



Foundations Student Notes

Lesson 4 – Instruction about Baptisms (Part I)

The third foundational teaching about Christ, instruction about baptisms, naturally follows repentance and faith. The word “baptize” comes directly from the Greek word “baptizo” (bap-tee-zoh), which means **to immerse, submerge, or dip** something in a liquid. One notable historical source of the meaning of “baptizo” comes from a pickle recipe by Nicander, a Greek poet and physician who lived around 200 B.C. Nicander writes that, to become a pickle, a cucumber must be **baptized** in vinegar. In this recipe, we see that baptism involves both **total immersion** – the entire cucumber must be submerged – and **permanent transformation** – once the cucumber has become a pickle, there’s no turning back!

Baptism is first and foremost **an act of obedience** to Jesus, who was himself baptized:

📖 *Matthew 28.16-20, Matthew 3:13-17*

Paul writes that baptism also has significant spiritual meaning. Baptism perfectly symbolizes the death of the old self we discussed when studying **repentance** and birth of the new self we discussed when studying **faith**. In this sense, baptism is both an **end** and a **beginning**.

📖 *Romans 6.1-14, John 3.1-8*

In baptism, we become like Jesus in his death in order to become like him in his resurrection. It’s important to note that this doesn’t mean that sin automatically disappears – Paul clearly states that we must **not allow** sin to reign in our lives. Paul himself confesses his own sinfulness:

📖 *Romans 7.14-25*

Baptism is emphasized throughout the New Testament, especially in the book of Acts:

📖 *Acts 2.32-41, Acts 8.26-40, Acts 16.25-34, Acts 9.1-19, Acts 10.44-48*

From these passages, we can learn much about baptism:

- Baptism can be performed by **any disciple** of Jesus Christ
- The location does not seem to be of particular importance
- Baptism always **immediately followed** an individual’s profession of faith in Jesus Christ

Baptism marks the end of an old, sin-ruled life, and the beginning of the Spirit-filled life given us by the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Just like Nicander’s cucumber, Christian baptism involves both **total immersion** – in baptism we declare Jesus is Lord over our entire life – and **permanent transformation** – once we have been born again, there’s no turning back.