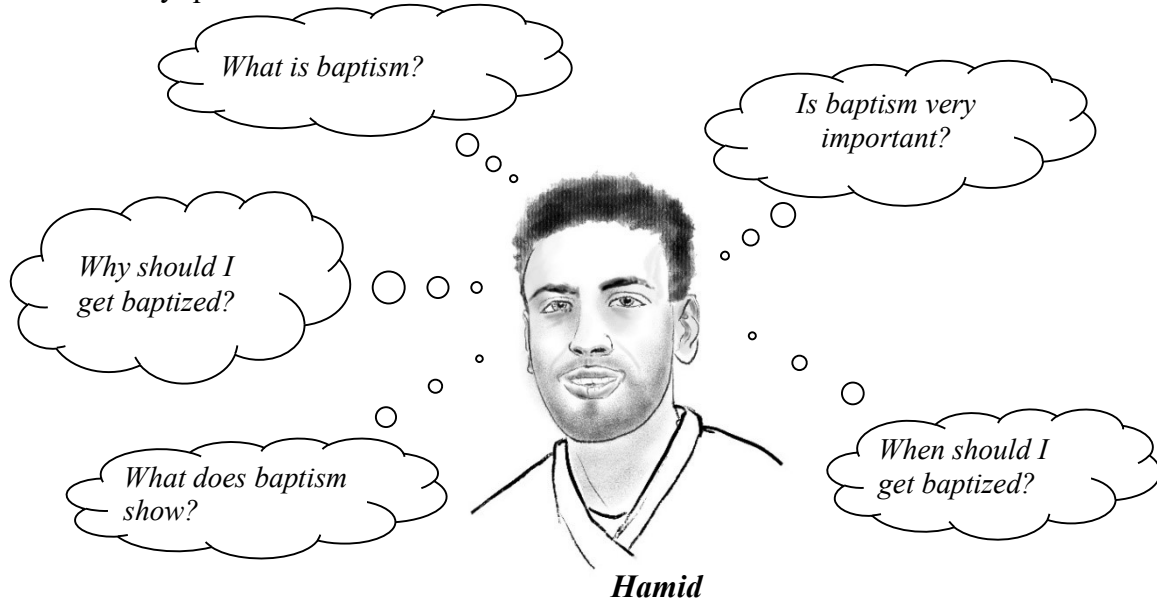


This young man Hamid is puzzled. Last year he entrusted his life to Jesus Christ. He is growing stronger in his new faith. Recently another believer told him, “Soon you should be baptized”. This started many questions in Hamid’s mind:



Hamid

Let’s try to answer each of Hamid’s questions in today’s lesson.

‘What is Baptism?’

1 ‘Baptism’ literally means getting dipped or plunged in water. In the New Testament we read how John the Baptist (*Yahya*) baptized people in the river Jordan, including even Jesus himself. These days Christ’s followers may be baptized in a river or tank, going right down under the water for a few moments. An alternative way is to pour or sprinkle water on them.

We go through this important ceremony just once, not repeatedly through our lives. What is the name of this ceremony? _____

‘Why should I get Baptized?’

2 We get baptized because the Lord Jesus commanded it. He said



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

This is an important verse. Please memorize it now.

3 In obedience to Christ’s command, the apostle Peter told a huge crowd in Jerusalem “*Repent and be baptized*” (Acts 2:38). That day three thousand people accepted his message and took the step of baptism!

What is the best reason for me to get baptized? (*tick one only*)

- a) because I want to do it
 b) because my Christian friends want me to do it
 c) because the Lord Jesus commands me to do it

‘What does Baptism show?’



Baptism is very special and significant. According to the New Testament, baptism shows that:

- A. I am a new person in Christ
- B. My sins are washed away
- C. I have joined Christ's community

Let's learn now about these wonderful truths.

A) *I am a New Person in Christ*

4 Some people are afraid to go under the water in baptism. Don't worry, during baptism people go under the water only for a few seconds and it is not dangerous. But it is a meaningful symbol of what happens to us when we turn to Christ. It is like our old sinful nature being drowned in the water so that we can rise up again to a new life in Jesus!

Draw lines to match the actions below with their related meaning:

Action

- a) Going down into the water
- b) Coming up out of the water

Meaning

- 1. I rise again as a new person in Christ
- 2. My old nature is put to death

5 So, baptism is a sign that my old life is finished and now I am a new person in Christ. God's Word says,

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life”

(Romans 6:4)

What is the first truth that baptism shows? (*circle the correct answer*)

[I am a new person in Christ / I am still in my old, sinful nature]

6 Often at a baptism people go down into the water wearing their old clothes symbolizing their old sinful life. Then they come up out of the water and put on fresh clean clothes showing their new life in Christ.



If you have already been baptized, what were your emotions when you came out of the water? Be ready to talk about this in the discussion time.

7 Siraj from Africa came to Christ from the same previous religion as you. Here he describes, in his own words, what he felt after his baptism:

“I felt I have died to my old sinful way, I have given myself to God and am now a new person. I am not the Siraj my friends knew, not the one whom Satan knew, but a new Siraj - forgiven, born again, controlled by the Spirit. The old Siraj is dead, the new one is alive in Christ. I came out of the water feeling I am a new person!”

In the box above, how many times did Siraj use the phrase ‘new’? ___ Underline them.

8 What is the first truth that baptism shows? I am a _____ person in Christ

B) My Sins are Washed Away

9 Acts 22:16 tells us about a second truth about baptism: “be baptized and wash your sins away”.

According to this verse, what truth does baptism show? (tick one)

- a) I am a new person in Christ
- b) My sins are washed away



10 As we know from our own experience, ablutions (*wudu*) or even a full bath (*ghusal*) is not enough to wash away our sins. Water can only wash the outside of our bodies, it cannot cleanse our hearts and consciences.

Nevertheless, baptism is a powerful outward sign of the inner cleansing which Christ does in our hearts. He died on the cross to make this possible. Read 1 John 1:7 (note that 1 John is a different book of the Bible from John. Check in your List of Contents).

According to 1 John 1:7, what purifies us from all sin? _____

11 The apostle Peter, who baptized many people during his life, also wrote about baptism in 1 Peter 3:18-22. This passage is not easy to interpret. But the main points are:

- Our salvation is through Jesus’ sufferings (verse 18) and resurrection (verse 21)
- Water is a mark of this salvation for us (verse 21) as it was for Noah (verse 20)

Which ceremony reminds me that my sins are washed away?

- a) my baptism
- b) my pilgrimage
- c) my funeral

C) I have joined Christ’s Community

12 By getting baptized we publicly join Christ’s worldwide community of believers (Christ’s *ummah*). We are men and women from many different races, but all united “for we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body.” (1 Corinthians 12:13).

What is the third truth which baptism shows?
I have joined Christ’s _____



13 Baptism is not something private just for you, but it involves the whole community of believers. They will witness your baptism ceremony, and at the end of it they may use words like this to welcome you:

“We welcome you into the Lord’s family. We are members together of the body of Christ; we are children together of the same heavenly Father; we are inheritors together of the kingdom of God. We welcome you.”



How fortunate we are to be welcomed by ‘God’s chosen people’! Stop now to thank God for your brothers and sisters in Christ.

14 What three truths does baptism show? *(fill the blank)*

- a) I am a _____ person in Christ
- b) My _____ are washed away
- c) I have _____ Christ’s community

Hamid is excited to learn these truths. Next he asks:

‘Is Baptism very important?’

15 In one way it is not essential for salvation, for we are saved through trusting Christ not through water. But still, baptism is Christ’s command! And as we have seen, it is a very important sign of belonging to him and to his church. So you should get baptized, when the time is right.

a) In many cultures, if you see a wedding ring on someone’s finger what does it show?

b) A ring is not totally essential for being married; but in some cultures it is an important sign that a person is committed to whom? _____

c) Likewise, our baptism is an important mark of commitment that we belong to whom?

16 Through baptism we show we are proud to belong to our master Jesus Christ. And we are glad to tell this to our brothers and sisters in Christ. You will probably be asked to ‘give your testimony’ at your baptism. This means briefly telling everybody how Jesus Christ has changed your life.



Let’s try this now. Imagine you are giving your testimony at your baptism. When the leader asks “What changes has Jesus Christ made in your life?”, what will you say?

Write what you will say and be ready for discussion. If you wish, check what you wrote for Lesson 2 question 15. But write it here in more detail.

17 Salma’s circumstances don’t allow her to get baptized yet. Which would be better advice to give her, a) or b)?

- ___ a) ‘Don’t bother about it, baptism is unimportant’
- ___ b) ‘Baptism is very important, so keep asking God to make it possible for your baptism to happen at the right time’

In this lesson, we have tried to answer Hamid’s different questions about baptism. Now we come to his last question.



‘When should I get Baptized?’

18 Some Christians advise you to take baptism as soon as you receive Christ. Others say it is better to wait for some time until your faith is stronger. Listen to their advice, but listen to God’s Spirit also. God himself will guide you in this important step. When the time is right, you will feel it in your heart.

Don’t let humans rush you into getting baptized if you are not ready. But don’t hang back either, if God is telling you now is the right time.

Which of the actions below are good? *(tick two answers)*

- a) listen to the advice of wise believers who care for you
- b) avoid getting baptized because you fear the consequences
- c) think it is unimportant to get baptized
- d) get baptized when you feel God telling you

19 Wise believers care for you and will give good advice about baptism. But some believers are unwise in making baptism arrangements, and some church leaders take advantage of baptisms to promote their own name. So find someone you trust to make arrangements for your baptism.

If you know who can give you good advice about your own baptism, tick this box . If you don’t know a suitable person, ask your advisor.

20 We thought earlier about what baptism means for us believers. But what does it mean for our non-Christian relatives? For them it is a sign that we publicly cut ourselves off from them, causing them hurt and shame.

How then should we take baptism?

- a) Fearfully, worried for our own safety
- b) Carefully, out of love for our families

21 Because of our non-Christian relatives, it is wise to be careful and take precautions. What precautions can you think of, to make sure that news of our baptism would not cause too much embarrassment to our relatives? *(Note your ideas and be ready for discussion)*



22 What advice would you give to a believer whose wife or husband is not yet Christ’s follower? Should the believer get baptized now, or wait hoping to do it later when their spouse turns to Christ? *(Note your ideas and be ready for discussion time.)*





Although Hamid’s baptism should be carried out with due precaution, it will be a time of great rejoicing! Even the angels in heaven will celebrate with him!



PRACTICAL TASK

If you have not yet been baptized, go to talk about it with the person you named in question 19. Get their advice about when and how you should be baptized. Ask the Lord for his advice too.

REVIEW

- 1 Write the memory verse: "Go and make disciples, _____"
_____ (Matthew ___ : ___)
- 2 We learned that my baptism is a sign of three things. What are they?
 - a) 'I am a new _____',
 - b) 'My _____ are _____ away'
 - c) 'I have joined Christ's _____',
- 3 How important is it to get baptized?
___ very important ___ not important

LESSON 13 ANSWERS

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 1 | read the verses to find the answer | 11 | God |
| 2 | personal answer | 12 | write the verse from memory |
| 3 | frightened | 13 | be ready for discussion |
| 4 | No | 14 | b) |
| 5 | B | 15 | respect |
| 6 | Joseph | 16 | c) |
| 7 | frightened | 17 | for discussion |
| 8 | be ready for discussion | 18 | a) and b) are correct |
| 9 | personal answer | 19 | c) |
| 10 | memorize the verse | 20 | No |

Study tip: Head knowledge is not enough. Ask God to change your heart too.



LESSON 14 ANSWERS

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|----|--|
| 1 | baptism | 14 | a) new b) sins c) joined |
| 2 | memorize the verse | 15 | a) that you are already married |
| 3 | c) | | b) your husband or wife |
| 4 | a) 2 b) 1 | | c) Christ |
| 5 | I am a new person, in Christ | 16 | be ready to give your testimony in the group |
| 6 | your personal response | 17 | b) is better |
| 7 | 4 | 18 | a) and d) are good |
| 8 | new | 19 | tick the box if you know a wise person to advise you |
| 9 | b) | 20 | b) |
| 10 | the blood of Jesus | 21 | for discussion |
| 11 | a) | 22 | for discussion |
| 12 | community | | |
| 13 | stop and thank God | | |