

THE TRUTH

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Lesson 21 - The Truth About Baptism

There are so many questions surrounding the Christian term, 'baptism.' Somehow, the subject of baptism has spawned a plethora of ideas on how it should be administered and to whom. It seems as if every church has a different method or idea of what baptism means and how the step is taken. Yet, all believe that their method is based on the one book of authority, the Bible. How could this confusion of conviction result from reading the same book? We hope to answer all of your questions about being baptized so that you can confidently take this step of identification with Christ Jesus.

1. What are two primary prerequisites for salvation? [Mark 16:16] Ans. _____ and _____

These are two great hallmarks of the Christian religion. The first is _____ itself. The second is the _____ of faith, the act that manifests the reality and sincerity of our faith. To be sincere in the first and refuse to submit to the second is unthinkable.

2. According to Jesus, how important is baptism? [John 3:5] Ans. _____ important.

NOTE: Jesus said Christian baptism is an important part of our response to the Gospel invitation. Jesus' cross which is supremely important, is mentioned _____ times in the New Testament. On the other hand, baptism is mentioned over _____ times.

3. What directive did Jesus give to his disciples? [Matt. 28:19-20] Ans. Go _____ and _____

4. Most people believe that any style or type of baptism is acceptable as long as a person is sincere; but what does the Bible say about this? [Ephesians 4:5] Ans. The Bible supports _____ method

We will consider two aspects of baptism:

A. _____

B. _____

A - THE METHOD OF BAPTISM

5. Who was the first person to practice Bible baptism in the New Testament? [Mark 1:9] Ans. _____ the Baptist [Matthew 3:13-16]

NOTE: Jesus was baptized in the river, not in Jerusalem with someone sprinkling water from a bowl on Him. When He had been baptized, He "went up straightway out of the water." [Matthew 3:16] This clearly indicates that the method of administering this ordinance to Jesus was by immersion, since He had gone into the water to be baptized. As He looked upon the scene, God the Father approved of what was done, and spoke directly from His throne, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

6. Why was John the Baptist baptizing near Salim? [John 3:23] Ans. Because of much

- Jesus is our example not in some things, but in *all* things, [1 Peter 1:21; Philip 2:5]
- Philip the Evangelist [Acts 8:26-31]

7. How were these “other” methods of baptism incorporated in Christianity? [Matt. 13:24-25] Ans.

Through the _____

NOTE: It was not until the Council of _____ in _____ that sprinkling and pouring were officially accepted as equally valid as immersion in the practice of baptism.

Sprinkling or pouring for baptism was not introduced into the church until hundreds of years after the early Christian church passed off the stage of action. D.A. Stanley, of the Church of England, wrote:

“For the first thirteen centuries [after Christ] the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word ‘baptize’ that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into the water.” [Dr. Dean Arthur Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, 256-257]

The only mode of baptism recognized and used in the New Testament is _____. The word baptize is simply a transliteration of the Greek word, **baptizo**, and is defined in lexicons as meaning “to dip, to immerse, to plunge.”

NOTE: John Wesley was in America in 1737, he was tried by a jury of thirty-four men in a church trial on the charge of “refusing to baptize Mr. Parker’s child, except by dipping.” It seems clear, therefore, that John Wesley, the father of Methodism, recognized baptism as immersion. The records of this trial are found in the court proceedings of Georgia.

B - THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

Throughout the New Testament, baptism is a symbol of a public commitment; a symbol of allegiance or commitment to Jesus Christ. But here’s the problem. Many people today give a sort of vague assent to Jesus as their Savior and keep their allegiance rather private. They believe in Him, but that belief, for some reason never becomes a public statement.

When we are baptized we declare three things:

- a. We declare our _____
- b. We take a _____ stand.
- c. We show whose _____ we are on.

Baptism symbolizes three important steps in our life: [Romans 6:3-4]

- i. _____ - First, as we go down into the waters and are covered, we **die** to sin. It means we are dying to our Old sinful way of life.
- ii. _____ - Second, we are **buried** by faith into the death of Christ. Burying our sins in the watery grave.
- iii. _____ - Third, as we come up out from under the water, we **rise** to newness of life, to a new life in Christ.

8. What are some of the benefits one receives after baptism?

- Every sin is _____ . [Acts 2:38]
- The Holy Spirit is _____ to us. [Mark 1:10; Acts 5:32]
- _____ is given to us. [John 1:12]
- We are _____ into God's heavenly family. [Phillip 3:30]

PRE-REQUISITES FOR BAPTISM

NOTE: First, it must be understood that baptism is an **OUTWARD** proclamation of an **INWARD** conversion. In other words, baptism is a ceremonial act undertaken by a person who accepts Jesus Christ as his or her Savior and Lord. This is usually done in the presence of the church body as a public proclamation of one's faith.

9. What are some of the requirements for Bible baptism as outlined in the Scriptures?

- a. _____ or _____ [Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:12]
- b. _____ [Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 7:10]
- c. _____ [Acts 3:19]
- d. _____ [Mark 16:16; Acts 16:31, 33]

10. Are there biblical grounds for re-baptism? Ans. _____

- I. A clearer understanding of _____ truths. [Acts 19:1-7]

There is still another lesson for us in the experience of those Jewish converts. When they received baptism at the hand of John they did not fully comprehend the mission of Jesus as the Sin Bearer. They were holding serious errors. But with clearer light, they gladly accepted Christ as their Redeemer, and with this step of advance came a change in their obligations. As they received a purer faith, there was a corresponding change in their lives. In token of this change, and as an acknowledgment of their faith in Christ, they were re-baptized in the name of Jesus. Many a sincere follower of Christ has had a similar experience. A clearer understanding of God's will, places man in a new relation to him. New duties are revealed. Much, which before appeared innocent, or even praiseworthy, is now seen to be sinful. [Acts of the Apostles, 284]

- II. If I have _____ [Proverbs 14:14; 2 Timothy 4:10; Revelation 2:4]
 - _____ backsliders - [1 Timothy 4:1] They decline from faith to infidelity or decline to error about the meaning of the Scriptures.
 - _____ backsliders - [Acts 7:39; Matthew 15:8] This is the kind of person whose outward life remains pretty much the same. He doesn't fall into gross sin; he doesn't renounce the faith; he doesn't quit going to church; he still reads the Bible and prays; but his heart is no longer in it.
 - _____ backsliders - [2 Timothy 4:10] This is the obvious backslider. He quits going to church; he no longer prays or reads the Bible; and so on. Or he starts drinking heavily; he leaves his wife for another woman; and sins of that kind.
- III. If I have brought _____, _____ and _____ on Jesus and his Church. [Romans 16:17-18; Thess. 3:14-15; Matt. 18:17]

IV. It's _____

"And when a soul is truly reconverted, let him be re-baptized. Let him renew his covenant with God, and God will renew His covenant with him. **[Evangelism, 375]**

11. Is there an age requirement for baptism? [Matthew 19:14; Proverbs 20:11] Ans. The Bible does not focus on _____, rather mental capacity and _____.

12. How long does it take to prepare for baptism? Ans. That depends on the person. Some grasp things more quickly than others. But in most cases, preparation can be made in short order.

Here are some Biblical examples:

- Ethiopian treasurer **[Acts 8:26-39]** baptized on the _____ he heard the truth.
- Philippian jailer and his family **[Acts 16:23-34]** baptized the _____ they heard the truth.
- Saul of Tarsus **[Acts 9:1-18]** baptized _____ after Jesus spoke to him on the road to Damascus.
- Cornelius **[Acts 10:1-48]** baptized on the _____ he heard the truth.

BAPTISM IS AN URGENT MATTER FOR EVERY BELIEVER

- Delay gives Satan an _____ **[Hebrews 3:15]**
- Delay encourages _____ **[Proverbs 27:1]**
- Delay questions the Bible's _____ **[2 Corinthians 6:2; Ecc. 12:5; Jeremiah 8:20]**

Do not put off the work of forsaking your sins and seeking purity of heart through Jesus. Here is where thousands upon thousands have erred to their eternal loss. I will not here dwell upon the shortness and uncertainty of life; but there is a terrible danger--a danger not sufficiently understood in delaying to yield to the pleading voice of God's Holy Spirit, in choosing to live in sin; for such this delay really is. Sin, however small it may be esteemed, can be indulged in only at the peril of infinite loss. **[Steps to Christ, 32]**

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