



# BAPTISM

A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE OF HOW WE ARE  
BROUGHT INTO A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH  
JESUS CHRIST BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH.



## STUDY GUIDE

understanding the importance  
of obedience to Jesus' commands

# OVERVIEW

**"baptism is among Jesus' commands.  
He sent His followers to disciple all nations  
baptizing them in the triune name" (Matthew 28:19).  
- J.I. Packer**

## IMPORTANCE

Baptism was Jesus' idea. It is a picture (or symbol) of all that has already happened, a proclamation of your new life in Christ, & a great reason for joy!!

This is important because it is commanded (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38). It is an act of worship & obedience that demonstrates the reality of our new life in God, through faith in Jesus Christ (John 1:12-13).

**"MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS  
BAPTIZING (LIT. IMMERSING) THEM  
IN THE NAME...**

**OF THE  
FATHER"**

**AND  
(OF THE)  
SON"**

**AND  
(OF THE)  
HOLY  
SPIRIT"**

# WHAT IS BAPTISM?

A beautiful picture of how we are brought into a new relationship with Jesus Christ by grace, through faith.

## "IMMERSION"

The word 'Baptism' would be best translated into English as: "to immerse". Many English translations of the Bible do not translate the word, but simply transliterate (carry it across languages without translating) the word. This leads to some confusion. It's best to understand that when the word "Baptism" is read that it means immersion.

## AN ACT OF OBEDIENCE

The command to baptize is found in Matthew 28:19. The command to be baptized is found in Acts 2:38. There is an example of baptism laid out for us in Acts 8:36-39.

## A SYMBOL

### THE PHYSICAL ACTION:

Immerse ("Baptize")

To immerse is to dip into, submerge, or to bring into.

### THE TRUTH PICTURED:

All who believe in Jesus as their Savior are brought into a new relationship with the one true God .

\*The Bible teaches that there one God who has eternally existed in 3 persons. This concept is referred to by many Christians as the "trinity".

\*The Bible teaches that a relationship with God cannot be earned through acts like baptism, but is a gift of God that is received by trusting in Jesus alone.

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## READ & REFLECT:

Why is baptism important? \* Matthew 28:19

Some people believe that things such as baptism have some sort of special/mystical power beyond their symbolic meaning. Some even believe that baptism secures them a good standing before God. Does baptism do either of those things?

Who is to be baptized, & when?

\*Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:41; 8:12; 8:36-39

\*See Ephesians 2:8-9

After being baptized, how can you continue to grow as a disciple? \*Matthew 28:19

YOUR REASON FOR BAPTISM:

Why do you want to be baptized?

"MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS BAPTIZING (LIT. "IMMERSING") THEM IN THE NAME...

"OF THE FATHER"

"AND (OF THE) SON"

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*ARE YOU READY?*

PLEASE LET US KNOW!

WE'D BE GLAD TO HELP ANSWER ANY OTHER QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY HAVE, AND MAKE SURE THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE & MEANING OF THIS GREAT ACT OF WORSHIP & OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST!

HOW CAN I LIVE YOUR LIFE IN SUCH A WAY THAT I AM LEARNING TO "OBSERVE ALL THAT CHRIST COMMANDED"?



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# *WANT TO DIG DEEPER?*

**IF YOU'RE SOMEONE WHO LIKES TO  
DIG DEEPER, CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING  
PAGES FOR SOME MORE!**

# WHAT IS BAPTISM?

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## DIGGING DEEPER

### CONTEXT MATTERS

In matters related to interpretation, context matters. The word immerse is used in many ways in the English language. For example: you may immerse yourself into a new culture, or you may immerse your child into bathwater. It would be confusing to attach the concept of bathwater to the phrase "Immersed into a new culture". When we read the Bible and see the word "Baptize" (or immerse), we need to consider the words use in each context. Many of the times the word is used, it is not referring to a Christian being immersed in water as an act of obedience. For example: Matthew 3:11 talks about being baptized with the holy Spirit, and with fire.

### WHY TRIUNE IMMERSION?

To answer this question simply, we practice triune immersion (threefold action) because we have a triune God who told us to immerse into His triune name (Matthew 28:18-20). A close reading of the grammar of the text points to this, and "the testimony of early church history strongly supports the practice of triune immersion..." (Plaster)

### Let's start by looking at the grammar of the text:

An ellipsis is a literary device in which there are implied words. There is an elliptical construction in Matthew 28:19 The implied words are in parenthesis. "baptizing them in the name of the Father and (in the name of) the Son and (in the name of) the Holy Spirit".

Does the language of Matthew 28:18-20 support the view that the doctrinal (teaching) emphasis in baptism is trinitarian?

If the emphasis is not trinitarian, what is it?

If the emphasis is trinitarian, what mode (particular way of doing something) of baptism would best picture this?

# WHAT IS BAPTISM?

An excerpt "Baptism by  
Triune Immersion"  
by David R. Plaster  
(Grace Theological Journal 6.2, 1985)

## DIGGING DEEPER (PG 2)

**"Doctrine cannot be determined by tradition or history. However, history can be very helpful in answering important questions about how the early Church understood apostolic teaching and practice. The testimony of early church history strongly supports the practice of triune immersion as the mode of baptism. The Didache does not specifically refer to "triune immersion." However, it is a very early extra-biblical testimony to the baptismal practice of the apostolic churches.**

**'Concerning baptism, baptize thus: Having first rehearsed all these things, "baptize in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." in running water; but if thou has no running water. baptize in other water, and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm. But if thou have neither, pour water three times on the head "in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.'" (Didache 7. 1-3)**

**The requirement of triple action in baptism is clear in this passage. Justin Martyr's (A.D. 110-165) description of baptism even adds the elliptical "in the name of" before each person as in its allusion to Matt 28:19.27 Tertullian (A.D. 145-220) states that the candidate for baptism is "thrice immersed.**

**He commands them to be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, not into a unipersonal God. And indeed, it is not once only, but three times, at each name, into each separate person, that we are immersed. (Tertullian, Ad Praxeas 26) ..."**

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## DIGGING DEEPER (PG 3)

**"...When Eunomius's innovative single-immersion baptism stressed his anti-trinitarian doctrine, an interesting analysis was made by later church fathers. Gregory Nanzianzen (A.D. 330-391) observed,**

**He, Eunomius, subverted the holy law of baptism which had been handed down from the beginning, from the Lord and the apostles, and made a contrary law, asserting that it is not necessary to immerse the candidate thrice, nor to mention the names of the Trinity, but to immerse only once, into the death of Christ.'**

**This is echoed by Sozomen in his Ecclesiastical History (6:26) and by Socrates in his Ecclesiastical Church History (5:24). Thus, the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381 determined that any bishop who would not use three immersions was to be deposed. This very brief survey of some of the significant historical evidence makes it clear that the early church understood the trinitarian thrust of Matt 28: 19 to require triple-action baptism."**



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