

Establishing a Firm Foundation



GOD
ENCOUNTERS
MINISTRIES

with James W. Goll

Published by

God Encounters Ministries

P.O. Box 1653, Franklin, TN 37065

Office Phone: 615-599-5552

Office Fax: 615-599-5552

For orders call: 1-877-200-1604

www.godencounters.com

Copyright ©2019 God Encounters Ministries

All rights reserved

Unless otherwise indicated, scripture is taken from the
New American Standard Bible®,
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973,
1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

As noted, scripture taken from the Amplified® Bible (AMP)
Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

As noted, scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® (NIV)
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society.
Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

As noted, scripture taken from the King James Version (KJV)
The KJV is public domain in the United States

Lesson Eight: Water Baptism

I. BAPTISM DEFINED

A. Definition of the Term

Baptism is a verb meaning “to baptize,” from the form *bapto*, to dip. It has the connotation of dipping into another, or to dip something into a fluid and then take it out again. Compare these references in Luke 16:24, John 13:26, and Revelation 19:13. There are eighty different locations for this word *baptizo*, and in two instances it is translated wash, or washed. Nevertheless, in all instances it means to overwhelm something, or to completely cover, or to make all wet. Therefore, there can be no truth to the method of sprinkling as against that of total immersion.

The Old Testament shadow of water baptism can be found in many references. The water baptism teaching truth is found in the Old Testament whenever water is administered or applied. Exodus 14 deals with Israel crossing the Red Sea, speaking of the baptism in water. This truth can also be seen in I Corinthians 10:2: “*And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*”

In I Peter 3:21 there is a like figure of water baptism using the ark of Noah as an example. Peter speaks of the filth of the flesh not being put away through the salvation of eight souls by water, but by the sprinkling (purging in the Greek) of their conscience through faith (see Hebrews 9:13). Thus the blood atonement is the pre-requisite to being totally immersed into the will and purposes of God.

B. Greek New Testament

1. **Noun 1. (*baptisma*):** found only in Christian writers, probably means “immersion” and is used of John’s baptism in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts; of Christian baptism (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 4:5; and 1 Pet. 3:21; and some manuscripts of Col. 2:12); and figuratively of martyrdom or suffering (Mk. 10:38-39; Lk. 12:50; Mt. 20:22-23). 2. (***baptismos***): immersion, dipping, washings (as of dishes, or of ritual washings; used in Hebrews 6:2; 9:10; Mk. 7:4,8; and the preferred reading of Col. 2:12).
2. **Verb (*baptizo*):** dip, immerse, plunge, wash, drench, overwhelm, sink, submerge; intensive form of a verb meaning Christian baptism, martyrdom, Jewish rituals washings, a type Israel’s deliverance through the sea, and being baptized in the Holy Spirit (“and fire” and three of the New Testament references).

C. **Kinds of Baptism**

John's Baptism was temporary, serving to prepare the way for Christ (Acts 19:4). The baptism into Moses is typological and is a foreshadowing or pattern for later baptism into Christ. The phrase "baptism in the Spirit" never occurs in the New Testament, but the verbal form "baptized in the Spirit" speaks of the reality of being immersed in the Spirit. Our primary concern for this lesson is to comprehend Christian Believer's baptism, the initiatory rite of the church of Jesus Christ.

Baptism is the initiatory rite by which we enter into this participation at the time of conversion (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4; Matt. 28:19).

Baptism always involves a subject (the one who baptizes), an object (those who are baptized), an element into which those baptized are immersed (denoted by the Greek preposition *en* meaning "in," "with," or "by"), and a purpose (denoted by the Greek preposition *eis* meaning "into").

1. **John's Baptism** – Matthew 3:5-11
2. **Christian Believer's Baptism** – Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27
3. **Holy Spirit** – Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16
4. **Typological** – I Corinthians 10:1-2
5. **Metaphorical (suffering)** – Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:49-50

II. **WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR WATER BAPTISM?**

A. **New Converts Need to be Taught in the Truth of Water Baptism**

Baptism was the New Testament altar call. It is the New Testament method of demonstrating a decision to receive Christ as Lord and Savior. Acts 2:41 – The Jews at Pentecost; Acts 8:34-39 – The Ethiopian Eunuch; Acts 8:12 – The Samaritan believers; Acts 9:17-19 – Paul; Acts 16:33 – The Philippian jailor; We cannot separate believing and baptism – Mark 16:16. When were they baptized? When they believed.

B. **Repentance Must be Demonstrated in the Life of the Believer (Acts 2:38-39)**

Without a significant change of lifestyle and confession of sin, the candidate for water baptism would only go under the waters as a dry sinner and come up a wet one. Nowhere does the Bible teach that there is a "baptismal regeneration" and that we cannot be saved until that act of baptism takes place. The Bible does teach that through faith in the finished work of Calvary and through the in-working power of the Holy Spirit we are born again. Water baptism is the seal of assurance of that inner work of the Spirit.

C. Hearing and Obeying the Word of God (Acts 2:41; 16:14-15; 19:5)

In all of these examples the Word of God was declared, and the Spirit of God touched the hearts of the hearers and faith rose to the level that brought them to actions. In this sense, faith without the accompanying works is dead. There must be a response – whether an immediate response as with the Ethiopian eunuch, or months or years as with the Ephesian believers. Remember that John the Baptist baptized with the baptism of repentance in order to bring forth a deeper and more lasting experience afterwards, through the acknowledgment of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

D. Faith in the Finished Work of Calvary (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12, 36-37)

Jesus' death on the cross was meant to be much more than just an escape from hell or a crutch to lean on in moments of anguish or despair when it seems there is "nowhere else to go." Water baptism is a demonstration of faith in the finished work of the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BELIEVER WHEN THEY ARE BAPTIZED?

In water baptism there is a definite work which takes place within the heart of the believer; the Holy Spirit performs a spiritual operation called circumcision.

A. New Testament Believers Become Children of Abraham (Galatians 3:27-29)

God made an everlasting covenant with Abraham and sealed it with the sign of circumcision (Genesis 12:1-3; 17:3-4, 7). It marked the Israelites as God's chosen people and set them apart as His personal property. We relinquish all rights to ourselves; at least, this is what we are supposed to be saying at the time of water baptism. In some countries of the world, salvation itself does not cause conflict. But at the moment of decision to be baptized in water there emerges a great conflict, even to the death of that person. So, in the minds of many people, water baptism is a step of full surrender to the Lord.

B. This Is a Circumcision of the Heart, Not of the Flesh (Deuteronomy 30:5-6; 10:15-16; Romans 2:28-29; Colossians 2:11-12)

The true sign of a believer, in the new covenant sense, is a circumcised heart. Our "old nature" or "body of sin" is dealt with in all of its desires and lusts, and, in a sense, we are testifying to the fact that "*I (the Lord) will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people*" (Hebrews 8:10). Water baptism is not a ritual; it is not just an ordinance of the Church. It is a work of the Holy Spirit – a love bond – an identification as we fall in love with the death of Jesus Christ and are able to say "my death," "I want to die with Him."

C. Baptism into His Death and Life

Ephesians 4:5 states, “*One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*” The incarnation of Jesus Christ makes one baptism valid for all; this opened all humanity to God’s dealing and blessings. Jesus Christ was baptized into the human race (“to fulfill all righteousness” – Matthew 3:15) and covered himself with all human emotions, frailties, etc. But then Romans 6:3 states that “*so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death.*” This gives us a freedom from the law of sin and death, and we are buried by the waters of baptism into new life identifying with the resurrection of Christ Jesus on the third day.

IV. WHY SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

- A. Matthew 28:19** – It is the command of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. Matthew 3:13-17; I Peter 2:21b** – Jesus gave us His example to follow.
- C. I Peter 3:20-21** – It shows we have a clear conscience towards God.
- D. Romans 6:3-7** – Through baptism we are giving a testimony to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- E. Colossians 1:21-22; 2:11-15** – It is a testimony to the defeat of satan.
- F. Matthew 10:32; Acts 2:41; Galatians 3:26-28** – It is a public confession of faith and fellowship.
- G. Romans 6:4** – It enables us to walk in newness of life.
- H. Summary: Baptism Is A Witness**
 - 1. **To the world** – My sinful nature has been crucified and I intend to bury it forever. I am dead to the world of sin.
 - 2. **To the Christian Family** – I identify myself with and join you.
 - 3. **To God** – I come out from the kingdom of darkness into your kingdom.
 - 4. **To Ourselves** – I identify myself with and enter into death, burial, and resurrection. My life is now hid with Christ in God. I must no longer live for myself but for the One who redeemed me.

V. BAPTISM AND CONVERSION

A. Baptism Is Not Optional

It is based on the Lord's final command to His disciples: *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew 28:19).

Peter included baptism as part of the proper response to the Gospel at Pentecost: *"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"* (Acts 2:38).

Some ask if they need to get baptized to get into heaven. The example of the criminal on the cross (Luke 23:40-43) who showed evidence of the foundation of faith and repentance but died without water baptism shows that in extraordinary circumstances the Lord bypass this rite of initiation. But the attitude we should show is to obey the Lord in baptism at our first opportunity. Though out in the desert, the Ethiopian eunuch looked for the first chance he had to be baptized by Philip: *"Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?"* (Acts 8:36). To ask, "Must I be baptized?" displays an attitude, which is not truly submitted to the Lord Jesus!

Jesus Himself submitted to being water baptized "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Though without sin, He set a perfect example for us to follow.

B. Repent and Be Baptized

"Repent and be baptized..." (Acts 2:38). Repentance and baptism are joined together. Baptism without repentance is ineffectual. John's baptism also required repentance in order to be baptized. John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, *"You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with your repentance."*

Though the practice of infant baptism has been very prevalent in Christendom, it doesn't really square with the New Testament teaching or the practice of the earliest churches. Even those born into a Christian family need to receive the Gospel at some point and repent.

No minimum age has been mandated for baptism in the Bible; however, as any who can hear and receive the word in faith may be baptized. Infant baptism is often argued from household conversions in Acts 10:30-48 and 16:29-34, but in both cases it is clear that those saved were able to listen to the preaching of the Gospel and to believe.

C. Baptized “Into the Name”

Jesus said, “*Therefore, going, disciple all the Gentiles, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” (somewhat literal rendering of Matthew 28:19). In Acts, new converts were “*baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus*” (Acts 19:5 and elsewhere). The church did not disobey Jesus by using a different formula than what He commanded. It was only later that the words of Matthew 28:19 became a formula used in baptisms. “*Into the name*” was not intended to be used as a formula in a ritualistic way, but expressed the reality of the fact that in baptism we come into a close unity with the Lord, and that we pass into His ownership. In the Scriptures, the name of a person is to be equated with the person. Jesus was talking about being baptized into the Triune God, not about a formula. Most specifically, baptism seals us in an intimate relationship with Jesus, the second Person of the Trinity (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3; baptized into Christ Jesus).

The “Name” of the Son is Jesus. Therefore it is fine to add both the Gospel accounts and the Book of Acts renderings and baptize them into the name of the Father God, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

But let us be clear, it is not a “ritual” that saves anyone. It is by accepting the free gift of eternal life through God’s only Son – Christ Jesus!

D. Baptism Honors Each Member of the Triune God

In the Father, we receive a new birth and life as a son or daughter (Galatians 3:26-27; 4:6-7). In the name of the Son we share in the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7; 2:8; Colossians 2:11-12). In the name of the Spirit we have indwelling and renewal.

Therefore let us honor the Lord and follow Christ Jesus in obedience and follow Christ Jesus in obedience and faith following His commandments.

Reflective Questions

Lesson Eight: Water Baptism

Answers to these questions can be found in the back of the study guide.

Fill in the blank

1. To baptize means to completely _____.
2. Without a significant change of _____ and confession of sin, the candidate for water baptism only goes under the waters as a dry _____ and comes up a wet one.
3. In water baptism, the Holy Spirit performs a spiritual operation called _____.
4. In the _____, we receive a new birth and life as a son or daughter; in the name of the _____ we share in the forgiveness of sins; in the name of the _____ we have indwelling and renewal.

Multiple Choice: Choose the best answer from the list below:

A. rights B. seal C. proof D. control

5. Water baptism is the _____ of assurance of that inner work of the Spirit.
6. What we are saying when we are baptized is that we are relinquishing all _____ to ourselves.

True or False

7. Baptism is the New Testament method of demonstrating a decision to follow Christ as Lord and Savior. _____
8. Baptism is optional for new believers. _____

Scripture Memorization

9. Write out and memorize Acts 2:38.

10. What is the main insight you received from this lesson?

Answers to the Reflective Questions

Lesson Eight

1. cover or immerse
2. lifestyle; sinner
3. circumcision
4. Father; Son; Spirit
5. B – seal
6. A – rights
7. True
8. False