

BUILDING BRIDGES, NOT WALLS.

THE SALVATION SERIES

What Does the Bible Say About Baptism?

A Bible Study

Stephanie A. Mayberry

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A THE BRIDGE Bible Study

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THE BRIDGE

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TO THE PERSON READING THIS

Thank you for allowing me to come on this journey with you.

But first, I want you to know...

I am not going to tell you what to believe. I don't think I need to. You have a Bible, and I trust you to open it, read it, ask questions, and look honestly at what it says.

I don't want to bully or intimidate you into agreeing with me—that never works. And then you would be obeying me instead of Jesus - and that definitely never works.

What I want is much simpler.

I want you to see.

You may finish this study believing exactly what you believe right now. You may discover something you hadn't seen before. You may find yourself with more questions than when you started. That's okay.

If God trusts you enough to let you work out your own salvation, so do I.

So bring your questions. Bring what you've been taught. Bring what you already believe. You don't have to leave any of that at the door.

Oh, and make sure you bring your Bible, too.

Open your Bible.

Let's look together.



BEFORE WE START WALKING

I'm so glad you decided to walk this trail with me! This is such an important one. Baptism is one of those subjects most of us don't come to with a blank slate.

Maybe you've been baptized. Maybe you haven't. Maybe you've been taught that baptism is necessary for salvation. Maybe you've been taught that it is an outward sign of something that has already happened. Maybe you know exactly what you believe about Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38.

That's okay.

I'm not asking you to set everything you've ever believed aside before we begin. I'm simply asking you to bring it with you—and be willing to look at Scripture.

That's what we're going to do in this study.

We're going to start with the words of Jesus. Then we're going to follow the people who actually heard Him. We're going to watch what they did, listen to what they preached, and pay attention to what happened when people believed.

And we're going to take our time.

Please don't feel like you have to blast through a Stop in one day.

Or even three.

If one Stop takes you a week, take a week. If you need longer, take longer. There are no time constraints here. You aren't behind, and there is no prize for reaching the last page first.

Read the Scripture. Then read it again.

Look at the surrounding verses. Think about what you're seeing. Sit with a question for a while if you need to. Pray about it. Give the Word time to sink in.

Let Scripture speak to you.

And don't be afraid of questions.

A question doesn't mean your faith is weak. Sometimes a good question is what sends us back to the Word to look more carefully.

That's part of what I hope happens as we walk together. I don't only want you to see what Scripture says about baptism. I want you to become comfortable opening your Bible, looking at context, comparing Scripture with Scripture, and asking, *What does the Word actually say?*

So bring what you believe.

Bring what you've been taught.

Bring your questions.

Bring your Bible and your brain. I'm bringing mine.

We aren't going to rush to the end of this trail and decide what you're supposed to believe before we've even started.

We're just going to open the Word and begin walking.

One Stop at a time.

And when you're ready—

Let's keep walking this trail - together.

Jesus bless you.

STOP 1

What Did Jesus Command?

READ: Matthew 28:18-20

Let's start with Jesus. That seems like a pretty good place to begin, doesn't it? Let's set the stage here. Jesus has risen from the dead, and He is speaking to His disciples. Before He tells them what to do next, He says something that I really don't want us to rush past:

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”

MATTHEW 28:18

Read that again. All authority. Keep that in mind as you read the next two verses.

What does Jesus tell His disciples to do? Take a minute and look at the text before you keep reading. See what you find. One of the things you probably noticed is baptism.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” MATTHEW 28:19

So we have established our starting point: Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize.

Now let's slow down and look at exactly what He said. Read verse 19 again. Did you notice the words “in the name”? Don't try to figure out what I want you to do with that phrase. I haven't asked you to do anything with it. We're just examining the Scriptures. So notice it. In fact, if you write in your Bible, you might underline name. If you don't, write it here:

in the name We're going to hang onto that for a minute, because there's more to examine. Now I want you to notice something else.

Who is standing there listening to Jesus? His disciples. Ah! These are the people receiving the command. Jesus tells them to go, make disciples, baptize, and teach.

We can follow the people who heard Him.

Following the People Who Heard Him That gives us an interesting opportunity. We don't have to stop here and argue about what Jesus meant. We have something better than that.

We can follow the people who heard Him.

COMMAND → DEMONSTRATION Jesus gave the command. Now we're going to watch what His disciples did with it.

There is a pattern you will see over and over again in Scripture: command followed by demonstration. Scripture tells us what to do, and then somewhere else we often get to watch someone actually doing it. Sometimes that demonstration appears in another chapter or even another book of the Bible. And very often, we find it in a story. So pay attention to the little details in those stories. Don't skim past them looking for the “important” verse.

The details are important too. They often show us what obedience to a command actually looked like. The book of Acts lets us watch what happened as these disciples began doing what Jesus told them to do. We can listen to their preaching. We can watch the Gospel spread. And, most importantly for our question, we can see in their stories what happened when people were actually baptized. So that's what

we're going to do. For now, resist the urge to jump ahead. We've established what Jesus said—the command that He gave.

That's enough for now. Next, we'll start looking at what that command looked like when the disciples actually carried it out. But first, let's process what we've covered so far. Permission to Pause
You don't have to figure everything out today. For now, we've established what Jesus said. That's enough. We'll keep looking.

*Let's Look Again Go back to
Matthew 28:18-20. Don't answer
these from memory. Look at the text.*

1 • WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Observe the text. Look for the details.

Who is speaking?

What does He say about His authority?

What does Jesus tell His disciples to do?

What exact words does He use when He tells them to baptize? Does anything in particular stand out to you?

Who heard this command directly?

2 • LET'S THINK A LITTLE DEEPER

We're not trying to reach a conclusion yet. We're simply following the evidence.

If you wanted to understand how the disciples interpreted Jesus' command, what evidence would you want to look for?

[illegible]

3. Where Are You Starting?

THIS ISN'T A TEST. I want to know what you actually think.

Before this study, what did you understand Matthew 28:19 to mean about baptism?

I'm not waiting for you to give me the “right” answer. I want your answer. Write what you actually believe. Don't change it because you're trying to figure out where this study is going. We need an honest starting point. You may finish this study believing exactly what you believe now. You may notice something you hadn't seen before. Either way, we aren't going to decide that on page one. We have more Scripture to examine.

Let's keep walking.

Permission to Pause You don't have to settle everything at once. Take your time. Go back to the Word when you're ready.

STOP 2

What Happened at Pentecost?

READ: Acts 2:37-41

Last stop, we left Jesus with His disciples. He had given them a command. They were to go, make disciples, baptize, and teach. And we ended with a question: What did they do? The next few stops are going to answer that question, so let's keep walking. We're going to Jerusalem. A lot has happened since the end of Matthew. Jesus has ascended, and His disciples have returned to Jerusalem as He instructed them. Now, on the Day of Pentecost, Jerusalem is filled with people. And something extraordinary has just happened. The Holy Spirit has been poured out. People have heard the disciples speaking in other tongues. A crowd has gathered, trying to understand what they are seeing and hearing. Then Peter stands up with the other eleven apostles and begins to speak. Hold up! Don't rush past that detail. Let's look closer. Get to the front of the crowd. Peter stood up with the eleven. These are the men who walked with Jesus. They heard His teaching. They were there when He gave the command we read in Matthew 28. Now we get to watch them live it out. Peter stands up and preaches Jesus to the crowd. He tells them about His death and resurrection. Then he tells them that the Jesus they crucified is both Lord and Christ.

Look at verse 37.

“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart...” Can you picture that moment? Now they realize what Peter is telling them: the Jesus they crucified is the Messiah they had

been waiting for. Can you imagine how you would feel? You've been hearing about this Messiah, this promise. You've been looking for Him, anticipating Him—and then you find out you crucified Him. I can't imagine the emotions they must have been experiencing. Scripture says they were “cut to the heart.” Think about that for a minute.

The gravity of this is enormous. As the realization hits them, they ask Peter and the other apostles:

“Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Now, stop there for a minute. These are devout people. They care about the things of God. They have just heard something that completely changes what they understand about Jesus, and now they want to know what to do with what they have learned. They ask. And then they wait for an answer. Neither do we—at least, let's read these verses as though we don't know what's coming. Don't jump ahead because you know this verse. Stay with the people in the story for a minute. Read it line by line, taking in every word.

What shall we do? That's their question. Now let's listen to Peter's answer.

Read Acts 2:38.

“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” There is quite a bit in that answer, isn't there? We're not going to chase all of it right now. Remember, we're following one question through Scripture:

What does the Bible say about baptism? So look specifically at what Peter says about baptism. Read his words again. What does he tell them to do? And what name does he mention? No need to explain it yet. Just notice it. In our first stop, Jesus told these same men to baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Now Peter, standing with the other apostles, tells this crowd to be baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ.”

What do you notice? Hang onto that. We're not finished watching the story. Peter continues:

“For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

Wow! Wow! Wow! THIS IS FOR EVERYONE. Not just the crowd gathered there listening to Peter. The promise reaches beyond them—to their children, to those afar off, to as many as the Lord our God will call.

How amazing is that? Verse 40 tells us Peter continued speaking to them with many other words. Then verse 41 tells us what happened next.

Read Acts 2:41.

*“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized...
There it is. They asked. Peter answered. And then they responded. They didn't merely hear Peter talk about baptism. They were baptized. Remember the pattern we noticed at our first stop?*

COMMAND → DEMONSTRATION Jesus gave the command. Now we're beginning to see what happened when the people who heard Him carried it out.

But this is only our first example. One baptism gives us something to notice. But one example doesn't make much of a pattern. So let's not decide more than the evidence has shown us yet.

Let's keep walking.

*Let's Look Again Go back to Acts 2:37-41.
Don't answer from what you remember
hearing about Pentecost. Look at the
story.*

1 • WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Observe the text. Look for the details.

What happened to the people when they heard Peter's message?

What question did they ask? What did Peter tell them to do?

What name did Peter mention when he spoke about baptism?
According to verse 41, what did those who received Peter's words
actually do?

Why do you think these people were so quick to obey what Peter told them?

2 • LET'S THINK A LITTLE DEEPER .

We're still following the evidence. We don't have to explain everything yet

Think back to our first stop. Jesus told His disciples to baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Peter, standing with the other apostles, told the people at Pentecost to be baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ.”

What do you notice when you put those two statements beside each other?

What questions does that raise for you?

3 • ALONG THE PATH

Notice what you're carrying with you before we keep walking.

So far, we have looked at Jesus' command and one example of His disciples carrying it out.

Has anything caught your attention that you want to remember as we look at the next baptism?

You don't need to explain it yet. You don't need to make the pieces fit yet. Just notice what you noticed. We'll take it with us. Let's keep walking.

REFLECTION

[illegible]

STOP 3

What Happened in Samaria?

READ: Acts 8:4–17

We've left Jerusalem. At our last stop, we stood in the crowd at Pentecost and watched Peter answer a very important question: “What shall we do?” Peter told them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Those who received his word did exactly that. That gave us our first example. But remember what we said before we left Jerusalem:

One example doesn't make much of a pattern. So let's keep walking. This time we're going to Samaria.

The Gospel Leaves Jerusalem Acts 8 opens during a difficult time for the believers in Jerusalem. Persecution has scattered them into other regions. But look at what happens. Read Acts 8:4–5.

“Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.”

Philip goes to Samaria, and he doesn't go quietly. The people listen to him. They see miracles. Unclean spirits come out of people. People who had been paralyzed and lame are healed. Verse 8 says: “And there was great joy in that city.”

Something is happening in Samaria. Philip is preaching Christ, people are listening, and an entire city is being affected. Lives are being transformed. Now let's move a little farther into the story. Read Acts 8:12.

“But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.”

There is a lot packed into that one sentence, so don't rush past it. What did Philip preach? Look at the verse. He preached the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. The people believed what Philip preached. And Scripture tells us what happened next.

They were baptized.

Both men and women. There is our second baptism account, but the story isn't finished.

Word Gets Back to Jerusalem Something has happened in Samaria, and the apostles in Jerusalem hear about it. Read Acts 8:14.

“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them...”

Peter is here again. He was standing with the eleven at Pentecost. He was the one who answered when the people asked what they should do. Now the apostles hear that Samaria has received the Word of God, and Peter and John are sent to them. We're following some of the same people who heard Jesus give the command in Matthew 28. We watched Peter answer the crowd in Acts 2. Now Peter has arrived in Samaria. Let's get close enough to see what's happening. Read Acts 8:15–17.

“...who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon

none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”

Hold on. There are several things happening here. The Samaritans had believed Philip's preaching. They had been baptized. And Scripture tells us that they had not yet received the Holy Spirit. We're not going to chase that part of the story right now. But don't throw it away either.

Notice it. We're going to encounter the Holy Spirit again as we continue through Acts. For now, we're following one particular question:

What does the Bible say about baptism? So go back and look at verse 16. How does Scripture describe the baptism these people had already received? “They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

There it is again. At Pentecost, Peter told the people: “...be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ...”

Now in Samaria, Scripture tells us: “...they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

We're no longer looking at one example.

We're beginning to see a pattern. But relax. Don't decide what the pattern means yet. Just make a note of it. We're letting Scripture interpret Scripture. That can take a minute sometimes. At our first stop, Jesus gave the command. At Pentecost, we watched people respond to Peter's preaching and be baptized. Now we've traveled to another city, watched another group of people hear and believe the

Gospel, and they were baptized too. And once again, Scripture tells us the name connected with their baptism:

The name of the Lord Jesus. Hang onto that. We've seen Jerusalem. We've seen Samaria. But there are more people on this trail, more believers, more people who love Jesus. And they all have stories. Let's keep walking.

Let's Look Again Go back to Acts 8:4–17. This time, don't go hunting for the baptism verse. Look at the whole story

1 • WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Observe the text. Look for the details.

Why did believers leave Jerusalem?

Where did Philip go, and what did he preach there?

According to verse 12, what did the people do when they believed Philip?

Who was baptized?

What did the apostles in Jerusalem hear had happened in Samaria?

Who did they send to Samaria?

According to verse 16, in what name had the Samaritans been baptized?

2 • LET'S THINK A LITTLE DEEPER

We're following the evidence. Let the stories speak before you try to explain them.

So far, we have seen two baptism accounts after Jesus gave His command. At Pentecost: “...be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ...”

In Samaria: “...baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” What do you notice?

Are you beginning to see a pattern? If so, how would you describe it using only what we have read so far?

These are people who walked with Jesus. They spent time with Him. He ministered to them. He taught them. How does that affect what you are seeing here in scripture?

There is another detail in this story that we aren't exploring yet. The Samaritans had believed. They had been baptized. But Scripture says they had not yet received the Holy Spirit. What questions does that raise for you?

You don't have to answer them yet.

Just notice them.

3 • ALONG THE PATH

Stop for a moment and look back at where we've been.

Jesus gave His disciples a command. At Pentecost, we watched the first baptism account. Now we've watched what happened in Samaria. Has anything become clearer since our last stop?

Is there anything you've noticed that challenges something you previously believed or assumed about baptism?

You don't have to force a conclusion. There are still more stories ahead of us. For now, keep following the evidence.

Let's keep walking.

REFLECTION

[illegible]

STOP 4

What Happened in Caesarea?

READ: Acts 10:1-48

We've left Samaria. This time, we're headed to Caesarea. And somewhere in Caesarea, a man named Cornelius is praying.

A Man Named Cornelius READ ACTS 10:1-4

Cornelius is a Gentile. He's also a Roman centurion—a man with authority and responsibility. But that's not all Scripture tells us about him. He's devout. He fears God. He gives generously to people in need. And he prays. In fact, Scripture says he “prayed to God always.” One day, while Cornelius is praying, an angel appears to him and says:

“Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.” Then Cornelius receives an instruction. Send men to Joppa and find a man named Simon Peter. So he does.

BUT While those men are traveling toward Joppa, something else is happening.

Peter is praying too.

Meanwhile, in Joppa... READ ACTS 10:9-20

Peter goes up on the rooftop to pray. While he's there, he falls into a trance and sees a vision. A great sheet descends containing all kinds of animals, and Peter hears a voice telling him to rise, kill, and eat. Peter refuses:

“Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.” Those words are important.

Common or unclean. The vision happens three times. And when it's over, Peter is left wondering what it means. Now, don't rush ahead because you know this story. Stay with Peter for a minute. God has just shown him something, and he doesn't understand it.

But while he's still thinking about it—

the men whom Cornelius sent arrive. The Spirit tells Peter:

“Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.” Peter doesn't have the whole explanation yet. But he goes.

Sometimes understanding follows obedience. Peter leaves Joppa, traveling with the men to Caesarea.

A House Full of People Is Waiting READ ACTS 10:24-33

When Peter arrives, Cornelius isn't alone. He has gathered his relatives and close friends. They are waiting, anticipating. Now you have to understand Peter's position here. He is very devout—remember how he refused to eat anything common or unclean in his vision? Peter is a Jew who has grown up within a tradition that regarded Gentiles as common or unclean and that created a barrier between Jews and Gentiles. Peter himself acknowledges that barrier in verse 28. Then he travels with these men and finds himself standing in the home of a Gentile.

Awkward. But Peter is obedient to God, so he walks through the door anyway. And there, on the other side of a barrier his tradition had told him not to cross, Peter begins to understand what God has been showing him. Peter explains:

“God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” There are those words again:

Common or unclean. The animals in the vision got Peter's attention. But Peter tells us what God was teaching him.

This was about people. Sometimes tradition can become a wall—a barrier that keeps us from moving forward into what Scripture actually says. God wasn't changing His mind.

He was revealing the next level of Peter's growth. Peter had to be willing to let God challenge something he had long understood to be true.

And so do we. When Scripture shows us something that doesn't fit what we've always been taught, we have a choice. We can stop at the wall and defend what we've always believed—or we can keep walking and see what's on the other side. Peter kept walking.

And look what was waiting on the other side! A Gentile who feared God. A house full of people hungry to hear the Word. And before this encounter is over, Peter is going to see God pour out His Spirit on people Peter once would not even have entered a house to meet.

New to Peter doesn't mean new to God. Cornelius is going to be transformed.

But so is Peter. Then Cornelius tells Peter why they are all gathered:

“Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” Think about that posture for a moment. Cornelius doesn't ask Peter to tell them only the things they already agree with. They are there to

hear what God has given Peter to say. Cornelius is hungry to learn more. So Peter begins to preach.

Peter Preaches Jesus READ ACTS 10:34-43

Peter tells them about Jesus. He tells them about His ministry. His death. His resurrection. And while Peter is still speaking—

something amazing happens. READ ACTS 10:44-46

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.” The Jewish believers who came with Peter are astonished. Why? Because:

“...on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.” How did they know? Scripture tells us.

“For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” Don't move past this too quickly. These people have received the Holy Spirit. Peter knows it. The Jewish believers with him know it. There is no question about what has just happened. So...

are they finished? Watch what Peter does next.

“Can Any Man Forbid Water?” READ ACTS 10:47-48

“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” There it is.

Water. These people have already received the Holy Spirit. And Peter immediately brings up baptism. Notice what he doesn't say. He doesn't say, They have the Holy Spirit, so baptism doesn't matter now. He doesn't say, We'll talk about baptism later. And nobody

pulls out the church calendar to find the next Baptism Sunday. Peter asks:

“Can any man forbid water?” Then look at the very next verse.

“And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.”

Commanded. Hold onto that word. At our first stop, Jesus gave His disciples a command:

Baptize. Now we're watching one of those disciples carry it out. Jesus commanded baptism. Peter commanded baptism. Peter is walking out what Jesus taught him to do.

He is walking as Jesus walked.

And there's something else worth noticing. Peter didn't schedule their baptism for later. He didn't tell them to spend several weeks preparing for it. The need for baptism was recognized, and baptism immediately became the next matter before them. We've seen that before. At Pentecost, those who received Peter's word were baptized that same day. In Samaria, the people believed Philip's preaching, and they were baptized. Now in Caesarea, the Holy Spirit has fallen, and Peter asks:

“Can any man forbid water?” Then he commands them to be baptized. We're seeing more than the fact that people were baptized. We're beginning to see how the apostles treated baptism. It wasn't an optional ceremony to get around to eventually. When people believed, baptism followed. And once again, Scripture tells us something about their baptism:

“...he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.”

Jerusalem. Samaria. Caesarea. Different people. Different circumstances. But something keeps appearing along the trail. They were baptized. Baptism followed promptly. And the name keeps appearing. Don't decide yet what all of that means. We're still following the evidence. But we're far enough down the trail now that the pattern is becoming harder to miss.

Let's keep walking.

Let's Look Again Go back to Acts 10. This time, follow the whole story from Cornelius's prayer to the baptism at the end.

1 • WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Observe the text. Look for the details.

Where did Cornelius live? What does Scripture tell us about Cornelius before Peter ever meets him?

Where was Peter when Cornelius sent for him? What was Peter doing when he received the vision? What words did Peter use in Acts 10:14 to describe what he had never eaten? According to Acts 10:28, what did Peter say God had shown him?

Who had Cornelius gathered to hear Peter? What happened while Peter was still speaking? How did the Jewish believers with Peter know the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit?

What did Peter ask immediately after they received the Holy Spirit? According to verse 48, what did Peter command them to do? In what name were they commanded to be baptized?

2 • LET'S THINK A LITTLE DEEPER

We're following the evidence. Let the stories speak before you try to explain them.

Peter entered Caesarea carrying an understanding about Gentiles that God was about to challenge. What did Peter do when God showed him something that didn't fit what he had previously understood?

Have you ever discovered that something you had always been taught didn't quite match what you were seeing in Scripture? What did you do with it?

What are some things that stand out to you in this study? Are there things that make you want to look deeper?

The people in Cornelius's house had already received the Holy Spirit when Peter said:

“Can any man forbid water...?”

Why do you think Peter immediately brought up water?

What stands out to you about this part of the story?

Verse 48 doesn't say Peter suggested baptism. It says:

“He commanded them to be baptized...”

At our first stop, Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize. Now Peter is commanding these believers to be baptized. What connection do you see between Jesus' command and Peter's actions in Caesarea?

Look again at the timing of the baptism accounts we've read. At Pentecost, those who received Peter's word were baptized that same day. In Samaria, they believed Philip's preaching and were baptized. In Caesarea, Peter recognized that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit and immediately raised the question of water. What does the timing of these accounts tell you about the importance the apostles placed on baptism?

So far, baptism has appeared in Jerusalem, Samaria, and Caesarea. What patterns are you beginning to see across these accounts?

3 • ALONG THE PATH

Stop for a moment and look back at where we've been.

At our first stop, Jesus commanded baptism.

Then we began following the people who heard Him. We've now watched baptism happen among people in Jerusalem, Samaria, and Caesarea. Has anything become clearer since our last stop?

Has anything you've seen in Caesarea challenged something you previously believed or assumed about baptism?

Remember Peter. Discovering something new didn't mean God had changed.

Peter was growing. You don't have to settle every question yet.

There's another group of believers ahead of us. And their story is going to give us something else to think about.

Let's keep walking.

REFLECTION

[illegible]

STOP 5

What Happened at Ephesus?

READ: Acts 19:1-7

We've been to Jerusalem. We've walked through Samaria. We've followed Peter from Joppa to Caesarea. Now we're going to Ephesus. And this time, we're going to meet a group of people Scripture simply calls:

disciples. Don't rush past that word. These aren't people who have no interest in God. They aren't standing outside looking in. They are disciples—people who have already responded to what they understand. But they're about to discover that there is something they don't know yet. And what they do next matters.

A Question They Didn't Expect READ: Acts 19:1-2

Paul comes to Ephesus and finds certain disciples. He asks them:

“Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” Their answer is startling:

“We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” There it is again.

Something they didn't know. Remember what we learned from Peter?

New to us doesn't mean new to God. These disciples aren't being condemned because they don't know something. They're being given an opportunity to learn.

This is an opportunity to grow. And Paul keeps asking questions.

“Unto What Then Were Ye Baptized?”

READ: Acts 19:3-4

When Paul learns that these disciples haven't heard about the Holy Spirit, he asks another question:

“Unto what then were ye baptized?” Stop there.

They had already been baptized. These aren't people who rejected baptism. They aren't people who didn't care enough to obey. They had responded faithfully to what they understood at that stage of their spiritual growth. Their answer tells Paul exactly where they are:

“Unto John's baptism.” Paul doesn't mock them. He doesn't question whether they were sincere. He doesn't tell them that everything they had done before was meaningless. He simply gives them something they didn't have before:

more understanding. Paul explains that John's baptism was a baptism of repentance and that John had pointed the people toward the One who would come after him:

Jesus Christ. And suddenly these disciples are standing at a spiritual crossroads and they have a choice to make. They can stay with what they already know. They can defend what they have already done. Or they can step forward in faith and follow where the truth they are learning is leading them. Keep reading.

What Did They Do? READ: Acts 19:5

“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Read that again

.“When they heard this...”

They listened. They learned something they didn't know before.
And then they responded to it.

They heard. They learned. They responded. They chose the truth
they were hearing over their current understanding.

They chose to grow.

And notice what Scripture does not record. There is no argument. No
defense of their previous baptism. No insistence that because they
had already been baptized, there was no reason to do it again. They
had reached a crossroads. And when they understood more, they
responded to what they now understood.

They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

What About the First Baptism? This is where we need to slow down
because perhaps you've already been baptized. Maybe you remember
it well. You were sincere. You loved God. You responded to what you
had been taught, and you did what you understood was right. Or
perhaps you've been taught that baptism isn't necessary at all—that
believing in Jesus is what matters and baptism is something that
may come afterward, but it isn't necessary. I'm not asking you to
pretend those beliefs or experiences don't matter. And I'm certainly
not asking you to look backward and declare that everything you
believed or did before was insincere. Look at the disciples at
Ephesus.

Learning more didn't make their earlier sincerity less sincere. They
had responded faithfully to what they understood at that stage of
their spiritual growth. But now they knew more. And knowing more

gave them an opportunity to grow. That is something every person who continues walking with God will encounter. There will be moments when Scripture challenges something you thought you understood. There will be moments when the Word asks you to look again. There will be moments when you discover that what you have always believed doesn't quite match what you're seeing in Scripture.

You will have your own Peter experiences. Peter had to allow God to challenge something he had long understood to be true. Now these disciples do the same thing. Neither Peter nor these disciples stopped at:

But this is what I've always believed. Instead, they kept walking.

Yesterday's Decision and Today's Revelation There is something beautiful about the response of these disciples.

They didn't defend yesterday's decision against today's revelation. Their previous baptism wasn't used as a reason to stop examining Scripture. Their previous understanding wasn't used as a wall against further growth. They heard something they hadn't understood before. They examined it.

And when they saw it—

they responded. That doesn't make yesterday meaningless. It means they're still growing. And that's the question this stop leaves with us. When Scripture shows me something more, what will I do with it? Will I hold onto what I already know simply because it's familiar? Will I defend what I've already done because changing feels uncomfortable? Or am I willing to keep walking? The disciples at Ephesus made their choice.

They heard. They learned. They responded. And once again, look at what happened when they were baptized:

“...they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Jerusalem. Samaria. Caesarea. Ephesus. The trail keeps going. And the pattern is becoming very difficult to miss.

Let's keep walking.

Let's Look Again Go back to Acts 19:1–7. This time, pay particular attention to what these disciples knew, what they didn't know, what Paul taught them, and what they did after they learned something more.

1 • WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Observe the text. Look for the details

How does Acts 19:1 describe the people Paul found at Ephesus?

What was Paul's first question to them? What did their answer reveal that they did not yet understand?

What question did Paul ask next? Had these disciples already been baptized? What baptism had they received? What did Paul explain about John's baptism?

What happened when they heard Paul's explanation? In what name were they baptized?

What happened after Paul laid his hands on them?

2 • LET'S THINK A LITTLE DEEPER

Sometimes growth begins when we discover there is something we don't know yet.

These people were already called disciples when Paul met them. What does that tell you about their desire to follow God before Paul taught them anything more?

They had already been baptized. When they learned something more, did they use their previous baptism as a reason not to respond?

Did being baptized again mean their earlier desire to follow God wasn't sincere—or does their response show something about their willingness to grow?

Think back to Peter in Caesarea. Peter had to allow God to challenge something he had long understood to be true. Now the disciples at Ephesus are confronted with something they didn't understand before. What similarities do you see in the way Peter and these disciples responded to new understanding?

We've now encountered baptism in Jerusalem, Samaria, Caesarea, and Ephesus. What do you notice about the name connected with baptism in these accounts?

3 • ALONG THE PATH

Notice where you are before we keep walking.

Perhaps you've already been baptized. Perhaps you've been taught that baptism isn't necessary. Perhaps something you've seen during these last few stops doesn't quite fit what you've always understood. You don't have to pretend your earlier beliefs weren't sincere in order to examine what Scripture is showing you now.

Learning more doesn't make your earlier sincerity less sincere. The question is what you do when you learn more. The disciples at Ephesus didn't defend yesterday's decision against today's revelation.

They heard. They learned. They responded. So before we keep walking:

Has anything you've seen in these baptism accounts challenged something you previously believed?

If your understanding of baptism has changed while walking through these Scriptures, what are you doing with what you've learned?

You don't have to answer every question about baptism yet. We still have more Scripture to examine. But don't lose what Ephesus has shown us.

Growth isn't a rejection of where you've been. Sometimes it's simply the decision to keep walking when God shows you there's more ahead.

Let's keep walking.

REFLECTION

[illegible]

STOP 6

Paul's Journey - Why Baptism?

READ: Acts 9:1–18 AND Acts 22:6–16

We've watched people respond to the Gospel in Jerusalem. We've followed it into Samaria. We've stood in Cornelius's house in Caesarea. We've met disciples in Ephesus who were willing to learn something more. Now we're going to follow Paul. You already know Paul. In fact, Paul was the one asking the questions in Ephesus. But before Paul was teaching other people about baptism, he had his own encounter with Jesus. And he had his own baptism. Let's go back and see what happened.

Paul Meets Jesus Paul's story doesn't begin with someone trying to convince him to become a Christian. Quite the opposite. Paul is persecuting the followers of Jesus. And Paul isn't doing this because he thinks he's fighting against God. He believes he's doing what God wants him to do. He will later say: “...I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” — Acts 26:9

Paul is sincere. He's convinced. And he's wrong. But being wrong isn't the end of Paul's story. That's important for us to remember, too. We can sincerely believe we're doing what God wants and discover that we've misunderstood something. That doesn't put us beyond His reach. It gives us an opportunity to learn, change direction, and grow.

Paul is about to have his own Peter moment. He is traveling toward Damascus when suddenly a light from heaven shines around him, and he falls to the ground. Then he hears a voice:

“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” — Acts 9:4

Paul asks: “Who art thou, Lord?” — Acts 9:5

And the answer changes the direction of his life: “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest...” — Acts 9:5

Paul has encountered Jesus. There is no question now about who Jesus is. Paul asks what he should do, and Jesus tells him to go into Damascus where he will be told what to do.

Paul obeys. For three days, he cannot see. He doesn't eat. He doesn't drink. And Scripture tells us something else about him: “...behold, he prayeth.” — Acts 9:11

Look at where Paul is. He has encountered Jesus. He knows who Jesus is. He has obeyed Jesus. He is praying. He is fasting. And God is already working on the other end of the story.

God Sends Ananias During this time, we meet a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord speaks to him in a vision and tells him exactly where to find Paul. Ananias knows Paul's reputation, and he has some very reasonable questions about this assignment.

But he goes. He enters the house. He lays his hands on Paul. Paul receives his sight. And then something else happens. “...and he arose, and was baptized.” — Acts 9:18

Baptism. But Acts 9 gives us only the brief version. Years later, when Paul tells the story himself, he gives us something more. And this time we get to hear what Ananias said.

“Why Tarriest Thou?” READ ACTS 22:16

Ananias tells Paul: “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”
— Acts 22:16

We've been asking questions all the way through this study. So let's ask another one.

Why baptism? Paul had already encountered Jesus. He believed what Jesus told him enough to obey Him. He had been praying. He had been fasting. And yet Ananias still tells him:

Arise, and be baptized. Not someday. Not when a baptism service is scheduled. Not when it is convenient. “Why tarriest thou?” — Acts 22:16

In other words:

Why are you waiting? We've seen that before, haven't we? Again and again, when people respond to the Gospel in Scripture, baptism follows. But Ananias gives us something more than the instruction to be baptized. Look carefully at the rest of his words. “...be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” — Acts 22:16

Don't explain it away. Don't add anything to it. Just look at what the Scripture says.

Baptism. Washing away sins. Calling on the name of the Lord. Those things appear together in Paul's own testimony. And once again—

there's the name.

Why Does the Name Matter? We've been carrying this question with us since our very first stop. Jesus said:

*“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” —
Matthew 28:18*

Then He commanded His disciples: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost...” — Matthew 28:19

Back at that first stop, we noticed something.

Jesus said “in the name.” We didn't try to explain it yet. We followed the people who actually heard Him give the command. And look at what we've seen. At Pentecost: “...be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ...” — Acts 2:38

In Samaria, they had been: “...baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” — Acts 8:16

At Caesarea, Peter: “...commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” — Acts 10:48

At Ephesus: “...they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” — Acts 19:5

And when Ananias speaks to Paul about baptism, he tells him:

“...calling on the name of the Lord.” — Acts 22:16

That's quite a trail. So maybe it's time to ask:

Why does the name matter?

The Authority of the Name Go back for a moment to what Jesus said immediately before He commanded baptism: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” — Matthew 28:18

The Greek word translated power here is *exousia*. It speaks of authority. Jesus is declaring His authority. And throughout the New Testament, we see His followers acting in His name. Peter encounters a man who has been unable to walk from birth and tells him: “...In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” — Acts 3:6

Later, Paul encounters a woman troubled by an evil spirit. Paul speaks directly to the spirit: “I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” — Acts 16:18

Why the name? Because the authority wasn't Peter's. The authority wasn't Paul's.

The authority belonged to Jesus. Think about someone being deputized. A deputy doesn't suddenly become powerful because of who he is personally. He has been authorized to act under an authority greater than his own. Or think about someone commissioned by a king. They go in the king's name because they have been given the authority to represent the one who sent them.

The name identifies the authority behind them. Jesus told His followers: “Behold, I give unto you power... over all the power of the enemy...” — Luke 10:19

Again, there is something interesting hidden by the English translation. The first word translated power is *exousia*—authority.

Jesus gives His followers authority over the power of the enemy. And He says: “...In my name shall they cast out devils...” — Mark 16:17

The name matters because the Name carries His authority. Now think again about baptism.

Baptized Into Christ Paul didn't only experience baptism. Later, he taught about it. Listen to what he tells the Galatians:

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” — Galatians 3:27

Read that slowly.

Baptized into Christ. Put on Christ. This isn't presented as an empty ceremony. This isn't merely getting wet to show other people that you've made a decision. Paul describes something much deeper. You are being baptized into Christ. And you put on Christ. The same Paul who was told: “...arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” — Acts 22:16

later teaches believers: “...as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” — Galatians 3:27

Paul experienced it. Then Paul taught it. And there's still more.

Buried With Him READ ROMANS 6:3–5

Paul asks another question: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” — Romans 6:3

There it is again.

Baptized into Jesus Christ. But now Paul tells us something else. We are baptized into His death. Then: “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death...” — Romans 6:4

Baptism is connected to burial. And burial is part of the Gospel story. Jesus died.

Jesus was buried. Jesus rose again. Paul continues: “...that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” — Romans 6:4

Death. Burial. Resurrection. And Paul places baptism right in the middle of it. We are buried with Him in baptism. And then we rise to:

newness of life.

So... Why Baptism? We've spent most of this study watching people get baptized. Jesus commanded it. The people at Pentecost did it. The Samaritans did it. Peter commanded Cornelius and his household to do it. The disciples at Ephesus learned something more and did it again. Paul did it. Now Paul has helped us understand why baptism keeps appearing. Baptism is connected with washing away sins. Baptism involves calling on the name of the Lord. We are baptized into Christ. We put on Christ. We are baptized into His death. We are buried with Him. And we rise to walk in newness of life. Suddenly, the urgency we've been seeing makes a lot more sense. And so does the name. This isn't merely about saying the right words.

It's about whose name you are entering. Whose authority stands behind that name. Who you are being baptized into. Who you are

putting on. Paul's journey began with a question: “Who art thou, Lord?” — Acts 9:5

He learned the answer: “I am Jesus...” — Acts 9:5

And then Paul spent the rest of his life walking in that Name.

Let's Look Again Go back through Paul's story in Acts 9 and Acts 22. Then read Romans 6:3–5 and Galatians 3:27. This time, don't just look for whether Paul was baptized. Look for why baptism mattered.

1 • WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Observe the text. Look for the details

Who did Paul encounter on the road to Damascus?

What did Jesus tell Paul to do?

What was Paul doing before Ananias arrived?

What did Ananias tell Paul to do?

What did Ananias connect with baptism in Acts 22:16?

What name appears in Paul's baptism account?

According to Galatians 3:27, what happens to those who are baptized into Christ?

According to Romans 6:3, what are we baptized into?

According to Romans 6:4, how are we buried with Christ?

What kind of life does Paul say follows that burial?

2 • LET'S THINK A LITTLE DEEPER

We've watched baptism happen. Now Scripture is helping us understand why

Paul had encountered Jesus, obeyed Him, prayed, and fasted before Ananias arrived. If baptism were merely an optional outward symbol, would you expect Ananias to speak about it the way he does in Acts 22:16? Why or why not?

Jesus declares that all authority belongs to Him before He commands His disciples to baptize. Later, we repeatedly see the apostles baptizing and ministering in Jesus' name. What does that tell you about the importance of the name?

Paul says those baptized into Christ have “put on Christ.” — Galatians 3:27 What do you think it means to put on Christ?

Think about the picture Paul gives us in Romans 6. Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. How does Paul connect baptism to that Gospel pattern?

3 • ALONG THE PATH

Look back at the trail before we keep walking.

At the beginning of this study, Jesus commanded baptism. Then we followed the people who heard Him.

Jerusalem. Samaria. Caesarea. Ephesus. And now Paul. Again and again, baptism followed belief. Again and again, the name of Jesus appeared. Now Scripture has begun showing us why. So think back to where you started. Has your answer to the question “Why baptism?” changed?

Has your understanding of why the name matters changed?

You don't have to manufacture an answer. Go back through the Scriptures. Look at the trail. Look at what happened. Look at what Paul taught. Then ask yourself:

What does the Bible say baptism does?

We've followed the command. We've watched the examples. And now we've begun to understand the meaning. There's one more stop ahead.

Let's keep walking.

REFLECTION

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STOP 7

What Does the Bible Say About Baptism?

We've walked quite a trail together. We began with a command Jesus gave His disciples. Then instead of deciding for ourselves what He meant, we followed the people who actually heard Him. We watched what they did. We listened to what they preached. We followed the Gospel from Jerusalem to Samaria, into the home of Cornelius, on to Ephesus, and finally through Paul's own journey. Along the way, we asked a lot of questions. Now we've reached our final stop. And it's time to just pause and take it all in.

Go Back to Where You Started Turn back to Stop 1 for a minute. Before we walked into Acts, I asked you to write down what you believed about Matthew 28:19. Find your answer. Don't change it. Don't correct it. Don't be embarrassed by it. Just read it. That was what you believed before you saw everything you've seen since. Now think about where you are today. Has anything changed? If it has, don't rush past that. Ask yourself another question: What changed it? Was it something I told you? Or was it something you saw in Scripture? That distinction matters. Because this study was never about getting you to agree with me. From the beginning, I wanted something much more important than that. I wanted you to see it for yourself. So let's look one more time.

Look Back at the Trail At our first stop, Jesus said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." — Matthew 28:18

Then He commanded His disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost..." — Matthew 28:19

Jesus commanded baptism.

Then we followed the people who heard Him. At Pentecost, people heard Peter preach Jesus and asked: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” — Acts 2:37

Peter answered: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” — Acts 2:38

And those who received the Word responded: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized...” — Acts 2:41

They were baptized. Then the Gospel reached Samaria. They believed Philip's preaching concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ: “...they were baptized, both men and women.” — Acts 8:12

And Scripture tells us: “...they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” — Acts 8:16

They were baptized. Then we went to Caesarea. The Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and the people gathered in his house while Peter was still speaking. They spoke with tongues and magnified God. And Peter still asked: “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” — Acts 10:47

Then: “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” — Acts 10:48

They had received the Holy Spirit.

And Peter still commanded baptism. Then we met the disciples at Ephesus. They had already been baptized. But Paul taught them something they didn't know. And when they heard it:

“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” — Acts 19:5

They didn't use yesterday's understanding as a reason to reject what they could see today.

They heard. They learned. They responded. Then we followed Paul. Paul encountered Jesus. He obeyed Jesus. He prayed. He fasted. And Ananias still told him: “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” — Acts 22:16

Why are you waiting? Paul was baptized. And later, Paul helped us understand why baptism mattered. He wrote: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” — Romans 6:3

And: “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death...” — Romans 6:4

Then he told the Galatians: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” — Galatians 3:27

Now look at the trail.

What Have We Seen? We didn't begin this study with a list of conclusions. We began with Scripture. And this is what we've encountered along the way.

Jesus commanded baptism. Baptism followed belief. Baptism happened promptly. Receiving the Holy Spirit did not make baptism unnecessary. Having been baptized before did not make further obedience unnecessary when someone learned more. Baptism was connected with washing away sins. Baptism involved calling on the

name of the Lord. People were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and the Lord Jesus.

We are baptized into Christ. We are baptized into His death. We are buried with Him in baptism. We rise to walk in newness of life. Those baptized into Christ have put on Christ. And all the way through the story, one thing kept appearing.

The Name. Jesus began by declaring His authority: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” — Matthew 28:18

Then He commanded baptism in the name. And when we followed the people who heard Him, we repeatedly found them baptizing in the name of Jesus Christ and in the name of the Lord Jesus. By the time we followed Paul's journey, we had also seen believers ministering in that Name. The authority wasn't theirs.

The authority belonged to Jesus. The Name was never a meaningless detail.

What Do You See? Now I'm going to give the question back to you. Not: What does your church say about baptism? Not: What were you taught about baptism? Not even: What does the person who gave you this study say about baptism? The question we've been asking from the beginning is:

What does the Bible say about baptism? You have the Scriptures in front of you now. You've seen the command. You've watched the examples. You've seen what happened when people believed. You've seen what happened when someone had already received the Holy Spirit. You've seen what happened when people had already been baptized but later learned more. You've watched Paul discover that

he could sincerely believe he was doing what God wanted and still be wrong.

And you've seen something else in Paul's story. Being wrong wasn't the end of his story. Neither was it the end of Peter's. And discovering that the disciples at Ephesus needed to learn more didn't erase their previous sincerity. Each of them was given an opportunity to respond to what God showed them next. So if something you've seen in this study challenges something you've believed before, you don't have to be ashamed of that. Learning isn't failure. Growth isn't rejection of where you've been. Learning more doesn't make your earlier sincerity less sincere. The question is what you do when you see more.

Let's Look Again Go back to the answer you wrote in Stop 1. Then look through the Scriptures we've studied. Don't compare your old answer with my answer. Compare it with the Word.

1 • WHAT DID YOU SEE?

Look back over the trail. Don't answer from memory if you don't have to. Open your Bible.

What did Jesus command concerning baptism?

What happened when people believed the Gospel in Acts?

What name repeatedly appeared in the baptism accounts?

What did Ananias connect with Paul's baptism in Acts 22:16?

According to Romans 6:3–4, what happens in baptism?

According to Galatians 3:27, what happens to those who are baptized into Christ?

2 • WHAT CHANGED?

Now compare where you started with what you've seen.

Has anything you believed about baptism changed during this study?

If something changed, what Scripture changed your understanding?

Was the change because someone told you what to believe—or because you saw something in Scripture for yourself?

Is there anything you're still unsure about?

If there is, don't be afraid of the question. Go back to the Word. Read the surrounding verses. Compare Scripture with Scripture. Take your time. Truth isn't going anywhere.

3 • WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH WHAT YOU SEE?

Peter had his moment. The disciples at Ephesus had theirs. Paul had his. At some point, each of them encountered something that required a response. Peter had to decide whether he would hold onto what he had always understood or walk through the door God was opening. The disciples at Ephesus had to decide whether having already been baptized meant they had nothing more to learn. Paul had to face the fact that he had sincerely believed he was serving God while actually opposing Jesus. They couldn't change what they had understood yesterday. But they could decide what they would do with what they understood today. And so can you. This is the last question I'm going to ask you in this study. Take your time with it. Don't write what you think you're supposed to write. Don't write what you think I want you to write. Look at the Scriptures. Then answer for yourself.

Now that you've seen what Scripture says about baptism, what will you do with it?

This was never about you being obedient to me. It's about what you see in Scripture—and being obedient to that. You don't owe me an answer.

But you do owe yourself an honest look at the Word.

Open your Bible. Look again. And keep walking.

REFLECTION

[illegible]

ABOUT THE BRIDGE

Building Bridges, Not Walls.

THE BRIDGE was created for people who are searching for biblical truth - and for the people who love them.

Sometimes the things we believe are deeply connected to family, church, tradition, and years of teaching. Looking at those beliefs again can be uncomfortable. THE BRIDGE provides Bible studies and resources designed to help people walk through difficult questions of faith with an open Bible, honest questions, and room for the Holy Spirit to work.

Our approach is simple: start with the Word. Look at the context. Ask good questions. Compare Scripture with Scripture. Take the time you need, and allow the Word to speak.

We aren't here to mock where someone has been, tear down the people who taught them, or pressure them into agreeing with someone else's conclusions.

We want to help people see.

But THE BRIDGE has another purpose, too.

It is also here to equip believers who have already begun this journey to minister to the people they love who don't understand - yet.

When you see something clearly in Scripture, it can be frustrating when someone you love doesn't see it. Sometimes our desire to help can become pressure. We talk too much. Push too hard. Give them everything we've learned at once. We may win the argument while

building a wall between ourselves and the very person we're trying to reach.

There is a better way.

THE BRIDGE helps believers become better disciples so they can become better disciple-makers - learning how to walk beside someone, ask good questions, recognize when to speak and when to give someone room, demonstrate good fruit, and trust the Holy Spirit to do the work that belongs to Him.

The goal isn't to make someone compliant with us.

It's conviction.

It's ownership.

It's helping someone see truth in Scripture for themselves so that if the person who taught them disappeared tomorrow, they would still walk in what they learned because their faith was built on the Word - not the teacher.

Don't make disciples of yourself. Make disciples of Jesus.

That's why we're building bridges - not walls.

Continue the journey: BridgeToTruth.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephanie A. Mayberry

Stephanie A. Mayberry is a Bible teacher, author, and co-laborer in ministry with her husband, Pastor C.W. Mayberry, at Torah Observant Apostolics. She has a particular heart for people who are asking difficult questions about what they have been taught and helping them turn to Scripture for the answers.

Her approach to teaching is simple: open the Bible, look at the context, ask good questions, and give the Holy Spirit room to work. She believes truth does not need to be forced, good fruit should always lead in not just teaching, but also correcting, and that helping someone *see* is far more important than winning an argument.

Stephanie is also the creator of Sabbath Kids, Apostolic Sabbath Keepers (ASK), and THE BRIDGE. She writes and teaches on biblical obedience, spiritual growth, discipleship, and living a Spirit-filled life.

When she isn't writing, creating Bible studies, teaching, building something for ministry, or chasing the occasional “creativity squirrel” that turned into an entirely new project, she can usually be found with a **strong cup of coffee**, talking to Yehovah about what's next and thanking Him for the rich, full life He has given her.

Stephanie lives in Louisiana with her husband CW, daughter Micah, and grandson Silas - and she considers the Oxford comma non-negotiable.

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