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## **Water Baptism**

### *Acts 8:26-40*

#### **Introduction:**

In the Christian church there are only two ceremonies given by Christ. Every true Christian must comply with these ceremonies because they are Christ's commands. The first command is Water Baptism. This is our subject for today. As we believe in Jesus and repent of our sins the first step of obedience is water baptism. Water baptism serves as a public witness, an announcement to the whole world that we are followers of Christ. It is also an act of obedience by the new believer who makes a verbal declaration of his faith.

This declaration consists of a commitment to keep his conscience clear before God all the days of his life (1 Peter 3:20-21). Water baptism does not save us, but it demonstrates to the whole world that we are obedient followers of Christ. Our story today is an account of a new believer being baptized in water.

#### **Why Is Water Baptism Important?**

#### **Story:**

#### **Philip Baptizes the African**

After Jesus' resurrection and return to heaven, it happened that there was an African official returning to Africa from Jerusalem in his chariot on horseback. He was returning from the temple where he had gone to worship the true God. As he traveled in his chariot, he read the scriptures. God sent Philip, a follower of Jesus, to meet this African. Philip approached the chariot and heard the man reading the scriptures. Philip asked him, "Do you understand what you read?"

The African replied, "How could I understand unless someone explained it to me?" The African then invited Philip to sit beside him so that he could explain that passage of scripture to him. The verses he was reading were written hundreds of years earlier and predicted that Jesus, would come into the

#### **Instructions:**

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- Tell the story*
- Retell the story.*
- Tell the story with the help of others.*
- Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- Ask the seven questions.*

#### **Questions:**

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- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story?
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

world and die. The African asked Philip. "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about? Philip then explained that it was a prophecy of Jesus' death and told him the good news of Jesus in full. As they traveled along the road, they came to a place where there was water.

The African said to him, "Look, here is water. Why can't I be baptized?" Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you can." And the man said, "I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Then Philip and the African went into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit was taken away from Philip, and the African saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing exceedingly.

**Extra help:**

The following questions can be used to help students learn more about the subject of water baptism. Many times, there is confusion about the form and meaning of baptism. The purpose of the questions is to motivate dialogue.

- What does the verse we memorized mean?
- Does baptism in water save us? Yes or no? Explain your answer.
- What are the purposes of water baptism?
- How is it baptized? By immersion or sprinkling?
- Matthew 28:19 states the formula for baptism; in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Could you defend this formula against those who are baptized only in the name of Jesus?
- Based on this story, what would be your next step of obedience in following Christ? When will you be baptized? When you are baptized invite your friends. Let them see your public testimony of what God has done in your life.

**Memory verse:**

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*Acts 2: 38*  
*"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."*  
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