*John 2:23-25; Jas. 2:19*). (Kenneth O. Gangel, *Acts*, vol. 5, *Holman New Testament Commentary* [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998]).

COMMENTARY

Question 4 (cont.). Acts 8:34-40. Philip had shared the gospel with the Ethiopian treasurer and had surely ended on a note of invitation and commitment. The wagon passed a pool of water, and the Ethiopian was ready. "Is there anything to prevent my being baptized *right now*?" (author's paraphrase). Many have sought to determine the exact site of the spring in question, but surely the more significant consideration is that at precisely the critical time they came to water, there along the arid route they were traveling (cf. v. 26). Significance has often been seen in the verb "hinder/prevent" which the eunuch employed when asking if there was any reason why he should not be baptized. The verb indicates that barriers have been removed, hindrances to the spread of the gospel to all people. In this case a double barrier of both physical and racial prejudice had fallen. A eunuch, a Gentile, a black, was baptized and received into full membership in the people of Jesus Christ (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992]).

Question 5. Mark 1:9-10. Straightway (εὐθέως) coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened (σχιζομένουτος); literally, *rent asunder*. The word εὐθέως occurs more than forty times in this Gospel, and is so characteristic of St. Mark that, in the Revised Version, it is uniformly rendered by the same English synonym, "straightway." Elsewhere we are told (*John 1:32*) that St. John the Baptist saw this descent. The earliest heretics took advantage of this statement to represent this event as the descent of the eternal Christ upon the man Jesus for personal indwelling. But it need hardly be said here that such an opinion is altogether inconsistent with all that we read elsewhere of the circumstances of the Incarnation, and of the intimate and indissoluble union of the Divine and human natures in the person of the one Christ, from the time of the "overshadowing of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Highest." The Spirit descending upon him at his baptism was not the descent of the eternal Christ upon the man Jesus. It was rather the conveyance to one who was already prepared for it as God and man, of office and authority as the great Prophet that should come into the world. St. Luke says particularly (*3:21*) that it was when Jesus had been baptized and was praying, that the Holy Spirit descended upon him; plainly showing us that it was not through the baptism of John, but through the meritorious obedience and the prayer of the Son of God, that the heavens were "rent asunder," and the Holy Spirit descended upon him (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *St. Mark*, vol. 1, The Pulpit Commentary [London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909]).

Question 6. 1 John 1:7. Having stated that God is light by his very nature and as a result has fullness of life in himself, John is able to deny the claims of fellowship with God to those who live in the darkness of death. In the context of this epistle, John must be aiming these statements against those who reject Jesus as the incarnate Son of God. These persons are, in reality, living in the state of death because eternal life is found only in this Jesus, the Jesus whose identity is the Son of God. It is those who live in the eternal life revealed in Jesus who have fellowship with God (and God with them) and are sinless in God's sight. The evidence of true mutual fellowship with God is one's living in the fullness of life revealed by Jesus. While those without Christ can only make false claims about having fellowship with God (*1:6*), Christians actually have fellowship with God and God with them through Jesus, who is the only Mediator between God and human beings (cf. *John 14:9-21, 23; 17:22-23; also 1 Tim 2:5*).

The second effect in John's reasoning indicates that the conditions necessary for fellowship with God are fulfilled by Jesus' death. His logic is thus: Those who live in the eternal life revealed in Jesus have every single one of their sins, which defile and make one unfit for fellowship with God, cleansed through Jesus' atoning death. Since *1:5-2:2* should be interpreted as a unit, the nature of this cleansing will be explored further. The implications of the whole will be summarized at *2:2* (Daniel L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, vol. 38, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001]).

Romans 6:1-5. Burial certifies the reality of death. Baptism is the ritual act that portrays this burial. That Paul did not speak of faith at this point is immaterial. He was using the ritual act of baptism as a symbol of the complete redemptive event that finds its effectual cause in the death of Christ and its completion in the faith of those who believe.

But death and burial are not the end of the story. In God's redemptive plan burial is followed by resurrection. As Christ was raised from the dead in a manifestation of the Father's glorious power, so also are we raised to an entirely new way of living. The lives of believers are to be as different from their preconversion days as life is from death (Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, vol. 27, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995]).

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