

# 3.3

## BORN OF WATER

### LESSON BIG IDEA

I will be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ.

### FOCUS VERSES

#### John 3:3-5

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

### LESSON TEXT

Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; John 3:1-7; Acts 8:26-39

### TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God requires all who will be saved to be baptized.



### Thinking about Last Week:

Have students refer to their Daily Devotional Guide to answer the following questions:

1. What is something that impacted you most as you read through the Bible Reading Plan, the Lesson Text, and the Biblical Insights?
2. How did this affect your prayers and thoughts throughout the week?
3. Do you feel you grew closer to the Lord this past week? Why or why not?

## LESSON CONNECTION

**Teacher Option:**  
Show Image to help illustrate the Lesson Connection.

Juan, one of Colombia's biggest outlaws, was the right-hand man of *El Terrible*, the rebel leader of forty thousand bandits, murderers, and insurgents who defied the government in the remote northern mountains of Colombia, South America. *El Terrible* had one eye and one ear; his face was crossed and recrossed with scars and lesions.

Through the influence of his mother, Juan committed his life to Christ. Though not yet baptized in water, Juan received a burden for his comrades in crime. Juan asked missionary Bill Drost to go with him and speak to these spiritually hungry outlaws. However, in the past, outsiders who had tried to penetrate their isolated locale were often beaten, robbed, and even murdered.

Juan and Bill could have made their way up into the mountains by donkey, but Juan had not thought to arrange for this. Their only way of travel was to walk through knee-high mud and water the whole way. When at last they reached Juan's residence, dusk had fallen. Juan's testimony had caused some of the rebels to believe, and they wanted to hear Bill preach. With his pocket flashlight and Bible, Bill stepped onto the verandah and began with the story of Philip going down to Samaria and preaching Christ to the Samaritans. No one moved or uttered a word as Bill spoke for ninety minutes.

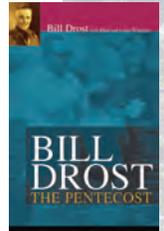
At about midnight, several of the men expressed a desire to be baptized. Around 6:00 AM the next morning, some men went out to dam a small stream, and nearly the entire town turned up to see the thirty-six who were to be baptized.

Afterward, Bill and Juan journeyed to the next village. Bill preached and baptized ten more people. Anxiety and tension could be sensed, however, because they were not far from *El Terrible's* territory. Some of his men had been baptized, weeping and confessing to all manner of evil, robbery, and murders. Fear fell on the villagers, who did not know if *El Terrible* would take vengeance.

*El Terrible* sent word asking Bill to come up into his territory; he would like to speak to Bill. Was this a cat-and-mouse game? Bill didn't know, but he agreed to go.

The next morning Bill, Juan, and a few other men set off for their final frontier, riding mules. As they made their way into steeper, higher, and harsher terrain, high wind and driving rain lashed them. They pulled their hats low, covered their faces, peering only through slits for their eyes. There was no sign of human habitation and hardly any evidence of wildlife in the desolate wilderness. Hour after hour they rode, not knowing what lay before them. Still they pressed on because nothing is more important than salvation. (This true story continues below in the Internalizing the Message section.)

(This account is summarized from *Bill Drost the Pentecost*, Word Aflame Press, 2000, available at [www.pentecostalpublishing.com](http://www.pentecostalpublishing.com).)



## **SG** TEACHING OUTLINE

**Icebreaker:** If you had the opportunity to talk to someone who knew nothing about the Bible, what is the first biblical narrative (story) you would most likely tell?

**Lesson Connection:** Share the Lesson Connection on page 327. **I**

### I. PHILIP THE EVANGELIST

#### A. The Samaritan Revival

» *How do your experiences of water baptism and Spirit baptism compare with those of the Samaritans? Were you baptized in water before or after you were filled with the Holy Spirit? Explain.*

#### B. Led by the Spirit into the Desert

» *Have you ever had an encounter with an angel? Describe what happened.* **V**

#### C. Philip Preached Jesus to the Ethiopian

» *Have you ever used Isaiah 53 to share the gospel with another person? Explain. How would you use this passage to share the gospel?*

#### D. They Went Down into the Water

#### E. We Must Follow God's Plan for Baptism

### II. BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF JESUS

#### A. The One Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

» *Has anyone ever asked you how to reconcile Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38? How do you do it?*

#### B. Except a Man Be Born of Water

» *How should receiving a new heart and a new spirit (spiritual rebirth) affect the way we live our lives?*

#### C. Those Who Believe and Are Baptized Shall Be Saved

#### D. I Will Be Baptized in Water in the Name of Jesus



### Internalizing the Message

#### Prayer Focus

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- That we would be filled with boldness and compassion to share the gospel with unbelievers
- That those who need to be baptized would understand its necessity

# LESSON COMMENTARY

## I. PHILIP THE EVANGELIST

### A. The Samaritan Revival

Philip's ministry in Samaria signaled that the Holy Spirit would fall, not only in an upper room in Jerusalem, but wherever the gospel was preached. As Philip preached Christ, multitudes listened to him and saw the miracles he did. With joy those who believed Philip were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. The Holy Ghost had not yet fallen on any of the Samaritans, however. So when Peter and John came down from Jerusalem to Samaria, they prayed for those who had been baptized, laying their hands on them. Then the believers received the Holy Ghost.

This account indicates that people do not automatically receive the Holy Spirit upon believing or being baptized, for the Samaritans had done both. To believe, to be baptized, and to receive the Holy Spirit are distinct events. Sometimes people do receive the Holy Spirit before being baptized in water, as in the house of Cornelius, but these experiences must not be confused. They are separate experiences, although they may occur close together (Acts 10:44–48).

*How do your experiences of water baptism and Spirit baptism compare with those of the Samaritans? Were you baptized in water before or after you were filled with the Holy Spirit? Explain.*

### B. Led by the Spirit into the Desert

After the episode in Samaria, an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, telling him to travel south along the road that went down from Jerusalem to Gaza. It is sometimes thought that references to an angel of the Lord are only found in the Old Testament. This is not the case, as is seen not only here but also in places in the New Testament. (See Matthew 1:20, 24; 2:13, 19; 28:2; Luke 1:11; 2:9; Acts 5:19; 7:30; 8:26; 12:7, 23.) Both the Old and New Testaments indicate it is possible for God to speak by means of angels before or after the Day of Pentecost. The word transliterated angel means, after all, messenger.

*Have you ever had an encounter with an angel? Describe what happened. ▼*

### C. Philip Preached Jesus to the Ethiopian

In the first century, it was not unusual for believers to receive guidance from angels, visions, and gifts of the Spirit. The results were remarkable. In Philip's case, he met a eunuch from Ethiopia who was treasurer to Queen Candace. This man had been to Jerusalem to worship. As he was returning to Ethiopia in his chariot, he was reading from Isaiah 53. The Spirit said to Philip, "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot" (Acts 8:29).

**Teacher Option:**  
*Show Video to either take the place of the question or to help illustrate it.*

Running toward the chariot, Philip heard what the man was reading and asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8:30). The eunuch, inviting Philip up into his chariot, answered, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (Acts 8:31). The Ethiopian was confused as to whether Isaiah wrote about himself or someone else. Beginning with Isaiah

Have you ever used Isaiah 53 to share the gospel with another person?

Explain.

How would you use this passage to share the gospel?

53:7-8, the same text the eunuch was reading, Philip preached Jesus to him.

#### D. They Went Down into the Water

It may seem surprising that Philip's message beginning in Isaiah brought the Ethiopian to the place of understanding his need for water baptism. But it demonstrates how thoroughly the Old Testament testifies of Jesus. (See Luke 24:25-27, 32, 44-49.) As the chariot traveled along, they approached a place where there was enough water for baptism.

*And the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (Acts 8:36-37)*

The Ethiopian's answer illustrates what it means to believe. There is no need to wait to baptize someone until that person has an advanced level of theological comprehension. It is sufficient to believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Stopping the chariot, the Ethiopian went down into the water, as did Philip. After the baptism, Philip and the eunuch both came up out of the water. This shows that water baptism requires immersion, as the Greek word *baptizō* indicates. *Baptizō* means "to dip, to plunge, to immerse."

#### E. We Must Follow God's Plan for Baptism

Water baptism is never portrayed as an option in Scripture. It is anticipated in the Old Testament by three events that serve as types of this New Testament practice. First is the water of Noah's flood (1 Peter 3:20-21). Second is God's command of circumcision (Colossians 2:11-12). The tense of the Greek text here indicates that the "circumcision of Christ" occurs at the moment of our burial with Him in baptism. Third is Israel's experience at the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:1-4). Israel's baptism "unto Moses" is seen as an analogy of Christian baptism.

The New Testament points to the necessity of water baptism. First, it is a command of Christ. (See Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16.) Second, baptism is linked to repentance and remission of sins. (See Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:47-48; 19:5; 22:16.) Third, baptism identifies us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. (See Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 1:13; Galatians 3:27.)

## II. BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF JESUS

### A. The One Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter declared, "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38). After Philip's preaching in Samaria, those who believed were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16). Peter commanded those who had been baptized with the Holy Spirit at Cornelius's house "to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48). Paul

baptized those who had been disciples of John the Baptist “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:5).

Since water baptism identifies us with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection, it should be no surprise it is to be done in His name. What then are we to make of Matthew 28:19, which records these words of Jesus: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”?

When Jesus gave His Jewish disciples the Great Commission, they understood the meaning of His name. They also understood that “Father” represented the God of Israel, whose name was Yahweh (i.e., “LORD”) and that His Holy Spirit was known in the Hebrew Scriptures as the Spirit of the “LORD” (Yahweh). The name *Jesus* captures all to which He referred when He commanded His disciples to baptize in “the name.”

*Has anyone ever asked you how to reconcile Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38? How do you do it?*

## **B. Except a Man Be Born of Water**

Jesus said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:5-7). Nicodemus could not comprehend the meaning of Jesus’ words. He asked, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?” (John 3:9-10, NKJV). Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel, should have understood what it meant to be born again.

Ezekiel wrote, “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them” (Ezekiel 36:25-27, NKJV).

There is no reason the sprinkled water of Ezekiel 36:25 cannot be a prophetic anticipation of New Covenant water baptism. Prophecy often uses figurative language to represent literal realities. Then, with a look forward to the New Covenant, still in the language of water and Spirit, Ezekiel saw these elements employed not merely in a figurative sense, but in the efficacious way described by Jesus in John 3.

We also discover that Jesus’ ministry, even before the imprisonment of John, included water baptism:

*After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. For John had not yet been thrown into prison. Then there arose a dispute between*

*some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!" (John 3:22–26, NKJV)*

When John's disciples informed him that Jesus was baptizing, it was because a dispute had arisen between them and the Jews "about purification" (John 3:25). John's disciples understood purification was linked to baptism, for John baptized for the forgiveness (i.e., remission) of sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). When they brought their questions to John about the baptisms being done by Jesus' disciples, they apparently wondered if those baptisms also resulted in purification, as John's baptisms did. John's response was to assure his disciples that everything Jesus did had been given to Him from Heaven, thus legitimizing the baptisms associated with Jesus' ministry. (See John 3:25–36.)

This demonstrates why Jesus could say to Nicodemus, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?" (John 3:10, NKJV). What better description could we have of what it means to be born again than to think of it in terms of being cleansed from all our filthiness and idols and to be given a new heart and a new spirit?

*How should receiving a new heart and a new spirit (spiritual rebirth) affect the way we live our lives?*

### **C. Those Who Believe and Are Baptized Shall Be Saved**

In Mark's record, Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15–16). This statement is clear enough; we must be baptized.

### **D. I Will Be Baptized in Water in the Name of Jesus**

The choice is yours. Will you obey the commands of Scripture and be baptized in water in Jesus' name? If so, you can be certain of the remission of your sins and of the promise of the Holy Spirit. You will be born again, and you will gain entrance into the kingdom of God.

## INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

(Continued from Lesson Connection:)

Finally reaching *El Terrible's* abode, Bill and those riding with him found the house and verandah filled with people, standing shoulder to shoulder. Without introduction, Bill was led to the verandah and left in front of the mass of people. It was quite dark. Only the shapes of people could be seen.

Bill started, "I am not one of yours. But I belong to Jesus Christ, and I have come to tell you the good news of the gospel." Juan slipped him a note: "*El Terrible* is here." The Holy Spirit gave Bill inspiration, and heavy conviction hung over the people.

When finished, Bill asked, "Who wants to take Jesus Christ and be baptized?" A perceptible change swept over the audience. Bill recognized it—it was the sickening sense of fear. Spiritual forces were striving together. Boldly, Juan stepped forward and announced, "I wish to be baptized."

All eyes fastened on Juan. *El Terrible* had threatened Juan with death should he submit to baptism. "Very well," Bill said. "We are going to the stream for a baptism." He led Juan out. No effort was made to restrain them, but the tension was at a breaking point. Many of the men were waiting for orders from *El Terrible*. Soon they were at the stream just below nearby cliffs.

Nearly ten of the biggest men climbed onto a ledge about ten feet above the water. Bill stepped into the water, asking Juan to wait on the side. Once more, Bill told the people of their need to believe in Jesus and be baptized. When he called Juan into the water, the men on the ledge stiffened, drawing their guns simultaneously. There was an ominous click as they cocked their guns and pointed them with one accord at Juan.

"Juan, you tell them why you want to be baptized," said Bill. After Juan's testimony under pointed pistols, Bill placed one hand on Juan's head, the other behind his shoulders, and called over him the name of Jesus.

At that moment, accompanied by a tremendous screech, a huge man fell in front of Bill, splashing into the water. It was *El Terrible*. His one eye looked into both of Bill's; his crossed pistols, still cocked, dangled by his side. His voice shaking, *El Terrible* said, "I too want to be baptized. I have been a terrible man, but I want to be a new man, and I want what Juan has. I forbade him to be baptized, and now I see he is determined. I know it is real."

Rising from the waters of baptism, *El Terrible* called on the name of Jesus with all his might. He was followed into the waters of baptism by other rebels. Altogether, seventeen were baptized, including *El Terrible's* son and wife. A prayer meeting followed, lasting all night. *El Terrible* and others were filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking with tongues.

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