

Adult Bible Study on Baptism

Even though there are multiple opinions regarding baptism, there is only one truth that really matters—the truth revealed in the Bible. This study guide is designed to guide you through a personal discovery of what the Bible says about baptism and its role in your life, your relationship with Jesus, your involvement in the Church and your hope of eternal life.

Take time to read and investigate the following points. The fill-in-the-blank sections correspond with the New International Version (NIV) translation of the Bible. If you don't have an NIV Bible, you can still read along in your own Bible. An answer key is available at the end of this study guide to provide any fill-in-the-blanks to which you cannot immediately discover an answer. (scroll to bottom for printable version)

1. God created everything, including you.

- Read Genesis 1.

In Genesis 1:31, God looked at all that He had made, and it was

_____.

- Psalm 139:13-14 says, "I praise you because I am fearfully and _____ made; your _____ are wonderful, I know that full well."
- How does it make you feel to know that you were created by God and are special to him?

2. Sin entered the world and ruined the perfection of God's creation.

- Read Genesis 2:16-17.

What did God tell Adam that he could do?

- What did God command Adam not to do? Why?

- Read Genesis 3:6-8.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command and ate of the fruit. What did they realize? What did they do?

Adam and Eve had been in a perfect relationship with God, but when they sinned, they were separated from Him. Instinctively, they realized this and hid in shame. If you read the rest of Genesis 3, you will see that God sent them out the garden of Eden. They could no longer live freely in His presence.

Why does God take such a harsh view of sin? If God is loving, why couldn't He just ignore Adam and Eve's sin?

- Habakkuk 1:13 describes God this way: "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong."
- 1 John 1:5 says "God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all."
- It is contrary to God's nature to sin or to tolerate the presence of sin. As much as He loves us (His creation), He cannot have a relationship with us, because of our sin.

3. Everyone has sinned. Because God is just, He cannot leave those sins unpunished.

- Adam and Eve aren't the only ones who have sinned. What does Romans 3:23 say? "For have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- What is sin? Sin is choosing to disobey God. Read what James 4:17 says about sin.

Think of a time you did not do the good you knew you ought to do. If you feel comfortable, describe it below.

Most of us instinctively realize that sin brings consequences. If you speed, you may get a ticket. If you rob a bank and are caught, you will go to jail. What does the Bible say is the consequence of sin?

- Read Romans 6:23

According to this verse, what "wages" are we to receive for sin?

Remember what God told Adam in Genesis 2:17? Death and separation from God are the natural consequences of sin, because God's holy nature cannot be in the presence of sin.

Because of our sin, we have all earned the "wages" of death.

- God is perfect, holy, and just. Isaiah 13:11 says, "I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their."

4. But God is also merciful, and wants to restore our relationship with Him. He knows we cannot do this on our own.

- Read Romans 6:23 again.

We already discussed that the wages of sin is death. But what, according to this verse, is the gift of God?

This verse perfectly captures the way in which God is both just and merciful. He is wholly just. He is righteous. He cannot just "ignore" sin. But He is also wholly merciful, and wants to provide a way for us to be in a relationship with Him.

- Look at Romans 6:23 one more time. According to this verse, what have we earned? What can we be given?

Many people believe that if the good things they do outweigh the bad things, then they can get to heaven. Nothing could be further from the truth. No "good" thing we do can ever erase or outweigh our sin. The only wage we can earn on our own is death.

Read Isaiah 64:6.

"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our are like."

This verse clearly tells us that even the best things we do (our "righteous acts") are like "filthy rags" compared to God's holiness. Have you ever had a piece of cloth that you thought was white, until you put it up against another that was pure white, and suddenly your cloth looked gray and grubby? We don't just look grubby, we look "filthy" next to God's pure holiness.

Why do you think so many people try to "earn" their way into heaven?

5. God has given us a way to be forgiven and have eternal life, and that way is through Jesus Christ.

- Remember the first passage we studied, in Genesis 1. God created the world and every person in it. Before Adam and Eve's sin, God looked at creation and called it "very good."
- Read John 3:16. "For God the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Even after the sin of Adam, Eve, and the rest of humankind, God still loved the world so much to send His one and only Son, Jesus, so that we could have eternal life.

- Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Who is the "him" this verse refers to?

This passage tells us that Jesus had no sin. He is the one exception to the rule that all have sinned. He was born and lived on earth. He was fully human, and at the same time, fully God. He "knew no sin." Because of this, only He could die and pay the price for our sins. Because of this, and only because of this, we can receive the gift God's righteousness and eternal life.

- Read Ephesians 2:8-9.

This gift of God is called .

We receive this gift through .

- Romans 3:22 says, "The righteousness from God comes through in Jesus Christ to all who ."

6. God has shown us clearly how to accept this gift.

A gift is worthless unless it is received. God offers His gift of grace freely to all people, but not everyone choose to accept the gift.

- In order to accept the gift, you must that is God's .

Earlier you read John 3:16. Go back and read John 3:16-18. In order to accept God's gift, we must believe that the gift exists, and that it is found in Jesus who lived a sinless life (2 Corinthians 5:21), died for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3), and that He was raised back to life (Acts 2:24).

- You also need to according to Acts 3:19. Repentance is more than just saying "I'm sorry." To "repent" means to turn away from a life full of sin, and turn toward God.
- Then, you " with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord'" (Romans 10:9). In other words, you must be willing to acknowledge in front of other people that you are putting Jesus in charge of your life.
- Finally, you can be baptized (Acts 2:38, 8:36, 9:18). In the early church, when someone came to believe in Jesus and accept his gift of grace, that person was baptized. We follow the same practice today.

The water in the baptistery has no special powers. If you don't believe in Jesus and accept his gift of grace, then baptism is nothing more than getting wet. But being baptized is clearly what the New Testament teaches believers to do when they come to a place of faith in Jesus.

7. God calls us to live our lives in grateful response to his gift of grace.

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- Nothing that you do either before or after you are baptized earns your salvation. Ephesians 2:8, 9 says "For it is by that you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the of God - not by so that no one can boast."
- That same passage tells us how God wishes us to live once we have accepted His grace. Read Ephesians 2:10. "We are God's , created in Christ Jesus to do , which God has prepared in advance for us to do."
- Some people think that grace gives them a "free pass" to continue sinning. But Romans 6:1-4 clearly shows the error of this thinking.

"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 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 .”

God has offered forgiveness of our sins not only so that we may have eternal life, but so that our lives on earth can be transformed, too.

ANSWER KEY

The bulleted answers correspond to blanks under each section in the studies.

1. God created everything, including you.

- very good
- wonderfully, works

2. Sin entered the world and ruined God's perfect creation.

- eat from any tree in the garden
- eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because you will surely die
- Their eyes were opened, they realized they were naked. They clothed themselves with fig leaves, and hid from God.

3. Everyone has sinned. Because God is just, He cannot leave sins unpunished.

- all
- death
- sins

4. But God is merciful, and wants to restore our relationship with Him. He knows we cannot do this on our own.

- eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord
- death, eternal life
- righteous acts, filthy rags

5. God has given us a way to be forgiven and have eternal life, and that way is through Jesus Christ.

- so loved
- Jesus
- grace; faith
- faith; believe

6. God has shown us clearly how to accept this gift.

- believe; Jesus; Son
- repent
- confess
- Holy Spirit

7. God calls us to live our lives in grateful response to His gift of grace.

- grace; gift; works
- workmanship; good works
- grace; baptized; new life